

Course provider:
Kingston University

Course approval:
Postgraduate Diploma Social Work
(Step UP)

Report date:	30 November 2021
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	16 November 2021
Date conditions met and approved:	26 May 2022 (With the exception of the condition applied to standard 1.6, where the conditions deadline has been extended to April 2023)

Contents

Introduction	3
What we do	3
Summary	5
Language	5
Inspection.....	6
Meetings with students and applicants	6
Meetings with course staff.....	6
Meeting with people with lived experience of social work	6
Meetings with external stakeholders.....	7
Findings	8
Standard one: Admissions.....	8
Standard two: Learning environment	12
Standard three: Course governance, management and quality.....	14
Standard four: Curriculum assessment.....	17
Standard five: Supporting students	21
Standard six: Level of qualification to apply for entry onto the register	23
Proposed outcome.....	24
Annex 1: Education and training standards summary	26
Regulator decision	33
Annex 2: Meeting of conditions.....	34
Findings	35

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, new course 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 two to three-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. As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, inspections are currently being carried out via remote virtual arrangements, and typically last three to four days.

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

Inspection findings from Kingston University course approval

11. The University of Kingston ('the education provider') are seeking approval for their new Postgraduate Diploma Social Work (Step Up) course having been contracted to deliver the course as part of the Department for Education's national Step Up to Social Work programme. Social Work England are considering this approval through the new course approval process against the Education and Training Standards 2021.

Inspection ID	KIU561
Course provider	Kingston University
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	Postgraduate Diploma Social Work (Step Up)
Date of inspection	7 – 10 September 2021
Mode of study	Full time
Proposed first intake	January 2022
Maximum student cohort	12
Inspection team	Rebecca Mulvaney (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Michelle Loughrey (Lay Inspector) David Childs (Registrant Inspector) Daisy Bragadini (Education Quality Assurance Officer)
Inspector recommendation	Approved with conditions
Approval outcome	Approved with conditions

Language

12. In this document we describe Kingston University as 'the education provider' or 'the university' and we describe the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work (Step Up) as 'the course'.

Inspection

13. A remote inspection took place from 7th to 10th September 2021. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, employers, practice educators and people with lived experience of social work involved in the course.

14. 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

15. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students and applicants

16. The inspection team met with two students currently enrolled on social work courses at Kingston University as it was not possible to meet with students enrolled on the newly proposed PG Dip Social Work (Step Up) course. The purpose of this meeting was to understand the social work students' experience of applying for their courses, of teaching and learning, preparation for placement, student support services, awareness of the regulatory body and the resourcing of their courses.

17. The inspection team also encouraged students to reflect on the feedback they had given to the university and whether they felt it had been valued and acted upon.

18. The inspection team also met with three applicants who were due to start on the first intake of the new course in 2022 to discuss their experience of the admissions and selection process.

Meetings with course staff

19. During the four-day inspection the inspection team met with university staff members from the social work course team, members of staff from the Faculty of Health, Social Care and Education (FHSCE) and several central teams within the university responsible for delivering student and professional services.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

20. The inspection team met with two people with lived experience of social work who volunteer their time and personal insight towards the design and delivery of social work courses at Kingston University. These two individuals attended as representatives of a wider 'experts by experience' group at the university, who have been involved with the development of social work courses across a number of years.

Meetings with external stakeholders

21. The inspection team met with representatives from the regional partners 'Achieving for Children' and Sutton County Council, in addition to members of staff from the 'Developing Together Social Work Teaching Partnership' (DTSWTP). The inspection team also met with current Practice Educators who are supervising social work students from Kingston University to understand their experience of existing systems, policies, and processes

Findings

22. 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

23. Prior to inspection the university submitted documentary evidence relating to the selection and admissions process for the new course. Further to this evidence, the DTSWTP provided documentation and guidance received from the Department of Education in relation to the national selection and admissions requirements for all Step Up to Social Work courses.

