

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of East Anglia

Course approval: BA (Hons) Social Work Degree

Apprenticeship

Inspection dates: 31st August – 2nd September 2022

Report date:	21 st October 2022
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	20 th December 2022
Date conditions met and approved:	30th January 2023

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

What we do

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

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

- 9. During this time a draft plan for the inspection is developed and shared with the education provider, to make sure it is achievable at the point of inspection.
- 10. Once the inspectors and officer are satisfied that an inspection can take place, this is usually undertaken over a three- or four-day visit to the education provider. We then draft a report setting out what we found during the inspection and if and how our findings demonstrate that the course meets our standards.
- 11. The inspectors may recommend in this report that the course is approved with conditions, without conditions or that it does not meet the criteria for 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 decision about the approval of the course.
- 13. The 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 it we decide the conditions are not met.

Summary of Inspection

15. Course details: The University of East Anglia wish to run a BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship, starting in January 2023, and as such have sought approval from the regulator.

Inspection ID	UEA
Course provider	University of East Anglia
Validating body (if different)	N/A
Course inspected	BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship
Mode of Study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	30
Proposed first intake	January 2023
Date of inspection	31 st August – 2 nd September
Inspection team	Daisy Bragadini - Education Quality Assurance Officer
	David Amos - Lay Inspector
	Lee Pollard - Registrant Inspector
Inspector recommendation	Approved with conditions
Approval outcome	Approved with conditions

Language

16. In this document we describe the University of East Anglia as 'the education provider' or 'the university' and we describe the BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship as 'the course'.

Inspection

- 17. An onsite inspection took place from 31^{st} August 2^{nd} September 2022 at the main campus in Norwich where the education provider is based. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students on the undergraduate and postgraduate social work courses, 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 10 students from the BA (Hons) Social Work and MA Social Work courses. 6 of them were from the undergraduate course and 4 were from the postgraduate route, and all of them were from the second or third year or had recently completed their studies. Discussions included their curriculum, teaching and assessment, feedback and support, placement experiences and learning opportunities.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the admissions team, placement provision team, teaching and assessment teams and staff with overall responsibility for the course.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in admissions processes and procedures, design of the curriculum, research projects, assessment of students and monitoring and evaluation. Discussions included how they are involved in assessing and selecting candidates, assessing students before they start placements and research projects.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including a range of staff from Norfolk County Council, practice educators and practice educator leads,

early careers development leads, learning and development leads, principal social workers, service managers and executive directors.

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. Prior to the inspection the inspectors were presented with evidence which illustrated how the course provider offers a holistic assessment of candidates for the course. This included the admissions policy, apprentice job description, information about the entry requirements, including those specific to Norfolk County Council and Social Work England, and scoring criteria. The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) was used to facilitate assessment of the potential to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards and the person specification document was used to assess ICT skills. A selection day involved an assessed role play activity, an observed group activity and an interview. The inspection team met with staff involved in admissions and the assessment of candidates and understood how Norfolk County Council and the course provider work in collaboration to complete the assessment of potential students. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

26. The inspectors reviewed evidence including information provided to potential applicants and applicants regarding how prior relevant experience would be considered as part of the admissions process. Prior relevant experience was assessed at the application stage and candidates without sufficient experience would not progress to the next stage. During meetings held with staff involved in the admissions process from the university and Norfolk County Council, inspectors heard how principal social workers are consulted with where there are instances of ambiguity over this requirement. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

27. Prior to the inspection the inspectors reviewed documentary evidence which illustrated the ways in which employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work were involved in the admissions process. Questions used at the interview stage have been agreed with the local authority, who read applications and moderated their outcome decisions with the university. Panels involved in the admissions process included staff from Norfolk County Council and people with lived experience of social work with each representative applying a balanced contribution to the decision-making process. During the meetings held with staff involved in the admissions process, the inspectors heard from employer partners and people with lived experience about their involvement and use of shared and transparent assessment criteria. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

28. The inspection team reviewed evidence and met with staff involved in the admissions process, all of which evidenced a process followed by the course provider in partnership with Norfolk County Council to assess suitability of applicants. Candidates who successfully reach the selection day and interview were required to complete a declaration of suitability with Norfolk County Council taking a lead in addressing issues of suitability as candidates will become employees. The council consulted with the course director or fitness to practice lead where issues of suitability exist before an offer on the course was made. Norfolk County Council also complete an enhanced criminal conviction check and consult with the course provider where necessary and provided information about the outcomes of these checks. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

