

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Plymouth

Course approval: BA (Hons) Social Work

Inspection dates: 29th March – 1st April 2022

Report date:	16 th June 2022
Inspector recommendation:	Approved
Regulator decision:	Approved
Date of Regulator decision:	13 th July 2022
Date conditions met and approved:	3 rd October 2022

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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 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 of Inspection

15. The University of Plymouth's existing BA (Hons) Social Work course and proposed changes to the course that will be implemented in September 2022, were 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.

16. During this inspection the inspection team also considered the approval of a PG Dip Social Work and details of this are covered in a separate report.

Inspection ID	UPR1
Course provider	University of Plymouth
Validating body (if different)	N/A
Course inspected	BA (Hons) Social Work and BA (Hons) Social Work with proposed changes (start September 2022)
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	60
Date of inspection	29 th March – 1 st April 2022
Inspection team	Daisy Bragadini - Education Quality Assurance Officer Zoe Burke – Education Quality Assurance Operations Manager Aidan Worsley (Lay Inspector) Mary Macdonald (Registrant Inspector)
Inspector recommendation	Approved with conditions
Approval outcome	Approved with conditions

Language

17. In this document we describe the University of Plymouth as 'the education provider' or 'the university' and we describe the BA (Hons) Social Work as 'the course'.

Inspection

18. A remote inspection took place from 29 March to 1 April 2022. 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.

19. 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.

20. As part of the reapproval process the proposed changes to the course were also reviewed. The course team plan to teach out the existing version of the course, with the new version being introduced from September 2022. Apart from two instances, Stages 1 and 2 remain the same in structure and content.

21. The course team propose a change to the assessment for the module; Contexts for Social Work: Organisations, Law and Policy II from an essay to an open-book exam. This replaces the exam, previously held in stage 3, providing students with the opportunity to consolidate their learning around legislation and policy over two modules in stages 1 and 2.

22. The course team propose to introduce an opportunity to learn abroad, which is not a placement, for students who may choose to take a zero-credit module called Cross Cultural Learning and Development for Social Work. This non-credit bearing module is proposed to take place following stage 2 studies, for a period of up to one academic year.

23. In stage 3, the course team propose to remove Contexts for Social Work: Organisations, Policy and Law III as this is consolidated into stages 1 and 2 law and policy modules. They also propose to remove the Social Work Extended Essay/Project and replace it with a 40 credit Social Work Dissertation module.

24. The inspection team were informed that the rationale underpinning the proposed changes included a response to the feedback provided by the Service User and Carer Consultative Group and feedback from students. In addition, the inspection team were told that the changes were also a response to the reapproval event from Social Work England, the desire to develop a global perspective within the course, to enhance interprofessional learning and to refresh the offer the course could deliver.

Conflict of interest

25. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

26. The inspection team met with eight students who were at all three stages of their study on the course. Discussions included their experience of practice placements, teaching and learning, the curriculum, support services and feedback they receive.

Meetings with course staff

27. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff from the course teaching team, staff involved in applications and admissions, staff involved in practice learning, staff involved in support services (both pastoral and academic), and members of the senior management team.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

28. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work (the Service User and Carer Consultative Group) who have been involved in the admissions process. Discussions included areas of the course they are involved in, ways in which they are supported to carry out their work and mechanisms for them to feedback into the course including how it is run.

Meetings with external stakeholders

29. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including staff from Plymouth City Council, Cornwall Council and voluntary organisations and practice educators.

Findings

30. 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

31. Through the review of evidence submitted prior to the inspection and throughout meetings held with students and staff involved in the admissions process, the inspection

team were able to understand how a holistic assessment is carried out. The inspection team reviewed the Social Work Interview Score Sheet and heard how the UCAS application process, interview panels and admissions tutor works to assess the capabilities of applicants. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

32. The inspection team were able to review the university's policy and regulations governing assessment of applicants' prior relevant experience. They were also provided with evidence relating to information provided at open days and the interview questions used in the admissions process. The meeting held with staff involved in the admissions process provided further confirmation that prior relevant experience is assessed. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

33. The inspection team heard and were provided with evidence about how interview panels are constituted, with academic staff, practice partners, from both a local authority and the Private Voluntary and Independent sector, and the Service User and Carer Consultative Group (SUCCG). The inspectors met with the SUCCG and were able to hear how they were involved in the admissions process, which was supported by the meetings held with employer partners and admissions staff. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

