

CURRICULUM VITAE

ROBYN KEMP

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

I have several decades of experience in the fields of children's social care, particularly residential child care, and social pedagogy. As a UK qualified social worker (DipSW 1995) and social pedagogue (MA 2011), I have a strong commitment to supporting students, professionals, practitioners, managers, leaders and educators in the system to be more empowering, relational and humane with those who want, need or have to use the system. As an ethical and theoretical framework for practice, social pedagogy helps me do this and navigate different terrains. I have set up and managed many children's homes and contributed to the strategic development of children in and on the edges of care services since the 1990s, created and facilitated a wide variety of education, training and other learning events (in person and online), contributed to the literature on children's care and social pedagogy and supported a huge range of organisations and individuals in public welfare and support to create and co-create better services and support.

PUBLICATIONS

- (2026) Kemp, R. The evolving landscape of social education in the UK: legacy of neoliberalism affecting UK children and those who support them, and the considerable value of its potential counterbalance – social pedagogy, [*Journal of Social Care, Vol 5 Issue 2 FESET conference 2025*](#)
- (2023) Cameron, C., Eichsteller, G. & Kemp, R., "Into the future: growing understandings of social pedagogy", *International Journal of Social Pedagogy* 12(1).doi: <https://doi.org/10.14324/111.444.IJSP.2023.v12.x.018>
- (2023), Petrie, P., Cameron, C., Jones, H., and Kemp, R., Introducing social pedagogy for children in care in the UK: from policy to research and from research to policy?, in [*Social Research for our Times: Thomas Coram Research Unit past, present and future*](#), edited by Cameron, C., Koslowski, A., Lamont, A. and Moss P., London, UCL Press pp65-84
- (2020) Kemp R., and Harbo, L., Social pedagogical perspectives on fidelity to a manual: professional principles and dilemmas in everyday expertise, [*International Journal of Social Pedagogy*](#)
- (2015) Kemp, R., Treasuring the social in social pedagogy, [*Children Australia*](#), Vol. 40, Issue 04, pp 348-350
- (2013) Kemp, R., A passion for children in care, in '*Becoming a social worker*' (2nd edition), Prof Viv Cree (editor), London: Routledge
- (2012) Kemp, R., Johansen, T., Eichsteller, G., *Head Heart Hands Reference Tool*, London: the Fostering Network and Social Pedagogy Consortium
- (2012) Kemp, R., Social Pedagogy: differences and links to existing child care practice, *Children Australia*, Vol. 36, issue 4, pp 199-206. accessible from www.thempra.org.uk/childreanaustralia_RK.htm ;
- (2010) Kemp, R., *London Pledge Practice Prompts*, NCERCC, National Children's Bureau, London accessible from http://www.ncb.org.uk/ncercc/london_pledge/practice_prompts.aspx;
- (2008) Kemp, R., *Self Harm Practice Reference Guide*, NCERCC, London: National Children's Bureau, London retrievable from http://www.ncb.org.uk/ncercc/ncercc%20practice%20documents/ncercc_SelfHarmPracticeReference.pdf;

WORK SUMMARY

Mar 2009 – date	Director, Kemp Consultancy – consultancy and training in social care sectors
Current Collaborations	
Nov 2025	Keynote Speaker , FESET conference, European Parliament, Strasbourg France, on neoliberalism's effects on children in care and the case for social pedagogy.
2025 – date	Critical Learning Group Facilitator (Independent Reviewing Officers) – 6 weekly sessions for two groups, facilitating reflective learning on critical subjects for children in care and allied professionals with 5 London local authorities
2024 – date	Academic lecturer – Module UK social pedagogy for relationship centred social work practice. MCI University, Innsbruck, Austria
2024	Hertfordshire's residential academy learning facilitator
2022 – date	Critical Reflection Supervisor to individuals in social work and related fields

2022 – date **East Ayrshire Children’s homes social pedagogy training** – created training programme with comprehensive handbook to support ongoing learning, and delivered 8 day training programme for the LA’s three homes, funded by the Scottish Government.