29. Prior to the inspection the inspectors reviewed the admissions and equal opportunities policies, which both illustrated how monitoring of the associated processes are completed, including statistical evaluation of application data. Inspectors were also provided with evidence highlighting how the teaching partnership is committed to an annual review by the admissions group involving a range of stakeholders. During the meetings held by the inspectors they were able to gain insight into how the policies were embedded into the application process and how applicants were informed of support available to them. During the selection event all applicants were asked if they required additional support and inspectors heard examples of adjustments being put in place for all candidates in a manner to prevent individuals' needs becoming apparent. All staff at the university complete online

courses on equality and unconscious bias and Norfolk County Council provide training for all staff involved in recruitment. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

30. Inspectors reviewed evidence regarding how applicants were provided with information to enable them to make an informed decision of whether to take up an offer on the course. This included information session slides, the course profile and information provided through the university's website. Information for applicants included detail on research interests and experience held by the teaching staff, the professional standards and information about placements. Inspectors heard how applicants were provided with suggested reading as they applied for their course and staff were available to be contacted if applicants had specific questions. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

- 31. Prior to the inspection, inspectors reviewed evidence which illustrated how apprentices on the course will complete at least 200 days on an assessed placement including 30 skills days. The course team made alterations to a typical rotational model for placements for apprenticeships and described how the apprentice will remain in their base team for the 3 years of the course. In year 2 apprentices will complete their first placement in a contrasting team within the local authority for 80 days, before returning to their base team. In year 3 they will complete their second placement in line with their base team, also within the local authority before returning again to their base team at the end of the placement. Inspectors heard that apprentices will be found additional statutory tasks within different teams if required although they do not provide formally split placements. Contrast between the placements will be ensured by enabling placements to take place in both adult and children's social work teams for each apprentice.
- 32. Inspectors were provided with a copy of the placement handbook currently used for students on the undergraduate and postgraduate social work courses at the university as it will form the base of the handbook used for the apprenticeship course. A requirement that the final form of this document be provided to the inspectors is addressed under standards 5.5 and 5.6.
- 33. Inspectors engaged in discussion with the course team about content and timetabling for the skills days for the course and heard examples of teaching currently provided for

undergraduate and postgraduate students. The inspectors would like to be provided with the finalised details for the skills days programme for the apprenticeship course.

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

Standard 2.2

35. Prior to the inspection, inspectors reviewed the Placement Handbook which will form the basis of the final copy used for the apprenticeship. They also reviewed the aims of the Suffolk Norfolk Social Work Teaching Partnership (SNSWTP) in relation to provision of practice learning opportunities. In addition, inspectors were provided with evidence in relation to the Practice Learning Advisory Panel (PLAP) which monitor and develop standards and consistency in practice learning and assessment. The Placement Learning Agreement details progression which needs to be achieved at level 1 and 2 within placements undertaken by apprentices and is mapped to the PCF and professional standards. Through regional partnerships with local authorities the course provider is part of the Eastern Quality of Practice Education and Placements Partnership as part of the SNSWTP which monitors the quality and provision of practice placements. Inspectors heard how practice educators ensure learning opportunities align with apprentices at level 1 and 2 of their course and are reviewed at the midway and final assessment points.

36. Inspectors were provided with a timetable for key development points of the course and were informed that the course team were in consultation with Norfolk County Council to develop the detail within the Placement Handbook. This will include mapping of the Knowledge Skills and Behaviours specific to the apprenticeship course and outlined in the apprenticeship standard. As we weren't able to see a final version of this, inspectors felt that this standard was currently not met.

37. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 2.2 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 proposed outcomes section.

Standard 2.3

38. Preceding the inspection, inspectors were able to review evidence illustrating the induction programme provided for apprentices by the employer, Norfolk County Council. This included guidelines for managers and how workload and progression are to be monitored and managed. During the meetings held with practice educators, inspectors gained insight into student hubs and regular supervision for apprentices, alongside support in the form of pre-placement workshops and pre-placement induction checklists. Induction training is provided by Norfolk County Council for all staff within an apprentice base team, and inductions are provided for each placement. The inspectors reviewed the Placement Learning Agreement which sets out the expectations for supervision, support and access to resources. During the meeting held with staff involved in providing support services at the university, inspectors heard how bespoke services aimed at apprentices are available. These take into consideration the particular demands placed on apprentices and are overseen by staff experienced in the nature of apprenticeship courses. The services respond by offering out of hours contact and have an understanding of the timetable of the course, for example. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