34. The inspection team understood that offers made for places on the course will be conditional upon a satisfactory occupational health assessment and criminal conviction check and applicants will not be able to start the course unless they pass the disclosure and barring checks. The Professional Issues Committee holds a monthly meeting and is made up of admissions tutors from different schools and is used to review applications that may involve a disclosure or issue of professional suitability. The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) is used to assess applicants against aspects of professionalism, ethics and values. Any concerns or issues arising through the application process are presented to the admissions tutor. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

35. The inspection team reviewed evidence which showed how the occupational health assessment and the UCAS application form requests information about any disabilities or requests for support or reasonable adjustments. Information provided here produces an automatic message to be sent to the disability support team, and there is also a self-disclosure form included in the offer letter provided to applicants. The inspection team were informed about how the university's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy is implemented

throughout the admissions process. The inspection team were confident that this standard had been met.

Standard 1.6

36. During the meetings held with students the inspection team heard how the application process provided them with the information they needed to make a decision about whether to take up an offer on the course, including travelling to placements. The inspection team reviewed information provided to applicants which is available on the website and includes information about placements, associated costs and research interests. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed the information provided to applicants through the open day presentation. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

37. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were able to review information provided about placements and skills days. The module brief Developing Professional Skills outlines the requirement for 30 skills days to be completed in the first year. The first assessed placement of 70 days takes place in year 2 and the final 100-day placement takes place in year 3. The inspection team reviewed the Workplace Agreement form and the Placement Host form and heard about plans within the school to develop their use of the online audit tool, the Plymouth Online Practice Placement Information (POPPI), and the Practice Environment Profile (PEP), which sits within it. POPPI works to provide a single point where learning resources and information about placements can be collated, making accessibility for students, practice educators, service users and tutors streamlined. Through discussion held with employer partners during the inspection, the inspection team heard about the pressure of providing placements for the current number of students and concern about any potential increase in demand. During the inspection further information was requested and provided to the inspection team regarding the correlation between placement capacity, placement type and student numbers. The inspection team concluded that this did not satisfy the request for clarity sought, especially in relation to the increase in placements required for the students on the proposed new PGDip Social Work course (the approval inspection for this course took place during the same week).

38. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 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 table](#).

Standard 2.2

39. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence including the Placement Host Form which placement providers complete to identify the learning opportunities available to students whilst on their placement. The Practice Learning Working Agreement is completed by each student at the start of their placement with the support to plan how they will learn on their placement and meet the professional standards. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

40. Through their documentary review and the meetings held with the course team, students and practice educators, the inspection team reviewed the processes and procedures followed to ensure students have an induction and are supported whilst on placement. Through supervision, students' workload and support needs are discussed and monitored. The Practice Learning Working Agreement outlines what students should expect to receive during their induction. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

41. The inspection team reviewed the Placement Learning Handbook which stipulates that students will be supported to ensure their responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of training by their Practice Educator and Supervisor. The learning outcomes for the placement modules are aligned with the Professional Capabilities Framework, matching the stage students are in their course. The Interim Meeting is used as a point within placements to monitor the responsibilities and learning opportunities provided to the student, and where necessary an action plan can be developed to support students through their learning. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

42. The inspection team heard that during the first year of the programme students are assessed in their preparedness for practice placement learning and direct practice. This must be successfully completed before a student starts their first 70-day placement and takes place within the Developing Professional Skills module. Within this module students complete 30 skills days and their assessed preparation for practice, concluding with a summative assessment which students must pass. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

43. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed documentary evidence submitted to show how the university ensures relevant criteria is met for the practice educators they work with. The inspection team reviewed the Practice Observer Educator Checklist which is used by the university's administrative team when a practice educator first makes contact with the university, to assess their suitability. The inspection team also heard that practice educators receive an induction session before the placement starts, regular bi-monthly meetings within their agency or with the university and placement lead. At these meetings updates are provided, resources shared, and training is provided. The inspection team reviewed the Working Agreement and both the Operational and Programme specifications. The inspection team concluded that the evidence available did not assure them that the university maintained sufficient oversight of all the practice educators they work with, including their knowledge, skills and experience. Therefore, they agreed that this standard was not met.

44. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 2.6 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, 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 table](#).

