

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Warwick

**Course approval: BA (Hons) Social Work
Integrated Degree Apprenticeship**

Inspection dates: 6 – 9 February 2024

Report date:	16 April 2024
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	1 July 2024
Date conditions met and approved:	21 March 2025

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Introduction

1. Social Work England completes inspections as part of our statutory requirement to approve and monitor courses. Inspections form part of our process to make sure that courses meet our [education and training standards](#) and ensure that students successfully completing these courses can meet our [professional standards](#).
2. During the approval process, we appoint partner inspectors. One inspector is a social worker registered with us and the other is not a registered social worker (a 'lay' inspector). These inspectors, along with an officer from the education quality assurance team, undertake activity to review information and carry out an inspection. This activity could include observing and asking questions about teaching, placement provision, facilities and learning resources; asking questions based on the evidence submitted; and meeting with staff, training placement providers, people with lived experience and students. The inspectors then make recommendations to us about whether a course should be approved.
3. The process we undertake is described in our legislation; the Social Worker Regulations 2018¹, and the Social Work England [\(Education and Training\) Rules 2019](#).
4. You can find further guidance on our course change, approval and annual monitoring processes on our website.

What we do

5. When an education provider wants to make a change to a course, or request the approval of a new course, they are asked to consider how their course meets our education and training standards and our professional standards, and provide evidence of this to us. We are also undertaking a cycle of re-approval of all currently approved social work courses in England following the introduction of the Education and Training Standards 2021.
6. The education quality assurance officer reviews all the documentary evidence provided and will contact the education provider if they have any questions about the information submitted. They also provide advice and guidance on our approval processes.
7. When we are satisfied that we have all the documentary evidence required to proceed with an inspection we assign one registrant and one lay inspector. We undertake a conflict of interest process when confirming our inspectors to ensure there is no bias or perception of bias in the approval process.
8. The inspectors complete an assessment of the evidence provided and advise the officer if they have any queries that may be able to be addressed in advance of the inspection.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2018/9780111170090/contents>

9. During this time a draft plan for the inspection is developed and shared with the education provider, to make sure it is achievable at the point of inspection.
10. Once the inspectors and officer are satisfied that an inspection can take place, this is usually undertaken over a three to four day visit to the education provider. We then draft a report setting out what we found during the inspection and if and how our findings demonstrate that the course meets our standards.
11. The inspectors may recommend in this report that the course is approved with conditions, approved without conditions or that it does not meet the criteria for approval. Where the course has been previously approved we may also decide to withdraw approval.
12. A draft of this report is shared with the education provider, and once we have considered any comments or observations they may wish to provide, we make a final regulatory decision about the approval of the course.
13. The final decisions that we can make are as follows, that the course is approved without conditions, the course is approved with conditions or that the course does not meet the criteria for approval. The decision, and the report, are then published.
14. If the course is approved with conditions, we will write to the education provider setting out how they can demonstrate they have met the conditions, the action we will take once we decide that the conditions are met, and the action we will take if we decide the conditions are not met.

Summary of Inspection

15. The University of Warwick, BA (Hons) Social Work Integrated Degree Apprenticeship was inspected as part of the Social Work England reapproval cycle; whereby all course providers with qualifying social work courses will be inspected against the new Education and Training Standards 2021. The university had undertaken validation activity within their institution to update the programme of study, including, identifying discrete periods of placement activity. All students had been transferred into the new programme at their current point of study and the university was not engaging in teach out.

Inspection ID	UWR1
Course provider	University of Warwick
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	BA (Hons) Social Work Integrated Degree Apprenticeship
Mode of study	Full time work based learning
Maximum student cohort	90
Date of inspection	6 February – 9 February 2024
Inspection team	Nikki Steel-Bryan, Education Quality Assurance Officer Priscilla McGuire, Lay Inspector Stephen Stericker, Registrant Inspector

Language

16. In this document we describe the University of Warwick as ‘the course provider’ or ‘the university’ and we describe the BA (Hons) Social Work Integrated Degree Apprenticeship as ‘the course’ or ‘the programme’.

Inspection

17. A remote inspection took place from 6 February 2024 to 9 February 2024. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, employers and people with lived experience of social work.

18. These meetings formed the basis of the inspection plan, agreed with the education provider ahead of inspection. The following section provides a summary of these sessions, who participated and the topics that were discussed with the inspection team.

Conflict of interest

19. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

20. The inspection team met with a group of 10 students which included student reps and recent graduates. Discussions included placements, supervision, support and feedback.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the senior leadership team, the course team, staff involved in placement, staff involved in admissions and welfare and academic support staff.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in admissions, assessment and curriculum delivery. Discussions included their role in the admissions process, their contributions to curriculum development, involvement in teaching and opportunities to feedback to the university.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including Leicester City Council, Warwickshire County Council, Coventry City Council and Worcestershire County Council. The inspection team also met with practice educators involved in supporting students on the programme.

Findings

24. In this section we set out the inspectors' findings in relation to whether the education provider has demonstrated that it meets the education and training standards and that the course will ensure that students who successfully complete the course are able to meet the professional standards.

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

25. The course provider submitted documentary evidence that included an admission guide detailing mandatory eligibility requirements, the stage 1 and stage 2 process and a matrix that demonstrated how candidates were assessed in both the interviews and the group task. The university also provided slides from information roadshows undertaken prior to application, examples of admissions forms and example stage 1 interview questions.

26. Through discussion with the staff responsible for admissions the inspection team heard that candidates undertook written English and maths tests, a formal interview and took part in a group exercise as part of the interview day. Applicants were not required to have a level 2 (or above) qualification for entry to the programme. However, were required to demonstrate a good command of English in the test and were supported to have completed a level 2 qualification by the gateway to the end-point-assessment (EPA) in Year 3 of the course. The inspection team understood that applications were made electronically and that candidates completed the maths and English tests on a computer and concluded that ICT skills were tested as part of the admissions process.

27. The inspection team were keen to better understand how the university ensured the information provided to potential applicants in different local authorities was consistent. The staff responsible for admissions explained that information on the process was available on the website and in the admission handbook. The team undertook online 'roadshows' where they explained what the programme would be like, and what issues apprentices may face. The inspection team noted that the roadshow presentation included information on the programme structure, delivery model, assessments, eligibility criteria, the contrasting placement, the application process and interviews, induction and support as well as frequently asked questions (FAQs). The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

28. The inspection team reported that the documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard was sufficient to demonstrate that the standard was met. Inspectors noted that employers highlighted candidates with relevant experience and that the expression of interest required applicants to reflect on their previous experience. The admissions guide

included the interview assessment form which detailed the following question under Section 2:

‘what have you gained from your experiences in the workplace that may help you to become a social worker and how might your experiences in the workplace hinder your ability to become a social worker?’.

The inspection team considered the evidence and agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

29. The admissions guide submitted as evidence against this standard outlined that the admission process took place in two stages with stage 1 undertaken by the employer and stage 2 undertaken by the university.

30. At stage 1, the employer partner considered an applicant’s statement of interest and carried out internal interviews. The inspection team understood from the local authority guide to admissions, provided to employer partners by the university, that stage 1 interview panels were made up of team managers or area manager, and a member of the learning development team. During stage 2 of the admissions process the university considered those applicants put forward by the employer partner, and the admissions guide outlined that the group task was assessed by a staff member and a person with lived experience of social work.