2021 – date **Reflective Practice Group facilitator to leadership teams in children’s social care**

2018 – date **Editorial Board Member, International Journal of Social Pedagogy – Handling Editor since 2020**

2018 – date **Social Pedagogy Consultant, Small Performance Adventures, Brighton**
Supporting this small charity to conceptualise social pedagogy in their immersive multi genre theatre pieces, working with people in addiction recovery and ‘affected by life’.

2016 – date **Social Pedagogy Consultant, Compass Child and Family Services, Ireland**
Bespoke design and delivery of annual programme of social pedagogy training for the senior leadership team, four children’s homes staff teams and an after care service (also the now closed fostering team) in Ireland. 2019 conference keynote speaker. Facilitator for bimonthly reflective practice group sessions with the leadership team, and team sessions to facilitate effective social pedagogical relationships between the adults for the children’s homes. Co-created and facilitated trauma informed reflective practice online course for children’s practitioners 2020-21.

2008 – date **Associate, ThemPra Social Pedagogy Community Interest Company**

2022 – date **SISU Residential Family Assessment Service** – providing social pedagogy learning facilitation for the SISU workforce, reflective practice group facilitator for the leadership team and reflective supervisor for managing director.

2022 - date **ResiAction Residential Child Care providers in Wolverhampton**, providing social pedagogy RCC learning facilitation

2009 – 2017 summary:
Social Pedagogy Consortium and Fostering Network **Head Heart Hands programme**, demonstrating the impact of social pedagogy for foster care (2012-2016): lead co-creator of the training programme and course reference tools; lead facilitator of the training programme; site Support Lead for three sites providing external consultation, support and supervision of social pedagogues and site project lead teams.
Social Pedagogy leader, trainer and facilitator for many organisations including **Essex County Council, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Staffordshire County Council, Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care/CELCIS, Orkney Council, and Aberlour Child Care Trust, Capstone Foster care South West, East Ayrshire Council, West Lothian Council, St Christopher’s Fellowship.**
Key note speaker at Social Pedagogy Development Network Dublin, Ireland, Nov 2014: *Critical Reflection – walking the path of most resistanc.*
Consultant to the Centre for Understanding Social Pedagogy, **Thomas Coram Research Unit**, Institute of Education.
Strategic development lead in Belfast, Essex Fostering, Orkney, Staffordshire and Aberlour CCT;
External and independent supervision of social pedagogues and residential management teams;
Consultant – QCF Level 3 Diploma (CWDC) and BA Social Pedagogy (University of the West of Scotland);
Creator of Social Pedagogical Leadership training and development courses, providing ongoing support to organisations and individuals

Past Employment/Collaborations

2021-2023 Social Pedagogy consultant & trainer for **Nether Johnstone House Children’s Home**, Johnstone, Scotland. Created and delivered online training for the staff team with support to the manager for embedding the learning.

Apr 2018 – Jun 2020 **Family Learning Intervention Programme (FLIP) & Rapid Support Service Manager, LB Hackney, London**

Led the strategic and operational management of FLIP’s social pedagogically informed service, established in 2015 to prevent children and young people from coming into care, foster care and residential care break downs, and to support young people returning home. Children and families co-created programme of support and activities with FLIP professionals (including systemic family therapists, substance workers, youth workers, teachers etc), mainly undertaken in a rural setting, and with as many of the birth, legal or substitute families of children, and their social worker and other allied professionals; funded originally through the Innovations Programme, Hackney continued to provide this service after the funding ended due to the success of the programme. I recruited, trained and supervised a team of social pedagogues and youth workers; created, implemented and developed case tracker and cost avoided systems to demonstrate service value in terms of resources, and value for children and families; established a new service (Rapid Support Service) to provide a timely and effective response to relational difficulties

between parents/carers and young people on the edge of care, contributing to well over £1m in avoided care costs per year; created, designed and delivered highly evaluated face to face and interactive online training for foster carers on relationship based practices, reflective learning and non-violent/compassionate communication; trained majority of Hackney social workers on assessing parental capacity to change leading to improved care and support plans and engagement of service users; active panel member to Children's Resources Panel and Care Planning Panel; presented to the North London Teaching Partnership's Skills and Knowledge Exchange Forum in collaboration with Islington SSD on relationship based practice and service delivery; leadership, management and supervision of two teams. Collaborative practice with all social work units, youth service, clinical service, safeguarding and learning, allied agencies and professionals.

