

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Lincoln

Course approval:

MSc Social work

PG Dip Social Work (exit route)

Inspection dates: 17th May 2022 to 19th May 2022

Report date:	28 June 2022
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	25 October 2022
Date conditions met and approved:	09 March 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 [education and training standards](#) and ensure that students successfully completing these courses can meet our [professional standards](#).
2. During the approval process, we appoint partner inspectors. One inspector is a social worker registered with us and the other is not a registered social worker (a 'lay' inspector). These inspectors, along with an officer from the education quality assurance team, undertake activity to review information and carry out an inspection. This activity could include observing and asking questions about teaching, placement provision, facilities and learning resources; asking questions based on the evidence submitted; and meeting with staff, training placement providers, people with lived experience and students. The inspectors then make recommendations to us about whether a course should be approved.
3. The process we undertake is described in our legislation; the Social Worker Regulations 2018¹, and the Social Work England ([Education and Training](#)) Rules 2019.
4. You can find further guidance on our course change, approval, and annual monitoring processes on our website.

What we do

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

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

9. During this time a draft plan for the inspection is developed and shared with the education provider, to make sure it is achievable at the point of inspection.
10. Once the inspectors and officer are satisfied that an inspection can take place, this is usually undertaken over a two to three-day visit to the education provider. We then draft a report setting out what we found during the inspection and if and how our findings demonstrate that the course meets our standards. As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, inspections are currently being carried out via remote virtual arrangements, and typically last three to four days.
11. The inspectors may recommend in this report that the course is approved with conditions, approved without conditions or that it does not meet the criteria for approval. Where the course has been previously approved, we may also decide to withdraw approval.
12. A draft of this report is shared with the education provider, and once we have considered any comments or observations they may wish to provide, we make a final regulatory decision about the approval of the course.
13. The final decisions that we can make are as follows, that the course is approved without conditions, the course is approved with conditions or that the course does not meet the criteria for approval. The decision, and the report, are then published.
14. If the course is approved with conditions, we will write to the education provider setting out how they can demonstrate they have met the conditions, the action we will take once we decide that the conditions are met, and the action we will take if we decide the conditions are not met.

Summary of Inspection

15. The University of Lincoln 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	ULIR1
Course provider	University of Lincoln
Validating body (if different)	n/a
Course inspected	MSc Social Work PG Dip Social Work (exit route)
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	25
Date of inspection	17 th May 2022 to 19 th May 2022
Inspection team	Laura Mellon (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Gill Nixon (Education Quality Assurance Operations Manager) Jane Jones (Lay Inspector) Michael Isles (Registrant Inspector)
Inspector recommendation	Approved with conditions
Approval outcome	Approved with conditions

Language

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

Inspection

17. An onsite inspection took place from Tuesday 17th May 2022 until Thursday 19th May 2022 at the university site in Lincoln where the University of Lincoln is based. 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 seven MSc students across both years of the course. Discussions included admissions, feedback, levels of responsibility, raising concerns and processes, placements, breakdown of placement, and readiness for practice, various support services, appeals and evidence informed practice.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the course team, central support team, the placement co-ordinator, associate professors, and senior staff members.

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 work with the Together Group. Discussions included their opportunities to be involved in various elements of the course.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including Lincolnshire County Council children and adults' services, the care plus group, North Lincolnshire Council, and East Riding of Yorkshire Council, and members of the social work practice education group and the Lincolnshire teaching partnership.

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 relating to their admissions guidance, screening tools for applications, interviewer guides, questions and scoring, and their declarations of suitability documentation. The inspection team, through meetings with the admissions team, course team and students, were satisfied that the university had a clear and holistic approach to admission on to the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

26. The university assesses prior experience as part of the admissions screening by way of a personal statement. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence which showed how this statement is used as evidence of the applicant's paid or unpaid experience and how it has influenced the applicant's values and understanding of the profession. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

27. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence of interview videos produced by people with lived experience as part of the admissions process and employer partner involvement with open days, interviews, and development of the admissions process.

28. During the inspection, the inspection team met with people with lived experience from the Together Group who confirmed they felt that they were an equal member of the interview panel, they are involved in formulating the questions, what questions are asked, they discuss the scores, and are asked for feedback on the process.