31. Through discussion with the people with lived experience the inspection team heard that the group were involved in the group exercise and agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

32. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were able to see that applicants were required to submit an occupational health form to the university’s occupational health team who would raise any relevant concerns with the admission tutor.

33. The university further submitted a disclosure and barring service (DBS) and related safeguarding check assurance register template in support of this standard. The register evidenced that all employers were asked to confirm that, for each apprentice, there was an enhanced DBS check in place that allowed applicants to work with children and adults. Furthermore, the register required the employer to confirm that their own enhanced DBS and safeguarding procedure had been completed to determine that the apprentice was suitable to undertake the course.

34. During the inspection, the inspection team did not hear any evidence to suggest that the documented procedures were not followed and agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

35. The university submitted information on the institutional approach to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) as a weblink to the social inclusion group and highlighted the social inclusion strategy. The course provider also supplied an admission guide, roadshow presentation and stakeholder meeting documents.

36. The inspection team heard through discussion with the course team and with people with lived experience of social work that those involved in admissions, had undertaken EDI training with unconscious bias training being specifically identified.

37. The inspectors were unclear about how EDI policies in relation to applicants were implemented and monitored, particularly across the two stage admission process. Through discussion with the staff responsible for admissions, they heard that applicants with declared disabilities were well supported by the university at the stage 2 interview day. Staff provided examples of reasonable adjustments such as extra time in the English and maths tests, and they noted that they discussed individual applicant needs with disability services where appropriate.

38. However, through discussion with the course team, the inspection team heard that the university had no central data point to supply EDI data to course leaders and that an institutional wide project was in place to consider EDI data activity across the university. Moreover, the inspection team heard from admission staff that, at the time of inspection, there were no mechanisms in place for the university to have oversight of any EDI data, or the training undertaken by staff involved in stage 1 of the process. It was not clear that the university had EDI data available, or whether they analysed data for the apprentice admissions cycle as a whole.

39. The inspectors queried whether the course team had access to demographic admissions data and the course team reported that they had some, but not a complete set of metrics. They further noted that, within the data they had available to them, they had not identified any areas, or particular patterns of concern.

40. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 1.5 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [conditions section of this report](#).

Standard 1.6

41. The course provider shared the roadshow presentation as a source of information for prospective candidates, and the admissions guide as evidence in support of this standard.

The inspection team noted that the roadshow slides were comprehensive and that the website provided additional information about the structure of the course including the number and length of placements, fees and funding, student support and information on how to apply. The students met by the inspection team reported having enough information about the course and described it as 'very informative'. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

42. The course provider submitted the degree apprenticeship placement handbook for all years, a contrasting experience guide, a daily log template, a practice learning agreement, guidance on the contrasting experience and the terms of reference for the practice quality panel (PAP).

43. The inspection team initially reported that the evidence provided met the standard. However, prior to inspection the course provider notified Social Work England that the apprentices currently in years 2 and 3 of the course had undertaken the previous model of delivery and would finish the course having undertaken 170 days, and 100 days, placement learning (respectively).

44. The inspection team understood that the course had undergone a process of updating and re-validation to ensure that, in the future, students would undertake 200 days of identified practice learning, including a contrasting placement. Apprentices also had access to a timetable of an additional 30 skills days.

45. The practice educators met by the inspection team highlighted that they welcomed the changes made to the course for academic year 2023/24 as they felt that it gave them the opportunity to formally review and 'end' a placement. Moreover, it was noted that the development of including a specific timeframe for the apprentice's placement, enabled them to coordinate and assess learning which was beneficial and reinforced the apprentice as a learner within their team.

46. In both the student and practice educator group met by the inspection team there was confusion around the contrasting placement as, some students reported organising this themselves, and practice educators reported surprise that they were responsible for the organisation of the contrasting placement. Through discussions with the course team, the inspection team heard that the course director checked and counter signed the contrasting placement forms to ensure that the opportunities were sufficiently contrasting. The inspection team were satisfied that there was clear evidence of a contrasting placement for the old and new version of the course.

47. Through discussion with the course team the inspection team heard that regular training was offered to practice educators on working with the KSBs.

48. It was understood by the inspectors that while on placement students had access to support from a practice educator and were required to complete daily reflective logs. Practice educators assessed students against the apprenticeship standard's knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) and reported on progress during four-way review meetings that took place four times a year. However, the inspection team heard concerns about incomplete records for some apprentices and sometimes less than rigorous scrutiny, citing an example about the level of detail in an electronic portfolio.

49. During the inspection the inspectors heard confusion from more than one group of stakeholders regarding the number of days spent on placement. It was unclear to inspectors that the students in year 2 and 3 would have completed the 200 days required by the standard in a practice setting by the end of the course. The students met by the inspection team reported being aware of a single 30 day contrasting placement in year 3 at the point that they joined the course, and noted that additional placements had been added in the current academic year. Students reported confusion about placements over the 3 years, with some students feeling dissatisfied with the introduction of an additional placement period, and consequently, a perceived increase in workload.

50. The inspectors understood that attendance at skills days was recorded in the four-way review meeting however, it was unclear how many skills days had been undertaken by Year 2 and 3 students and the inspection team heard confusion about skills days, from a variety of stakeholders.

51. The inspection team reflected that, at the time of inspection, they were unable to confirm if standard 2.1 was met as it was unclear if year 2 and 3 apprentices would have been rigorously assessed over a minimum period of 200 days in a practice setting. The inspection team requested immediate assurance from the course provider to ensure that the year 3 students had completed practice learning, in year 1 and 2 of the programme, commensurate with 100 assessed placement days, and, that the assessment records for these students were complete.

52. The course provider was asked to provide an audit of practice education for all students currently enrolled on Year 3 of the course, commensurate with 100 days of placement that the students had undertaken in years 1 and 2 of the programme.

53. In response to the request for immediate assurance, the course provider submitted an anonymised spreadsheet that cross referenced the assessment documents. Additional narrative supplied by the course provider stated that the learning covered in years 1 and 2 was commensurate with the apprenticeship KSBs. A placement days identification document was also provided that detailed that, prior to academic year 2021/22 and

2022/23 on-the-job days (80% of the week) were considered to be synonymous with placement days. These days were where apprentices were being assessed against the apprenticeship standard KSBs, under the supervision of a practice educator, and having supervision to review progress against the KSBs, evidencing progress in the four-way review meeting and undertaking practice learning between two set dates. The number of skills days attended was not provided.

54. The inspection team were satisfied that year 1 students would complete 200 placement days under the new provision. The year 2 students would complete 170 days on placement and 30 skills days that still needed to be confirmed. The year 3 students would complete 100 days and assurance has been provided by the university that within the first two years of the course these students had complete 100 days of placement on-the-job but under the supervision of a practice educator assessing them against the KSBs.

55. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that one condition, and one recommendation, is set against 2.1 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found [in the conditions and recommendations section of this report](#).

Standard 2.2

56. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included a placement handbook, information on the four-way review meeting process and the practice learning agreement (PLA) template which included an area to identify learning objectives against the KSBs. In addition, the university supplied an addendum to the practice learning agreement that set out that it was the practice educator's responsibility to discuss learning outcomes in advance of the placement. The inspection team understood that the PLA was stored on the OneFile and formed the basis of a student's individual learning plan (ILP) which was reviewed at the four-way review meetings.