Standard 2.7

45. Through meetings with students, placement providers and the course team, the inspection team were able to understand how the university assures itself that placement providers have the necessary policies and procedures in place for students to report concerns. The Practice Learning Working Agreement is used by students and placement providers, alongside practice educators, to ensure that students access and understand these policies and know when and how they should utilise them. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

46. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence and met with the senior management team which enabled them to gain an oversight of the management and governance plans in place at the university. They heard that the Academic Lead, who is also the registered Lead Social Worker for the course, sits within the management team of the School of Health Professions within the Faculty of Health, and is responsible for the

management and resourcing of the course. The course is led by the Programme Lead and are accountable to the Academic Lead, and this is detailed within the Programme Handbook. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

47. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with the Workplace Agreement which requires that an agreement is established between the university and the placement provider for the delivery of placements. The Placement Module Lead visits the placement where they complete the Placement Host Form, which along with the Workplace Agreement, details the processes to follow in the event of a placement breaking down. Both documents also illustrate how the placement meets the Professional and Education and Training standards. The Integrated Practice Handbook outlines the stages which need to be followed, including the people required to be involved, and actions needing to be taken in the event of a placement difficulties. Placement providers are in receipt of the handbooks before placements start. The inspection team were in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

48. The Workplace Agreement, Placement Host Form and the Practice Learning Working Agreement were provided to the inspection team prior to the inspection. These documents, in combination with the discussions held with students, placement providers, the course team and staff responsible for providing support to students, enabled the inspection team to gain an understanding of how policies and procedures were implemented. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

49. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with confirmation from the Chair of the Southwest Peninsula Social Work Stakeholders Group of the Lead Social Worker's involvement. The group represents employers and is attended by practice education coordinators and Principle Social Workers from the area where matters of employment and social work education are discussed. The inspection team also reviewed minutes from the Programme Committee meetings and the Annual Review meetings which employers attend and feedback to. The inspection team heard that the teaching and student contact employers are involved in supports the monitoring mechanism, and they heard from employer partners that formal feedback systems have been more recently reintroduced. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

50. The inspection team were provided with the Social Work Programme Plan, and understood that this was partly informed by the module evaluations completed by students and fed into the External Examiners report. These reports also contribute to the Annual

Review and Programme Committees review of the course. A Staff and Student Liaison Committee is held where students have the opportunity to feed back on the running of their course, and where they can raise any aspects they would like to see being done differently. The inspection team were also provided with minutes from the SUCCG meetings. During the discussion held with employer partners, the inspection team observed there was a lack of recognition of formal mechanisms available to the group enabling them to feed-back, monitor or evaluate the course. The inspection team also heard that the group of employer partners had not been involved in the development of the new PGDip Social Work course. The inspection team concluded that this standard had not been met.

51. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 3.5 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 table](#).

Standard 3.6

52. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence submitted to demonstrate how the university aligns student numbers with a strategy which considers placement numbers within the region. The Programme Specification outlines a policy to maintain student recruitment in line with placement capacity with the aim to ensure placement quality is not compromised. The inspection team understood that the Lead Social Worker attends the PSWEG meeting where there is engagement around the decision-making process for placements. The inspection team understood that the Practice Learning Business Group is in the process of being re-established and heard that module leaders have ongoing individual conversations with placement providers. The inspection team were not satisfied that the evidence reviewed represented a clear strategy and concluded that this standard was not met.

53. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 3.6 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, 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 table](#).

Standard 3.7

54. The inspection team reviewed the CV of the Lead Social Worker who has overall professional responsibility for the course. The inspection team were satisfied that this

illustrated appropriate qualifications, experience and registration with Social Work England. Therefore, the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

55. The inspection team were provided with the CVs of current staff within the course team. The staff include a Programme Lead and Admissions Lead, and the inspection team heard and read about the range of experience and qualifications held, including research interests and publications within the team. The inspection team also heard that student numbers are carefully matched with the capacity of the teaching team as well as practice placements, and that there is provision for an expansion of teaching staff in the form of associate lecturers and study group leaders. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met. In relation to the planned growth in the form of the new PGDip Social Work course, the inspection team would like to attach a [recommendation](#) to this standard to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of resourcing in relation to staff and student numbers.

