

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Kent

Course approval: BA (Hons) Social Work

Inspection dates: 21st – 24th June 2022

Report date:	18.07.2022
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	12.09.2022
Date conditions met and approved:	08.12.2022

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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. University of Kent was inspected as part of the Social Work England reapproval cycle; whereby all course providers with qualifying social work courses will be inspected against the new Education and Training Standards 2021.

Inspection ID	UKR1
Course provider	University of Kent
Validating body (if different)	N/A
Course inspected	BA (Hons) Social Work
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	55
Date of inspection	21 st – 24 th June 2022
Inspection team	Catherine Denny Education Quality Assurance Officer David Childs Registrant Inspector Priscilla McGuire Lay Inspector Zoe Burke Education Quality Assurance Operations Manager
Inspector recommendation	Approved with conditions
Approval outcome	Approved with conditions

Language

16. In this document we describe University of Kent as ‘the education provider’ or ‘the university’ and we describe the BA Social Work as ‘the course’.

Inspection

17. A remote inspection took place from 21st – 24th of June 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.

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

Conflict of interest

19. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

20. The inspection team met with a variety of students from the BA Social Work course, alongside students from the Social Work Degree Apprenticeship (SWDA) from a range of years in their studies. Seven attendees were student representatives for their course. Topics for discussions included their experience of application and admissions, ability to access support services within the university, placement experiences, teaching and assessment and experience of issues relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from BA and SWDA course teams, senior leadership, admissions, student support, library and academic staff and administrative support services.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in the Partnership Initiative (PI) at the University of Kent. Discussions included their involvement in application and admissions processes, contributions to course design and review, training and development opportunities and support to fulfil their role.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including representatives from local authorities, local voluntary partners and practice educators.

Findings

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

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

25. The university provided documentary evidence through their BA Admissions Handbook to demonstrate how admissions processes ensure applicants have the necessary skills to meet the requirements of the course. This included academic and non-academic requirements as well as entry level descriptors mapping to the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).

26. Documentary evidence that outlined processes for interview and selection indicated there were different processes for students who obtain a place on the course via clearing. Inspectors enquired about the absence of the observed group discussion when accessing the course through clearing processes. The university confirmed that applicants through clearing engage in the written test and formal interview but, not the group discussion element of interview. The inspection team queried how parity for students applying for a place on the course was ensured due to differences in experience. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met with a recommendation around ensuring an equitable interview process for all candidates. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [recommendations](#) section of this report.

Standard 1.2

27. The university considers prior relevant experience when reviewing candidates' personal statements at the application stage. The programme director for the course reviews all personal statements to assess whether candidates demonstrate an awareness of social work values and have knowledge and experience of social work practice. Students commented that the personal experience reported within the personal statement is continuously explored throughout the admissions process. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

28. Inspectors were provided with evidence which outlined the involvement of the Partnership Initiative (a group of people with lived experience of social work) in admissions processes. During the inspection, members of the Partnership Initiative confirmed that they lead on the observed group discussion element of the selection process. Representatives of

the group explained that they are involved in developing scenarios which are the basis for the group discussion, and in the marking and feedback for applicants who take part.

29. Employer partners confirmed that their role in interviews was embedded within the formal interview aspect of the process. Partners cited that they were able to use interview panels to further understand the past experiences of candidates, including work and personal experience of social work. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

30. The suitability of applicants is initially explored via the personal statement, references and a written test. Documentary evidence submitted by the university outlined how applicants who have been successful in the early stages are then expected to complete a criminal activity disclosure form, ahead of being invited to participate in an observed group discussion and formal interview. Applicants who made a positive disclosure are invited to provide detailed information which is then shared with a virtual suitability panel, who review information from the applicant alongside an academic panel member.

31. In addition to criminal convictions disclosures, applicants are also asked to share details of any disciplinary issues they have been subject to which are followed up on during formal interview. Furthermore, suitability in relation to health is explored via a health declaration form which allows the university to assess whether the course can be delivered in a way that does not disadvantage students. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

32. The admissions handbook highlights the university's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), including guidance to support students who require reasonable adjustments during the application process. The inspection team were also able to understand more about the university's wider commitment to EDI, including a focus on gender equality, racial equality and fair access for people with disabilities.