57. However, stakeholders met by the inspection team reported that there were difficulties with the identification of learning opportunities evidenced by confusion over the organisation of the contrasting placement experience (c.f. para [46](#)). The inspection team acknowledged that it was the expectation of the university that the employer was responsible for identifying opportunities for the contrasting learning experience, however, in some cases the organisation of this appeared to be undertaken by students, or practice educators which raised concerns regarding the robustness of the matching process between student learning opportunities, the independent learning plan (ILP) assessment and the stage of progression.

58. Concerns were raised with the inspection team as follows;

- the completeness of OneFile records for some students (c.f. para [48](#));
- variable support from some practice educators was reported;
- confusion relating to the organisation of the contrasting placement and associated learning opportunities (c.f. para [46](#));
- confusion over skills days (c.f. para [50](#)).

59. Furthermore, through discussion with the students met by the inspection team, the inspection team heard that there was confusion about the assessment of students learning while on placement within their 'home' team.

60. The inspection team reflected that, at the time of inspection, the year 2 and 3 students might not have completed the required numbers of assessed placement learning days (c.f. para [51](#)). Therefore they could not confirm that the course had provided practice learning opportunities that enabled students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and progress through the different stages of the programme and to meet Social Work England's professional standards.

61. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that two conditions, and a recommendation, are set against standard 2.2 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that conditions are appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found [in the conditions and recommendations section of this report](#).

Standard 2.3

62. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included the PLA, an addendum to the PLA and the placement handbook. In addition, the university also submitted a document detailing the contrasting placement experience guidance for assessment and delivery.

63. Through discussions with employer partners and the course team, the inspection team heard that the university maintained a compliance spreadsheet which employer partners were required to complete. Employers reported that they completed the spreadsheet at the point of admission and that it included all the policies and procedures that the apprentice was expected to be familiar with. The sheet was electronically signed, via Adobe, by the employer lead, manager and apprentice. The inspection team noted that, following the course changes, all 200 days of placement were undertaken within the same local authority and therefore apprentices were subject to the same policies and processes.

64. The students met by the inspection team raised a concern that their workload during placement could be high, with students reporting different experiences in different local authorities and that they found it difficult to understand what the workload should be. The course team confirmed that workload should be allocated at 80%, capacity of a full-time post and that where they were aware that this wasn't the case (over 80%), the course director would work with the employer to resolve any issues. Practice educators reported that the new defined periods of placement were helpful to be able to raise queries around workload and redefine the assessment of apprentices as learners within their team. The inspection team considered the evidence and agreed that the standard was met.

Standard 2.4

65. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included the placement handbook, PLA and PLA addendum. The inspectors reported that the curriculum increased in complexity over the duration of the course. Through discussions with the practice educators, the inspection team heard that practice educators found assessing against the KSBs for progression more difficult than the professional capabilities framework (PCF). However, the course team explained the structure of the KSBs, and the way in which the increase in complexity had been articulated for practice educators using the KSBs. They further highlighted that they offered regular training to practice educators on this aspect of the role. The inspection team further acknowledged that the four-way meetings reviewed apprentices' progression and agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

66. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included the assessed preparation for direct practice form. The form detailed the expectations and key skills that the apprentice was required to have demonstrated to be considered suitable for placement. These included communication skills, compassion, dignity and respect, adaptability and that they must be committed to continuous learning. The form was counter signed by the line manager (who also counter signed for DBS confirmation) and the academic tutor. The inspectors reported that the standard was met by the documentary submission and that they had heard no evidence on inspection to suggest that the process was unfit for purpose.

Standard 2.6

67. Following a review of the documentary evidence provided, and discussions with key stakeholders throughout the inspection, the inspection team were able to confirm that the university maintained a record of practice educator registration, currency and qualifications. The inspection team understood that spreadsheets were maintained, one for independent practice educators, and one for employer partner practice educators, and that an annual check was undertaken against the register.

68. The course team reported that they required practice educators to be PEPs 1 qualified and working towards PEPs 2 with a mentor. The practice educators met by the inspection team reported a number of support and training opportunities available to them including 6-weekly community of practice sessions by Worcestershire local authority. The West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership who offered practice educator sessions, the Northamptonshire Teaching Partnership and the continuing professional development sessions (CPD) were offered by the university.

69. The inspectors highlighted that the practice educators they met spoke confidently and professionally about their practice and the support that they received, which was considered to further demonstrate the level of relevant knowledge, skills and experiences they brought to the course to support safe and effective learning. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.7

70. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included the placement handbook and the institutional whistleblowing policy. The students met by the inspection team were aware of relevant whistleblowing policies and reported that it was included within their induction and covered in university teaching. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

71. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included the Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL) structure chart, an institutional organisational chart of the higher level executive staff, the terms of reference for the teaching quality education committee (TQEC) and the wellbeing and professionalism group (WBPG). Also, weblinks to the West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership and the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) social worker integrated degree statement.

72. The inspection team reported that the documentary evidence provided a clear explanation of the governance structures and organisational responsibilities, however, felt that the quality assurance aspects of programme governance was less apparent. Through discussion with the senior leader team (SLT), the inspection team heard that annual monitoring of provision was delivered through the education committee (EC) where analysis of the quality enhancement plan (QEP) took place. The QEP was understood to be reviewed three times over the course of the academic year. Moreover, apprenticeship programmes were required to produce a position statement where cohort numbers, achievements and areas for improvement were identified.

73. The SLT reported that areas for improvement had included the consideration of the staff student ratio (SSR), as course numbers had grown to 85 in the current cohort. As a further example of development, they noted that the discussions around ensuring enough placements were available for apprentices had resulted from the QEP. Module review was highlighted as linked to these processes as it was recognised that it was important that modules were reviewed for currency, and that there were clear alignments between learning outcomes (LOs) and assessment. A scrutiny sub group considered modules on an annual basis.

74. The SLT and the course team further reported that the course had achieved a 100% satisfaction rating in the most recent (2023) National Student Survey.

75. The inspection team acknowledged that staff biographies were appropriate and agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

76. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included the apprenticeship handbook dated 2023-24 and the placement handbook. The mapping document provided narrative against the standard reporting that appropriate agreements were in place with placement providers as *'all apprenticeships on the social work programme are contractual, and apprentices need to be employed to remain on the programme'*. The inspectors noted that the placement handbook included information on the concerns process.

77. Stakeholders provided an example of where the concerns process had been implemented and reported that the university had been supportive and helpful. Where stakeholders had not engaged with the concerns process they noted that guidance was available to them, should they need it. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

78. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included the placement handbooks and the apprenticeship handbook. During the inspection the university also supplied a screenshot of the apprentice training plan: tab 2 covering the key policies and procedures checklist. Inspectors noted that apprentices were able to access the same health and well-being support at the university as other students, as well as support structures within their employer's workplace. The placement handbook set out the health and wellbeing expectations of the course. Students were required to complete an annual self-declaration on OneFile, and to inform their employer, practice educator and the university if there were any changes to that declaration during the academic year.

79. Through discussions with the employer partners, the inspection team heard that employers were asked each year to complete the training plan for each student. The

training plan was a spreadsheet that was Adobe signed by the apprentice, manager and employer lead and included all the policies that students were expected to have read and understood (c.f. para [63](#)). It included policies on student behaviour, health and safety, EDI, safeguarding, prevent, the complaint procedures and bullying and harassment. The employer partners also reported being aware of the placement commitment statements provided by the university. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

80. Evidence submitted to support this standard included slides from an employer drop-in session that communicated updates regarding the course. Module handbooks were also submitted for two modules:

- CE357-30, *Key Issues in Professional Social Work*, the handbook detailed that the module was co-produced with representatives from multi-disciplinary and multi-agency settings, including the police, NHS and education.
- CE287, *Law B*, which included a Best Interest Assessor (BIA).