29. The inspection team also met with employer partners who advised of involvement in the admissions process over the years. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

30. The university demonstrated the process used to assess the suitability of an applicant's character, conduct and health through documentary evidence by providing evidence of the

process, supporting forms for applicants to complete and evidence provided during the inspection meetings.

31. The course team explained that if declarations are made by an applicant, they will work in partnership with the student to enable them to succeed and that there are options to review and defer applications as part of their process.

32. The course team advised that if support is needed for the applicant, they will be referred to their personal wellbeing service and, in some circumstances, where needed they will set up a fitness to proceed panel. The team advised that if an applicant is declared fit with restrictions, but they are not sure they can factor these in, they will meet as a panel, including occupational health, senior representatives, and senior staff from the academic team to discuss what can be done to assist the person through the programme.

33. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

34. Prior to the inspection the university provided evidence of guidance on health within the occupational health questionnaire. This document advises applicants why their health information is needed, that disability is not a barrier to progressing and how to discuss any reasonable requirement needs.

35. Evidence was also provided of annual equality, diversity and inclusion training being a requirement of all staff. During the inspection meeting with people with lived experience they also confirmed the requirement for them to complete this training before being involved in the admissions process and that this was updated annually.

36. During the inspection examples were also given of reasonable adjustments and support available to students by the course team and admissions team and it was clear to the inspection team that the university has equality and diversity data on the make-up of the student cohort for the course.

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

Standard 1.6

38. Prior to inspection the inspection team were provided with documentary evidence showing the information available on the website for students. This covered a range of information including, eligibility to apply to register, available research projects, what their career might look like, fees and funding and specific additional costs, how they will study, placement days and where these are located, module overviews, assessments, and entry requirements.

39. Therefore, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

40. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard prior to the inspection did not fully explain how the university ensured that this standard was met.

41. The inspection team had concerns from reviewing the documentary evidence about the capacity of the university to fulfil placements for their students and to ensure that each student had contrasting placements. It was noted by the inspection team that the university are a member of a teaching partnership and also the Social Work Education Partnership Group that meets three times a year.

42. The course team were asked about their strategy for ensuring placement availability and the availability of practice educators. The course team advised that a 1-2-1 discussion takes place with each student about their needs and what they want to get out of the placement and at this point discussions also take place about what the final placement will look like. The university will then work with placement partners to check how many placements are available, how many practice educators are available and match students based on interests, location, and other considerations such as disability.

43. The inspection team agreed that there was evidence of good working relationships with placement providers and the teaching partnership.

44. An additional meeting was held with the placement coordinator who had not been available previously. A demonstration of the systems used confirmed that a range of statutory and PVI placements were available to students and how a contrast in placement was ensured by capturing the relevant data and having early discussions with students about placement. It was noted that all students during the current and previous cohorts had received placements within statutory settings across a range of providers.

45. The inspection team were also provided with a further demonstration of the system used to ensure enough available practice educators. From this the placement team can see the currency of practice educators, expiry and who is working towards PE1 or PE2. It also showed offsite practice educators and on-site supervisors. The inspection team were satisfied with the number of available practice educators and the plans to ensure placement and practice educator availability. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.2

46. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence of the pre-placement audits and QAPL forms completed for placements that the university use to ensure the quality of placements for their students.

47. The inspection team met with the placement providers who assured the inspection team of the strong working relationship that they have with the university to ensure quality placements. There was also a specific example given of steps taken by placement providers to ensure that if students were having difficulty meeting the PCF standards, then they would consider shadowing days elsewhere for students to get the range of experiences needed.

48. During the inspection, the course team also explained that feedback is distributed to the teaching partnership in order to share areas for improvement.

49. The inspectors felt reassured that there are strategies in place and increased availability of practice educators to support students.

50. The inspection team also met with the students who echoed that their experiences of placements were positive. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

51. Prior to the inspection the university provided evidence of the guidance and information given to students and practice educators before placement, including information on support, expectations, supervision, and induction.

52. Evidence from the practice learning agreement – which is agreed between the student, personal tutor and practice educator prior to the placement – also demonstrated the support available to students.

53. During the inspection, the inspection team met with the practice educators who confirmed that they have weekly supervision meetings with students to keep an eye on what is happening. Practice educators also have planning meetings with the employer to discuss work allocation, learning needs, family or personal issues, and levels of responsibility.

