

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Winchester

**Course approval: BA (Honours) Social Work
Degree Apprenticeship**

Inspection dates: 16 – 18 January 2024

Report date:	19 January 2024
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	8 May 2024
Date conditions met and approved:	21 August 2024

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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 three to 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, 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 Winchester BA (Honours) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship 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	UWIR3CP298
Course provider	The University of Winchester
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	BA (Honours) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	57
Date of inspection	16 – 18 January 2024
Inspection team	Sam Jameson (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Sarah Hamilton (Lay Inspector) Louise Hernon (Registrant Inspector)

Language

16. In this document we describe the University of Winchester as ‘the education provider’ or ‘the university’ and we describe the BA (Honours) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship as ‘the course’.

Inspection

17. A remote inspection took place from 16 – 18 January 2024. 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 ten students from all levels of the course, four of them were student representatives. Discussions included their experiences of the teaching and learning within the course, their access to support services of the university, admissions process, placements and how ready they felt for practice. Within this document students are referred to as apprentices and students.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from; the social work course team, senior leadership team, admissions team, staff involved in practice and placement learning, library and academic support services, disability support services and student support.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work, referred to as experts by experience by the university and in this document, who have been involved in the course. Discussions included what area(s) of the course they were involved with, how much input and feedback they had from the university and the course and what training they received in this role.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement and employer partners for the apprenticeship course, including Practice Educators (PEs), representatives from Hampshire County Council, Isle of Wight Council, West Berkshire Council, Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council, who at time of inspection had no students enrolled on the course.

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. Following their review of documentary evidence provided and discussions with staff involved in selection and admissions during the inspection, the inspectors were assured that entry to the course is via a holistic assessment process. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were provided with examples and evidence of Interview Questions and the Written Assessment as part of the assessment process. This included information within the Skills Scan that checks and provides information regarding the applicant's information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

26. The inspection team was satisfied that documentary evidence and information on the university website confirmed that applicants must demonstrate that they have a good command of English, level 3 study and GCSE English Language and Maths at Grade C/4+ or equivalent, either at the selection process or before formal completion of the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

27. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 1.1. We recommend that consideration is given to whether a more multi-dimensional approach to the assessment process could be introduced, that involves coproduction and involvement from the experts by experience group members that the course team works with. Find details of this recommendation in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard 1.2

28. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the university Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and examples of Skills Scans. The inspection team reviewed the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy that identified evidence of experiential

learning, under section 5 of the policy, would require the submission of a portfolio that would normally include the statement of the claim, a brief CV to provide a context for the claim, reflection on the relevance of the learning to the programme against which the claim is being made, and outcome cross-referenced to the full evidence. The policy also identified further guidance of what evidence might be seen as part of the portfolio.

29. However, during their second meeting with the course team the inspection team learnt that the skills scan had replaced the portfolio from the start of the academic year 2022/2023, with the support and completion of this by all applicants and their line managers. The inspection team heard from members of the course team who are involved in reviewing the skills scan of this process, how they seek further evidence and information regarding areas of the applicants' previous learning and development and how this information is input into the skills scans. The inspection team was provided with further documentary evidence of examples of skills scans in relation to students who had, and had not, been assessed as being suitable to join the course at level 5, based on the application of Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL).

30. The inspection team was not satisfied that there was a robust process, or evidence of one, of how students joining the course at level 5 or 6 were undergoing a robust assessment of mapping or evidencing the learning outcomes, skills and knowledge that would be expected for the student to learn and achieve within level 4 and the 70-day placement at level 5. This included how these decisions are agreed and evidenced between the university and employer partners regarding an applicant's prior relevant experience as part of the admissions process, and how this is applied consistently for applicants starting at different levels of the course and the variation regarding which modules or placements they undertook.

31. The education and training standards allow for recognition of prior learning and are not specific about any restrictions. However, the inspection team was concerned that the process enabling exemption from course modules and practice placements was not thorough and robust, and that exemption from whole practice placements is not an expectation within a course and RPEL applied to its applicants.

32. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 1.2 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 1.3

33. The inspectors agreed that based on the documentary evidence provided and from discussions with employer partners and staff involved in selection and admissions, employers and placement providers are clearly involved in the admissions and selection processes. However, from their discussions with the expert by experience group members, the inspection team heard that no members had been involved in interview panels or selection days with the university and employer partners. The inspection team was able to triangulate this within their meeting with staff involved in selection and admissions, that highlighted that members of the expert by experience group had attended a summer workshop last year regarding interview questions, providing edits to these, but were not involved directly in the selection of applicants.

34. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 1.3 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 1.4

35. The inspection team learnt from documentary evidence and discussions with employer partners and staff involved in selection and admissions that all applicants must have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate as part of their employment, for working with both children and adults. The inspection team heard from a senior admissions officer within the university that the admissions team check that the DBS check has been completed, log this in the students' records, including if there is anything flagged on the DBS check. The admissions officer identified that if this occurs then the university process is clear for all involved, head of admissions, programme lead, and employer partners triage the information. The dean of the faculty is referred to if deemed appropriate by the nature of the flag, who assesses whether the applicant is suitable for admission to the course.