Standard 1.1

23. Through the documentary evidence provided and their discussions with key stakeholders throughout the inspection, the inspection team were able to understand the selection and admissions process from start to finish – including the aspects of the process which are administered nationally by the Department for Education or managed by the regional partnership, which comprises of Achieving for Children and Sutton County Council acting in collaboration with the DTSWTP.

24. This included reviewing admissions materials for the assessment centre, which requires candidates to undertake an interview, a role-play, an observed group exercise and a written test. These tasks involve a number of stakeholders, including people with lived experience, social workers, employer representatives and academic staff. The involvement of these groups was discussed and affirmed as part of the admissions process, as applicants were able to describe the assessment centre and the variety of activities and people involved. The inspection team were assured that this was a holistic and multi-dimensional process, and that standard was met.

Standard 1.2

25. It is a national requirement of the Step Up to Social Work programme that applicants have a minimum of 6 months full-time (or equivalent) direct experience of working with vulnerable children, young people and/or families, carers, or adults, either in a paid or voluntary capacity. Examples of relevant experience are therefore provided by applicants as part of their initial application and these are reviewed by the regional partners before applicants are invited to attend an assessment centre.

26. The inspection team was able to review examples of interview questions that would provide applicants with an opportunity to demonstrate prior relevant experience as part of the assessment centre. They were also able to meet with applicants who provided examples of how they had applied and demonstrated their relevant experience as part of the admissions process. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

27. At a national level, social workers and people with lived experience are required to be involved in interviewing, assessing, and selecting prospective candidates for all Step Up to Social Work courses. The Department for Education also sets an expectation that regional partnerships involve people with lived experience of social work in reviewing assessment exercises, interview questions and role plays at a local level.

28. The inspection team met with two people with lived experience of social work who had been involved in the selection process for the new course, this included engaging in role plays and interviewing candidates. These individuals had also had the opportunity to review course documentation in relation to the new course, including documentation in relation to selection and admissions, in order to provide comments or feedback as part of the course design process.

29. The inspection team also spoke with applicants to the new course who were able to reflect on their experience of engaging with people with lived experience of social work as part of the assessment centre. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

30. The inspection team were able to review documentary evidence in relation to the suitability checks undertaken for applicants onto the new course, including criminal conviction checks. These processes were discussed further at inspection when inspectors had the opportunity to meet with successful applicants, course staff and the Admissions Team Leader.

31. The inspection team were also provided with a 'Declaration of Suitability for Social Work' form which the university requires all successful applicants to complete. The inspection team agreed that this form included a comprehensive set of declarations for prospective students in addition to useful guidance on how declarations would be used by the university to inform decisions around suitability or student support. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

32. For all Step Up to Social work courses the initial information made available to applicants is hosted by the Department for Education on an online portal/webpage. Following a review of this information the inspection team were not assured that this was sufficient to ensure that it was clear to applicants that talking about a health condition or impairment would impact on decisions taken about whether they are offered a place on the course. As an example of this, there is information available for applicants on the Step Up to Social Work webpages to indicate whether or not a local authority partner requires students to have a driving licence and access to a car. There is no further information on this webpage for students who may be exempt from driving because of a health condition or impairment, and no signposting for applicants who may wish to discuss this further with a member of staff from the university, or the local authority.

33. In conversations with applicants, it was reported that applicants did not feel they were able to contact anyone to ask questions about reasonable adjustments or their individual needs in terms of health until they were invited to the assessment centre. One applicant with additional needs commented that the support she had received from the university during the assessment centre had been exemplary, but that very little information had been available beforehand as she had not known which university she would be attending.

34. The inspection team met with representatives from the Department for Education, the regional partners and staff involved with admissions at the university to understand who applicants would contact if they had a question in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion or required reasonable adjustments, or additional support. Although it was reported by all parties that queries would be passed on to the most suitable person to answer them, it wasn't clear to the inspection team how this worked in practice or whether applicants were aware of how to get in touch or find this information.