33. The inspection team were assured that academic members of interview panels have accessed appropriate EDI training to support them to fulfil their role. As a result, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

34. The course information documentation provides an overview of the structure and demands of the course. The information contained within documentation is enhanced via open day events for prospective candidates, where more detailed information about the role of a social worker and practice placement experiences is shared. The course team confirmed that presentations and recordings from these events is uploaded to the university website for those who were unable to attend in person.

35. The inspection team queried what level of information is provided to students in relation to costs associated with the course, including those associated with DBS checks and potential travel costs. The university confirmed that students are made aware of DBS costs upon being offered a place on the course and that the potential need to travel to placements is discussed during interview. The inspection team suggested that this information could be highlighted through course materials and on the education providers website to ensure students are fully informed of potential costs from the point of application. The inspection team agreed that a recommendation in this area would be appropriate. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [recommendations](#) section of this report.

36. During the review of documentary evidence, the inspection team highlighted that some of the public facing material available to prospective candidates did not accurately identify Social Work England as the specialist regulator or reference the most recent Education and Training Standards (2021). Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that conditions are appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standards, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the [conditions](#) section.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

37. The evidence provided against the standard showed that all placements on the course meet the minimum length and statutory requirements. The inspection team heard that students complete a 70-day placement in the second year of study which is followed by a 100-day placement in the third and final year. The education provider confirmed that the 100-day placement is usually researched for placements in a local authority or an organisation that undertakes statutory work. Placements are supported via 30 skills days over the duration of the course which prepare students for direct professional practice.

38. The placement manager from the university works in close liaison with the teaching partnership and local partners to ensure appropriate capacity for placements. Once placements are assigned, the activities and available tasks offered to students are discussed via initial placement meetings to ensure they are appropriate. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.2

39. Documentary evidence provided ahead of inspection showed that placement expectations are mapped through the BA handbook where relevant knowledge and skills for social workers are mapped alongside the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).

Placement agreement meetings held ahead of student allocation allow opportunities for the education provider and employer partner to reflect upon relevant areas of the PCF, and identify appropriate learning opportunities for the placement.

40. The inspection team met with the university placement team, employer partners, practice educators and students to discuss their experiences of placement. The university confirmed that students are allocated to appropriate placements following consideration of experience, access needs and preference. Once students are matched with a placement, their profile is shared with the employer partner who then considers how they might support gaps in knowledge and experience over the course of the placement. The placement manager also outlines the support available from the university to ensure consistency for students. One employer outlined how interviews with students, ahead of their placement starting, support them to appropriately address any gaps in understanding from the first day.

41. Overall, students commented that they felt placements offered a breadth of opportunities for learning which supported the development of their knowledge and experience. One student commented that their experience on placement helped to inform future career prospects and explore an area of social work they had not considered previously. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

42. The university outlined the processes in place to ensure that students have appropriate induction, supervision and support for the duration of their placement. The meetings held between the university placement manager and employer outline expectations in relation to placement, and employers are expected to sign a placement agreement. The university completes health and safety audits of placement and requires employers to sign documentation which assures them that necessary policies and procedures are in place.

43. Practice educators confirmed that they play a significant role in placement inductions and meet with students ahead of their start date to explore prior experience and skills. They also ensure that students have a clear understanding of different staff roles, such as practice educator, on-site supervisor and placement tutor, and their responsibilities. Practice educators play a significant role in the placement agreement meeting and subsequent review meetings as well as offering ongoing supervision to students for the duration of placement. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

44. Documentary evidence provided by the university showed that student roles and responsibilities are guided by the practice learning agreement meeting, which is held at the start of the placement. These agreements are followed up with a mid-point meeting where progress and support required is reviewed. Meetings are supported by a team around the

student which includes the practice educator, on site supervisor and placement tutor to ensure a holistic approach to continuous development. The placement practice handbook also outlines all parties for the placement duration.