36. Students on the course must sign a declaration of suitability during their admissions process to the course, providing the admissions and course team with assurance of the applicants' suitability of character, alongside the DBS check. This process supports input from university student support services regarding any disclosed additional requirements arising from a health condition or, for example, if the applicant is a care leaver. The inspection team heard that the university has a designated support worker to provide guidance and support if the applicant wishes at this stage. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

37. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the university Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy. The inspection team heard from students of how supportive their selection and admissions process were, providing examples of reasonable adjustments that were put in place for them through the proactive work from the university staff. The inspection team was assured from their discussions with the course team, staff involved in selection and admissions and employer partners that all staff involved in admissions process have appropriate training for EDI.

38. The inspection team heard from employer partners of examples of how supportive the university staff were regarding assisting applicants and students with accessing support and services for previously undiagnosed neurodiverse needs. The employer partner representatives that the inspection team met with expressed that they saw this as a clear example of the supportive nature of the university teams and services, acknowledging that this has provided the employer partners with further development of their own in-house support services. The inspection team advised that this standard was met.

39. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 1.5. We recommend that the university EDI Policy is reviewed and updated in line with review dates contained in the policy. Details of the recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard 1.6

40. The inspection team was able to review documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard that included the university website, Flyer Advertising Event, Evidence Information for Employees, and the Course Handbook. The inspection team heard from the course lead of the partners' portal, and a YouTube channel in development, that provides relevant information to potential applicants to support them to make an informed decision as to whether to take up an offer of a place on the course.

41. The inspection team was able to triangulate this information within their meeting with representatives from the student cohorts, who all spoke of feeling clear of what the course involved and they knew what would be expected of them as an apprentice, including but not limited to the role of Social Work England, roles and responsibilities of a social worker, Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and the content, assessment and delivery of the course. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

42. The inspection team was able to identify from their review of documentary evidence and discussions with the course team, senior management team and staff involved in placement-based learning that this course includes 30 skills days and an introduction to professional practice module at level 4, year 1 of the course. That includes an assessed

practice module to evaluate a student's readiness for practice and confirm whether a student is safe to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting. Please refer to standard 2.5 in this report for further focus on this area of the programme. In level 5 of the course there is a 70-day placement, and the final 100-day placement is in level 6.

43. As identified under standard 1.2 in this report the inspection team considered how the course applies its Recognition of Prior Learning Policy, the skills scan as part of this process, and the application of this to individual students. The inspection team learnt that students who start at level 4 are in the minority, with the majority of students starting at level 5.

44. The inspection team learnt that students in this situation are exempt from the skills days, the introduction to professional practice module at level 4, and in some instances the 70-day placement in level 5. The inspection team was concerned that students were not spending the identified time in practice settings to meet this standard, to develop their knowledge and skills, which included learning and development opportunities within contrasting placement settings.

45. The inspectors were not reassured that there was a robust process of how students joining the course at level 5 and/or 6 were undergoing a thorough assessment of mapping or evidencing the learning outcomes, skills and knowledge that would be expected for the student to learn and achieve within level 4 and the 70 day placement at level 5, and how these decisions are agreed and evidenced between the university and employer partners.

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

Standard 2.2

47. The findings of the inspection team regarding this standard were that the university's application of its Recognition of Prior Learning Policy resulted in a number of students being assessed as being exempt from study at level 4 which includes the introduction to professional practice module, and the 70-day placement in level 5. The inspectors considered that if students had not undertaken the practice learning and placement opportunities at level 4 and 5, then there were concerns regarding how these students would be able to gain and evidence the required knowledge and skills necessary to develop and progress in order to meet the professional standards.

48. As identified within this report, the inspectors were not reassured that there was a robust process of how students joining the course at level 5 and/or 6 were undergoing a

thorough assessment of mapping or evidencing the learning outcomes, skills and knowledge that would be expected for the student to learn and achieve within level 4 and the 70 day placement at level 5, and how these decisions are agreed and evidenced between the university and employer partners.

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

Standard 2.3

50. During the inspection week, the inspectors were able to meet with skills coaches from the course and discuss their key role on the programme in supporting students and ensuring that they have an appropriate induction, supervision, access to resources and a realistic workload during their placements. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard provided an example of the Practice Learning Agreement (PLA), that is completed at the start of the placement between the student, workplace supervisor, manager, and the academic tutor.

51. The inspectors were assured that this process maps out and formalises an understanding between all those at the meeting and involved in the placement setting that the student has appropriate and realistic learning opportunities and workload, as well as access to required resources in their placement role, with support and supervision in place. The inspectors were satisfied that there is a formal induction process that feeds into the assessment of practice during the placement.

52. The inspection team heard from a skills coach regarding the tripartite reviews, held every 12 weeks, that evaluate a student's progression and support to address any barriers they have met regarding their induction, supervision, access to resources and ensuring that they have a realistic workload. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

53. The inspection team heard from staff involved in placement-based learning of the work that is done when a student first joins the course to identify their previous experience and the areas of development that would be most suitable to support their placement-based learning. This is then matched to learning opportunities that are identified within certain organisations services that can best meet these learning outcomes for an individual student.

54. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors were able to review an anonymised tripartite review document that demonstrated that this is completed by the student, PE and practice supervisor. The inspection team were satisfied that this document checks and records that students are being given tasks that are appropriate to their level of learning. The inspection team heard from the representatives from the student cohorts that they felt the responsibility that they had on their placement was appropriate to where their learning and development on the course was, including that they felt this gradually increased as they progressed through the course. Documentary evidence highlighted that the students' tasks, learning outcomes and responsibilities on placements were appropriately mapped to the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) for Social Work in England, British Association of Social Workers (BASW, 2018) and Social Work England Professional Standards. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

55. Documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection identified that students in level 4 must complete the SW1311 Introduction to Professional Practice module, that is an assessed practice module that evaluates a student's readiness for practice and confirms whether a student is safe to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting.

56. As identified within standard 2.1 the inspectors queried how students joining at level 5 and 6 were being assessed and how this was evidenced against their previous knowledge and learning to the learning outcomes and opportunities that they would have undertaken in the levels of the course from which they were assessed as being exempt. That included readiness for direct practice within a placement setting that was undertaken in level 4.

57. As identified in standard 1.2, the inspection team reviewed the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy which identified evidence of experiential learning, under section 5 of the policy. That would require the submission of a portfolio that would normally include the statement of the claim, a brief CV to provide a context for the claim, reflection on the relevance of the learning to the programme against which the claim is being made, outcome cross-referenced to the full evidence and full evidence. The policy also identified further guidance of what evidence might be seen as part of the portfolio.

58. However, during their second meeting with the course team the inspection team learnt that the skills scan has replaced the portfolio from the start of the academic year 2022/2023, with the support and completion of this by the student and their line manager. The inspection team heard from members of the course team who are involved in reviewing the skills scan of this process, how they seek further evidence and information regarding areas of the students' previous learning and development and how this information is input into the skills scans. The inspection team was provided with further documentary evidence of examples of skills scans in relation to students who had, and had not, been assessed as being suitable to join the course at level 5 based on the application of RPEL.

59. The inspection team was not satisfied that there was a robust process, or evidence of one, of how students joining the course at level 5 and/or 6 were undergoing assessed preparation for direct practice, that demonstrated that they were safe to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting.

60. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 2.5 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, 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 outcome](#) section.

Standard 2.6

61. Staff involved in placement-based learning were able to inform the inspection team of the university process for ensuring that PEs are on the Social Work England register, and that they have the relevant and current knowledge, skills, and experience to support safe and effective learning to students on the course. The inspection team heard that the university placement team gathers an annual declaration from PEs that records their registration and CPD, that is stored securely and checked with employer partners. Within their meeting with PEs, the inspectors received confirmation that they are asked for this information which goes through their organisation's learning and development team and that PEs have access to the university's training and masterclasses. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 2.7

62. The inspection team heard from employer partners and staff involved in placement-based learning that all local authorities that they work with have their own policies and procedures, including whistleblowing, that students are informed of during their inductions, within the PLA, and have access to throughout their placements. The university have their own complaints, safeguarding and whistleblowing policies in place that outline these processes to students, that is covered at the start of the course and available to students on CANVAS, the university's e-learning platform, during the course.

63. As part of the documentary evidence submission the inspection team was able to review the university Report and Support webpage, that provides students with clear guidance and support in reporting any concerns that they have in a secure and confidential manner. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management, and quality

Standard 3.1

64. From their review of documentary evidence and discussions with the senior management team, the inspectors were assured that the course is supported by a management and governance plan to meet the requirements of this standard. The inspection team met with the course lead and head of department who are both registered social workers. The inspection team met with the head of department of social work, pro-vice chancellor, director of student support and success, head of quality and the dean of the faculty of health and wellbeing, that the social work department works within. The inspection team received narrative evidence within their meeting with the senior management team that enabled them to triangulate information regarding the governance, and apprenticeship programme, that highlighted the structures that the course has in place and its quality improvement mechanisms.

65. The inspection team was reassured that there is a system for quality assurance and oversight of academic standards, and allocation of resources, roles and responsibilities within the course and university. The inspection team was therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

66. Documentary evidence included The Partnership Agreement, that outlined the written arrangement between the university and its employer partners and placement providers, highlighting the requirements and expectations for all signed parties in the agreement that acknowledge and confirm responsibility of upholding and meeting the professional standards, and the education and training qualifying standards for students on the course.

67. In line with being an apprenticeship course, all the employer partners involved in the programme are signed to this agreement to provide placement opportunities, referred to as practice experience by the university, that meet the professional and qualifying education and training standards. Documentary evidence outlined that all the course placements are organised between the university and the learning and development teams that sit within the partner organisations, with meetings and reviews at the partners board and separately as individual employer partners.

68. The inspection team heard from students of the supportive process that is in place in the event of a practice placement breakdown. Representatives from the employer partners that the inspectors met with identified that the workforce development team for their organisation liaised with the course team, involved the PE and skills coach to ensure that the student was supported throughout the process of moving to another placement setting to continue their learning and development. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

69. As identified in standard 3.2 the Partnership Agreement sets a formal contract between the university and its employer partners, that includes placement providers having safety policies and procedures in place to uphold students' health, wellbeing, and relevant risk assessments. The inspectors were able to review the Health and Safety Agreement between the university and employer partners prior to the inspection, that further underpins the above policies and procedures.

70. The inspection team met with staff involved in practice-based learning who identified that students are already employed by their organisation and have therefore undergone their induction process and training in relation to their inhouse policies and procedures, with the university systems being covered during the student's university induction process, with links and further information on CANVAS, student support services, and the Programme Handbook.