35. 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. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard 1.6

36. The inspection team were aware prior to inspection that applicants to the national Step Up to Social Work programme apply via an online portal provided by the Department for Education. This means that the initial information provided about the Step Up to Social Work programme to applicants is made available through these webpages and not the university. Upon review of the webpages available to applicants the inspection team noted

that there was no information available about the university that the applicant, if successful, would be attending. Applicants were instead directed to local authority websites, but not directly to any form of information about the Step Up to Social Work course or the university partner involved in delivering the course.

37. During the meeting with applicants, the inspection team heard that applicants had not known which university they would be attending until later in the application process when they were invited to attend the assessment centre. Even at this stage, applicants indicated that they had made a reasonable guess that the education provider would be Kingston University based on the location of the event. One applicant expressed that they were shocked to find out that they would be studying at the university as it was a long way from their home address.

38. Applicants further reflected that they had tried to work out which university they might be attending by joining unofficial online forums, where applicants made guesses based on the location of local authorities and their proximity to different universities. Further to this, there was some confusion about whether all of the Step Up to Social Work courses across the country were exactly the same in terms of curriculum, module content and assessment, as this had not been clear to applicants at the point of application.

39. In meetings with staff involved in admissions from the university, the inspection team asked whether the university had made any information available on its own website about the new course which prospective applicants would be able to access, for example with regards to course costs, course content or the staff involved in teaching and learning on the course. They reflected that this had not happened to date as they had not been responsible for initially advertising and selecting applicants for the course. The admissions staff reflected during the inspection that this could present difficulties in terms of ensuring that applicants have enough information to make an informed choice about whether to accept an offer for the course.

40. On this theme, the inspection team heard examples from the Course Leader and the Head of Social Work of how they had sought to address this gap with successful applicants by sending out additional communications to them from the university and inviting them onto campus to meet with peers and course staff ahead of the course start date in January. The applicants that the inspection team met with reflected that this contact had been appreciated, as it had helped them to get a feel for the university and better understand the course. Overall, the inspectors agreed that this was a beneficial approach which demonstrated how dedicated course staff were to ensuring that students were effectively welcomed onto the Step Up to Social Work programme.

41. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against Standard 1.6 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. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

42. The inspectors agreed that based on the documentary evidence provided and from discussions with the course team and regional partners that all students would be able to access a suitable placement that would meet the requirements of this standard. However, the inspectors were not assured by the processes in place to monitor student attendance of mandatory placement days including relevant Skills Days, which at the point of inspection were still being planned and finalised within the revised course structure.

43. In discussions with the course team and employer partners, the inspection team asked whether there was a timesheet or equivalent used by students to log their daily attendance, which could then be checked by a Practice Educator or an onsite supervisor. It was confirmed that a system such as this is not currently in place, but could be developed to ensure that student attendance on placement was monitored more effectively. The inspectors agreed that this standard was not met by the evidence provided.

44. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against Standard 2.1 and Standard 5.6 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. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section of this report.

Standard 2.2

45. The inspection team were able to review a Practice Learning Handbook for the new course and relevant documentation in relation to the provision of practice placements for social work students on Step Up to Social Work programmes, provided by the Developing Together Social Work Teaching Partnership (DTSWTP). This included evidence of how practice-based learning opportunities would be mapped and assessed by the education provider against the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and Social Work England's Professional Standards. For this new course specifically, practice placements are contracted to take place with Achieving for Children and Sutton County Council as they are the regional partners for this Step Up to Social Work programme. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

46. The inspection team agreed on review of the documentary evidence that the induction guidance provided for students, such as in the Practice Placement Handbook, was cohesive. There was clear agreement between employer partners and the university that all students would have a two-week induction at the start of their placement, supported by a Practice Educator or on-site supervisor. This was evident from conversations with Practice Educators and students, who were able to describe the induction process and activities involved.

47. Students have the support of academic staff, particularly their Personal Tutor, and a dedicated practice support team within the university, who they are able to contact directly should they require additional advice or guidance while on placement.