54. The practice educators advised that they would consider previous placements and what areas need to be worked on and tailor this to the student's workload. They also advised that they felt supported by the university and would ensure that an induction is carried out with the student. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

55. The university provided evidence of the portfolio which illustrated what is required during the placement against the PCF thresholds to ensure that appropriate learning is undertaken.

56. During the inspection, the inspection team met with employer partners who advised that it is made clear to them what the responsibilities are for students, and that they are provided with a lot of information from the university. They are invited to a social work practice education group (SWPEG) that provides a forum to equip them with what is needed and what they need to do.

57. The students that the inspection team met also confirmed that they felt the practice educators were supportive and that they were enjoying their placements and had not had any issues. The students advised that they felt ready for the placement and were aware of what to do if there were any issues. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

58. Prior to the inspection the university provided the module descriptor for the readiness of practice module which set out pre-practice learning opportunities with appropriate assessments.

59. At the inspection, the inspection team were advised by the practice educators that they will check the students' progress against the standards and then once both they and the student are confident, they can move on to specific pieces of work. The practice educators advised that there is a lot of monitoring, and some advised that placements have peer support groups for students and training that they can access from the placement provider.

60. The students advised that they felt the readiness of practice module was good and that they have felt very supported. They advised that the module helped everything to 'click into place' and that there was clear guidance on how the placement will work. Both first year and second year students felt that communication was effective and email responses to queries were quick. As a result, the inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

61. At the inspection, the inspection team were shown the documentation used to assess the currency of practice educators through the university's system. The inspection team were advised that approval takes place each year and were shown the form to guide practice educators to confirm their currency via a flowchart.

62. The placement co-ordinator also advised that there is also training for the onsite supervisors through an onsite programme that is mapped to practice educator professional standards (PEPS), and it is ensured that they also attend a briefing before each placement.

63. The practice educators advised that there is ongoing work through the teaching partnership to focus on the funding of practice educators. There are forums both regional and with Northeast Lincolnshire, and a CPD event in June covering a variety of themes.

64. The practice educators also advised that there are one-two-one meetings with staff to see if support is needed, and mentors for practice educators are available for when doing their training. An example was given that they have theory cards to use with students to help them put theory into practice. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.7

65. The university provided documentary evidence of their problem resolution protocol and their cause for concern and fitness to practise processes. Evidence was provided of a whistleblowing policy and procedure in place, both within the university and with placement providers.

66. During the inspection, the course team talked the inspection team through the process for any issues, possible need for an action plan or cause for concern process. The support available for students going through these processes was also explained by the support staff, student union officers and advisors.

67. The students also confirmed that if they had a concern, they know what to do or where to go for information on what to do. The inspection team was therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management, and quality

Standard 3.1

68. Documentary evidence was provided by the university in the form of CVs for the course lead and some members of the academic team and by way of the Health and Social Care programmes governance structure outlining the roles and responsibilities.

69. It was noted by the inspection team that there have recently been a lot of changes to staff turnover for several reasons, however it was felt that the university has considered recruitment to ensure an appropriate staffing structure. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

70. The university has provided documentary evidence of the agreements in place with placement providers and minutes of meetings with the SWPEG and the Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Trust.

71. Evidence of contingency for placement breakdown was also provided in the practice handbook outlining how to manage concerns and difficulties. During the inspection, the practice educators gave examples of placement breakdowns and advised that these were handled well. They advised that discussions were held, and it was felt that the university were professional, sensitive, and impartial in their decision. It was also emphasised that contact with personal tutors would take place early on and open conversations are encouraged with the student.

72. The employer partners also expressed that they had a close working relationship with the university with good lines of communication and that if a situation arose, they would work on solutions together and tailor learning where needed for individuals. It was made clear that there was a protocol in place that has been agreed with the university on how to escalate issues. As a result, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

73. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with a copy of the placement learning agreement which detailed policies and procedures available to students in relation to health and wellbeing and a checklist to be completed as part of the student induction. It was also noted that the quality assurance for practice learning (QAPL) takes place, to ensure the quality of placements.