45. During meetings with students, the inspection team heard that support from the university in relation to placement responsibilities and any issues was positive. Students acknowledged some challenges that had presented themselves because of the pandemic, however communication from the university in relation to such matters was positive. Practice educators provided clear examples of situations where they had responded to students who had been assigned inappropriate levels of responsibility on placement and the swift response from the university. As a result, the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

46. The education provider highlighted that the course attracts students from a range of backgrounds with some having no direct work experience in a social work setting. To ensure that all students are prepared for their first placement, there is a requirement that they undertake 70 hours on skills-based modules. The Readiness for Direct Practice module requires students to submit a portfolio which includes sign off from a practice educator to confirm suitability to practice. This module has a pass compulsory requirement ahead of direct practice. In addition to skills days and portfolio submission, student's complete hours in practice shadowing social workers. Currently this is completed over two days, however the university plans to increase this to 5 days and has support from local employer partners to do so. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

47. There is a clear job description in place for practice educators which outlines the essential requirements for the role. A robust interview process ensures that the education provider sees all relevant documentation and checks the level of qualification for all practice educators ahead of appointment.

48. Practice educators are supported by the placement manager upon commencing their employment with the university to consolidate their understanding of the role and to ensure understanding of learning and portfolio requirements. Throughout the academic year, the university facilitates workshops for practice educators to develop knowledge in relation to contextual issues and to support university priorities in areas such as EDI. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 2.7

49. Documentary evidence provided by the university outlined procedures for whistleblowing within the university as well as during periods of direct practice. The BA

Handbook outlines the different routes students can use to raise concerns either to staff within the university or whilst out on placement. This is reinforced in the 'readiness for direct practice' module and again during placement induction. Supervision meetings and formal review opportunities provide additional opportunities for students to raise concerns. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

50. Social work sits within the School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research (SSPSSR) which is part of the division for the study of Law, Society and Social Justice (LSSJ). The head of school ensures there is appropriate support and resources for social work education which is the largest element of work of the SSPSSR. The head of social work maintains strong links between the head of school and senior leadership in respect of resourcing and quality management of the social work routes on offer within the university. The BA course team are led by a designated director of studies who is a key link to the head of school, as well as being a member of the teaching staff.

51. During the inspection, the inspection team heard that professional services within the school work well in collaboration with academics, and there is appropriate governance which filters up and down through the structure. The inspection team noted that there are clear lines of accountability and those involved in social work education present as a cohesive team. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

52. Prior to the inspection event, the inspection team were able to view module specifications that are shared with placement providers ahead of student allocation. The specifications ensure providers are aware of their responsibility to provide opportunities that enable learners to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards and appropriately evidence their learning towards identified outcomes. The provider also submitted evidence of partnership agreements between the local authority and neighbouring higher education institute which outline the responsibilities of all parties to provide effective education and training.

53. To ensure that students access appropriate education and training on an ongoing basis during placement, the university requires all parties to complete Quality Assurance of Placement Learning (QAPL) forms. The QAPL process is reviewed by the university placement manager so that any issues can be identified and responded to in a timely manner. Where placements experience difficulties, discussions are held between relevant staff and if appropriate, action plans are co-produced. If difficulties persist, the provision of a Practice Assessment Panel (PAP) explores issues and make recommendations on next steps. During the inspection, all stakeholder groups were able to articulate the processes

outlined in documentary evidence and recognised the routes to take when faced with placement challenges. The inspection team were satisfied this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

54. The inspection team heard that the placement manager discusses expectations for policies and procedures during the placement agreement meeting with employer partners. The employer is expected to sign up to an agreement that confirms that they have the required policies and procedures in place and share a commitment to the university anti-racism statement. The placement manager also completes a health and safety checklist as well as sharing details of any reasonable adjustments required for individual students.

55. The inspection team queried whether the university ever see copies of policies and procedures held by employer partners at any point during the placement agreement meeting, or throughout the placement itself. The university confirmed that currently assurance is taken from employers signing the placement agreement documentation, but copies are not currently seen, or spot checked. The inspection team queried how the university can be assured that policies are robust and in line with expectations without checking them directly, particularly when seeking a new placement provider. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that conditions are appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standards, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the [conditions](#) section. The inspection team also made a recommendation in relation to ongoing review of policies for established employer partners that the university has worked with over a longer period. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [recommendations](#) section of this report.