71. The inspection team was provided with information regarding the university Resource Page, that provides students with links to safeguarding support and how to raise concerns. The inspection team heard from skills coaches of the work done during placements at PLA, midpoint review and endpoint meetings of checking and recording that students are aware of and know how to access support with any concerns relating to their health, wellbeing, or risk. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

72. Due to the nature of the apprenticeship course the programme's employer partners are integral to the course and involved throughout including admissions and placement management, and they attend the partnership board meetings. The inspection team was provided with documentary evidence of principal social workers from one local authority delivering sessions on systemic practice, and visiting lecturers from another area, who work in frontline social work posts, that support the teaching in the programme, including part of the critical reflection module. The inspection team received narrative evidence during the inspection of workshops held between the university and employer partners that support discussions on the course's monitoring and development, alongside regular partnership board meetings. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

73. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included examples of student and PE Quality Assurance in Practice Learning (QAPL), and minutes from the Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings and the 'University of Winchester Social Work Strategy for Engaging with People with Lived Experience'. The inspectors heard within their meeting with experts by experience of members from their group involved on the social work apprenticeship board, university board and the programme strategic planning group.

74. The inspection team learnt that students attend and chair the Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings, which feed into annual monitoring and enhancement work, with the education committee, that meets every two months to review and identify actions. The inspection team was informed that student evaluation is also gathered through QAPL and CANVAS, with some module leaders gathering this on a week-by-week basis. Students that the inspection team met with identified that they felt listened to and their issues acted upon, giving examples in relation to IT and attendance recording that the course team supported them to address.

75. Employer partners spoke of their attendance at the partnership board and this being a useful forum to share their feedback on the course and any areas of development; one example given to the inspection team was of previous timings of the teaching day and the impact this had upon students travelling from their locality. The employer partners confirmed that the course team listened to this and then acted upon it to make a change to the course that was of benefit to its students.

76. Within their meetings with students, experts by experience and employer partners, the inspection team was able to triangulate information from the submitted documentary evidence that outlined how these key stakeholders are involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the course's quality and effectiveness. Therefore, the inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

77. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team was able to review documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard, BA (Hons) in Social Work (Apprenticeship) Partners Board Terms of Reference (ToR) and notes from one of these boards' meetings. The inspectors were satisfied that the ToR included oversight of the quality delivery of the course and heard from employer partners and the course team during inspection of the workforce planning in place for the decision making on numbers to be admitted to the course.

78. As identified under standards 1.2, 2.1 and 2.2 earlier in this report, the inspection team was not reassured that there was a robust process of how students joining the course at level 5 and/or 6 were undergoing a thorough assessment of mapping or evidencing the learning outcomes, skills and knowledge that would be expected for the student to learn and achieve within level 4 and the 70 day placement at level 5, and how these decisions are agreed and evidenced between the university and employer partners.

79. The inspectors were not satisfied with how the recognition of prior learning was applied to students assessed as exempt from undertaking placement learning opportunities at different levels of the course, and any changes this may have on placement capacity in its local and regional area.

80. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 3.6 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard 3.7

81. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included the programme lead's CV and Social Work England registration details. The inspection team was assured that based on this evidence and discussions with the head of department and programme lead were appropriately qualified and experienced. The inspection team concluded that the documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection was able to demonstrate that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

82. During their meeting with student representatives the inspection team heard of how they found the course team very approachable, students could access support and guidance when they needed to, and the student support services, and wider university services were accessible, supportive, and knowledgeable.

83. From documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection, it was identified that members of the course team are involved in a wide range of roles and work to maintain their currency and professional knowledge, including deprivation of liberty safeguards assessor, volunteering for human rights assessments and a safeguarding lead for a local charity. The inspection team learnt from discussions with the course team of visiting lecturers, who work in frontline social work posts, that support the teaching in the programme, including part of the critical reflection module.

84. The university was able to demonstrate, through documentary evidence reviewed by the inspection team and within meetings, that the course team are appropriately resourced and supported. The course team's CVs were available to the inspection team, that provided evidence of professional and academic experience, including specialist subject knowledge and work undertaken outside of the university to maintain currency and support professional development. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

85. Within their meeting with the senior management team the inspectors were provided with a narrative overview of the process of gathering and evaluating student attainment data. That is gathered at a module basis and faculty level, the head of quality oversees,

liaises with the programme lead and head of department and then reviewed at board level, with actions fed into the programme improvement plan. Skills coaches that the inspection team met with identified that tripartite meetings and reviews feed into the process of collecting, analysing, and using student data, that can help to chart a student's individual progress or areas for development and support.

86. The inspection team was informed of the university lead for EDI and their work from data they have gathered that informs them of the low numbers of applicants that their local authorities are putting forward from the global majority. The course team identified within their documentary evidence submission that 'whilst the local demography is part of the answer to this question, we want to consider it more fully and make use of wider learning that came from work done by the wider team on our application and interview process'. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

87. From their discussions with the senior management team and course team, the inspectors learnt that the course team has 150 hours to utilise to support their professional knowledge, currency, and development. As identified in standard 3.8, from documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection, the inspection team was assured that members of the course team are involved in a wide range of roles and work to maintain their professional knowledge. The inspection team was provided with details of the workload allocation model that the university uses, including its annual appraisal model to highlight and discuss course team development and training, including areas of interest and specialisms through its individual review and development scheme policy.