2018 – 2019 *Associate, Research In Practice*

Learning facilitator – Assessing Parental Capacity to Change and Building Reflective Capabilities courses delivered across England.

2017 – 2018 *Social Pedagogy Consultant, Stirling EISS, Scotland*

Bespoke design and delivery of training for children's home staff team and Education Inclusion Support Service team, focussing on better supporting children's educational attainment and achievement.

2015 – 2017 *Director, Centre for Social Work Practice, London.*

Strategic and operational lead for small charity promoting relationship based practice in social work. Redesigned the website, supported and developed learning events across the country, developed collaborative partnerships with professional bodies, leaders in social work and practitioners. Keynote speaker at a number of events across the UK. Lead for the Reflective Practice Group project, part of Brighton and Hove's relationship based practice model. Commissioned independent mixed methods research which showed that in general: families have a better experience of social work; social workers feel more supported and more able to make a difference for families; relationship-based practice seems to be supporting safe and stable family lives for children; and the model of practice appears to have decreased demand for social work (a 5.4% decrease in the number of 'open' families) and high-level interventions (a 10% decrease in both children with child protection plans and in care) during a time of increasing national demand. I continue to support this project as an independent consultant.

2012-2013 *Lecturer & Academic Tutor, BA Social Work, Anglia Ruskin University*

Lecturer for Children and Families and Social Work in Society modules, 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students. Academic tutor and placement tutor for 16 students.

2012 *Visiting lecturer, Institute of Education, University of London*

Children in care and social pedagogy lectures, MA Sociology of Childhood and Children's Rights

2009 *Children with disabilities consultant, Bournemouth County Council*

Consultant for the strategic development of the transitions services team for children with disabilities, assisting in the design of the strategy and services including pioneering operational support services such as 'Safe Spaces'

2009 *Residential Child Care Consultant, London Borough of Wandsworth*

Delivered training and facilitation to aid the development of more effective staff team following a period of considerable difficulty and consequent closure. Provided a comprehensive report based on findings over the three days and all recommendations linked to research evidence, all accepted

2008 – 2013 *Associate, National Children's Bureau and NCERCC*

Lead trainer and consultant for an NHS funded research project on peer mentoring for looked after young women, aiming to reduce the rates of teenage pregnancy in this group (2010-2012); Consulted to and wrote the London Pledge Practice Prompts for children and young people in care practitioners, keynote speaker at launch event, London; Wrote the Self Harm Practice Reference Guide for Residential Child Care sector; Consulted on the review of England's National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes; Contributed to research and practice papers on supervision in the residential child care sector.

Jul 2006 – Feb 2009

National Service Development Manager – Residential Care, Action for Children (formerly NCH)

Responsible for designing new strategy for residential child care based on practice research evidence and field analysis, aiming to improve the quality of care and outcomes for children through innovative workforce development programmes in caring for increasingly vulnerable and challenging children, and improvement of the financial efficiency and long term security of services