48. This was explored with Practice Educators who were able to provide case studies of how they had supported students with reasonable adjustments or mitigating circumstances while on placement, by working in partnership with staff from the university and following the relevant policies and procedures. The inspection team also met with students who were positive about their workloads, supervision and their experience of induction on placement. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

49. The inspection team were able to review documentary evidence that demonstrated how practice placements are mapped against students' individual learning needs, the PCF and the Professional Standards in order to inform the Practice Learning Agreement. They were also able to review the learning outcomes for the first and final placement within the Module Directory for the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

50. The inspection team were satisfied with the evidence provided in relation to students assessed preparation for direct practice and heard no evidence from employer partners or Practice Educators to suggest that these processes weren't working effectively for existing provision. However, at the point of inspection, the exact schedule, content and planning for fourteen Skills Days embedded within the Readiness for Direct Practice module were not available for the inspection team to review. As attendance and engagement in these days form part of the assessment of students' readiness for direct practice, the inspection team agreed that it would be necessary to review this evidence in order to agree if the standard was met.

51. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against Standard 4.1 and Standard 2.5 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. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard 2.6

52. In discussions with course staff, representatives from the Developing Together Social Work Teaching Partnership and employer representatives from Achieving for Children and Sutton County Council, examples were provided of the broad range of training and support available for Practice Educators. This included assurance of how checks would be undertaken to ensure that Practice Educators were registered and suitably qualified to supervise students on the new Step Up to Social Work course, which reflected the documentary evidence provided prior to inspection. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.7

53. The inspection team were able to identify clear information for students on whistleblowing, challenging unsafe behaviours and reporting concerns within the Practice Learning Handbook. They were also able to review the related university policies and processes, which were explored in discussion with current students and Practice Educators. Stakeholders were able to provide relevant examples of the implementation of these procedures, and students reported to the inspection team that these topics had been included in taught sessions as part of their preparation for practice placements. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

54. The inspection team explored the management and governance of the new course across several levels within the university (course, department and school with oversight from the institutional internal quality team) and further interrogated the governance arrangements of the regional partnership and the Developing Together Social Work Teaching Partnership. This involved reviewing documentary evidence from several sources which informed the overall 'governance plan' for this specific Step Up to Social Work route, which includes several key partners and distinct structures, in addition to ongoing liaison with the Department for Education as the funding body for the programme. The inspection team were able to review the Step Up to Social Work Partnership Contract, which outlined the legal responsibilities of each partner in relation to the delivery of the new course.

55. The inspection team were assured by the strength of the relationships between partners, the structures in place to enable the quality assurance and operational management of the course, the documented lines of accountability and the clarity of roles and responsibilities between the university and employer groups. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

56. During the inspection, the inspection team met with the Chair of the Developing Together Teaching Partnership who was able to provide a thorough overview of the agreements that the university and employer partners have in place to ensure that placements meet the required standards. This was mirrored in the evidence and answers to questions provided by the Head of Social Work at the university, and employer partners from Achieving for Children and Sutton County Council. It was clear from the documentary evidence provided that all partners are represented in strategic and operational boards, meeting regularly to discuss contingencies, resourcing and the quality assurance of practice education across the partnership. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

57. The inspection team were able to review documentary evidence in relation to this standard such as the Practice Learning Handbook and the Appendix to the handbook which included policies on; Health and Safety; Equality, Diversity & Inclusion; Confidentiality; Whistleblowing; Complaints, Harassment and Disciplinary Procedures; Agency/University Procedures for responding during major incidents; Lone Working, and Covid-19. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

58. The inspection team were assured by the documentary evidence provided by the university, regional partners and the teaching partnership which clearly described the arrangements for placement allocation as per the Step Up to Social Work Partnership Contract in addition to the management and resourcing of the course. Further to this the inspection team identified that the engagement of employers in the design of the course had been very strong, with examples provided of how current regional issues and developments within social work practice had informed course content for specific modules.