88. The inspection team heard from PEs that they are invited to teaching and development days at the university, including masterclasses, that they can attend alongside their mandatory training through their employer. Employer partners highlighted that they keep records of PE's CPD and training so that they can support with accessing any further training that may be required or beneficial for that individual. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

89. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 3.10. We recommend that the course team has their mandatory and CPD training recorded and logged within the university so that it is kept securely and can be accessed when required. Find details of this recommendation in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

90. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the Programme Specification, Programme Handbook and Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours (KSB) Evidence Log. The inspectors were satisfied that this demonstrated how the content and structure of the course is mapped to the apprenticeship Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours standards, the professional standards, PCF, and the Degree Apprenticeship Standard (Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education). Within the documentary evidence the transition from the PCF to KSB was noted.

91. Within their meetings with PEs and employer partners, the inspection team heard of their experiences of students qualifying from the course as being prepared for their role as a Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) and their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), highlighting that students were aware of appropriate professional conduct, and of their requirements to meet the professional standards and apply for registration to Social Work England when they qualify.

92. Within the documentary evidence submission, and discussions with the skills coaches, the inspection team was able to triangulate information regarding the work that is done within the tripartite meetings. This included how the students' learning and development is discussed, logged, and reviewed to evidence how their work-based practice is linked to learning outcomes and learning from the course modules, to demonstrate how their knowledge and skills are incrementally progressing to meet the professional standards. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

93. As identified in standard 3.5, the inspection team was assured that the views of employer partners, practitioners, and people with lived experience of social work are incorporated into the design, ongoing development, and review of the curriculum. The inspection heard within their meeting with members from the expert by experience group that they are involved on the social work apprenticeship board, university board and the programme strategic planning group. The inspection team heard from these same members that they feel valued in their work with the university, with a real emphasis on inclusion and participation from their group, providing examples of working with tutors on module assessments and assignment questions and that they provide feedback on the content of students' work. All expressed to the inspection team that their involvement and co-production is sought, valued, respected.

94. Employer partners spoke of their attendance at the partnership board and this being a useful forum to review the content of the programme, share their feedback on the course and any areas of development, one example given to the inspection team was of previous timings of the teaching day and the impact this had upon students travelling from their locality. The employer partners confirmed that the course team listened to this and then acted upon it to make a change to the course that was of benefit to its students. The

inspection team learnt from discussions with the course team of visiting lecturers, who work in frontline social work posts, that support the teaching in the programme, including part of the critical reflection module. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

95. Documentary evidence submitted prior, and during, the inspection, included the university EDI Policy, confirmation of the completion of mandatory EDI training for staff and the Access and Participation Plan. The module descriptors and learning outcomes for modules reflected that human rights and equality are key themes throughout the programme, with teaching covering the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

96. The inspection team was able to triangulate this information within their meeting with the course team, who highlighted their work and specialist areas regarding research and practice to pursue human rights goals including their work with people with learning disabilities, decolonising the curriculum, and working with gypsy and traveller communities, that are brought into the design and teaching on the programme.

97. The inspection team was satisfied that the course had been designed in accordance with appropriate EDI principles. In their meetings with student representatives and university student support services, the students expressed that they felt well supported and individual needs were always considered by the university and course team. Examples of reasonable adjustments such as specialist equipment and technology, extensions, and adjustments to working conditions, that student support services provided were given to the inspection team. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

98. As identified within standards 3.8 and 3.10, documentary evidence, Social Work Educators Maintaining Professional Practice, the inspection team was assured that members of the course team are involved in a wide range of roles and work to maintain their currency and professional knowledge. That sought to ensure that the course and curriculum are continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice. Documentary evidence identified the involvement of the Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, and Portsmouth Social Work Education Network, SHIP SWEN 10 June 2021, that the course team spoke of as a network that allows the sharing of current information of best practice and national updates that they draw upon in maintaining and updating the programme.

99. The inspection team was informed of members of the course team undertaking and completing their doctorates, with new staff completing their post graduate certificate in teaching in higher education, highlighting the university's approach to scholarly activity that reflects best and current practice into the curriculum and the programme's approach to teaching. Student support and library services provided narrative evidence of how library

and academic resources are updated for the course and how these link with, and provide, currency to the course, including updates and skills sessions to students on the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

100. Within their meeting with students, the inspection team heard some views of areas of practice that they were seeing in their placement settings that they felt could be drawn upon and focused within the teaching of the course, to give them a greater understanding and evidenced approach in their current placement setting. For example, some students felt that the teaching staff could helpfully learn from placement settings the impact that the pandemic had had on social work. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 4.4. We recommend that consideration is given to teaching staff discussing with the student cohorts current practice trends and issues they are seeing in placement. This could then be drawn upon and a focus within formal teaching sessions. Find details of this recommendation in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard 4.5

101. The inspection team was satisfied that the documentary evidence provided, including module descriptors for the Ready to Practise, Applied Practice Issues and Critical Analysis and Investigation of Practice modules, demonstrated that the integration of theory and practice is central to the course, and threads throughout its modules and teaching. The inspection team was provided with an example of students work that demonstrated their ability to draw links between theory and practice as a result of the teaching they had undertaken within the course. The inspectors heard from skills coaches during the inspection week of examples of how the tripartite meetings are a tool for reinforcing links and understanding between relevant social work theoretical frameworks and practice undertaken during placements.