Standard 3.4

56. During a meeting with employer partners, the inspection team heard about the collaborative working that has been developed between the university and placement providers. The consultation between the university and employers around the delivery of the course is ongoing and there is a focus on ensuring there are strong links between academic learning and that this occurs in practice. Employers highlighted how the teaching partnership has supported practitioner teachers to become involved in the delivery of some aspects of the course. Further to this, the university seeks feedback from employers with regards to the delivery of the practice educator programme.

57. One employer partner highlighted that whilst they are geographically placed further away from the university and have other education providers within their locality, they made the conscious decision to partner with the University of Kent. This was due to their commitment to partnership working with employers and the provision of their practice

educators. As a result of the feedback from employer partners and the course team, the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

58. Evidence provided prior to inspection showed that the university seeks feedback from a range of stakeholders on a regular basis. This is obtained via the gathering of module and mid-term evaluations from students, annual stakeholder events which include employers, students and people with lived experience, QAPL processes, Placement Assessment Panel (PAP) and quarterly meetings with the Partnership Initiative (PI) where feedback on the delivery and assessment of modules with PI involvement is gathered.

59. During the inspection, the course team also outlined annual university monitoring processes which require the course team to report on the quality of the programme and any enhancements required as a result of feedback from stakeholder events and data analysis.

60. The inspection team heard about some of the direct impacts of monitoring and evaluation activities, which included changes to the timeline of specific modules and induction experience because of feedback from students. The education provider has also introduced travel pods to support non-driving students to manage demands of travel to and from placements following feedback from stakeholders. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

61. The inspection team heard how the university plans for placements at a strategic and operational level. The university meets with local employer partners through the teaching partnership each year to look at projected numbers and explore availability of practice educators and links to future recruitment. Larger local councils make agreements for placement numbers which are then shared between the university and another local placement provider. Any capacity issues are escalated to senior management at the earliest point so that alternative plans can be made. The course team highlighted that workforce strategy discussions always remain open for discussion throughout the year which allows for any unexpected placement issues to be discussed when needed. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

62. Prior to inspection, the inspection team were able to review CVs for staff currently in post and also the job descriptor for the Head of Social Work role. The inspection team were satisfied that the Head of Social Work was appropriately qualified and is registered with Social Work England. The university clarified that appropriate arrangements are in place to employ an appropriate person to the role should there be a change in circumstance. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

63. Through review of CVs, the inspection team were assured that all staff on the course have the appropriate level of experience and qualification. The CVs provided allowed an opportunity to review past academic and professional achievements which showed there was diversity of experience. The course team were able to explain their current workload allocation model to demonstrate that there is capacity within the team to deliver an effective course.

64. During the inspection there were areas of the course that appeared to have a single point of dependency on specific staff. The inspection team questioned what contingencies were available in these situations to ensure there was not an impact on the course if a member of staff is unable to fulfil their role. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met with a recommendation around ongoing review of such roles to mitigate potential risk. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [recommendations](#) section of this report.

Standard 3.9

65. The university provided details of how student performance and retention is analysed on a frequent basis to identify any achievement gaps or common issues and necessary next steps. The inspection team were able to review minutes from internal meetings where issues were outlined and had discussions which explored potential reasons for this. Documentary evidence also showed the university commitment to addressing issues relating to EDI and the involvement of the Student Action for Diversity (STAND) group to address issues of diversity, oppression and discrimination in social work education and practice within the context of wider social inequalities.