39. Inspectors reviewed evidence which illustrated how the PCF and professional standards were used to map the learning opportunities to ensure they were appropriate for the stage of education and training. Inspectors were informed that practice educators and onsite supervisors will also take into account the previous experience held by the apprentice and their base team. This will inform how they allocate learning opportunities and monitor responsibility for the apprentice while on placement at both levels 1 and 2. The remit of the PLAP and the QAPL forum will work to assess the alignment of an apprentices' stage of training and the responsibilities allocated to them. During the meeting held with current students, inspectors heard examples of how they felt prepared for suitable levels of responsibility, were provided with clear expectations and found the mid placement review useful in evaluating levels of responsibility. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

40. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors requested additional evidence in relation to how apprentices will be assessed for direct practice. They reviewed the module outline for Becoming A Social Work Apprentice, an assessment template for the observation of an apprentice's direct practice and guidance for apprentices whilst shadowing a social work practitioner. In year 1 apprentices will complete 3 direct observations of a social worker in their team and will be observed completing direct practice within their base team. The summative assessed preparation for direct practice will involve a simulated practice interview and a reflective essay. This module must be passed before apprentices can begin their first practice placement. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

41. Inspectors were able to review evidence including the QAPL protocol which outlined the objectives and functions and stipulated how registration of practice educators will be maintained, how continual professional development (CPD) will be coordinated and how information sharing will be managed to support practice educators. Inspectors were also able to review the current practice educator registration and reaccreditation form used for maintaining oversight of practice educators. The Placement Learning Agreement requires there to be an understanding of the procedure for complaints. During meetings held with practice educators, inspectors heard how they are required to update QAPL every 2 years with evidence of CPD and details of their registration. For those who have not completed current CPD a set task is allocated to them. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.7

42. Preceding the inspection, inspectors were able to review the whistleblowing flowchart which highlighted to students the process which is followed and the Reporting Wrongdoing policy for issues at the university. Within the Course Handbook, apprentices have access to a system called Report and Support which helps them to deal with concerns about themselves or others. Within the university's policy on placements, the placement provider and the university have a shared process to follow if apprentices need to raise a concern. During meetings held with students on current courses, inspectors were assured that there was a comprehensive understanding of policies to challenge unsafe behaviours, including for whistleblowing. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

43. Prior to the inspection, within the initial and additional evidence submission, inspectors were informed that there will be 2 course directors working in partnership to deliver the course. The Course Directors and Director for Teaching and Learning Quality have responsibility for the curriculum and assessment for the course and will work in close partnership with each other. Inspectors were provided with the staff roles and management structure, illustrating lines of accountability. During the inspection, inspectors were informed further about the annual qualifying programme review, which will involve partners from Norfolk County Council. Within meetings held with the course team and senior managers, the inspectors heard that strategic meetings are held 4 times a year between the university and Norfolk County Council, which includes workforce development planning. Twice a year a management and governance committee will meet with a particular focus on the apprenticeship course, which will run alongside a twice monthly committee maintaining oversight of the day-to-day running of the course. Inspectors met with the Strategic Chair at Norfolk County Council and gained insight into how the local authority will be involved in the management of the course alongside university staff. The People and Communities select committee will meet twice a year and will be presented with a report on the management and outcomes of the course. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

44. The inspectors reviewed documentary evidence prior to the inspection highlighting the partnership and agreement with Norfolk County Council to provide education and training, including a placement provider agreement. Both the university and Norfolk County Council are members of the Suffolk and Norfolk Social Work Teaching Partnership (SNSWTP) where placement provision for social work students is a main focus area. Inspectors also reviewed the placement handbook which is informed by the placement policy, offers guidance to placement providers and is mapped to the professional standards and the PCF. During meetings inspectors spoke to staff involved in placement provision, including employer partners and members of the Practice Learning Advisory Panel (PLAP), chaired by the Placement Director, and explored how practice placement breakdown is managed. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

45. Prior to the inspection, inspectors reviewed the employer's health and safety policy and induction pack which detail the policies, support and resources available to apprentices at the local authority. The placement agreement which is held with NCC includes a commitment for the employer to provide policies and procedures in relation to health,

wellbeing and risk. During meetings held with the employer partner, the inspectors heard about the range of support apprentices will be able to access whilst on placement and in their base team. The placement handbook highlights how health and risk will be managed and provided for and outlines the individuals holding responsibility for supporting apprentices, at placement and at university. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