Standard 3.9

56. The inspection team heard how an attainment and progression data pack is produced annually. The Assistant Head of School, responsible for Teaching and Learning, and the Academic Lead then use and analyse this data and an action plan is developed. The Student Success Committee, which works as a pan-university forum, analyses the data on student representation and attainment, which is then used to inform developments required to support different groups. The inspection team heard more widely about the quality governance process and the Access and Participation Plan, which utilises input directly from the social work team. This has allowed the social work team to be cognisant of areas which require focus and in one example provided, is leading to the planned development of resources which can be used in practice by students with disabilities. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

57. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed documentary evidence which was illustrative of how staff are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding of professional practice, which included staff CVs. They also heard that in development is a social work research strategy to support and encourage staff to promote shared learning and carry out research which can then be used to underpin teaching and learning on the course. Through meetings held with senior managers the inspection team heard how staff are provided with one day per week pro rata to be used for scholarly activity which can include practice. Staff also have access to £300 to use for CPD related resourcing and utilise a workload planning system which informs annual reviews. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

58. The inspection team were able to review documentary evidence which showed how the learning outcomes for each module, including the practice learning modules, are mapped to the Professional Capabilities Framework and that teaching is aligned to the relevant Knowledge and Skills Statements. During meetings held with the course team and the presentation made to the inspection team, inspectors were told about how the spiral curriculum is used to support learning through incremental development, consolidation, reflection and connection-building. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

59. The inspection team reviewed evidence shared by the course team which illustrated how some employers were involved through the PSWEG meetings and offered feedback on some of the changes proposed to the course, for example the assessment for Contexts for Social Work: Organisations, Policy and Law II. The inspection team reviewed minutes from the Social Work Programme Committee meeting which employer partners attend from a range of local authorities. Although the inspection team acknowledge this evidence, they concluded that it did not demonstrate sufficient strength to meet this standard.

60. Please also see comments under standard 3.5.

61. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 4.2 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 table](#).

Standard 4.3

62. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with teaching resources which illustrated some of the topics covered within modules, including Citizenship and Participatory Practice. During meetings with students and the course staff, the inspection team discussed how the Peer Assisted Learning Support (PALS) system works and understood that students in the later stages of their course provide mentoring to students in their first and second years. The development of this model had been informed by the university's Widening Participation agenda and the inspection team heard how during the pandemic this had not been able to continue, although it has now been reinstated. Whilst meeting with students, the inspection team heard suggestions that further guidance and

support for the student leaders would improve their experience of PALS. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

63. Prior to and during the inspection the inspection team reviewed and heard evidence of the proposed changes to the course. One of these changes includes the introduction of a new module which involves up to one academic year spent abroad. The inspection team heard how this Cross-Cultural Learning and Development for Social Work module will provide students with a globalised perspective of social work and was informed by the feedback received from students. This will be introduced as an optional module for students after their second year of study and carries no credit weighting. A further change is within Contexts for Social Work: Organisations, Law and Policy II where the assessment has been modified from an essay to an open-book exam, which the inspection team heard aligns with practice application. The inspection team were provided with staff CVs which illustrated the range of research topics and projects staff are involved in, and the Annual Programme Review and Programme Plan exemplified how the course is continually updated. Consequently, the inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

64. During the inspection the inspection team heard from the course team, practice educators and students about how theory and practice are integrated into the course. The model of the spiral curriculum supports the students' learning and links to theory whilst in practice, and practice educators have access to the Practice Learning Development Forum (PLDF), which supports their teaching. Students attend study groups which are facilitated by tutors and social workers in practice, and the inspection team heard from students that they provide effective support. The study groups provide opportunity for students to share and develop their learning through linking theory to practice, and develop reflective practice through learning about models and completing tasks. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

65. The inspection team heard from the Lead Social Worker who is also leading the interprofessional academic learning, about opportunities provided to students to work with and learn from other professionals. Plymouth Integrative Health and Social Care Education Centre provides opportunities for students, although this is not a core component part of the course. The inspection team heard how compulsory modules across the stages of the course include learning about other professions and students described guest speakers involved in their course. Students also described learning opportunities provided through their practice placements. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

66. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed Module Records and Module Briefs which outlined the lecture hours and expected private study time. They were also provided with timetables for all three stages of the course showing lectures, seminars and study groups. The inspection team understood that through the pandemic teaching had been exclusively online, which then moved to synchronous online teaching when this was permitted. All teaching will now be expected to be in-person, with teaching sessions being recorded. The inspection team heard how the university's Study and Wellbeing policy is implemented when students' attendance is a concern, incidences of which the course team are alerted to through the monitoring of attendance through manual registration. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