66. During discussions with the course team, the inspection team heard about specific outputs following data analysis and evaluation which included reviewing assessments to ensure they can capture student abilities, decolonising of the curriculum to ensure diverse literature is used and the introduction of workshops which explore gender issues in children and young people. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

67. The university outlined how staff are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice. The inspection team heard how staff have spent time in practice shadowing colleagues in areas outside of their specialism to support their development. Academics are also funded by the teaching partnership to spend 1-2 days per academic year in practice to support their professional knowledge. Continuous professional development is also a feature of course team planning days where requirements are discussed and opportunities for staff are identified. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

68. Documentary evidence provided by the university demonstrated how the programme is mapped against the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), Subject Benchmark Statement for Social Work and the Social Work England Education and Training Standards. Learning outcomes detailed within module specifications and guidance around tasks ensure that students are clear on how to achieve learning outcomes during the course. The course team explained how all module specifications are reviewed by the university quality assurance department to ensure that they meet necessary requirements. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

69. As evidenced in standard 1.3 and 3.5, the university were able to evidence how employer partners, people with lived experience of social work and practice educators are involved in the design and review of the course. During the inspection, practice educators shared how regular meetings as a network allow them to provide constructive feedback to the university about placement processes and the preparedness of students for direct practice based on curriculum content. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

70. Following review of documentary evidence which included university wide EDI initiatives and course specific responses to issues pertinent to the student population, the inspection team were satisfied that the course had been planned with appropriate principles in mind. The inspection team heard from staff and students that there is appropriate guidance and support in place to ensure that students can access resources to support their mental health and wellbeing as well as secure appropriate adaptations where necessary. Students provided concrete examples of how the university had supported them to seek specific diagnosis in relation to specific learning difficulties and obtain support whilst studying on the course. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

71. The university outlined the range of methods used to ensure that the course is continually updated in response to current issues and developments. This includes annual stakeholder reviews, university programme annual monitoring and working with the teaching partnership. The inspection team heard that practitioner teachers who are currently active in practice provide teaching in specialist areas, and members of the course team are given protected time in practice which then informs course developments.

72. The inspection team heard about the commitment to ongoing development within the course team with academics being encouraged to develop new skills through periods of study leave, which then inform course developments. There is also a focus on promoting research currently being undertaken by members of the course team which is shared amongst the course team and wider university. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

73. Documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection outlined modules which specifically teach theoretical concepts and how they link to practice. The placement handbook provided further evidence about how teaching on the course can be applied through direct practice. Practice educators articulated the ways in which they encourage students to apply theory in real life scenarios whilst on placement. This is promoted through regular supervision sessions and completion of weekly reflective logs which students are expected to complete. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard is met.

Standard 4.6

74. The university ensures students receive opportunities to learn from other disciplines both during direct practice and through taught content. Whilst on placement, reflective writing tasks require students to specifically demonstrate their understanding of different organisations within the practice setting. Students are also required to provide evidence that highlights the way they have worked with other professions whilst on placement.

75. In the final year of the course, students undertake a module which focuses upon multi-disciplinary learning. The taught sessions during this module are led by practitioners from other disciplines to ensure authenticity. The teaching partnership also invites colleagues from other areas to attend student forums and work alongside social work students. The inspection team heard about a current initiative between the teaching partnership and local authority, where a study is being undertaken with the virtual school team to promote joined up working between social care students and educational psychologists who work closely with the team. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

76. The evidence provided to meet this standard demonstrated clear mapping of academic hours for students on the course. Comments from external examiner reports supported the university's current model and delivery of the course. Meetings with students confirmed that academic hours are appropriate and supported the development of knowledge in relation to social work theory and practice. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

77. The university provided assessment mapping for all modules to ensure there is a variety of methods used to enable students to meet the intended learning outcomes. There was also detail provided to outline how tasks are mapped to the professional and academic standards of the course. The course team also shared evidence of their review of assessment which highlighted formative and summative assessment opportunities within their modules and next steps in development. The inspection team were satisfied that a robust approach is taken to assessment and therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

78. The evidence provided by the university demonstrated that assessments are carried out at appropriate stages during the course and follow a staged approach to student development. The inspection team also heard about how the course team have responded to feedback sought through module evaluations to stagger assessments so that students do not feel overwhelmed at certain points of the course. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

79. The inspection team were able to review the university's assessment and feedback policy which outlined expected structures that should be followed when providing feedback to students. There was also a clear timescale referenced in which feedback should be provided. The course team outlined opportunities for students to receive feedback on formative tasks which supported their development and approach to future tasks.