46. Inspectors were able to review documentary evidence which outlined the involvement of Norfolk County Council (NCC) with the course, including the management, monitoring and organisation of practice placements. Since 2017 the university has been a member of the SNSWTP, working alongside NCC. Inspectors reviewed evidence that the development of the course has enabled further integration and collaboration between the 2 partners. Inspectors, during meetings, understood that practitioners teach on the current courses and will do so on the new course. The employer is involved in recruitment, course design and evaluation, operation and delivery. During several meetings held throughout the inspection, inspectors met with practice educators, practice educator leads, early careers development leads, learning and development leads, principal social workers, service managers and executive directors. These meetings provided inspectors with examples of the ways in which employers are involved in the course. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

47. Prior to the inspection, inspectors received additional evidence which described the areas of oversight for quality assurance and where responsibility will be located, including relevant stakeholder involvement. Inspectors were provided with evidence showing how senior and operational leaders and learning and development leads will manage apprentice capacity, recruitment, course development and governance at NCC. Inspectors also gained insight into key meetings which will provide mechanisms for assessment of the course. These will include tripartite meetings every 12 weeks, staff and student liaison meetings each term, bimonthly operations meetings, a course committee held twice a year and an annual programme review. The team also plan an assessment and moderation day and an admissions review, including planning for the following year. During the meetings held with employer partners the inspectors heard how input from the local authority formed the foundation of the development of the course. They were also assured that regular and effective channels of feedback were utilised. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

48. Inspectors were able to review initial and additional evidence in relation to the strategy to align apprentice numbers with local and regional placement capacity. Inspectors were able to understand the consideration given by the employer and university to the availability of practice placements in relation to availability of practice educators, and the impact provision of other course cohorts may have on placement and support staff numbers. Inspectors were informed that the desire to start the course in January would facilitate workforce planning to manage capacity for apprentice placements, as demand from the teaching partnership and other qualifying routes is reduced at that point. During the meeting held with senior managers, inspectors heard how shared planning between the university and NCC enabled a balance to be reached with placements being provided in both adult and children's social work teams. Inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

49. Prior to the inspection the inspectors were provided with CVs for the lead social worker who holds overall responsibility for the course. This evidence illustrated the appropriate qualification and experience of the lead social worker and registration status was confirmed. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

50. In relation to this standard, inspectors reviewed evidence of planning of resourcing and staff to meet the demands of the new course. Inspectors reviewed CVs for current staff which exemplified a broad range of experience in contrasting areas of social work, research areas and experience in the delivery of social work education. Inspectors were also able to review evidence which illustrated the agreement for provision of staff, including practice educators at NCC. Associate tutors are requested to contribute to teaching when particular areas of expertise are required to be covered. Plans were clear in relation to additional recruitment for the new course and current staff in support services exemplified capacity to provide for apprentices. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

51. Inspectors were able to review evidence which outlined how students' performance is evaluated on the current programmes. They were provided with the Teaching Excellence Plan which highlighted some of the actions taking place including priorities to develop further their ambitions for an inclusive and decolonised group of programmes. Work is

ongoing to gather data to make a submission for the Athena Swan Charter Bronze Award, to encourage care experienced young people to apply to their courses and to use funds from Access To Participation to support students. The School's assessment strategy included a variety of mechanisms to monitor students' progression, including moderation of assessment. The course and module review and exam boards will be used to gather and evaluate data on outcomes for students. Inspectors understood that the School will be reporting on achievement rates to the Education Skills Funding Agency on a monthly basis. During meetings held with employer partners from NCC the inspectors heard how applicants with care experience were encouraged to apply by support staff and entry requirements such as 2 years' previous experience were modified, with some places being ringfenced for others. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

52. Inspectors reviewed documentary evidence submitted which outlined the processes used to monitor performance of staff and deliver professional training. Inspectors heard how staff regularly share updates on current research and practice, and during meetings inspectors were informed of a range of research and collaborative projects involving people with lived experience of social work and academic staff. During a meeting held with senior managers it was explained that the teaching partnership had reported a reduced uptake of offers for staff to visit practice teams regularly, although staff involved in research maintained engagement with them. Briefing sessions will be pre-recorded for practice educators who are supporting apprentices in order to support them to maintain their knowledge in relation to professional practice. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

53. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to 3.10. Full details can be found in the <u>proposed outcomes</u> section.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

54. Preceding the inspection, inspectors were able to review the placement and course handbooks for the current courses which will form the basis of the handbooks to be used for the course. The handbooks refer to the professional standards and the PCF, and the module outlines were mapped to the professional standards. The Apprenticeship Standard will also be used to guide the content, structure and delivery of the course which will be reflected within the handbooks, placement paperwork and throughout all module outlines. At the point of evidence submission, mapping exercises to the Apprenticeship Standard was

ongoing. Inspectors reviewed the assessment strategy for the course which illustrates how each module integrates the professional standards and inspectors understood how the PCF would be used to differentiate between placements 1 and 2.

55. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 4.1 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 <u>proposed outcomes</u> section.

Standard 4.2

56. Within the evidence submission inspectors were able to review the mechanisms for involving employers, practitioners and people with lived experience of social work in the design, ongoing development and review of the curriculum. Inspectors were provided with evidence of the work undertaken by the SNSWTP, which involves employer partners, people with lived experience of social work and practitioners. Members of these relevant stakeholder groups are also represented at the annual course review. Inspectors heard about information sharing between the university and managers and practice educators at NCC, who are kept informed of the curriculum, expectations and teaching days. Feedback from employer partners and apprentices at NCC informed recent changes manifesting in a move away from a rotational model for placements to a base team format. Members of the people with lived experience group were part of the working group involved in the very first stages of the design of the course. They continue their involvement within admissions design and delivery and sit on the management panel of the teaching partnership. During a range of meetings held as part of the inspection, inspectors were provided with multiple opportunities to hear from and discuss with people with lived experience of social work about their work with the university. Examples included being involved in teaching sessions on anti-discriminatory practice and intersectionality, being involved in role play and presentation assessments and reviewing placement portfolios through the Placement Learning Assessment Panel. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

57. Prior to the inspection inspectors reviewed the course's assessment strategy which highlighted how the range of assessment methods were designed to accommodate a variety of learning styles, equality and widening participation, and considered the more common

characteristics shared by apprentices. The strategy also highlighted the provision of reasonable adjustments where appropriate and the course handbook offered information on wellbeing, support available and methods of access. During meetings with people with lived experience of social work inspectors heard how they were involved in teaching anti-discriminatory sessions for current students and will do so for the apprentices. The Teaching Excellence Plan submitted to the inspectors included a range of examples, including showing how the course has been designed in accordance with equality frameworks and relevant legislation. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

58. As part of the documentary evidence submission for this standard, inspectors gained understanding of the processes followed for course and module review which assists the course team in continually updating their courses. Module outlines for the course reflect updates in legislation and current research and are adapted in line with their review process. Module content and reading lists contain contemporary themes, current research and frequently include research and texts published by academic staff teaching and delivering on the course. People with lived experience of social work and research active members of staff teach on the courses and inform the curriculum. The Annual Review is attended by employer partners and people with lived experience of social work which facilitates the influence of practice and lived experience and is incorporated in the courses. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

59. Preceding the inspection inspectors reviewed the module outlines for the course including Psychosocial Development Across the Lifespan and Developing Specialist Practice. Inspectors were able to understand how apprentices, undertaking their academic studies at university, will be taught about relevant theories. They also gained insight into how they will then be expected to demonstrate and be assessed on an application of knowledge, whilst on placement. During the meetings held with students studying on current courses inspectors heard examples of frequent opportunities for application of theoretical knowledge and descriptions of a clear progression of understanding. Students also voiced a preference for there to be an offer of further refresher sessions towards the end of their studies. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

60. The meeting held with current students confirmed to the inspectors that students were benefitting from a range of opportunities to work with and learn from other professions. Students described having chances to meet and question a range of different professionals, as well as opportunities throughout their placement experiences. During the meeting held with the course team inspectors heard of a mock court experience delivered in conjunction with the law school and barristers, provided as part of one of the skills days. The teaching team included a family court magistrate and plans for the course included psychologists and psychiatrists contributing to specialist teaching days. Participation in a mock child protection conference, alongside colleagues from midwifery and health, are also planned to be part of the course. The Centre for Research on Children and Families is led by the School which runs an interdisciplinary seminar and apprentices will be able to attend. Inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