81. In addition, the university submitted examples of regular review documents provided to employer partners. This included an example of a progress report, a quarterly training provider apprentice update and the slides from an introductory workshop for line managers and practice educators. The employer partners reported being involved in quarterly meetings which were focussed on their apprentices and tracking their progress, and in an annual stakeholder meeting where all partner agencies were represented.

82. The inspection team acknowledged that employer partners were involved in admissions processes (c.f. para [30](#)) and were in attendance at teaching partnerships meetings. They further understood that employers would be represented on the practice quality panel (PQP) which, at the time of the inspection, had been put into place but had not yet been convened. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

83. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included the course governance structure, the terms of reference for the social work degree apprenticeship stakeholder group (SWDASG), an email invite to the SWDASG and an example meeting agenda. The terms of reference confirmed the purpose of the group was to provide leadership, guidance and consultation to the university to support delivery of the course, and included ongoing development. The group was considered quorate with four attendees, of which one should be an expert by experience, one employer colleagues and one apprentice.

84. The university supplied the four-way progress review template where university staff, employers and apprentices met to discuss the progress of individual apprentices. A *'you said, we did'* document detailed actions and outcomes from the Service User and Care Group (SUCG) and a *'you said, we did'* style presentation detailing outcomes from the students' staff liaison committee (SSLC). Also submitted was an example agenda for the monthly course team meeting which detailed items for feedback from SSLC and SUCG.

85. The university engaged in quality assurance of placement learning (QAPL) processes and supplied a QAPL data report for 2021-22 and a QAPL analysis presentation.

86. The people with lived experience met by the inspection team reported positively on their involvement with the annual SWDASG and noted that every three months they were involved in a sub-group of the teaching partnership. Through discussion with the group, the inspection team heard that the group name was changed from experts-by-experience to people with lived experience following their feedback.

87. The inspection team understood that CLL employed a welfare officer to support students within the centre (c.f. para [134](#)) who was responsible for coordinating the staff student liaison committee (SSLC). Through discussion with the students met by the inspection team, the inspection team heard a number of instances where changes had been made following feedback to the programme from the SSLC. An example was provided where the delivery schedule of a module impacted the volume of time apprentices working in adult social care had to complete an assignment. The course team responded by restructuring the module content.

88. Employer partners acknowledged positive changes to the course each year. They reported being able to provide course feedback and had noticed changes as a result. For example, one employer noted that they had provided feedback to the university on the provision of adult safeguarding and a change was made to the safeguarding module.

89. Inspectors also acknowledged that the external examiners (c.f. para [125](#)) provided an additional source of monitoring, evaluation and improvement.

90. The course team reported that module evaluations were undertaken on the university's virtual learning environment (VLE), Moodle, and provided examples of where the curriculum had been updated in response to apprentice feedback including extending the time spent on certain topic areas and developing a balanced spread of case studies. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

91. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included the terms of reference for the social work degree apprenticeship stakeholder group (SWDASG), an email invite to the SWDASG and an example meeting agenda. Also submitted was an example email sent to

employer partners that detailed the timeline of admissions and included a statement on student numbers, an email demonstrating a collaborative funding bid made with an employer partner and the CLL Strategy Development Report which noted that the target for apprenticeship recruitment each year was 40, but that this was exceeded annually.

92. Through discussions with stakeholders the inspection team heard that where employers wanted to increase student numbers the university considered any potential growth against the resources they had to ensure that the model of delivery was not compromised. Through discussion with employer partners, the inspection team heard that the teaching partnership worked to gain a regional overview of staffing needs in the local area, and the available training to meet those needs including placement demand. Employer partners reported that the apprenticeship was embedded as part of the recruitment and retention strategy within their local authorities. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

93. The evidence provided to support this standard included a link to the online university biography, and the Social Work England registration number, of the lead social worker which detailed relevant experience and esteem indicators. The inspection team reviewed the Social Work England professional register to confirm entry and agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

94. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included links to staff profiles and, where relevant, Social Work England registration numbers. As part of a secondary submission of evidence the university also provided further information on training for staff. The inspection team understood that, at the time of the inspection, four members of staff were enrolled on the Academic Pathway for Teaching programme.

95. Throughout the inspection the university invited appropriate staff with specialist knowledge in admissions, student support and wellbeing, course design and development, and academic services including a subject librarian. The inspection team heard from the course team that they were encouraged to undertake educational research in areas of interest and share the outcomes with the team via workshops. The course team provided an example of a workshop that had been delivered to staff, supporting them with effective practice in marking and moderation. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

96. The inspection team reviewed the terms of reference for the Teaching Quality and Enhancement Committee (TQEC), the TQEC Agenda dated 14 November 2022, and a series of exam board agendas covering the end point assessment (EPA), other aspects of the

curriculum and pre-exam boards. As part of a secondary submission of evidence, the university also provided pre-exam board minutes dated 25 July 2023 and two exam grids containing module marks both generated on 25 July 2023.

97. Through discussions with stakeholders across the inspection the inspection team heard that the university undertook four-way review meetings to support the monitoring of student performance, progression and outcomes. However, through discussion with the course team, the inspection team heard that EDI data was generally not available to them for programme level analysis (c.f. paras [38](#)). The programme team recognised that this was an area for development.

98. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 3.9 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found [in the condition section of this report](#).

Standard 3.10

99. The inspection team reviewed slides from an introductory workshop for line managers and practice educators dated 2023 and a template agreement from the *Academics into Practice* scheme run by the West Midlands Teaching Partnership. This detailed the expectations of the scheme for both the academic and the hosting organisation. The inspectors understood that, at the time of the inspection, three staff members had engaged with the *Academics into Practice* scheme.

100. As part of a secondary submission of evidence the course provider also provided a link to the academic development centre, which provided details of the CPD opportunities offered to academic staff. It was reported that one staff member was undertaking a professional doctorate, one had recently published on mental health social work and one undertook regular CPD in relation to ethical governance.

101. Through discussion with the SLT, the inspection team heard that 150 hours per year was available within the lecturer's workload for research and other scholarly activity. The course team reported feeling well supported to undertake CPD and reported opportunities such as professional doctorates, time to act as an external examiner, research with other organisations and supported time to review research as a panel member on the international journal for social work education (IJfSWE). The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

102. Documentary evidence submitted to support this standard included a link to the IfATE social worker (integrated degree) apprenticeship standard and the Social Work England professional standards. The course provider also provided a mapping document that demonstrated where in the course the professional standards were either taught or assessed. The inspectors further reviewed the course approval documentation used internally by the course team for the institutional validation processes that provided additional mapping evidence of the programme to the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) of the IfATE standard and the Social Work England professional standards. In addition, the inspectors acknowledged that the four-way review template included the apprenticeship KSBs as benchmarks for assessing apprentices progress and identifying areas for development. The inspection team concluded that the documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection was able to demonstrate that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

103. The evidence submitted prior to the inspection in support of this standard provided details about the course teams approach to consultation with external stakeholders regarding the design and ongoing development and review of the curriculum.