74. During the inspection, the employer partners confirmed that they have been given information from the university about the support available to students, the university procedures etc. They also confirmed that they have their own processes and documentation in place and that they know who to contact if needed.

75. The head of student wellbeing also explained types of support available to students and access arrangements, and that use of personalised academic study support (PASS) plans would also cover any requirements relating to placement experiences. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

76. It was noted that prior to the inspection the inspection team wanted to know more about the level of involvement of employers in elements of the course. The university provided the teaching partnership minutes prior to the inspection which showed instances of collaboration between the university and employer partners, however these evidenced discussion around the sustainability of placements.

77. At inspection, the employer partners were asked about their involvement in the course, but the examples given by the people in attendance at the meeting were not in relation to the MSc course but rather the apprenticeship.

78. The inspection team held an additional meeting with some of the course team to explore employer involvement in managing, monitoring, and improvements to the course. Whilst it was noted that there is an intention for the teaching partnership to become involved in looking at the curriculum, with a system and structure in place including a sub-group of practitioners that will review the curriculum, this was not currently taking place.

79. It was also noted that the programme's quality and health review committee meet on a quarterly basis but that it does not include employer partners. It was also confirmed that there are meetings with principal social workers to discuss the programme on an ad hoc basis, but that there is currently no formal mechanism or structure for inclusion of employers in the review and ongoing design and development of the curriculum.

80. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending a condition is set against standard 3.4 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given

as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that conditions are appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standards, and the inspection team is 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 proposed outcomes sections of this report.](#)

Standard 3.5

81. The course team confirmed that student feedback is used to update their guides and that feedback from students is reviewed in the annual monitoring review. Previous documentary evidence provided by the university also confirmed student involvement in module and placement evaluation and representation of students at committee meetings.

82. In relation to evidence obtained in relation to employer involvement in the monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the course, please see the above comments under standard 3.4.

83. The inspection team met with people with lived experience from the Together Group. They were asked about any involvement with monitoring, evaluation and improvement and were able to confirm that whilst they were involved in programme design and development for other courses, they were not involved in the social work course design and development. It was noted that there is an intention to re-launch the Together Group and that they are looking at how they can be involved in changes to the governance structure and involvement in evaluation, but this is currently in the planning stages.

84. The Together Group noted that they get feedback from students, and this makes them feel valued. They also noted involvement in delivering a simulation day across the school, admissions and with the interprofessional module but nothing in relation to planning or review of the course.

85. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team were satisfied that there was evidence of student involvement in the monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of the course.

86. However, the inspection team is recommending that two conditions are set against this standard. The first condition against standard 3.5 in relation to the involvement of employers and a second condition against standard 3.5 in relation to the involvement of people with lived experience in relation to the approval of this course.

87. 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 the inspection team is 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 proposed outcomes sections of this report.](#)

Standard 3.6

88. The university confirmed that their recruitment target is twenty-five students and that they typically recruit just under this and have had no issues being able to place students.

89. The inspectors recognised the struggles that the team have had with turnover of staff recently but noted that they still have strong relationships with local partners.

90. The senior leadership team were able to explain their rationale for course numbers and advised that the associate professor in charge of placements is working with the teaching partnership and Lincolnshire County Council to approach them for placement numbers. They are also working on a new strategy to ensure capacity in the system for students across East Riding, North Lincolnshire, and Northeast Lincolnshire. If funding for this is not successful, they have an agreement in place to fund an administrator.

91. The placement co-ordinator confirmed that they have placed all the students that they have and explained how sometimes there are geographical issues as students do not want to travel too far, but that they have a requirement for students to be drivers on this course and students are briefed on travel when they start. However, they also advised that they could make reasonable adjustments if needed and gave an example of this during the inspection.

92. The senior leadership team confirmed at the inspection that they currently ensure the majority of students find out their placement 1 month before starting, but their aspiration is to have this in place 2 months before the start date.

93. The team also advised that there are a series of practice educator programmes which are free if they agree to take a student. They now have a lead for practice educators in place to help get a better understanding of practice educator availability. They also confirmed that they will look to run practice educator training regardless of demand twice a year in partnership with Hull and will offer non-accredited courses. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

94. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed the CV for the course lead and deputy head of school who provided overall responsibility for the programme. The inspection team were satisfied that this individual was a registered social worker and appropriately qualified and experienced and therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

95. The university provided a programme overview of staffing, linking each module to a staff member prior to the inspection.