102. The inspectors heard from both students and PEs that the supervision that they conduct focuses on reflection. This seeks to provide a constructive and supportive space to discuss and develop links between the work that the student is undertaking and their learning of relevant theoretical frameworks that underpins their placement practice and development as a social worker. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

103. The social work department at the university sits within the faculty of health and wellbeing. The mapping evidence received prior to the inspection highlighted that this provides the opportunity for multidisciplinary working with other students and courses. Documentary evidence, MD Teaching Mapping 2022-2023, emphasised the work that is done between social work, nursing that included adult, learning disability and psychiatric courses, as well as physiotherapy and occupational therapy cohorts, to provide learning and

development opportunities for students from peers in other professions. Students spoke of attending multi-disciplinary simulated home visits within their teaching on the course, and their role in Swartz round meetings with social work, nursing, and midwifery cohorts that reflect on their roles and impact of front-line practice experiences.

104. The PLA meeting reinforces the focus of students from the course working alongside other professionals during their placement settings and is checked within tripartite meetings by the skills coaches. The inspection team was able to triangulate this information within their meetings with employer partners and PEs who spoke of working and shadowing opportunities for students with other services and professions, including police, prisons, and hospital settings. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

105. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the Programme Handbook Social Work Apprenticeship, the Social Work Degree Apprenticeship BA Programme Specification, and the module specifications. These outlined to the inspectors the number of hours a student on the course would spend in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator.

106. However, as already identified within this report the inspection team was concerned regarding the students who were assessed in their admissions process as being eligible to start at level 5 of the course, not undertake the learning at level 4, the 70-day placement at level 5 and in some instances joined the course at level 6. These concerns included a lack of clear evidence to demonstrate how students' previous learning and experience are mapped to academic learning modules that they have been given exemption from.

107. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 4.7 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 outcome](#) section.

Standard 4.8

108. Prior to the inspection the inspectors were able to review documentary evidence and the education and training standards mapping form submitted by the course team. These outlined that the course assessment strategy was designed through the internal university process, including annual feedback at module and programme level by the external examiner (EE) and that marking on the course is in line with the university Assessment Regulations, including moderation and second marking as required. The inspectors noted

that the EE report identified positives of the standard of assessment and the apparent fairness and consistency of marking on the course.

109. As identified in other standards of this report, the inspection team was not satisfied that there was a robust process, or evidence of one, of how students joining the course at level 5 and/or 6 were undergoing a robust assessment of mapping or evidencing the learning outcomes, skills and knowledge that would be expected for the student to learn and achieve within level 4 and the 70 day placement at level 5. The inspectors were not assured that those students exempt from level 4 study and the level 5 placement had been thoroughly assessed as having the learning opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards.

110. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 4.8 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 outcome](#) section.

Standard 4.9

111. The inspection team was provided with module descriptors and the Programme Handbook Social Work Apprenticeship as part of the documentary evidence submission. This enabled the inspectors to identify that the module learning outcomes are appropriately aligned to KSBs and appropriate standards, with assessments being carried out at appropriate stages of the course to match students' expected progression through their learning and development. The sequencing of assessments in modules is clearly set out in the Programme Handbook Social Work Apprenticeship, with the Social Work Degree Apprenticeship BA Programme Specification detailing the learning across the programme.

112. This was triangulated within the inspection teams meeting with students' representatives, who raised no concerns regarding their assessment and progression during their time on the course. The inspection team concluded this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

113. The inspection team was provided with documentary evidence and examples of feedback that students on the course have received, including observations in practice by a PE, tripartite and midway reports for students, including the marking criteria for the executive presentation. The inspection team received narrative evidence within their meeting with the course team, who identified that feedback is provided within fifteen days, university wide, on assessments, with three clear statements, 'what could have been

improved, things to consider for the future and what you have done well', that they focus on with students to support their progression.

114. The inspection team heard from student representatives that the feedback they received had all been within the 15-day timeframe. They expressed that it was timely, helpful, and informed them of their progression and areas of development. Students identified that the time of reflective supervision that they receive from their PE was beneficial, and that formal and informal feedback was provided in these settings. They also spoke about feedback from their personal tutors, who are available and responsive to their learning and development needs. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

115. As identified in standard 3.8, the inspectors were able to review the CVs of the course team and staff involved in assessment, which satisfied them that appropriate expertise, qualifications, and experience were held, including registration of the EE with Social Work England. From their meetings with the course team, the inspectors learnt that marking moderation is carried out, with new members of the course team being provided with training and induction, including for the assessment, and marking requirements. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

116. Documentary evidence provided in relation to the systems that manage student progression included module descriptors, tripartite review examples and evidence of direct observations. The inspection team identified that the module descriptors reflect the different learning needs, depending on the development stage and year of students. The inspection team was provided with narrative evidence during the inspection of how the monitoring of students' progression throughout the course is monitored and evaluated at the programme board meetings. Within the documentary evidence the requirements for direct observation of practice were outlined, with a range of key stakeholders involved in the assessment of the students, including academic staff, PEs, and employer partners. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

117. The inspectors agreed that based on the documentary evidence provided and from discussions with the course team, PEs, employer partners and students, the course design facilitates an evidenced informed approach to practice. The inspection team was informed of, and provided documentary evidence regarding, the applied practice issues module. That included evidence and research-based learning outcomes, and assignment guidance that emphasises the need to gather, use, analyse and evaluate evidence to inform decision making and enable effective practice.