104. The university provided the terms of reference, and an example agenda for the SWDASG, where employers and practitioners were invited to comment on a number of items including strategic programme enhancement (c.f. para [83](#) for further details of the SWDASG). The course provider further reported that during academic year 2023/24 they were hosting a teaching consultant from the West Midlands Teaching Partnership who co-taught modules that were aligned to their background and expertise.

105. Also provided was a screenshot of an MS Teams meeting invite for a Social Work Stakeholder Drop-In meeting, the module outline for CE1E4, *Learning from Lived Experience* which was co-produced and co-delivered alongside people with lived experience and a 'you said, we did' document from the SUCG.

106. The information provided in the documentary evidence was successfully triangulated with stakeholders' groups across the inspection and the inspection team acknowledged that the people with lived experience positively discussed their participation in teaching on module CE1E4. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

107. The university submitted evidence in support of this standard under three headings, the institutional wide approach to EDI, admissions processes and reasonable adjustments within learning and teaching. The university provided a link to the accessibility statement

for the website, that in turn linked to the strategy and key performance indicators (KPIs), information on the equality act and social inclusion annual report. The course provider also provided a link to the social inclusion group including information on the university director of social inclusion, a link to the course website that included information on the types of student support available including study skills, student welfare, technology and e-learning and careers and development. The course provider also confirmed that EDI principles, human rights and legislative frameworks were embedded within the programme and submitted the module handbooks for CE1E6, *Social Diversity and Social Work*, and CE1E7, *Social Work Law (A)*, where Ethics, Rights and Equality was listed within the module content. The inspection team concluded that the documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection was able to demonstrate that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

108. Through review of the documentary evidence the inspection team considered the currency of the programme modules and documented changes submitted by the course provider. The inspection team noted that the university had highlighted curriculum development within the module CE1E6, *Social Diversity and Social Work*. The examples provided were evidenced by presentations given within the module and included updates such as *UK Poverty 2023: essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK* and Social Work England's strategy for 2023 to 2026. Other examples within the presentations included reference to research dated 2016, and information on multi-dimensional racism impacting on inequalities experienced in employment, education, policing, housing, health, and hate crimes from research and statistics on the government website. In addition, within module CE287, *skills B - the interpersonal social worker*, a session had been added on trauma informed practice as it was identified that this was the dominant approach within the local authorities. The inclusion of contemporaneous literature suggested that the course was continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practise.

109. Through discussion with the course team the inspection team heard that the university had a central quality assurance process for module changes to be approved and that the annual stakeholder meeting provided employers with the opportunity to feedback on the currency of the programmes and what, if anything, could be updated. The employee partners met by the inspection team reported that the university had put curriculum development on the agenda for the regional meetings and that they had found the university, on the whole, to be open to feedback. The inspection team concluded that the documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection was able to demonstrate that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

110. The inspection team reviewed the four-way progress review form which the course provider reported covered an assessment of the apprentices learning of theory within the knowledge standards contained within the KSBs. Module handbooks were also supplied for the following modules illustrating where theory was delivered within the programme;

- CE297 – *Skills B – The interpersonal Social Worker*
- No module number - *Work-based Learning for Qualifying Social Work*
- CE1E6 – *Social Diversity and Social Work*
- CE356 – *Readiness for Professional Practice*
- CE284 – *Human Life – Course Development*

111. The inspectors highlighted that CE356, *readiness for professional practice*, aimed to;

‘provide apprentices with the opportunity to critically reflect on their personal learning journey recognising the underlying ethical imperatives and application of key concepts, theories and social work law. The module enables apprentices to demonstrate their capabilities against the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) as set out in the apprenticeship occupation duties and Social Work England professional standards’.

112. Students confirmed that theory was effectively linked to their practice learning. Through discussion with practice educators, the inspection team heard that the monthly supervision template covered theory, anti-oppressive practice and assessment against the KSB's. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

113. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included the module handbook 4CE357-30, *key issues in professional social work*. The handbook included a teaching schedule that listed all taught sessions between November and January of the academic year 2023/24. The inspection team reported that the teaching schedule showed one session delivered on multi agency working that included key speakers from the police, education and the National Health Service (NHS). Through discussion with the course team, the inspection team heard that apprentices worked with different professionals as part of the on-the-job learning.

114. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met with the recommendation that the university continue to develop interprofessional learning opportunities as part of the taught curriculum. Full details of the recommendation can be found [in the recommendation section of this report](#).

Standard 4.7

115. The inspection team reviewed the documentary evidence submitted by the course provider and understood that apprentices spent 80% of the programme on-the-job and that 20% of the programme was undertaken at the university. This equated to one day a week and the breakdown of off-the-job hours was provided in the apprenticeship handbook submitted as evidence in support of this standard.

116. The inspectors reported that the split between the on-the-job and off-the-job training was clear and the breakdown of hours within the module specifications was appropriate. They agreed that the number of hours spent in structured academic learning was sufficient and that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

117. Prior to inspection, the inspection team reviewed the CLL internal and external moderation policy and procedure which outlined the way in which assessed work submitted for credit in programmes was moderated. They also considered a template moderation report and two external examiner reports. From the narrative provided in the mapping document the inspection team understood that marking was undertaken by a marking team and moderated internally by an academic colleague that was not involved in the initial grading.

118. Through discussion with the course team, the inspection team heard that assessments were marked against module learning outcomes and that assessment guidance was provided to students during module teaching. It was also reported that the grade descriptors were provided in the programme handbook and that the course team supported students prior to assessment submission with the offer of 1-2-1 tutorials. In addition, following submission, feedback was returned within 20 working days and students were able to access a post- submission debrief and a download of their annotated script, should they wish to. The institution as a whole did not have a rubric system for marking, however, the course team communicated what a successful assignment looked like to students during module teaching. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

119. The inspection team reviewed a table of modules, seven agendas from meetings of the exam board for the academic year 2023/24 and two external examiner reports. Through discussion with the course team, the inspection team heard, that modules did not overlap ensuring that students were focused on a single module at a time and did not, therefore, experience assessment overload. The course team further reported that there was a clear expectation that students worked towards the KSBs over the three years of the programme. At level 4, year 1, students were expected to engage with the KSBs in a descriptive way, at level 5, year 2, the focus was on critical thinking and at level 6, year 3, the response to the KSBs was expected to be critically evaluative.

120. The inspection team understood from the discussion that the e-portfolio, OneFile, contained a scorecard to rank progression for each apprentice, capturing the increasing complexity of work. The inspectors acknowledged that the external examiner reports were positive, and that there was evidence of different methods of assessment on the progression which considered complexity and agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

121. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included the four-way progress review template and the slides from a presentation detailing how apprentice progress was monitored including information on assignments, four-way reviews, the OneFile scorecard, reflective learning logs and portfolio evidence.

122. Apprentices were understood to receive feedback via the four-way review meetings that were undertaken in October, January, April and July of the academic year. The meeting included the apprentice, line manager, practice educator and university tutor. As part of the four-way review meeting the apprentice received feedback on their ongoing self-assessment of skills, known as the OneFile scorecard. In addition, apprentices submitted regular reflective learning logs prior to their monthly supervision meeting. The reflective log provided a framework for recording learning and progress over time and feedback was provided by the practice educator on these logs.