96. Explanations at inspection were given about the significant departure of a large part of the academic team during the past two years, precipitated in part by the pandemic, and the University's efforts to recruit and have in place a full team with an appropriate skill-mix for the current academic year. There is now a mix of experienced academics alongside newer staff who have come directly from practice, and the use of a range of associate lecturer contracts with hours dedicated to specific modules and activities.

97. The inspectors were satisfied that the course team had recruited well for the recent gaps in staffing. The inspection team agreed that this standard is met.

Standard 3.9

98. The university provided documentary evidence in the programme report of the data collected in relation to student performance.

99. During the inspection, the inspection team were shown the university system which can be used to track and assess students' progress; access to this can be given to a range of people to allow collaboration and for progress to be checked, for example before a mid-point review.

100. The inspection team were also shown an infographic which detailed how progression is monitored through various exam boards, monthly boards, a student progress panel, and subject boards to look at reports, external examiner feedback, marks reports, statistical data, and student feedback.

101. There was also evidence of a function to analyse data for equality, diversity, and inclusion purposes. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard is met.

Standard 3.10

102. Prior to the inspection the inspection team noted that there was limited evidence of how the university supported educators to maintain their knowledge and understanding of professional practice.

103. During the inspection, the inspection team were able to speak to members of the course team about the opportunities available to them, including offers to be involved in research and different routes for further development. It was acknowledged that seven out of ten staff were new to the university.

104. Members of the course team described development opportunities for those who are new to academia, as well as CPD routes available to more experienced academics, including support to stay connected with practice. The course team staff are given dedicated time to do this and meet with managers every few months.

105. The course team confirmed that they felt well supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding, including support to return to practice if they were interested in doing this. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

106. The inspection team reviewed the programme specification, curriculum map and individual module specifications prior to the inspection, which showed that the course learning outcomes cover Social Work England's Professional Standards.

107. In particular, the readiness for social work practice module ensures that students learn about professional conduct and accountability and the types of behaviour that are appropriate for a professional. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

108. In relation to employer involvement in the design and ongoing development and review of the curriculum please see the above comments under standard 3.4.

109. The inspection team met with people with lived experience from the Together Group. They were asked about any involvement with design, development and review of the curriculum and were able to confirm that whilst they participated in programme design and development for other courses, they were not involved in the social work course design and development. It was noted that there is an intention to re-launch the Together Group and that they are looking at how they can be involved in changes to the governance structure and involvement in evaluation, but this is currently in the planning stages.

110. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that two conditions are set against this standard. The first condition against standard 4.2 in relation to the involvement of employers and a second condition against standard 4.2 in relation to the involvement of people with lived experience, in relation to the approval of this course.

111. 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 the inspection team is 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 proposed outcomes sections of this report.](#)

Standard 4.3

112. The university provided the inspection team with evidence prior to the inspection of the student wellbeing, support, and advice services and some of the university wide initiatives in relation to equality and inclusion.

113. During the inspection examples were provided of reasonable adjustments, support and wellbeing resources being available to students.

114. The support staff advised that their mental health advisor team is made up of qualified mental health nurses and accredited counsellors and that students can access six sessions of counselling and IAPT services, as well as skills sessions and prescribed courses. They also gave examples of students with physical disabilities being given a PASS plan which could detail any needs, for example, the need for a hearing loop to be put in place. It was confirmed that reasonable adjustments are reviewed using their CRM system either monthly, six monthly or as set by an advisor. The inspection team agreed therefore that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

115. The course team provided numerous examples including the yearly changes to the contemporary issues module which is adapted to the current issues, and the social policy and law modules that are always evolving and this year included the new Domestic Abuse Act. It was also noted that students chose what they study for their dissertation in conjunction with their supervisor.

116. The course team also advised that the use of subject boards and the external examiners also play a part in ensuring that the course is updated in line with developments in research, legislation and changes to government policy or best practice. There is an annual conversation to discuss how the programme can run the next year, what the contemporaneous changes are that need to be made, and how they can ensure the course is fit for purpose.