80. During meetings with students, attendees confirmed that they valued meaningful verbal feedback and felt that this had supported them to identify areas for development. Where this is done well, students reported meaningful impact. However, some students reported that this approach was not consistent. For example, a student representative commented that there had been some positive experiences of well-balanced feedback however, on other occasions, students felt that feedback was not always easy to access or timely. Whilst there were some differing experiences reported, the inspection team agreed on balance that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

81. The evidence provided demonstrated that assessments are carried out by appropriately qualified staff and practitioners. Where stakeholders are involved in providing feedback, appropriate training and development opportunities are identified to ensure this is managed effectively. The inspection team were also able to review samples of external examiner reports and understood that recruitment to this role considered previous

knowledge and experience of social work and qualifying social work programmes. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

82. The university provided a range of documentary evidence to ensure systems in place to manage student progression are effective. Systems in place are informed by a range of professionals such as academics, practice educators and members of the Partnership Initiative group. Students are observed regularly in practice and submit evidence that provides feedback from the service users the students have interacted with. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

83. The university outlined their aim to deliver research-led social work education which equips students with the knowledge, skills, confidence and critical understanding to practise social work in complex and demanding environments. The course team demonstrate their own commitment to social work research and ensure that this is reflected in module content. Practice educators also support students to adopt an evidence-informed approach through guiding students to consider different perspectives when working in direct practice. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

84. During inspection activity, the inspection team were able to meet with a range of student support services. Details of a variety of services were outlined which included disability support, pastoral support, careers and employability advice, library services and academic tutors. Students are made aware of the support available during admission and induction and services can be accessed on an ongoing basis via referral for the duration of the course.

85. Staff from various support services were able to outline levels of engagement from students with their services and reported a positive uptake for students on the course. During meetings with students, the inspection team heard that all felt they knew how to access support and reported to responses being timely and effective when needed. All stakeholders confirmed that students can access services remotely when on placement and where appropriate, university teams can offer direct support to students to manage difficulties that arise during periods of offsite activity. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

86. Students on the course are allocated an academic advisor who meets with them on a termly basis to discuss their progress and identify any necessary support. Where support is required, academic advisors can refer directly into student support services for 1:1 appointments. This support can include sessions through the library to develop areas such as research skills.

87. During the meeting with student support services, the inspection team heard about planned interventions that are offered to develop student abilities in areas such as study skills, literacy and numeracy. This includes embedded workshops within the course, online bitesize programmes and a numeracy and statistics programme which students can drop in to when required. Students confirmed that they understood what academic support was available and how to access this if required. The inspection team agreed that documentary evidence, alongside feedback from discussions with key stakeholders confirmed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

88. The education provider submitted a copy of their 'Social Work Professional Suitability Procedure' as part of the inspection. The documentation outlined how university staff respond to issues that may bring into question a student's ability to study and practice in a safe manner. Also included were the supportive measures in place to address issues relating to health or wellbeing.

89. During the inspection, the university also outlined the role of the Practice Assessment Panel (PAP) to assess suitability of students where there are issues in relation to placement. Key stakeholders, such as employer partners and practice educators, were able to outline to the process for PAP and understood when this might be a process to engage with. The inspection team also heard how student declarations in relation to suitability are continually reviewed prior to placement activity. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

90. The university submitted a wide range of documentary evidence to demonstrate the range of support that is available to students who require reasonable adjustments to access the course successfully. This evidence was reinforced through discussions with staff from support services, who explained processes and provided examples of where students who had Inclusive Learning Plans (ILP's) to support them could access support. The inspection team heard how ILP's are accessible to teaching staff and personal tutors to ensure consistency of support across different modules. Student feedback confirmed that appropriate measures are in place to ensure reasonable adjustments and current processes work well within the university. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

91. Students are made aware of the course curriculum and placement requirements during the admissions process, either via attendance at open day events or through course material that is shared with applicants. When students enrol on the programme, they have a thorough induction process which highlights the role of Social Work England as the regulator and introduces the Professional Standards and PCF. This is reinforced through course documentation such as programme specifications and assessment criteria.