123. Students were provided with feedback on formative and summative assessments. Formal feedback was provided within 20 working days of the date of the assessment submission. The students met by the inspection team reported that overall, feedback about their learning was constructive and was always provided within the time period advertised. However, some students reported variability in the consistency of feedback. Overall, students reported feedback was fair, timely and useful. Some students suggested that they would prefer a rubric marking system, however, they were able to identify that the grading criteria was provided in the programme handbook.

124. To promote consistency in feedback, the course team reported that they mark as a team usually with two or three markers, at least one marker will be the module lead. There was a formal process of moderation which included sampling for the external examiner who reviewed all fails, and all scripts graded over 78%. The inspection team considered the evidence and concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

125. The inspection team reviewed the teaching team profiles, which included Social Work England registration numbers where applicable and external examiner CVs, supplied as part of a secondary submission of evidence. They noted that staff had appropriate expertise to undertake assessment for social work and that the external examiners were suitably qualified and on the register.

126. Through discussion with the people with lived experience the inspection team heard that the group were involved in the grading of the end point assessment (EPA). The people with lived experience reported that the EPA process was planned in advance, and they felt that they had all of the information that they needed in advance of the EPA. They were provided with support and a grading proforma and acted as one member within a larger panel. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

127. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included the four-way review meeting template, the programme handbook, information on the OneFile scorecards and reflective logs, agendas from seven exam boards and the terms of reference from the practice quality panel (PQP). From the narrative provided in the mapping document the inspection team understood that the four-way review meeting was central to the monitoring and management of student progression.

128. Through discussions with a variety of stakeholders across the inspection the inspectors heard that academics, practice educators and people with lived experience were all involved in decisions about student progression. The documentary evidence demonstrated that there was a series of exam boards to consider if apprentices could progress to the next level of the programme. The placement handbook, although not directly mapped as evidence against this standard, included information on the requirements of direct observation of practice. The handbook clearly stated 3 observations of practice per year as a minimum and the programme handbook included the direct observation form template.

129. Acknowledging that queries were raised under standard 2.1 and standard 2.2 (c.f. paras [43](#), [51](#), [60](#), [57-58](#)), the inspectors considered that there was a system in place to manage students' progression, and therefore the standard was met.

Standard 4.13

130. The inspection team reviewed the work based learning handbook, the programme handbook, an induction presentation delivered by the subject librarian which included information on search and retrieval for books, e-books and journal articles, the module handbook for CE341, *evidence- informed practice* and the module handbook for CE356, *readiness for professional practice*.

131. The inspectors noted that the module handbook for CE341, *evidence-informed practice* detailed the module aims as;

'enhance research mindedness in social work apprentices and gain the knowledge and skills required to become evidence informed practitioners'.

132. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

133. The inspection team found that, throughout the inspection, student support was clearly articulated within the documentary evidence submitted prior to inspection and through discussions with stakeholders. The documentary evidence included web links to the central wellbeing and support services and the careers service.

134. Through discussion with support staff met by the inspection team, the inspection team heard that CLL, where the apprenticeship was located, employed a welfare officer to support the centre's students. The officer acted as triage for student concerns and queries and could provide some support directly, for example mentoring and some pastoral support. The officer reported that the centre had a higher than average number of mature students who undertook study alongside work and other commitments. The types of queries the officer faced were most often to do with home life or personal issues, employment issues and ongoing learning needs.

135. Through discussion with central support services the inspection team heard that the institution offered individualised support. Students were able to access the well-being advisory service online and in person and book an initial appointment. The well-being advisory service employed professionals from a variety of backgrounds including social workers, staff from the probation service, psychologists and occupational therapists. The service also offered a well-being master class as a twice weekly drop in session where they covered advice for the most common themes students presented with and it was reported that, where appropriate, the service could refer students on to specialist financial support or other therapeutic services, including in house counselling and psychotherapy.

136. The inspection team heard from stakeholders that CLL had a named careers consultant who offered one to one appointments with students to provide individualised careers support. It was also noted that the careers service offered seminars with people from the industry and covered topics such as writing a CV or a cover letter. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

137. In advance of the inspection, the inspection team reviewed information on the library service, information for disabled students provided by the institution, the four-way review meeting template and a document that summarised the course team student support roles. The inspection team understood, from that document, that CLL had a director of student experience and progression (DSEP), a senior tutor, a welfare officer and a student engagement coordinator. In addition, during inspection, the subject librarian provided a link to the library guide for social work.

138. Through discussion with CLL support services, the inspection team heard that the student engagement coordinator was involved in ensuring that information from the institutional support services was effectively shared with students and staff within the centre. They were also responsible for the creation and circulation of the CLL newsletter, as well as organising bespoke seminars and events. For example, during COVID, they organised social coffee breaks and more recently the creation of an online common room. The student engagement coordinator also oversaw the SSLC and organised or provided training and support to student representatives to enable them to take ownership of the committee.

139. The centre provided each apprentice with a university tutor (UT) and within the social work apprenticeship this was organised as a year tutor system. In addition to the UT, CLL also identified a senior tutor who led on pastoral support and provided support to the centre's UTs if they had, for example, a complex case. It was understood by the inspection team, from the documentary evidence, that the senior tutor was responsible for ensuring that the UT system operated effectively within CLL, as well as acted as chair on the CLL mitigating circumstances panel and adjudicated on undergraduate extension requests.

140. Through discussion with the subject librarian, the inspection team heard that the library was moving towards e-books for easier access off campus and had recently (academic year 2023/24) subscribed to community care inform (CCI) for social work students. In addition to electronic resources the library also offered free postal loans, a scan and deliver service for single chapters and advice on referencing, avoiding plagiarism and search and retrieval. The librarian reported that although they were involved in student induction the service was not otherwise embedded within the programme, however, the librarian offered one to one appointments over MS Teams.

141. The students met by the inspection team were positive about the support provided for the development of academic skills including guidance on referencing and academic writing noting that they felt appropriately supported to engage academically with the programme. Students who had accessed these services cited module teaching, supportive direction to reading and other resources, and being provided with links to short courses at the university to develop academic skills as being particularly helpful to them. The inspection team considered the evidence and concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

142. Prior to inspection, the inspection team reviewed the admissions guide, an annual declaration form, the apprenticeship handbook and information on the LADO process within the local authority. The inspection team reported that the apprentice handbook included clear information on the apprentice's responsibility to complete the annual declaration.

143. The students met by the inspection team confirmed that they were aware of the annual declaration of their suitability, conduct, character and health. The students also noted that the fitness to practice processes had been fully explained to them. The inspectors reported that the standard was met by the documentary evidence submission and that they had heard no evidence on inspection to suggest that the process was otherwise unfit.

Standard 5.4

144. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included links to information for disabled students and the programme handbook. The handbook detailed a variety of university services that could provide support or advice including the disability service that provided advice, information and support to disabled students.

145. Through discussion with the student support team within CLL, the inspection team heard that the director of student experience and progression within the centre received all LSPs. They liaised with the programme team to ensure that adjustments were made. The practice educators, met by the inspection team, provided examples of supporting students with dyslexia and employers and placement providers reported being responsible for the assessments for apprentices. They noted that where apprentices were identified as needing reasonable adjustment the university accommodated these well, often over and above what was required. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

146. Evidence submitted in support of this standard included the apprenticeship handbook, the placement handbook, the guide for the contrasting experience, an induction presentation that included information on the module schedule, the module guide for CE343, *preparing for qualified social work practice assessment: endpoint assessment* and the module guide for CE356, *readiness for professional practice* which included 'learning about Social Work England and professional standards' as a module learning outcome.