118. Narrative evidence gained during the inspection reinforced how students are encouraged to apply research to practice within their supervision and reflection work with their PEs, with library support services and skills workshops available to students to further develop their learning and ability to research and analyse appropriate information. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

119. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed documentary evidence provided by the university regarding the access to support services that students on the course have in relation to their health and wellbeing. The inspection team was assured that these services provided support including careers guidance, occupational health services and confidential counselling services, as well as specialist tutors, support for care leavers, financial and housing advice, student support and success advisors.

120. During the inspection the inspectors were able to triangulate the documentary evidence in discussions with the university student support services, that provided an overview of the links between Student Support and Success (SSaS), Student Support and Success Advisors (SSSAs) and the work between these and their academic and programme administration colleagues to support retention, progression, and student success. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

121. Both documentary and narrative evidence provided the inspection team with an overview of students being able to access support whilst on the course, during placements, and having assistance to access specialist support services regarding a range of areas, including but not limited to students with caring responsibilities, additional support needs and mature students. Students spoke positively of how they can access this support and guidance in the form of one to ones and how accessible this support is.

122. In their meeting with the course team the inspectors heard how each student is allocated a personal tutor for the duration of the course, has access to individual module leaders for one-to-one meetings and support with academic assignments. The academic skills department provides face to face, online and virtual workshops, including group and

individual sessions, that work alongside skills coach monitoring and support at the tripartite meetings.

123. During the meeting with student support services, it was identified that support to study is a service that offers to meet with students and academic staff, to provide a supportive process, that can assist with developing a study plan for the student and support with extensions to deadlines, learning environment, and liaising with the course team. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

124. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence that included annual declaration forms and the university's Fitness to Study Policy. The inspection team was able to triangulate this information within its meetings with the students and course team, highlighting that there is a system in place for ensuring the suitability of a student's conduct, character, and health.

125. The inspection team heard how this is reviewed annually, that students must sign and complete declaration, and that a student's suitability is also checked through assessment of readiness for practice, assessed practice and academic work and tripartite reviews. The inspection team concluded that the documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection, and discussions with key stakeholders during the inspection, were able to demonstrate that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

126. During the inspection the inspectors were able to meet with a representative from the university disability service, who provided narrative evidence of the support provided to students on the course. Narrative evidence provided to the inspection team identified that students are offered support and can undertake an assessment for reasonable adjustments, as well as learning agreements where appropriate. This can include adjustments to practice experiences, teaching on the course and its assessments. This is reflected in the university accessible and inclusive learning policy, that includes guidance regarding reasonable adjustments, and that funding is available for these.

127. The inspection team heard examples of the support which was provided and offered to students regarding accessing additional support and specialist services to enable them to progress through the course and meet the professional standards. The inspectors agreed this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

128. Documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection clearly outlined that students are provided with information on CANVAS, skills days, and teaching sessions, regarding all elements of the course and curriculum, as well as the transition to registered social worker,

ASYE, and CPD requirements. The inspection team was able to triangulate this information within their meetings with the course team and representatives from the student cohorts, who identified that this information was discussed throughout the course and available to them to access online to refer to as required. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 5.6

129. The inspection team was able to review the Programme Handbook Social Work Apprenticeship that provides students with clarity regarding parts of the course where attendance is mandatory. As part of the documentary evidence submission the inspectors were provided with student training plans, which are signed by PEs, employer partners, students, and members of the course team to confirm their attendance on the course. The inspection team learnt of the university's attendance app that monitors student attendance, noting that students identified some issues with signing in, identifying wi-fi connection issues.

130. The course team were aware of these issues and identified that IT services had been brought into support, allowing students to log their attendance on the app over a 24-hour period and that paper copies were used as a backup to record attendance. Students were clear in their understanding of the mandatory requirements for their attendance with this being an apprenticeship course, including potential repercussions if they did not meet these. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

131. As identified within standard 4.10, the inspection team was provided with and reviewed documentary evidence regarding students receiving feedback throughout the course to support their ongoing learning and development. As already identified within this report this evidence outlined the mechanisms that the university has in place for formative, summative and placement activity feedback to the students.

132. The students that the inspection team met with identified that this was provided within the university timeframe for feedback, and that they found this helpful and was informed by their reflective focus and supervision with their PE. The inspection team heard from the library and academic support services of the range of workshops and tutorials that is on offer to support students' ongoing development needs. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

133. The information identified within the university Academic Appeals Regulations, provided within the documentary evidence submission, illustrates that there is an effective formal appeals procedure for students. This was triangulated within the meeting with the

student group and their confirmation that they were aware of this procedure, what it meant for them and how to access it if required. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

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

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

136. 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.