59. The inspection team reflected that throughout the inspection across meetings with key partners, everyone was able to demonstrate current knowledge of the new course and provide an oversight of its design and development, which the inspection team felt displayed a real commitment to working in partnership. They therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

60. In addition to the documentation provided by the teaching partnership which demonstrated how employers are engaged in monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems, the inspection team were able to review examples of Course Enhancement Plans provided by the university in relation to their existing social work provision. They were also able to meet with staff involved in the internal quality management of university courses, to better understand the annual and ongoing audit/feedback mechanisms in place for both taught elements of the course and practice placements.

61. From conversations with stakeholders such as employers, students and people with lived experience of social work, the inspection team were able to identify how stakeholder feedback is included in these monitoring and evaluation processes. For example, there are structures in place to enable all stakeholders to participate in university committees, review relevant course documentation, and contribute their views in order to improve social work provision. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

62. The inspection team were able to identify that the proposed student numbers for the new course, which would involve an initial cohort of 12 students, were clearly aligned to a strategy agreed with employer partners, reflecting the number of placements available and the needs of the local workforce. They were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

63. It was confirmed prior to inspection that the Course Leader for the new course and the Head of Social Work are registered social workers, as are all of the Module Leaders for the course, and several other senior members of staff involved in the governance and management of social work education at the university.

64. It was evident from discussions with the Course Leader that they had recent and relevant knowledge of contemporary social work practice and had been supported by the university to maintain this knowledge and to grow relationships with key stakeholders such as employer partners and people with lived experience of social work. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

65. The inspection team found no evidence to suggest that staff were not appropriately qualified or experienced, or that the resourcing of the course would not be sufficient to ensure that it is effectively delivered. As part of the documentary evidence the university provided a Resources Document which the inspection team felt went into considerable

detail about the resourcing of both the course team and student services across the institution. Students spoke positively about the support they had received from central student services and the responsiveness of academic staff. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

66. Drawing from the documentary evidence provided, including the Course Enhancement Plan for the MA Social Work and Department Course Enhancement Plan, the inspection team explored this standard within the context of the attainment gap for black students identified by the university. This provided course staff with the opportunity to talk through how they are using information about students' performance, progression and outcomes to evaluate their taught provision and make improvements to course content, assessment or student support. A case study was provided by a lecturer who explained how data from the student dashboard had led to amendments within teaching on a specific module in order to tackle the attainment gap. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

67. Examples were provided by the Head of Social Work and the wider course team of how staff are supported to spend time back in practice, which was evidenced further by the provision of an 'Academics in Practice' paper within the documentary evidence received prior to inspection. This detailed the additional activities staff are able to undertake, including research in local practice environments and shadowing practitioners within the teaching partnership. There are also opportunities for practitioners to teach on social work courses at the university, creating a community of practice which spans across the university and its employer partners. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

68. The inspection team were made aware during the inspection process that there could be amendments to some elements of course documentation following conditions and recommendations set by the university's internal validation of the course. The inspection team was able to review the original plans for the course, in addition to revised plans which had been updated to meet the requirements of the internal validation process. Therefore, at the point of inspection, the inspection team was not satisfied by the evidence provided in relation to this standard as the university's approval of the revised documentation was still outstanding. Further to this, the inspectors sought further detail around the structure and content of the Skills Days within the course and felt that without this detail they were not assured that this standard was met

69. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a

condition is set against Standard 4.1 and Standard 2.5 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. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard 4.2

70. The inspection team agreed that based on the documentary evidence provided and their meetings with stakeholders involved in the design and the delivery of the curriculum for the new course, that this was an area of strength demonstrated by the university and the wider teaching partnership. In particular, the inspection team considered the engagement of employers and people with lived experience of social work in university governance and management structures to be very positive, fostering a collegiate and collaborative approach between those involved.