117. The 5-year periodic review also gives the opportunity to refresh the course. Feedback on employability and lived experience is also brought to the teaching. As a result of information provided at the inspection the inspection team were satisfied that this standard is met.

Standard 4.5

118. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the documentary evidence provided in the programme handbook, module descriptors and curriculum map which referred to the integration of theory into practice.

119. During the inspection it was made clear from both the course team and students that theory and practice is central to the course. The initial presentation from the course team detailed how one of the modules focuses on theories and concepts that inform practice and

are routed in practice experience by looking at serious case reviews to look at lessons learned. The course team also advised that they seek to ensure integration of practice through a theory basis but brought to life with real examples. Simulations are also used to enable theories to be applied within a safe pre-practice environment, and questioning confirmed students were positive about many aspects of the taught content and its relevance to practice. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard is met.

Standard 4.6

120. The university provided evidence in relation to the essential interprofessional practice module which allows multi-agency practice to be embedded as a core principle from the start. This module includes students from nursing and allied health professions, learning together to help students understand different roles and consider their approaches to working together. It allows students to think about ethics and includes an assessment as a presentation across different disciplines to consider what worked, what could have been better, how to develop goals and consider any other frameworks that might be involved.

121. It was noted from feedback from the students that this module was very health focused and appeared to lack opportunities for social work input. The course team have advised that they received feedback from students on the module and as a result the university are working with the students to develop new case studies that will be written by social workers and also advised that they have modified this module.

122. The course team also advised that they have some module leads from different professions such as criminologists and mental health professionals and that they have lecturers coming in from other disciplines. They also had two big events involving medical and occupational therapy students.

123. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met however they also agreed that given the feedback from students it was important to ensure that there is enough focus on social work within the multidisciplinary working opportunities available to students. The inspection team agreed with the course team proposal that this module be revised to ensure a greater focus on social work within the studies. [Full details of the recommendation can be found in the proposed outcomes section of this report.](#)

Standard 4.7

124. The inspection team were able to review the module handbooks which confirmed the teaching hours per week and the subjects covered. The inspection team were in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

125. Prior to the inspection the module guides provided description of the various assessment methods. The inspection team also received additional evidence in the form of revalidation reports which showed various outcomes and responses to them.

126. During the final meeting, the course lead explained the module assignments and alignment to the assessment map, which clarified the previous concerns of the inspection team, as the previous mapping document supplied had been incorrect. The role of external examiners and appeals for students were also discussed.

127. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence prior to the inspection containing comprehensive details of the overall assessment methodology and individual module requirements. As a result, the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

128. As with standard 4.8 above, the inspection team have reviewed documents in relation to assessment and progression. During the inspection, the course team talked the inspection team through the amended assessment map which showed that assessments were spread throughout the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

129. Prior to the inspection the university provided some documentary evidence of the university assessment charter that sets out the expectation of timely and appropriate feedback.

130. During the inspection, the inspection team was given a demonstration of the university system which is used by practice educators to leave feedback for students that can then be responded to back and forth with comments between students and practice educators.

131. The students advised of recent issues with assignment feedback being late, however the general consensus of the group that the inspection team met was that there was good communication and support. The students advised the inspection team that they understood that the reasons behind the delays were due to factors outside of the staff's control and more in relation to issues with moderation. The students also confirmed that the quality of the feedback was good and contained constructive feedback and praise. It was noted that there had been issues with staff leaving but that the current staff had been very responsive and supportive.

132. The course team confirmed that the issue with delays in feedback has now been resolved and was an isolated incident due to staff shortages and was not an ongoing or systemic issue. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

133. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence in the form of CVs which evidenced social work registration and examples of external examiner reports prior to

the inspection. It was also noted that the university has an external examiner approval process and that all external examiners are required to submit an annual report.

134. During the inspection evidence was provided of the systems in place to ensure practice educator currency and evidence of new staff receiving mentoring and completing courses to ensure expertise. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

135. The university provided documentary evidence prior to the inspection of formal subject boards, termly review of programmes and module reports being completed and provided for review.