67. The inspection team reviewed the Programme Specification and Module Briefs. The inspection team understood how the assessment strategy, from stage to stage, cohered into one another, enabling students to demonstrate how they progress and develop from foundation level awareness to level 6 complexity and independent practice. A wide range of assessments are used including essays and critical analysis, oral presentations and group tasks as well as practice learning workbooks. The inspection team also noted comments from the External Examiners about the programme assessment strategy. Again, the inspection team heard how the spiral curriculum enhances the structure of the assessments. The inspection team were in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

68. The inspection team reviewed evidence which illustrated how assessment within modules at each of the three stages builds on previous learning and assessment. One example of this included students moving from being assessed on a group work presentation, through to the presentation of a poster including a reflection within a group, to finally an individual presentation. Modules Briefs provided outline how the assessments are mapped to each of the learning outcomes and are supported through the implementation of the spiral curriculum, previously noted. The inspection team met with students who discussed their experience of assessment throughout the different stages of learning. The inspection team heard feedback from them that multiple assessments are focused within short time periods which presented them with additional, and in their view, unnecessary challenges. The inspection team agreed this standard was met and in addition would attach a [recommendation](#) to this standard.

Standard 4.10

69. The inspection team were able to review a range of methods of feedback which are provided to the students to support their ongoing developments. Students are provided

with feedback from service users and carers as part of their readiness for practice assessment, and throughout their placement from service users and from their Practice Educator within their interim meeting. Students receive feedback for all work submitted as part of module assessments and the inspection team heard how the course team plan to start to use the Turnitin assessment submission system for marking. During the meetings held with students, and further confirmed in the meeting with employer partners, the inspection team heard requests for feedback provided to students to be more critical and constructive. Examples provided by students included an absence of clear guidance on how to improve after having received a relatively low mark. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met and in addition would attach a [recommendation](#) to this standard.

Standard 4.11

70. Through a review of the documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection, the inspection team were able to see how staff involved in carrying out assessments have the appropriate expertise and that the External Examiners for the course are registered with Social Work England. External Examiners go through a process of approval by the University External Examiner Sub-committee via the Faculty of Health Quality Assurance team and Programme Lead. This process includes a review of their qualifications, experience and ensures that they are registered with Social Work England. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

71. The inspection team heard how moderation of assessments and marking takes place across all modules, and in the Practice Panel both employer partners and service users are represented. Evidence reviewed by the inspection team confirmed to them that External Examiners are involved in providing feedback which highlights sufficient strategies to manage students' progression. Students are observed and assessed in direct practice both in stages 2 and 3 of the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

72. The inspection team were able to review, prior to the inspection, documentary evidence outlining the module Evidence Informed Practice for Social Work. Here, students are provided with the opportunity to critically explore evidence within practice and develop skills which enable them to identify evidence and how to analyse and apply it. The inspection team also reviewed the Extended Essay module in stage 3, and within the proposed change for students starting in September 2022, the Social Work Dissertation module, which also provides the opportunity for applying these skills within a longer and more analytical written assignment. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

73. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed information on the services provided by the university in relation to meeting the needs of students in areas such as mental health, occupational health and careers advice. They were provided with information on the Student Hub where services are centralised and students can access a range of services including counselling, financial advice, support from the Students' Union and more specialised help for personal issues. The Programme Handbook provides information for students about services they can access and methods of doing so. During the meeting held with staff responsible for coordinating and delivering support services, the inspection team heard examples of how wellbeing services have adapted through the pandemic and flexed to accommodate an increase in demand, including offering evening appointments and recruiting associate counsellors. However, the inspection team did hear that there was an issue about delays in support from occupational health services. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

74. The course runs a personal tutor system which each student has access to. The inspection team heard how personal tutors are provided with training and support to assist them to know when and where to guide students when they require more specialist support. This was also underpinned by the Study and Wellbeing Review policy. Personal tutors convene personal and group tutorials, which are planned regularly, and study groups provide an additional dimension where students can share and reflect and be offered both pastoral and academic support. Within the library, which is open all day, every day, there is a daily writing café and study skills sessions which students are informed about during their induction. Learning Developers offer group or 1:1 sessions and can also be referred to through student feedback on an assignment. Therefore, the inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

75. Through their documentary evidence review the inspection team assessed the information provided detailing the processes followed to ensure the ongoing suitability of students on the course. The Study and Wellbeing Review Policy contains the guidelines and procedures which are followed in cases which involve a students' fitness to practice and covers issues of professional suitability, performance and conduct. Student declarations are completed at the start of the course and are required to be updated annually, which include notes on criminal convictions, conflict of interests and health. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