71. The inspection team felt that a real commitment to co-production seemed to exist across roles within the social work team, with people of lived experience providing examples of having regular contact with the Head of Social Work, Course Leaders and individual academic staff in order to enable their involvement in a number of different areas of course provision, from admissions to teaching and assessment. The people with lived experience that the inspectors met with described feeling well respected and supported by course staff, who in their experience had consistently demonstrated social work values throughout their work together. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

72. The inspection team found sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the course had been designed in accordance with appropriate equality, diversity and inclusion principles, human rights and legislative frameworks. They agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

73. As this is a new course which will be delivered in partnership with local employers Achieving for Children and Sutton County Council, the inspection team was able to explore how recent developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice had informed the design of the curriculum and course content. Examples were provided by both the course team and the regional partners of how they had engaged with one another to ensure that the course reflected current trends in practice, such as child-centred practise, and explored local issues relevant to families and practitioners in London. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

74. From the documentary evidence provided within the Module Directory the inspection team were able to review the module content across the course, plans for assessment and the associated learning outcomes. This evidence indicated where and how theory and practice would be explored and taught across the curriculum, which was discussed with the course team during the inspection. The inspection team felt that the course team demonstrated a commitment to integrating theory and practice throughout the course through their own engagement and research in local practice environments, the proactive involvement of current practitioners in teaching and learning and collegiate working across the teaching partnership. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

75. The inspection team agreed that they were not provided with evidence which would ensure that students on the new course would be given the opportunity to work with, and learn from, other professions. This was explored further during the inspection with members of the course team, who did not assure the inspection team that sufficient plans had been put in place to ensure when and how students would learn from other professionals on placement or in academic sessions. The inspection team agreed that this standard was not met.

76. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against Standard 4.6 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. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard 4.7

77. The inspection team were able to review both the original Programme Specification and Module Descriptors detailing the proposed course structure and revised versions of these documents, which had been amended during the university's internal validation process to ensure that structured academic learning was more evenly spread across the academic year. The inspection team and agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

78. The inspection team were able to review documents in relation to assessment and progression for the new course, including university policies and examples of assessments mapped against the curriculum, learning outcomes, PCF and relevant Social Work England standards. These were discussed with the course team during inspection who provided

examples of how the range of different assessment methods would test different skills and competencies. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

79. The inspection team were provided with an Assessment Calendar and a Module Summative Assessment Map which indicated a range of assessment strategies matched to module content appropriate for a postgraduate social work course. Further detail on progression points was provided by course staff during the inspection as the Head of Social Work lead a presentation that described the course structure, curriculum and assessment from enrolment to graduation. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

80. The inspection team were able to review documentation that described the timelines for student feedback (which should be received twenty working days following the date of submission), the form it should take, how much feedback should be provided and the processes in place for the moderation of student assessments. Students raised no concerns about the feedback they had received and spoke positively about the support available to enable their progression. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

81. The education provider confirmed to the inspection team that the new course would use an existing external examiner employed by the university and confirmed their name and registration number. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

82. From the documentary evidence provided in relation to the Practice Assessment Panel (PAP) and Assessment Boards, in addition to discussions with the course team, employer partners and key stakeholders, the inspection team was assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

83. Evidence for this standard was provided within the learning outcomes and Module Descriptors prior to inspection. However, the inspection team further explored this topic in discussions with the course team and Practice Educators who were able to give specific examples of how current practice had fed into course content and informed student assessments across the university's social work provision. In relation to the new course, the Head of Social Work demonstrated how the team was embedding criticality and an analytical approach throughout all of the modules, in order to empower students to be critical in their thinking and draw from current research. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

84. The inspection team were provided with a Resources Document prior to inspection which outlined the provision of student support services available across the institution including Student Wellbeing, Accommodation, Money & Housing Advice, Immigration Advice, Disability & Mental Health Support. In discussions with students the inspection team felt that knowledge of these services was clear and that this was mirrored in discussions with Practice Educators and Personal Tutors. Course staff informed the inspection team that all new staff and hourly paid lecturers receive training on the student support services available and how to signpost students to relevant services. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