136. During the inspection, the inspection team were given a demonstration of a student dashboard to show the progression boards and the recording of direct observations on the system. The inspectors were satisfied that the portfolio was comprehensive. It was advised that student progression is discussed at frequent intervals and involved a range of people such as practice educators and personal tutors who remained the same throughout placement. The inspection team was therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

137. The inspection team agreed prior to the inspection that the overall ethos of the programme is to develop students critical thinking, reflections, and evidence-based practice and that this comes across through the documentary evidence supplied.

138. The inspection team met with the practice educators who confirmed that they check for gaps in student knowledge and gave examples of this.

139. It was also noted that the head of research and dissertation co-ordinator was keen to encourage analysis and critical thinking. It was noted that students would receive a face-to-face session to orientate them during this module, they would then be allocated a co-ordinator and would have a presentation part way through to see how they were getting on.

140. The students also confirmed that they felt there was up to date research into practice, and they felt the teaching is informed by research. The inspection team was in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

141. Prior to the inspection the inspections team were provided with documentation of the support resources available to the students, which included a student wellbeing, support and advice service and a career and employability service. Documentary evidence was also

provided in relation to the availability to students of a personalised academic support plan for students with disabilities.

142. During the inspection, the students confirmed that the support from the university was strong, and examples of the specific assistance received by an individual was given.

143. The support staff advised that in relation to student wellbeing they can see the student dashboard with details of student attendance and engagement and can then work with the personal tutor on any issues, for example disability or mental health issues. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

144. The university directed the inspection team to the dedicated web pages for academic support and provided documentary evidence of the personal tutor handbook which contained detailed advice and guidance for personal tutors.

145. It was noted during the inspection that students are now supported by the same personal tutor throughout the course, including on placement (where they are referred to as contact tutors), to ensure consistency of support.

146. The students confirmed that they knew where to access support and that they had strong support also from their personal tutors who they felt they genuinely care about the student's personal circumstances and offered suggestions and support.

147. The support staff advised that all personal tutors have a session on supporting students in distress and signposting them to appropriate services. There is also mandatory safeguarding and mental health training. The inspection team were in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

148. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with documentation setting out the cause for concern and fitness to practice (FTP) processes.

149. During the inspection, the students confirmed that they were made aware of the process from the beginning of the course and examples of concerns raised with the course team by students were given.

150. The support staff advised that the process starts with the personal tutor and a supportive discussion about the next steps, how long it will take, who will be involved etc. The student union also advised that they have representatives on FTP panels and the advice service can separately provide advice on academic concerns, FTP processes and can support students through the entire FTP process, including attending the hearings with the student.

151. Both the student wellbeing and student union advised that they work closely together and have monthly meetings and joint pieces of work. They also confirmed that advice can be provided about appeals and alternative options, and they can signpost students to the careers service for support. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

152. As highlighted under standard 5.1, throughout the inspection the inspection team were provided with examples of support and reasonable adjustments available to students.

153. The support team staff talked the inspection team through the PASS plan and advised that it had been reviewed by the student advisory board to see how it was working. For example, support has been considered for post-graduate students going through the menopause, feedback was sought, and the support team are now providing specific support.

154. The support team also advised the inspection team that the PASS plans can be shared with personal tutors at the discretion of the students. The PASS plan is shared with the librarian so that students can be offered specialist platforms and services and it was noted that the librarian picks up wellbeing needs if she identifies and recommends support. A learning needs assessment can also be carried out if needed.

155. It was also noted that international students have inductions and then further support is provided with 1-2-1 sessions. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

156. Prior to inspection the documentary evidence provided by the university showed the inspection team information on the website for students. It also covered eligibility to apply to register, research projects available, what their career might look like, fees and funding and specific additional costs, how they will study, placement days and where these are located, module overviews, assessments, and entry requirements.

157. During the inspection, the students confirmed that they knew where to obtain information whilst on placement. First year students confirmed that they felt well prepared for their first placement and were already aware of what they needed and who to contact. They also felt that the readiness for practice module was useful, and that communication was good, and email responses from course staff are quick.

158. The inspection team were also satisfied that the process for applying for social work registration was clearly understood as separate from achieving the course qualification. Therefore, the inspection team were in agreement that this standard was met

Standard 5.6

159. The inspection team were provided with a copy of the programme handbook prior to the inspection which outlines mandatory components of the course and clearly stipulates the attendance requirements.

160. During the inspection evidence of how attendance is monitored was provided by the course team via a demonstration of their systems.