76. During the inspection, the inspection team met with staff involved in the provision of student support services, including the Head of Student Services and representatives from other specialist departments. The university has a dedicated specialist disability service and reasonable adjustments are provided to students to support them in their studies, including, for example, individual exam arrangements and technological support. The inspection team understood how and when a Student Support Document is used and shared when a student has agreed and requests additional provision. Therefore, the inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

77. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with the Programme Handbook which includes information on the curriculum structure, guidance on how students will be assessed, detail about practice placements and registration with Social Work England. The inspection team reviewed the Module Briefs where further information about the course is available for students and they were provided with the induction presentation. Learning outcomes and timetables for each module are provided to students. Within the final placement module information about continuing professional development is provided, alongside guidance on what is required at application for registration. The Programme Handbook contained information which was out of date and requires updating to reflect the current regulatory frameworks. Therefore, the inspection team concluded that this standard was not met.

78. 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, 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 table](#).

Standard 5.6

79. The inspection team reviewed the information contained within the Programme Handbook in relation to the parts of the course where attendance is mandatory. Through discussions with students the inspection team heard a broad and basic understanding of this requirement of the course. The inspection team were satisfied that the standard was met and would like to attach a [recommendation](#) here to support the improvement of the clarity and detail provided to students.

Standard 5.7

80. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were able to review the Assessment Setting, Marking and Moderation Policy and the Assessment Policy. Students receive feedback from

summative and formative assessments within 20 days and during meetings with students, no concerns were raised about the timing or regularity of the feedback. Therefore, the inspection team were in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

81. The inspection team reviewed information on the website which details the policy and process for students to follow if they wish to make an academic appeal. During the meeting with staff involved in the delivery of support services, the inspection team heard that students are provided with guidance when they receive their results, which includes access to support from the Students' Union. Students are provided with appropriate signposting at all stages of the course about the university's policy and they are able to correspond directly via email with the central complaints team. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

82. As the qualifying course is a BA (Hons) Social Work, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

84. 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.

85. 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	2.1	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates clarity over capacity of statutory and non-statutory placement numbers in relation to student numbers, including within the context of the new PGDip course and the increase in demand.	27.8.22	Paragraph 38
2	2.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates they have developed systematic mechanisms which allows the education provider to have full oversight of all practice educators they work with, including the monitoring of their skills and experience and currency in their practice. Also, the Practice Observer Educator Checklist refers to registration with the HCPC, which needs to be updated.	27.8.22	Paragraph 44
3	3.5	The education provider will demonstrate mechanisms for regular and effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems involving employer partners, people with lived experience of social work and students.	27.8.22	Paragraph 51

4	3.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates the development and strengthening of the strategy aligning student numbers with local/regional placement capacity, involving employer partners.	27.8.22	Paragraph 53
5	4.2	The education provider will demonstrate the mechanisms in place for collaboration with employer partners, people with lived experience of social work and practitioners so that their views are incorporated into the design and ongoing development of the courses.	27.8.22	Paragraph 61
6	5.5	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that all information and links provided to students are complete with up to date information which references the current professional regulator and the relevant programme, including within programme specification.	27.8.22	Paragraph 78

Recommendations

86. 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	3.8	The inspectors are recommending that the university strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of resourcing in relation to staff and student numbers.	Paragraph 55
2	4.9	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider work with students to ensure that the academic calendar for assessment operates in a sensitive fashion given the demands of the programme.	Paragraph 68

3.	4.10	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider a review of the marking guidance and staff development sessions on providing feedback to ensure it is accurate and useful.	Paragraph 69
4.	5.6	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider including a section in the Course Handbook on mandatory attendance not just on placement in order to increase clarity for students.	Paragraph 79

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

87. Table breakdown of standards met during preapproval and inspection.

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	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	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.	☐	☒	☐
2.7 Ensure that policies and processes, including for whistleblowing, are in place for students to	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
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 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	☐	☒	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
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, ongoing development and review of the curriculum.	☐	☒	☐
4.3 Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
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.	☒	☐	☒
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	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
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.	☒	☐	☐
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.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Met with conditions	Recommendations
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

88. 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](#).