85. The inspection team found that throughout the inspection stakeholders provided examples of how the Personal Tutor system had worked in practice, from students describing the support that they had received as individuals, to Practice Educators reflecting on how they had worked with different personal tutors to support students on placement across a number of years. Stakeholders commended the approachability and responsiveness of staff and demonstrated to the inspection team that the system was operating in line with how it was described within the documentary evidence provided. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

86. Following a review of the documentary evidence provided and discussions during the inspection, the inspection team agreed that this was an area of strength for the university as they have put a system in place which is effective, supportive and clearly understood by key stakeholders due to the university revisiting and reiterating how to manage suitability concerns across the academic year and the duration of the course.

87. Positive examples were provided to the inspection team by Practice Educators and Personal Tutors, who were able to describe their experiences of raising concerns and how those concerns were managed effectively in line with the relevant processes. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

88. In addition to reviewing relevant documentary evidence, the inspection team explored this standard during the inspection in their meetings with the course team, students, university support staff and Practice Educators. Specific examples were provided by stakeholders to demonstrate how individuals who required reasonable adjustments due to health conditions or impairments were supported. These examples included exploring the

experiences of a deaf student, a student who used a wheelchair, and a student with a life-limiting health condition, all of whom were supported to progress through their social work course. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

89. The inspection team was not able to review a Course Handbook for the new course and were made aware during the inspection process that there could be amendments to some elements of course documentation following conditions and recommendations set by the university's internal validation of the course. Therefore, at the point of inspection, the inspection team was not satisfied by the evidence provided in relation to this standard as they were not able to fully review the finalised information which would be provided to students about their course.

90. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against Standard 5.5 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. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard 5.6

91. The inspectors were satisfied by the evidence provided that students would be made aware of which parts of the course were mandatory and the consequences of missing mandatory parts of the course. However, as with their findings in relation to Standard 2.1, the inspection team were not assured by the current processes in place for monitoring student attendance on placement and therefore agreed that this standard was not met at the point of inspection.

92. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against Standard 2.1 and Standard 5.6 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. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcomes](#) section of this report.

Standard 5.7

93. From the documentary evidence provided and discussions with members of the course team and current students, the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

94. The inspection team was able to identify the university policies and procedures around academic appeals from the documentary evidence provided and saw examples of how information about these processes was made available to students. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

95. As the qualifying course is a Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

96. The inspection team recommend that the course be approved with conditions

97. 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.

98. Having considered whether approval with conditions or a refusal of approval was an appropriate course of action, we 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 education provider will provide evidence of the equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants from the point of application, and how all applicants will be able to access relevant information about support available from the university at the point of application.	1 February 2022	Paragraph 35
2	Standard 1.6	The education provider will provide evidence of the information available to applicants at the point of application, to ensure that all applicants can make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the course. This should include the information outlined in the guidance on Standard 1.6.	1 February 2022	Paragraph 41
3	Standards 2.1 and 5.6	The education provider will provide evidence of the system and processes in place to ensure that attendance is monitored while students are on their practice placements.	1 February 2022	Paragraph 44 Paragraph 92
4	Standards 4.1 and 2.5	The education provider will provide any outstanding revised or updated documentation following the internal validation of the course, this should include documentation in relation to	1 February 2022	Paragraph 51 Paragraph 69

		the course structure, indicative timetable and content/schedule of Skills Days including the Skills Days embedded within students' readiness for direct practice.		
5	Standard 4.6	The education provider will provide evidence of how they will ensure that there are opportunities for all students to work with and learn from, other professions during the course.	1 February 2022	Paragraph 76
6	Standard 5.5	The education provider will provide evidence of the information which will be made available to students about the course, this should include a Course Handbook for the PG Dip Social Work (Step Up) and any relevant revised or updated documentation following the internal validation of the course.	1 February 2022	Paragraph 90

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

Table breakdown of standards met during preapproval and inspection.