147. The students met by the inspection team reported that overall, they had good information about the course, their assignments and their placements. They found it organised, with clear expectations around assignments and deadlines. However, they noted that this was not the case for their employers, who they felt were not well informed about the course and didn't seem clear on what the expectations were. Students reported being clear about the role of the regulator and felt well informed about their transition to professional social worker. The inspection team considered the evidence and concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 5.6

148. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the four-way review template, where attendance was a standing item on the agenda and the apprentice handbook where attendance expectations were explained. Also provided was a link to university regulation 36 which governed attendance and clearly stated that all taught sessions were to be attended.

149. The students met by the inspection team were unclear about the attendance expectations. Some students noted that there was information in the handbook and there was an attendance register. However, students' understanding about attendance requirements was unclear. The course team confirmed that attendance at lectures was recorded on a register and uploaded to OneFile. In addition, there was an aggregation to record skills days within the four-way review template. Missed skills days were discussed with module tutors and made up in a student centred way that ensured that the learning was undertaken. The inspectors acknowledged confusion around skills days (c.f. para [50](#)), however, concluded that the required elements of this standard were met.

Standard 5.7

150. Following a review of the documentary evidence provided, and through discussion with key stakeholders throughout the inspection, the inspection team were assured that students had access to satisfactory points of feedback. Feedback was provided formatively, as well as on assessments. Feedback was also provided by practice educators and line managers. Students reported that feedback was timely, consistent and clear (c.f. standards [3.9](#), [4.8](#) and [4.10](#) for more information about student feedback). The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

151. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included a link to the institutional appeals process. The university also supplied the apprentice handbook which included an outline of the appeals process. The inspection team agreed that there was an institutional process in place and that this standard was met.

Standard six: Level of qualification to apply for entry onto the register

Standard 6.1

152. The inspection team reviewed the apprenticeship handbook which included an outline of course and agreed that the award for the BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship met the standard, noting that other exit awards were clearly distinguished from the registered award.

Proposed outcome

The inspection team recommend that the course be approved with conditions. These will be monitored for completion.

Conditions

Conditions for approval are set if there are areas of a course that do not currently meet our standards. Conditions must be met by the education provider within the agreed timescales.

Having considered whether approval with conditions or a refusal of approval was an appropriate course of action, the inspection team are proposing the following conditions for this course at this time.

	Standard not currently met	Condition	Date for submission of evidence	Link
1	Standard 1.5	The course provider will provide evidence that that the admission process is in line with equality and diversity principles at both stage 1 and stage 2 and should include EDI data collection, monitoring and analysis.	2 January 2025	Para 38-39
2	2.1 2.2	The course provider will confirm how they will record and monitor mandatory attendance at the 30 skills days for year 2 students to ensure that this cohort of apprentices will complete 200 days of practice learning by the end of the course. If year 2 students will not complete 30 skills days the course provider will provide information to demonstrate how the shortfall of 30 days placement learning will be made up.	30 September 2024	Para 43 54
3	Standard 2.2	The course provider will provide evidence of how they ensure that employers and all partners understand and implement their responsibilities for identifying, assessing and monitoring learning opportunities within the 30 day contrasting placement.	2 January 2025	Para 46 57-58

		The education provider must work in partnership with employers to identify the contrasting learning experience. The University, employers and partners will provide evidence of how the contrasting learning opportunities include enough tasks to enable apprentices to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet Social Work England's professional standards.		
4	Standard 3.9	The course provider will evidence implementation of a system to collate, analyse and monitor performance and progression data of apprentices, in relation to EDI data.	2 January 2025	Para 97

Recommendations

In addition to the conditions above, the inspectors identified the following recommendations for the education provider. These recommendations highlight areas that the education provider may wish to consider. The recommendations do not affect any decision relating to course approval.

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	Standard 2.1 2.2	The inspectors are recommending that the university consult and work with partners to ensure clarity in relation to the content and scheduling of skills days.	Para 50 58
2	Standard 4.6	The inspectors are recommending that the university continue to develop and expand interprofessional learning opportunities as part of the taught curriculum.	Para 113 - 114

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
Admissions			
1.1 Confirm on entry to the course, via a holistic/multi-dimensional assessment process, that applicants: i. have the potential to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards ii. can demonstrate that they have a good command of English iii. have the capability to meet academic standards; and iv. have the capability to use information and communication technology (ICT) methods and techniques to achieve course outcomes.	☒	☐	☐
1.2 Ensure that applicants' prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions processes.	☒	☐	☐
1.3 Ensure that employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work are involved in admissions processes.	☒	☐	☐
1.4 Ensure that the admissions processes assess the suitability of applicants, including in relation to their conduct, health and character. This includes criminal conviction checks.	☒	☐	☐
1.5 Ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.	☐	☒	☐
1.6 Ensure that the admissions process gives applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on a course. This will include	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
information about the professional standards, research interests and placement opportunities.			
Learning environment			
2.1 Ensure that students spend at least 200 days (including up to 30 skills days) gaining different experiences and learning in practice settings. Each student will have: i) placements in at least two practice settings providing contrasting experiences; and ii) a minimum of one placement taking place within a statutory setting, providing experience of sufficient numbers of statutory social work tasks involving high risk decision making and legal interventions.	☐	☒	☒
2.2 Provide practice learning opportunities that enable students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards.	☐	☒	☒
2.3 Ensure that while on placements, students have appropriate induction, supervision, support, access to resources and a realistic workload.	☒	☐	☐
2.4 Ensure that on placements, students' responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of education and training.	☒	☐	☐
2.5 Ensure that students undergo assessed preparation for direct practice to make sure they are safe to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting.	☒	☐	☐
2.6 Ensure that practice educators are on the register and that they have the relevant and current knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
2.7 Ensure that policies and processes, including for whistleblowing, are in place for students to challenge unsafe behaviours and cultures and organisational wrongdoing, and report concerns openly and safely without fear of adverse consequences.	☒	☐	☐
Course governance, management and quality			
3.1 Ensure courses are supported by a management and governance plan that includes the roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability of individuals and governing groups in the delivery, resourcing and quality management of the course.	☒	☐	☐
3.2 Ensure that they have agreements with placement providers to provide education and training that meets the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards. This should include necessary consents and ensure placement providers have contingencies in place to deal with practice placement breakdown.	☒	☐	☐
3.3 Ensure that placement providers have the necessary policies and procedures in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk, and the support systems in place to underpin these.	☒	☐	☐
3.4 Ensure that employers are involved in elements of the course, including but not limited to the management and monitoring of courses and the allocation of practice education.	☒	☐	☐
3.5 Ensure that regular and effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems are in place, and that these involve	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
employers, people with lived experience of social work, and students.			
3.6 Ensure that the number of students admitted is aligned to a clear strategy, which includes consideration of local/regional placement capacity.	☒	☐	☐
3.7 Ensure that a lead social worker is in place to hold overall professional responsibility for the course. This person must be appropriately qualified and experienced, and on the register.	☒	☐	☐
3.8 Ensure that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff, with relevant specialist subject knowledge and expertise, to deliver an effective course.	☒	☐	☐
3.9 Evaluate information about students' performance, progression and outcomes, such as the results of exams and assessments, by collecting, analysing and using student data, including data on equality and diversity.	☐	☒	☐
3.10 Ensure that educators are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice.	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum and assessment			
4.1 Ensure that the content, structure and delivery of the training is in accordance with relevant guidance and frameworks and is designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards.	☒	☐	☐
4.2 Ensure that the views of employers, practitioners and people with lived experience of social work are incorporated into the design,	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
ongoing development and review of the curriculum.			
4.3 Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and human rights and legislative frameworks.	☒	☐	☐
4.4 Ensure that the course is continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice.	☒	☐	☐
4.5 Ensure that the integration of theory and practice is central to the course.	☒	☐	☐
4.6 Ensure that students are given the opportunity to work with, and learn from, other professions in order to support multidisciplinary working, including in integrated settings.	☒	☐	☒
4.7 Ensure that the number of hours spent in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator is sufficient to ensure that students meet the required level of competence.	☒	☐	☐
4.8 Ensure that the assessment strategy and design demonstrate that the assessments are robust, fair, reliable and valid, and that those who successfully complete the course have developed the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards.	☒	☐	☐
4.9 Ensure that assessments are mapped to the curriculum and are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression through the course.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
4.10 Ensure students are provided with feedback throughout the course to support their ongoing development.	☒	☐	☐
4.11 Ensure assessments are carried out by people with appropriate expertise, and that external examiner(s) for the course are appropriately qualified and experienced and on the register.	☒	☐	☐
4.12 Ensure that there are systems to manage students' progression, with input from a range of people, to inform decisions about their progression including via direct observation of practice.	☒	☐	☐
4.13 Ensure that the course is designed to enable students to develop an evidence-informed approach to practice, underpinned by skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to research and evaluation.	☒	☐	☐
Supporting students			
5.1 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their health and wellbeing including: i. confidential counselling services; ii. careers advice and support; and iii. occupational health services	☒	☐	☐
5.2 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their academic development including, for example, personal tutors.	☒	☐	☐
5.3 Ensure that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
5.4 Make supportive and reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments to enable them to progress through their course and meet the professional standards, in accordance with relevant legislation.	☒	☐	☐
5.5 Provide information to students about their curriculum, practice placements, assessments and transition to registered social worker including information on requirements for continuing professional development.	☒	☐	☐
5.6 Provide information to students about parts of the course where attendance is mandatory.	☒	☐	☐
5.7 Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students on their progression and performance in assessments.	☒	☐	☐
5.8 Ensure there is an effective process in place for students to make academic appeals.	☒	☐	☐
Level of qualification to apply for entry onto the register			
6.1 The threshold entry route to the register will normally be a bachelor's degree with honours in social work.	☒	☐	☐