89. Inspectors will undertake the conditions review and make recommendations to Social Work England's decision maker.

90. This section of the report will be completed when the conditions review is completed.

	Standard not met	Condition	Inspector recommendation
1	2.1	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates clarity over capacity of statutory and non-statutory placement numbers in relation to student numbers, including within the context of the new PGDip course and the increase in demand.	Condition met.
2	2.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates they have developed systematic mechanisms which allows the education provider to have full oversight of all practice educators they work with, including the monitoring of their skills and experience and currency in their practice. Also, the Practice Observer Educator Checklist refers to registration with the HCPC, which needs to be updated.	Condition met.
3	3.5	The education provider will demonstrate mechanisms for regular and effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems involving employer partners, people with lived experience of social work and students.	Condition met.

4	3.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates the development and strengthening of the strategy aligning student numbers with local/regional placement capacity, involving employer partners.	Condition met.
5	4.2	The education provider will demonstrate the mechanisms in place for collaboration with employer partners, people with lived experience of social work and practitioners so that their views are incorporated into the design and ongoing development of the courses.	Condition met.
6	5.5	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that all information and links provided to students are complete with up to date information which references the current professional regulator and the relevant programme, including within programme specification.	Condition met.

Findings

91. This conditions review was undertaken as a result of conditions set during course approval as outlined in the original inspection report above.

92. After the review of the documentary evidence, the inspection team are satisfied that all of the conditions set against the approval of the BA (Hons) Social Work course are met.

93. In relation to standard 2.1, the course provider has submitted evidence of how they will manage capacity of statutory and non-statutory placement numbers aligned with student numbers, giving consideration to the demand of the new course. Evidence submitted in relation to this condition includes minutes from the Social Work Practice Learning Business Group meeting which is attended by placement provider representatives from both statutory and non-statutory organisations. Terms of reference for this group are being consulted on so as to ensure sustainability and a clear understanding of the purpose of establishing placement capacity in the region. Inspectors observed that it will be pertinent

for the course team to continue to maintain focus on aligning placement numbers with placement capacity, especially as demand through the new course increases and more placements are required in year 2 and beyond. Further evidence included communication with non-statutory placement providers regarding placement numbers and a flowchart depicting the placement matching process timeline. This standard is now met.

94. In relation to standard 2.6 the course provider submitted evidence which demonstrates how they will maintain necessary oversight of all practice educators they work with. This evidence included a practice educator information form which will be required to be completed prior to a practice educator being matched with a student. Evidence also included the Practice Observer Educator Checklist which has been updated to reflect the new process in place. This standard is now met.

95. In relation to standard 3.5 the course provider submitted evidence which demonstrates how they will monitor, evaluate and improve their courses, with involvement from employer partners, people with lived experience of social work and students. Evidence included the plans for the bi-annual Programme Committee meetings and an annual review which will be attended by all relevant stakeholders. Evidence also illustrated details of the re-established Social Work Practice Learning Business Group, co-chaired by the Lead Social Worker and an employer partner. In addition to this, evidence was submitted to show the intention and consultation to establish curriculum review meetings. Further evidence included details for the service user and carer group meetings and the student representative meetings, which convenes 3 times a year. The standard is now met.

96. In relation to standard 3.6 the course provider submitted evidence which illustrates the work being undertaken to establish collaborative links with employer partners to strengthen the planning to align student numbers with placement capacity regionally. Evidence included details of communication with the Peninsula Social Work Education Group requesting updated information about placement capacity. The re-established Social Work Practice Learning Business Group is also a forum where the course provider will be enabled to strengthen and develop the strategy to align student numbers with placement capacity. Inspectors reiterated their observation that it will be pertinent for the course team to continue to maintain focus on aligning placement numbers with placement capacity, especially as demand through the new course increases and more placements are required in year 2 and beyond. In relation to standard 3.6, this would involve maintaining the integrity of the strategy in place. The standard is now met.

97. In relation to standard 4.2 the course provider submitted evidence to show how the views of with employer partners, people with lived experience of social work and practitioners are incorporated into the design of the course. The course provider referred to the stakeholder meetings cycle, outlined under standard 3.5 above. Further evidence

submitted included details of the planning and delivering of CPD sessions for social workers and practice educators, informed by the needs of the workforce. The standard is now met.

98. In relation to standard 5.5 the course provider submitted evidence which reflected updates for the current regulatory environment within relevant course paperwork and documentation. The inspectors observed that it would be important for the course provider to maintain reviews of student-facing sources of information to ensure documentation continued to be updated where necessary. The standard is now met.

Conclusion

99. The inspection team is recommending that as the conditions have been met, the course be approved.

100. 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.

Regulator decision

Approved.