161. The students also confirmed that they are aware of mandatory attendance requirements and how to make up any missed days. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

162. As highlighted under standard 4.10, the inspection team reviewed the documentary evidence provided and discussed feedback mechanisms with current students.

163. The course team provided a demonstration of their system which allows direct observations to be uploaded from practice educators and supervisors. It is also used by practice educators to leave feedback for students that can then be responded to back and forth with comments.

164. The students advised that the quality of the feedback was good and contained constructive feedback and praise. It was noted that there had been issues with staff leaving but that the current staff had been very responsive and supportive. The inspection team are therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

165. The university provided documentary evidence of their academic appeals process and it was noted that information about the appeals process is also outlines in the handbooks and on the websites support pages for students.

166. During the inspection, the students confirmed that if they needed information on making an appeal they would know where to look and would check online or ask if they needed assistance. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

167. As the qualifying courses are an MSc social work and PG Dip social work (exit route) the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

169. 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.

170. 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 3.4, 3.5 and 4.2	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates a process of including employers in all the following: 1. the design, ongoing development, and review of the curriculum. 2. The regular and effective monitoring, evaluation, and improvement systems in place. 3. The management and monitoring of the course and allocation of practice education.	September 2022	Paragraph 76 Paragraph 81 Paragraph 108
2	Standards 3.5 and 4.2	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates a process of including people with lived experience in all the following: 1. the design, ongoing development, and review of the curriculum. 2. The regular and effective monitoring, evaluation, and improvement systems in place.	September 2022	Paragraph 81 Paragraph 108

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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	4.6	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider reviewing and amending their essential interprofessional practice module to ensure that there is enough focus on social work in the multidisciplinary working opportunities that are available to students.	Paragraph 120

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

Approved with conditions.

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

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

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

	Standard not met	Condition	Inspector recommendation
1	3.4, 3.5 and 4.2	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates a process of including employers in all the following: 1.the design, ongoing development, and review of the curriculum. 2.The regular and effective monitoring, evaluation, and improvement systems in place. 3.The management and monitoring of the course and allocation of practice education.	Condition met.
2	Standards 3.5 and 4.2	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates a process of including people with lived experience in all the following: 1.the design, ongoing development, and review of the curriculum. 2.The regular and effective monitoring, evaluation, and improvement systems in place	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.

In relation to the first condition set against standards 3.4, 3.5 and 4.2, the course provider submitted an overview of the plans to develop a quality assurance framework as part of the Humber Social Work Teaching Partnership (HSWTP). The quality assurance framework

included partners involved in the delivery of social work courses at the university and topics covered included discussions about the design and review of the curriculum. In order to monitor the progress of the framework, a tracker had been set up which included areas of focus and discussion for the group and associated timescales. The inspection team agreed that the documentation provided gave an overview of the intention to develop partnership working to ensure effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement of course related issues, however there was not appropriate evidence of implementation of the plans. A request for further evidence to support the standard was made to the course provider.

A further submission from the course provider included an agenda and minutes from the first meeting of the quality assurance partnership panel and a rationale and reflection of the implementation of the panel. Within the minutes of the initial panel meeting, the inspection team were able to see the representation of partners from different agencies and the range of discussions in relation to modules on the courses offered by the university. There was further evidence of actions agreed for the panel moving forward. The inspection team therefore agreed that the condition was met.

In order to provide evidence that the second condition in relation to standards 3.5 and 4.2 was met, the course provider submitted a revised copy of their Together Group handbook which had been amended to reflect a broader role for people with lived experience in the review of the course. The course provider also highlighted their intention to involve the Together Group on forums, such as the quality assurance panel, where discussions about development and review of the programme would take place. As with the previous condition, the inspection team acknowledged there was an aspiration to improve partnership working with people with lived experience of social work, however this was not yet evidenced.

Within the second submission of evidence, the inspection team were able to see minutes of a meeting where module content was discussed with representatives from the Together Group, alongside academic staff and colleagues from the Social Work Education Partnership Group (SWPEG). As referenced against the previous condition, these minutes included a record of discussions on the work of the panel moving forward and agreed actions. As a result of the evidence provided, the inspection team agreed that the condition had been met.

Regulator decision

Conditions met.