Regulator decision

Approved with conditions.

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

1. If conditions are applied to a course approval, Social Work England completes a conditions review to make sure education providers have complied with the conditions and are meeting all of the [education and training standards](#).
2. A review of the conditions evidence will be undertaken and recommendations will be made to Social Work England's decision maker.
3. This section of the report will be completed when the conditions review is completed.

	Standard not met	Condition	Recommendation
1	1.5	The course provider will provide evidence that the admission process is in line with equality and diversity principles at both stage 1 and stage 2 and should include EDI data collection, monitoring and analysis.	Met
2	2.1 2.2	The course provider will confirm how they will record and monitor mandatory attendance at the 30 skills days for year 2 students to ensure that this cohort of apprentices will complete 200 days of practice learning by the end of the course. If year 2 students will not complete 30 skills days the course provider will provide information to demonstrate how the shortfall of 30 days placement learning will be made up.	Met
3	2.2	The course provider will provide evidence of how they ensure that employers and all partners understand and implement their responsibilities for identifying, assessing and monitoring learning opportunities within the 30 day contrasting placement. The education provider must work in partnership with employers to identify the contrasting learning experience.	Met

		The University, employers and partners will provide evidence of how the contrasting learning opportunities include enough tasks to enable apprentices to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet Social Work England's professional standards.	
4	3.9	The course provider will evidence implementation of a system to collate, analyse and monitor performance and progression data of apprentices, in relation to EDI data.	Met

Findings

4. The conditions review was undertaken as a result of the conditions set during the course approval as outlined in the original inspection report above.
5. The course provider submitted evidence against the conditions, including a mapping document that included additional narrative evidence (hereafter referred to as 'the mapping document').
6. The response to condition 2 was submitted for review earlier than conditions 1, 3 and 4 as per the due dates detailed within [the conditions section of this report](#). Inspectors undertook the review of condition 2 prior to the submission of evidence for conditions 1, 3 and 4.
7. In response to condition 1 the course provider submitted the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies from partner organisations. Also submitted were email exchanges between the university and partner organisations detailing the stage 1 apprenticeship recruitment processes employed within agencies, and details on how these processes aligned to agency EDI policies. The inspection team acknowledged that the monitoring of EDI was emerging and reported that data had been collected via a new IT system (c.f. [para 13-16](#)). They further understood that this data was planned to be considered at a stakeholder meeting in April 2025. The inspection team agreed that this condition was met.
8. In response to condition 2 the course provider submitted a four-way review template which included a section for the recording of skills development days achieved, including the qualifier that one day was equivalent to 7.5 hours. Also submitted was a document that detailed the skills development days which included a table mapping skills days to modules, activities, skills and aims.

9. The mapping document provided an overview of the placement and skills development days. It included a clear statement from the course provider communicating their confidence that the identified impacted students would complete 30 skills days, and 200 placement days. It further noted that rigorous monitoring was in place to ensure that standard 2.1 was met for this cohort of students.
10. The inspection team acknowledged that where skills days were missed, students were required to submit a catch-up plan to their tutor and agreed that this condition was met.
11. In response to condition 3 the course provider submitted guidance supplied to apprentices, practice educators, line managers and university staff on the contrasting placement. Then guidance identified learning outcomes and assessment criteria for the contrasting placement and outlined the roles and responsibilities of different partners in the delivery of this placement.
12. The course provider also supplied a slide deck from a workshop aimed at practice educators and employers that included examples of placements that would be suitably contrasting. The inspection team agreed that this condition was met.
13. In response to condition 4 the course provider reported on the mapping document that the university had instigated a new data transformation project across the institution, resulting in enhanced data being available to the programme team. The course provider noted that available data continued to be released thematically as the project developed and that the data was intended to enhance the continuous improvement cycle.
14. In addition, the course provider submitted 5 examples of data dashboards related to disability that were available to them from the data suite. They also provided a data action plan, a stakeholder meeting agenda that showed a data analysis presentation scheduled for discussion, an annual programme review and a programme level summary report.
15. The inspection team noted that the documentation provided demonstrated evidence of a system in place for EDI data collection and some themed analysis through annual programme review and the action plan. However, the inspectors noted that there did not appear to be reporting on areas such as attainment gaps and, that the evidence submitted was limited to the reporting of disability data.
16. Through discussion the inspection team concluded that the introduction of the data transformation system appeared to meet the specifics of the condition which required that the course provider implement a system to collate, analyse and monitor performance and progression data of apprentices in relation to EDI data, and consequently the inspection team agreed that the condition was met.

17. Following the review of the documentary evidence submitted, the inspection team are satisfied that the conditions set against the approval of the BA (Hons) Social Work Integrated Degree Apprenticeship are met.

Regulator decision

Conditions met.