137. 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	1.3	The education provider will provide evidence that members of the expert by experience group are directly involved in the admissions and selection process of applicants to the course.	8 August 2024	Paragraph 33
2	Links to a condition set against standards 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 3.6, 4.7 and 4.8.	The education provider will provide evidence to demonstrate a robust process for RPEL and RPL with an updated policy document to reflect how this works for social work. This should identify how experience and academic learning is mapped to course modules and learning outcomes, including how this is formally assessed and agreed as part of the admissions process with all stakeholders. This should acknowledge that future recruitment should not normally allow exemption from a placement, including assessed preparation for direct practice. An exception to this could be where an applicant has previously studied on an approved social work course at a different	8 June 2024	Paragraph 28 Paragraph 42 Paragraph 47 Paragraph 55 Paragraph 77 Paragraph 105 Paragraph 108

		institution; evidence and currency of learning and achievement from that study should be considered under your recognition of prior learning process.		
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Recommendations

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

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	1.1	The inspectors are recommending that consideration is given to whether a more multi-dimensional approach to the assessment process could be introduced, that involves coproduction and involvement from the experts by experience group members that the course team works with.	Paragraph 25
2	1.5	The inspectors are recommending that the university EDI Policy is reviewed and updated in line with review dates contained in the policy	Paragraph 37
3	3.10	The inspectors are recommending that the course team has their mandatory and CPD training recorded and logged within the university so that it is kept securely and can be accessed when required.	Paragraph 87
4	4.4	The inspectors are recommending that consideration is given to teaching staff discussing with the student cohorts current practice trends and issues they are seeing in placement. This could then be drawn upon and a focus within formal teaching sessions	Paragraph 98

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.	☒	☐	☐

Regulator decision

139. Approved with conditions.

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

140. 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](#).

141. A review of the conditions evidence will be undertaken and recommendations will be made to Social Work England's decision maker.

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

	Standard not met	Condition	Recommendation
1	Standard 1.3. Ensure that employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work are involved in admissions processes.	The education provider will provide evidence that members of the expert by experience group are directly involved in the admissions and selection process of applicants to the course.	Met.
2	Links to a condition set against Ensure that applicants' prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions processes. 2.1. Ensure that students spend at least 200 days (including up to 30 skills days) gaining different experiences	The education provider will provide evidence to demonstrate a robust process for RPEL and RPL with an updated policy document to reflect how this works for social work. This should identify how experience and academic learning is mapped to course modules and learning outcomes, including how this is formally assessed and agreed as part of the admissions process with all stakeholders. This should acknowledge that future recruitment should not normally allow exemption from a placement, including assessed preparation for direct practice. An exception to this could be where an applicant has previously studied on an approved social work course at a different	Met.

	and learning in practice settings. 2.2. Provide practice learning opportunities that enable students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards. 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. 3.6. Ensure that the number of students admitted is aligned to a clear strategy, which includes consideration	institution; evidence and currency of learning and achievement from that study should be considered under your recognition of prior learning process.	
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	of local/regional placement capacity. 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, reliable, and valid, and that those who successfully complete the course have developed the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards.		
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Findings

143. The conditions review was undertaken as a result of the conditions set during the course approval as outlined in the original inspection report above. The course provider submitted the conditions monitoring mapping form within the timescale identified by the inspectors. The mapping form contained narrative evidence and supporting documentary evidence that was reviewed by the inspectors.

144. In relation to the condition set for standard 1.3, the education provider confirmed that experts by experience are now directly involved in the admission process. Within the conditions evidence mapping form the course provider highlighted that the admissions process for all applicants to the course will include and involve a member of the expert by experience group. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this included the Group Task Brief for Social Work Apprenticeship Interviews 2024 document. The inspection team were satisfied that the evidence met the condition, and the standard is now met.

145. In relation to the condition set for standards 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 3.6, 4.7 and 4.8, the course provider submitted documentary evidence in support of meeting the overall condition and narrative information regarding each of the above standards that link to the condition.

146. Narrative and documentary evidence submitted by the course provider confirmed that there is no exemption from level 5 of the course for all students on the course, this includes the practice experience of 70 days and the academic content of level 5.

147. Through the evidence submission the education provider identified that if exemption from level 4 is to be considered, then the applicant will be invited to a professional discussion and workshop to discuss and assess the evidence required to meet the learning outcomes for level 4. The inspectors learnt that any student who enters level 5 of the course through the recognition of prior learning process must undertake an assessment of readiness to undertake direct practice, including a direct observation and receiving feedback on their practice from a person with lived experience of social work.

148. Documentary evidence submitted to the inspectors highlighted that any exemption from level 4 of the course would also have to include the submission of an applicants' portfolio for assessment. Information from the course provider confirmed that the portfolio would include the applicants' skills scan, evidence from the professional discussion, their CV and observation of practice. As well as including evidence against the learning outcomes for level 4 of the course using the evidence proforma, transcripts of previous educational qualifications mapped to the learning outcomes for level 4 and mapping of prior experiential learning to the learning outcomes.

149. Information from the course provider identified that the exemption from level 4 of the course must be recommended by the University or Collaborative Partner Institution, endorsed by the University's Academic Liaison Officer, and finally approved by the University's Head of Academic Department.

150. The Additional Information for the Recognition of Prior Learning for the Social Work Degree Apprenticeship document was submitted by the course provider as guidance alongside the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy. The supplementary information maps out the learning outcomes and the type of evidence that may meet the learning outcomes and the process by which the application is considered. Minutes from a partner's workshop confirmed that this has been shared and agreed with all key stakeholders and circulated to all prospective applicants. The inspection team were satisfied that the evidence met the condition, and the standards are now met.

151. Following the review of the documentary evidence submitted, the inspection team are satisfied that the conditions set against the approval of the BA (Honours) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship are met.

Regulator decision

Conditions met.