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Met with recommendations
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	Met with conditions	Met with recommendations
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	Met with conditions	Met with recommendations
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	Met with conditions	Met with recommendations
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	Met with conditions	Met with recommendations
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	Met with conditions	Met with recommendations
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	Met with conditions	Met with recommendations
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. Inspectors will undertake the conditions review and make recommendations 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	Inspector recommendation
1	Standard 1.5	The education provider will provide evidence of the equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants from the point of application, and how all applicants will be able to access relevant information about support available from the university at the point of application.	Condition met.
2	Standard 1.6	The education provider will provide evidence of the information available to applicants at the point of application, to ensure that all applicants can make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the course. This should include the information outlined in the guidance on Standard 1.6.	Condition extended to April 2023.
3	Standards 2.1 and 5.6	The education provider will provide evidence of the system and processes in place to ensure that attendance is monitored while students are on their practice placements.	Condition met.
4	Standards 4.1 and 2.5	The education provider will provide any outstanding revised or updated documentation following the internal validation of the course, this should include documentation in relation to the course structure, indicative timetable and content/schedule of Skills Days including the Skills Days	Condition met.

		embedded within students' readiness for direct practice.	
5	Standard 4.6	The education provider will provide evidence of how they will ensure that there are opportunities for all students to work with and learn from, other professions during the course.	Condition met.
6	Standard 5.5	The education provider will provide evidence of the information which will be made available to students about the course, this should include a Course Handbook for the PG Dip Social Work (Step Up) and any relevant revised or updated documentation following the internal validation of the course.	Condition met.

Findings

4. In relation to standard 1.5, the education provider submitted additional evidence to show how they were meeting the standard. Evidence included links to equality and diversity policies on Kingston University website and an example of the conditional offer letter provided to students which references these links. Students are able to access appropriate information in relation to EDI, Health and Wellbeing, Disability and Mental Health Support as well as guidance and support.
5. In relation to standard 1.6, the education provider submitted a narrative of their planned approach for future cohorts which includes reference to the information listed within the condition. The provider has also developed a Step Up to Social Work webpage on their website under Social Work.
6. At the time of reviewing the evidence, inspectors were unable to access this link as the course is currently underway and is pending funding from the DfE for future cohorts. Inspectors noted that the planned approach, which includes an agreement within their partnership that future cohorts will be able to access the course webpage from the point of being allocated to a local authority, means that future cohorts will be able to access information about the course and participating university at an earlier part in the process.
7. It was agreed that this approach was much stronger and would seem appropriate to meet the standard however, as links are unavailable due to pending funding, it was not possible for inspectors to agree that it was met at the time of reviewing evidence. As the course provider could not provide this evidence due to the need to await confirmation of DfE funding, it was agreed that the deadline for meeting the condition be extended to

a date where a future cohort is planned. In liaison with the education provider, a date of April 2023 was mutually agreed.

8. In relation to standards 2.1 and 5.6, the education provider submitted their updated course handbook which ensures that expectations for attendance on placement are made clear and processes to monitor this are strengthened. Inspectors were satisfied that the conditions for these standards were now met.
9. In relation to standards 4.1 and 2.5, revised documentation was submitted including; a module directory, module assessment map, assessment calendar and revised programme specification. Inspectors noted that skills days are also clearly mapped as part of the Outline Step Up Programme. The conditions for standards 4.1 and 2.5 are met.
10. In relation to standard 4.6, the provider provided explicit examples of how students are provided with opportunities to learn from and work alongside other professions during the course. Reference was made to teaching which is led by other professionals including a lawyer and joint learning with education and health. Inspectors are confident this standard is met.
11. In relation to standard 5.5, evidence was provided through the new course handbook which provides students with a wide range on information and supplementary revised course documents. This condition is met.

Conclusion

12. The inspection team is recommending that with the exception of the condition relating to standard 1.6, conditions have been met, the remaining condition will be considered in April 2023.
13. It should be noted that all qualifying social work courses will be subject to reapproval under Social Work England's 2021 education and training standards.