Provided guidance and advice to CEO, Strategic, Operational and Assistant Directors across the UK and support to 47 residential services across mainland UK including mainstream and specialist adolescent short, medium and long term care, alternatives to secure care, long term homes for children with disabilities, residential short breaks for children with disabilities and residential special schools for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties and for those with PMLD; Evaluated service quality and efficiency and made recommendations through highlight reports and regular progress updates to the Executive Management Team and Children's Services Strategic Management team; Lead consultant in conducting reviews of Local Authorities children's homes provision in Wales and Northern Ireland leading to better experiences and outcomes for children; Contributed to the tendering process for a number of tenders across the UK for residential child care and other services; Designed and delivered workshops and operational training programmes to residential managers, their teams and other bodies; Participated in market research processes to ensure regions and countries had a comprehensive understanding of the business environment within which voluntary services were being delivered; Established management information systems to monitor, evaluate, review and improve the quality of residential child care services, relating to experiences and outcomes for children; Collaborated with Public Policy Officers in drafting organisational responses to the UK four nations' government proposals and draft legislation, and attended and contributed to policy briefings and debates at Westminster; Provided support and advice to European Social Pedagogues for NCERCC and DCSF pilot project; Consulted on and wrote sections of the new Children's Workforce Development Council Professional Standards for Residential Child Care; Contributed to the National Framework Contract for Residential Child Care, 2007 and the Joint Commissioning Framework; Contributed to the Government Office for Science, Foresight Report on Mental Capital and Wellbeing, 2008; Wrote a practice 'manual' for Action for Children residential child care based on the National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes in England, Scotland and Wales

Established and developed the Action for Children National Behaviour Support Steering Group in response to a lack of information, coordination and risk management; wrote and implemented comprehensive behaviour support policy for use across all 500 Action for Children services, highly praised and successful in reducing seclusion and restraints; introduced new data collection and analysis tool to aid monitoring and evaluation; Designed and delivered workshop on reducing restraint and seclusion at the NCERCC Annual Conference 2008; Keynote speaker at the Practice Exchange workshop in Inverness 2008; Established and delivered Emotional Intelligence training programme and established an EI network for managers and practitioners; Created a Virtual Therapeutic Team to provide therapeutic support from highly experienced and qualified consultants within and associated to the organisation to staff and carers of looked after children across the UK, funded through voluntary income, delivered through face to face consultations, e-support, and video and telephone conferencing; Provided consultation for the St Lucian government and the government of the commonwealth of Dominica for establishing their first children's homes and providing consultation on the Operations Manual for the welfare services department

Sep 2003- Jun 2006 *Project Manager, NCH House on the Hill, Lewisham, London*

Leadership, management, development and co-ordination of high quality 6 bedded residential short break care for children with disabilities within a multi-agency framework from a written concept to an operational reality, overseeing a £1.4 million refurbishment, recruiting and chairing the advisory panel and a full staff team, agreeing protocols and procedures with the partner Authority.

Established, sustained and further developed a clear ethos founded on research evidence, child-centred and anti-discriminatory practice; Recruitment and development of a full staff team, sessional workers and volunteers using the Warner recommendations (1991); Development and continuous management of service requirements for regulatory body; Liaison with partner agency contractors and staff in relation to the refurbishment of the building and development of the service; Development and maintenance of communications strategies with the partner agency; Development of close working partnerships and liaison with service users and potential service users ensuing focus on their active participation; Development and maintenance of financial and other systems within the project, including budget monitoring; Overall maintenance of the service premises and equipment; Development and maintenance of a range of information systems; Successful marketing of service to and partner relationships with other Local Authorities; Presented with NCH Project Manager of the Year Award 2004

Jul 2001 – Sep 2003 *Senior Fostering Co-ordinator, Clarion Agency Ltd, London E8*

Assessing, supporting, supervising and reviewing foster carers, and placing children; Developed support systems for the birth children of foster carers; Development of protection and care plans and behaviour programmes for children placed ; Liaison

with child care professionals including regular consultation with child psychotherapists; Supervision of contact; Developing and writing agency policies and procedures; Development of foster carers handbook; Advisor to the fostering panel; Advisor on child protection and child care issues to LA partners; Development of introductory and specialist training programme for foster carers; Development and delivery of UK wide training on Life Story Working

Feb 1997 – Sep 2003 *Freelance Child Care Trainer and Consultant*

Courses designed and delivered to social care professionals (including social work managers, social workers, residential managers and workers, foster carers, nursery workers, child and adolescent mental health professionals, family centre practitioners, interpreters):

Adolescence	Child abuse awareness, introduction
Child and adolescent development	Child Protection & Safeguarding
Children Act 89	Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
Development of an Asylum Seekers SW Team	Direct work with children
Education and Health for looked after children	Life story work
Looked After Children System	Moving in, moving on
Pathway Planning	Personal Education Plans
PQSW Assessor / Mentor – Waltham Forest SSD	Recording with care
Safer Care	Supporting young people leaving care
Training the trainer	Working with families where disability is an issue
Working with birth parents	Working with unaccompanied asylum seeking children

Also, one piece of Primary Research – ‘User Perspectives on the Child Protection System’ for London Borough of Redbridge Best Value Review, 2002. Research conducted on 5 users of child protection service who responded to request, data analysed and presented at conference event.