92. All students on the course take part in annual careers and employability events which explore registration processes once qualified, Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and CPD requirements. Students demonstrated a clear understanding of CPD requirements during discussions and had a good understanding of the registration requirements post qualification. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.6

93. All course module guides include a clear statement in relation to attendance expectations. Where a student falls below 80% attendance, they are contacted by student support services to identify issues affecting attendance on the course. Where problems persist, face to face meetings are required to review progress and if improvements are seen, the academic diligence process can be initiated.

94. Placement attendance expectations are outlined within the placement handbook. Attendance on placement is closely monitored by the university, practice educator and on-site supervisor. Students demonstrated that they understand attendance expectations, particularly in relation to placement where there was the understanding that any missed day must be made up before completing any placement activity. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

95. The university Assessment and Feedback policy outlines the university's principles in providing feedback which includes ensuring that it is timely, constructive and developmental. Reports provided by the external examiner highlighted diverse assessment opportunities with comprehensive feedback that supports learning and development. In a meeting with students, some issues were highlighted where feedback had not always been received in a timely manner. The course team were able to provide a clear explanation of where this had happened and highlighted it as an anomaly as opposed to a regular occurrence. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

96. The university demonstrated that it has an academic appeals policy which is available to all students via the university website. The policy includes clear guidance in relation to

making an appeal and potential informal and formal resolutions. The academic appeal process was understood by students studying on the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

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

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

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

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

	Standard not currently met	Condition	Date for submission of evidence	Link
1	Standards 1.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that all course documentation available to current and prospective students accurately reflect Social Work England as the regulator and correctly reference the current Education and Training Standards.	Within one month of the regulator decision	Paragraph 37
2	Standards 3.3	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates processes are in place to ensure that new placement providers have a thorough audit of policies and procedures, which includes the education provider seeing physical or electronic copies.	Within 3 months of the regulator decision	Paragraph 56

Recommendations

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

	Standard	Detail	Link
1.	1.1	The inspection team is recommending that the education provider review processes in place for interviews for candidates who apply for a place through clearing to ensure that all students have a fair and equitable experience of entry onto the course.	Paragraph 27
2.	1.6	The inspection team are recommending that the university consider providing further detail in relation to the costs associated with the course during the application process so that prospective students are fully informed.	Paragraph 36
3.	3.3	The inspection team are recommending that there is a cycle of review of policies in place through placement providers to ensure these remain suitable and fit for purpose. This may include planned annual spot checks.	Paragraph 56
4.	3.8	The inspection team are recommending that the education provider conducts ongoing reviews of roles and responsibilities within the team, particularly where a single point of dependency is identified, to mitigate risk and ensure appropriate contingencies are in place.	Paragraph 65

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

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

Course approved with conditions.

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

About the conditions review

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.

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

This is in accordance with Social Work England's education and training rules 2019.

	Standard not met	Condition	Inspector recommendation following the conditions review
1.	1.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that all course documentation available to current and prospective students accurately reflect Social Work England as the regulator and correctly reference the current Education and Training Standards.	Condition met.
2.	3.3	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates processes are in place to ensure that new placement providers have a thorough audit of policies and procedures, which includes the education provider seeing physical or electronic copies.	Condition met.

Findings

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

After the review of the documentary evidence, the inspection team are satisfied that all of the conditions set against the approval of the BA Social Work and Social Work Degree Apprenticeship are met.

In relation to standard 1.6, the education provider submitted links to the University of Kent website where their BA Social Work and Social Work Degree Apprenticeship are advertised. Within both areas of the website, the course provider has referred to Social Work England as the regulator for the profession and provided links to the 2021 Education and Training Standards which the course is approved against. The inspection team are satisfied that evidence provided against the condition provides assurance that the standard is now met.

In relation to standard 3.3, the education provider submitted a copy of the placement learning agreement for the BA and the employer health and safety questionnaire for the Social Work Degree Apprenticeship. Both documents included reference to checks of key policies through induction to placement and a requirement for these to be signed off. In addition, the education provider submitted copies of spreadsheets which hold information about placements, policies checked, dates of checks and any actions taken. The inspection team are satisfied that the checks and processes evidenced confirm that there is a clear auditing process in place and agree that the condition against standard 3.3 is met.

Conclusion

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

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

Conditions met.