61. Inspectors reviewed the information in the current Course Handbook and the module outlines for the course. The assessment strategy was also reviewed in relation to this standard which outlined the time spent in structured academic learning. The contract between the course provider and NCC includes stipulation that apprentices will receive 150 days teaching at university over the length of their course. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

62. Prior to the inspection inspectors were provided with evidence including the course assessment strategy and the module outlines. Within these documents assessments are evidenced as being robust, reliable and valid. Mapping is evident in each of these documents to the professional standards including how learning will be scaffolded in order that apprentices can develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet them. Learning outcomes are linked to the professional standards and briefing sessions within each module are planned for apprentices to gain understanding on how they will be assessed and what will be expected of them. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

63. Evidence of appropriate sequencing of assessments was found within the assessment strategy, with inspectors highlighting consideration given to the timing of assessments. Inspectors also reviewed evidence in the strategy that assessments develop in complexity as the course progresses. Assessments are linked to learning outcomes for each module and

will be assessed in a range of different ways. Tripartite meetings and progression reviews held between the apprentice's workplace mentor and university advisor will further contribute to their assessments being matched to their progression and stage in training. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

64. Prior to the inspection inspectors were able to review the course and placement handbooks and assessment strategy which outlines the range of feedback apprentices will receive, including through formative and summative assessment. The Placement Handbook will support apprentices to understand and utilise the feedback they receive from supervision meetings and who to contact to gain any additional support or guidance after they have received feedback. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

65. Preceding the inspection, inspectors reviewed the CVs for the staff involved in assessment which illustrated an appropriate level of expertise. Inspectors also reviewed the CV for the external examiner and confirmed their registration. The Code of Practice for the External Examiner system further highlighted the guidelines followed by the university to support them to appoint an external examiner who has appropriate expertise and experience. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

66. Inspectors were able to review evidence in relation to how apprentices' progression will be managed and monitored, including the assessment strategy. This outlined how tripartite meetings will establish targets and goals for the apprentice, attended by the workplace mentor and academic adviser. The Placement Handbook details processes for observation of practice, feedback and mid and end of placement assessments. The Practice Learning Advisory Panel (PLAP) is attended by practice educators, people with lived experience of social work and staff from the course team. The panel will review the evidence presented by the practice educator and apprentice and make a recommendation about the apprentice's progression. The Exam Board will then review the decision of the panel. During the meeting with the course team, inspectors were told how both the university and NCC will hold clear lines of responsibility for managing the progression of their apprentices. The university will provide the academic adviser, moderation of marking, assessment boards, formative assessment for academic learning and study support skills for each apprentice. NCC will monitor and judge progress and make decisions where necessary about whether issues

arising are academic or employment based. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

67. The Social Sciences and Social Work and Dissertation modules both provided the inspectors with evidence which illustrated how apprentices will be enabled to develop an evidence-informed approach to practice. During the meeting held with current students, the inspectors heard examples of how students had been able to use and apply members of the teaching team's research to their own practice. Students highlighted the benefit they were able to experience through being able to access, understand and utilise research and evidence generated by the team responsible for teaching them and running the courses. The inspectors were also provided with evidence about the range of research projects being generated by staff in the course team, with topics including contextual safeguarding, contact through adoption, trauma-based approaches to social work and working with fathers. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

68. The inspectors reviewed a range of evidence about the support services which will be available to apprentices, including confidential counselling, careers advice and occupational health services. The inspectors met with a range of staff at the university and from NCC who were responsible for the design and delivery of support services and were able to gain insight into how they will meet the needs of apprentices on the course. Wellbeing services will be provided online and in person and include an out of hours service, email and instant messaging. Inspectors understood that apprentices will be made aware of the services available to them through events, social media and in class sessions. During the meeting held with staff, inspectors were informed about the bespoke careers support for apprentices, which involves longer-term planning for future roles planned between the employability lead for the course and the careers expert at the university. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

69. During the meetings held with staff at the university responsible for providing appropriate resources, inspectors were able to assess resources available to support the academic development of apprentices. Internal needs assessments can be completed with

support and help to access funding. The inspectors met with the disability liaison officer who links to the wellbeing services and senior academic advisers, and are provided with annual training on providing guidance and support. The university have established a One Stop Shop providing a range of advice, signposting and support for apprentices, with thematic drop-ins, such as finance, for example. Inspectors heard how, here, external experts and internal departments attend, offering detailed and expert advice on a range of topics which students and apprentices can access. Academic advisers are facilitated to connect to colleagues in different departments to enhance information sharing and best practice, as well as gain support for themselves. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