Aug 1995 – Jul 2001 *Children’s Home Manager (short term & emergency care), LB Tower Hamlets*

Accommodating up to six 12 to 17 year olds, for up to three months. Primary aim to thoroughly assess need, minimise period of accommodation with a view to return young person home, if at all possible, within six weeks, based on research findings by Prof June Thoburn. Our team’s relational approach had a no restraint policy, successful for 5 years – we supported most young people to return home by working with the whole family wherever possible.

I developed and implemented Comprehensive Four Week Assessments based on the seven developmental dimensions of the LAC system; Developed policy and procedures regarding Risk Assessments of young people, work activities and building management; Contributed to the development and implemented staffing strategy for all Tower Hamlets children’s homes; Developed and implemented training strategy based on the needs of the service; NVQ & PQ assessor; Managed a staff team of 18 FTE; Provided in house training on Children Act ’89, DoH LAC system, social work theory in residential care; Contributed to the NSPCC protocol on working with young people at risk of and involved in sexual exploitation; Member of the User Involvement Group, Inspection Advisory Panel, Fourth Tier Managers Group; Contributed to organising three annual speak out events for Tower Hamlets’ children in care; Project Manager for the Young People’s Film Group working with Four Corners Film Workshop – produced 40 min digital video film with ten young people over six months, entered into film festivals and being used as a training tool; Developed Internal Procedures Manual, used in all Tower Hamlets children’s homes; Successfully managed the budget as the cost centre manager budget holder, always coming in on target, able to secure additional funding through careful understanding of costs and benefits of service delivery and development. Additional roles and responsibilities: building management; active member of the Children’s Home Management Team; community relations; liaison with other agencies including YOT teams, Child Mental Health, Education providers, NSPCC, NCH, Police, Community Service Volunteers, Advocacy agencies, Refugee Council; Interpreters and translators

Apr 1992 – Sep 1993 *Manager of Under 5’s Specific Needs Day Nursery, 60 William Guy Gardens, LBTH SSD*

Nursery for ten full time children, working with parents on their parenting skills, promoting all aspects of the children’s development. Developed nursery to specialise in working with children with specific needs arising from child protection

concerns of referring social worker, particularly in terms of neglect. Responsible for the supervision and development of five nursery staff. Developed and implemented procedures and good working practices

Dec 1991 – Mar 1992 *Senior Residential Social Worker, 60 William Guy Gardens, LBTH SSD*

Shift leader responsible for smooth running of shifts, referrals and admissions. Supervisor of three RSWs and one auxiliary staff. Key worker, responsible for attending placement meetings, statutory reviews, promoting the education of residents, reporting for child protection meetings, co-ordinating the placement and care of the young person. Developed and contributed to weekly management meetings. Developed internal procedures manual for all staff

Apr 1991 – Nov 1991 *Nursery Officer, Overland Day Nursery, LBTH SSD*

60 place Social Services day nursery. Seconded to cover maternity leave. Responsible for 5 under fives, including children with disabilities. Supervised NNEB students

Jan 1988 – Mar 1991 *Residential Social Worker, Dave Adams House, London Borough of Tower Hamlets*

20 bedded children's home, accommodating children short, medium and long term. Active member of the staff team, feeding into the management team. Designed the home's first handbook for residents in 1988. Developed and ran the first Girl's Group. Organised holidays and educational trips. Liaised with internal and external agencies. Instigated Residents Meetings. Key worker