70. Prior to the inspection, inspectors reviewed documentary evidence which highlighted how suitability and fitness to practise will be managed to ensure ongoing suitability. During the admissions process, apprentices sign a declaration of suitability which includes the necessity to inform the course directors of any changes to personal circumstances. The Placements Handbook outlines the processes in place when there are concerns and the Course Handbook addresses professional conduct and suitability. It includes The Code of Conduct for apprentices involving an agreement that apprentices will also be required to inform their adviser of any changes to personal circumstances. Within the meeting held with students, inspectors heard about ongoing class discussions addressing suitability and declarations, and a clear understanding demonstrated by students including if their personal circumstances change. During the meeting held with practice educators, inspectors were informed of the process followed at the start of placements when the fitness to practice policy is referred to along with the processes followed when necessary. Clear lines of communication and responsibility are outlined within the Placement Handbook, and during the meeting held with employer partners a clear and transparent process was described, involving collaboration and shared agreements. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

71. Preceding the inspection, inspectors reviewed evidence submitted in relation to reasonable adjustments which will support apprentices to progress through their course and to meet the professional standards. Examples of adjustments included timetabling adjustments, access to reading software and the provision of loaned assistive technologies. The Learning Enhancement Team specialise in widening participation. Reflective and supportive writing sessions are held, along with support sessions for developing

presentation skills and one-to-one tutorials are provided in the Study Café. Specially designed learning workshops are offered for apprentices and students who may have had a break from academic study, which is delivered in relation to the timetable followed by apprentices. The Course Handbook directs apprentices to the Disability Support Team and the School's Disability Officer. The Practice Learning Agreement provides opportunity for the apprentice to share information on reasonable adjustments required throughout their placement and for these to be put in place. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

72. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors reviewed the Course Handbook which will provide information to the apprentice about their modules and assessments and practice placements. It will be here that apprentices will be provided with information about the staff and their roles, with contact information and responsibilities outlined. Blackboard, the university's virtual learning environment, will provide apprentices with information about their modules, learning outcomes, reading lists and assessment formats. Inspectors were also able to review the assessment strategy for the course which will offer a further source of information for apprentices about different aspects of their course. During meetings with employer partners, inspectors heard that NCC provides a 2 year Assessed and Supported Year of Employment and that practice educators have early and encouraging constructive conversations with students and apprentices, using feedback to inform advice and guidance. Learning aims can then also be transferred over at the end of the course into their first year of practice.

73. As referred to under standard 2.1, inspectors were provided with a copy of the Placement Handbook currently used for students on the undergraduate and postgraduate social work courses at the university as it will form the base of the handbook used for the apprenticeship course.

74. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 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 <u>proposed outcomes</u> section.

75. Preceding the inspection, inspectors were able to review the Course Handbook which stipulates the parts of the course where attendance is mandatory. Assessed days in practice placements will be monitored by Academic Advisers and attendance information will be shared within the tripartite meetings. The Faculty Embedded Team will monitor attendance of the apprentice at university and offers support and guidance when engagement of the apprentice raises concerns. All taught sessions and days spent within an assessed placement will be mandatory. The Placement Attendance Sheet, within the Placement Handbook is used to record attendance during placements, and the absence procedure within the Placement Handbook outlines the process to be followed and actions to be taken when there are concerns about absence.

76. As referred to under standard 2.1, inspectors were provided with a copy of the Placement Handbook currently used for students on the undergraduate and postgraduate social work courses at the university as it will form the base of the handbook used for the apprenticeship course.

77. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 5.6 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, 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 <u>proposed outcomes</u> section.

Standard 5.7

78. Inspectors were provided with evidence to show how apprentices will be provided with timely and meaningful feedback. Feedback will contain guidance on how and where apprentices can access support for development of their work and will take account of learning outcomes and the Senate Mark Scale. The university's regulations stipulate that marks and feedback will be given within 20 working days after submission. Apprentices will be able to refer to their Course Handbook and the assessment strategy to find information on what they can expect in relation to receiving timely and meaningful feedback including sources of support, if required. One issue relating to feedback a student received was raised. However, the inspectors were not concerned about the overall consistency of feedback or the mechanisms in place enabling students to request a meeting to discuss aspects of the marking they received. Inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

79. The Course Handbook will guide apprentices to the Learning and Teaching: Appeals and Complaints webpage. The appeals and complaints process is underpinned by the General Regulations: Academic Appeals and Complaints Procedure. During the meeting held with current students, no concerns were raised about students' ability to access and engage with the academic appeals process. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

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

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

- 82. Conditions for approval are set if there are areas of a course that do not currently meet our standards. Conditions are binding and must be met by the education provider within the agreed timescales.
- 83. Having considered whether approval with conditions or a refusal of approval was an appropriate course of action, we are proposing the following conditions for this course at this time.