Aug 1986 – Dec 1987 Waitress / Bar Staff, Bass Clef Jazz Club, London N1

Jul 1986 – Jun 1987 Personal Assistant to Director, London Insurance Services, Old St, London EC1

Jan 1986 – Jun 1986 Maths Teacher for SEN students, Yesoday Hatorah Hasidic Jewish Secondary School, London N16

Sep 1985 – Dec 1985 Caring for sick relative in Manchester

Jul 1985 – Sep 1985 Summer Camp Leader, Sheffield City Council SSD

Mar 1985 – Jun 1985 Volunteer Holiday Play Scheme Worker, Sheffield University Student Community Action Group

Apr 1984 – Feb 1985 Riding School leader, MENCAP, Dore, South Yorkshire

Sep 1981 – Mar 1984 Unemployed, Volunteer Holiday Play Scheme Worker (as above)

EDUCATION and QUALIFICATIONS

2011: MA Social Pedagogy (with Distinction), Institute of Education, University of London
Dissertation: *Towards Emerging Coherence: opportunity in the challenge of social pedagogy in the UK*

1995: Diploma in Social Work, Havering College of Higher Education, Essex
Dissertation: *Residential Child Care: First or last resort?*

1981: GCEs including English & Mathematics

I.T. Proficiency: Microsoft Office, Google suite, Mosaic, Apple /Mac

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Board Member of AIEJI (International Association of Social Educators) Member of British Association of Social Workers for many, many years **(no. 0011908)**
Founding Member of the Social Pedagogy Professional Association since inception in 2017 (formerly chair of trustees 2019-2025)
Member of the Global Alliance for Social Pedagogy
Member of the Social Pedagogy Practice Research Education And Development (SPPREAD) Network – international network of academics and practitioners interested in social pedagogy meeting online.

VOLUNTARY WORK

2008 – date Social Pedagogy Development Network

Supporting Thempra and SPPA to put on annual events to promote social pedagogy in the UK and Ireland

2014 – date Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care Journal

Editorial board member, reviewing articles and contributing to the development of the journal.

2017 – 2025 Chair of Trustees (since 2019) [Social Pedagogy Professional Association](#) (Charity no: 1183411)

Having been a founding member, director and trustee since its inception in 2017, I was elected as chair of SPPA trustees at the AGM in Nov 2019, I now co-chair along with Dr Cecile Remy. SPPA is a membership charity promoting

and supporting the profession of social pedagogy in the UK; all work is currently carried out by the trustees with support from a P/T administrator. Since taking over the chair I have worked with the trustees to establish a well-attended webinar series, redesigned the website, changed membership offers and support, established effective collaborative networks across professional disciplines and countries, spoken at a number of local and national events including a parliamentary launch event, organised AGMs and conferences, and have recently doubled the membership of the charity including individual and organisational members.

2020 – date International Journal of Social Pedagogy

Co-managing editor and board member. Co-editor with Dr Lotte Junker Harbo of the special issue on social pedagogy and transgression, inspired by the seminal work of bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*.

Previous voluntary work

Four years as a trustee for Heshima, a children's charity based in Kenya and Tanzania, which provides a wide range of opportunities for play and learning for disadvantaged children and young people. I also provided support and guidance to a children's home for 'street children' also in Kisumu, Kenya. I served a four year term as parent governor of a local Junior School, and served as the Chair of Governors for one year. Member of the Board for Four Corners Film Workshop – socially responsible film making charity, patron Mike Leigh.

The personal me...

I am a proud Scot (although you can't tell from my accent), who has lived in east London for over four decades with two cockney kids (now grown up). I am close to my creative side through music and arts, though I lack any real talent. I enjoy the countryside and nature more generally, walking Chi the dog, watching birds and cows, supporting Arsenal and Aberdeen football clubs and much more. I am someone who loves her work and tries hard to be congruent with beliefs and values. I have continued to work in and alongside children's services throughout my life because I really like being with, listening to and learning from children, because our systems in the UK and Ireland could be so much better and I believe there is both a willingness and an urgency among to shift toward more relationship centred, empowering practice, organisations, education and policy for the good of society.