	Standard not currently met	Condition	Date for submission of	Link
			evidence	
1	2.1	The education provider will provide	2 months	Paragraph
		evidence to show the planning and	from date	<u>31</u>
		timetabling of the skills days for the	of final	
		course.	report	

2	2.2	The education provider will provide evidence to show how the course's learning outcomes are aligned to relevant standards which will need to be reflected in key Course Paperwork including the Placement Handbook and the guide for managers.	2 months from date of final report	Paragraph 35
3	4.1	The education provider will provide evidence to show that full mapping has been completed against the frameworks relevant for this course. This will be reflected in the course and placement handbooks, all module outlines and placement paperwork.	2 months from date of final report	Paragraph 54
4	5.5	The education provider will provide evidence to show that information for apprentices about their course is updated and appropriately reflected within the course and placement handbooks.	2 months from date of final report	Paragraph 72
5	5.6	The education provider will provide evidence to show that information for apprentices in relation to expectations for attendance on their course is updated and appropriately reflected within the course and placement handbooks.	2 months from date of final report	Paragraph 75

Recommendations

84. 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	3.10	The inspectors are recommending that the	<u>Paragraph</u>
		university consider formalising their approach to	<u>52</u>

facilitate staff in maintaining contact and	
engagement with practice teams.	

85. It should be noted that all qualifying social work courses will be subject to re-approval under Social Work England's 2021 education and training standards.

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Regulator decision

86. Approved with conditions.

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

- 87. 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 <u>education and training standards</u>.
- 88. Inspectors will undertake the conditions review and make recommendations to Social Work England's decision maker.
- 89. 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 to show the planning and timetabling of the skills days for the course.	Condition met.
2	2.2	The education provider will provide evidence to show how the course's learning outcomes are aligned to relevant standards which will need to be reflected in key Course Paperwork including the Placement Handbook and the guide for managers.	Condition met.
3	4.1	The education provider will provide evidence to show that full mapping has been completed against the frameworks relevant for this course. This will be reflected in the course and	Condition met.

	placement handbooks, all module outlines and placement paperwork.	
5.5	The education provider will provide evidence to show that information for apprentices about their course is updated and appropriately reflected within the course and placement handbooks.	Condition met.
5.6	The education provider will provide evidence to show that information for apprentices in relation to expectations for attendance on their course is updated and appropriately reflected within the course and placement handbooks.	Condition met.

Findings

- 90. This conditions review was undertaken as a result of conditions set during course approval as outlined in the original inspection report above.
- 91. After the review of the documentary evidence, the inspection team are satisfied that the conditions set against the approval of the BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship course are met.
- 92. In relation to the condition set for standard 2.1 the course provider submitted evidence which illustrates the planning and timetabling for the skills days on the course. This evidence included topics for teaching on the days and illustrated the wide range of skills and learning involved in the skills days. The standard is now met.
- 93. In relation to the condition set for standard 2.2 the course provider submitted course and placement handbooks. These documents illustrated how the course's learning outcomes are aligned to relevant standards. The standard is now met.
- 94. In relation to the condition set for standard 4.1 the course provider submitted evidence which outlined comprehensive mapping to relevant frameworks for the course. The course provider submitted placement and course handbooks, module outlines and mapping documents which show alignment with the professional standards, the professional capabilities framework (PCF) and the apprenticeship standards. The condition is now met.
- 95. In relation to the condition set for standard 5.5 the course provider submitted evidence which provides apprentices with relevant and appropriate information about their course.

The inspectors reviewed the course and placement handbook and noted that the information and presentation included in the handbooks was detailed, useful and clear. The condition is now met.

96. In relation to the condition set for standard 5.6 the course provider submitted evidence which shows that apprentices are provided with relevant information about attendance on their course. The inspectors reviewed the course and placement handbooks and noted that expectations surrounding apprentices' attendance on the course was clear and appropriate. This condition is now met.

Conclusion

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

98. 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.