Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Gloucestershire

Course approval: BSc (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship

Inspection dates: 12th – 14th November 2024

Report date:	10.1.25
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	27.2.25
Date conditions met and approved:	TO BE ADDED

Contents

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 2018[1], 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

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

officer if they have any queries that may be able to be addressed in advance of the inspection.

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 it we decide the conditions are not met.

Summary of Inspection

15. The University of Gloucestershire's BSc (Hons) 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	UGR3
Course provider	University of Gloucestershire
Validating body (if different)	N/A
Course inspected	BSc (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	45
Date of inspection	12th – 14th November 2024
Inspection team	Daisy Bragadini (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Michelle Loughrey (Lay Inspector) Kev Stone (Registrant Inspector)

Language

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

Inspection

17. An onsite inspection took place from the 12 November 2024 until 14 November 2024 at the Oxstalls Campus, School of Health and Social Care, Gloucester, where the education provider is based. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including apprenticeship students, course staff, employer partners and people with lived experience of social work. At the same time, a separate inspection team carried out a reapproval inspection of the MA Social Work and PGDip (exit route) courses at the university, and a separate inspection report reflects the findings from that inspection. Some of the meetings were held together with both inspection teams, whilst others were held separately.

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 11 apprenticeship students from levels 4, 5 and 6 of the course, including student representatives. Discussions covered their experience of practice-based learning, their curriculum, communication, feedback and assessments.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the admissions team, central apprenticeship team, the teaching and learning team, some senior leaders, staff involved in practice-based learning and staff responsible for delivery of professional services.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with 3 people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in assessing apprenticeship students on the courses, admissions processes and role play activity. Discussions explored their roles in supporting the course team and apprenticeship students, and how they are involved in the course.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from employer partners from Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Swindon, Bath and North East Somerset and Bristol local authorities. Discussions included how the employer partners worked with the university to deliver the course, provide placements for apprentices, and supported the monitoring and management of 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 apprenticeship students who successfully complete the course are able to meet the professional standards.

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

25. In relation to this standard, the course provider submitted the University of Gloucestershire Admissions Policy and Admissions Procedures 2024. Applicants applied to the employer partner, who put forward successful applicants, within a quota, to the university. Alternatively, an expression of interest was received directly by the university by individual applicants who were then required to submit an application form. The Admissions Lead coordinated all applications, and successful applicants were invited to attend an interview at the university. This involved an informal group exercise and individual interview.

26. The inspection team reviewed evidence which confirmed that apprenticeship applicants were expected to have appropriate ICT ability in their current role and obtain an English GCSE equivalent by the end of the course, if this was not already held. The inspection team were informed that the application assessment process did not include a written activity as it was expected that employers would assess this element. Additionally, the inspection team did not receive evidence of how the university provided guidance to employer partners on eligibility criteria or expectations for applicants. The inspection team concluded there was insufficient evidence to illustrate how the university was able to assure itself that English language requirements and the capacity to meet academic standards, were assessed at the admissions stage, and determined that this standard was not met.

27. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 1.1 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the conditions section of this report.

Standard 1.2

28. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with the Academic Regulations for Taught Provision and the Accreditation of Prior Learning policy. They heard that applicants applying in line with these procedures were considered on an individual basis by the admissions lead and the academic course lead.

29. Narrative evidence provided by the university outlined that employer partners ensured that applicants possessed relevant prior experience. During the meeting with employer partners, representatives from a range of regional local authorities described how they assessed prior relevant experience. However, the inspection team were unable to identify how the university maintained oversight of these processes of assessment or how the university itself considered prior relevant experience as part of the admissions process. They concluded that this standard was not met.

30. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 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 conditions section of the report.

Standard 1.3

31. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team were provided with the Admissions Policy and Procedure. As part of a request for additional evidence the inspection team were provided with assurances that people with lived experience of social work and employer partners were involved in the admissions process. During a meeting with people with lived experience of social work, the inspection team heard about their

involvement as part of the interview panel, their involvement in marking interview questions, and heard how they felt their views and opinions were valued as part of the process. A member of the group described being supported by an academic staff member and attended an equality, diversity and inclusion conference at the university. During the meeting with employer partners, the inspection team also heard how representatives from local authorities were involved in the interviews at the admissions stage.

32. The course team conveyed their ambition to increase the number of people with lived experience of social work they are able to work with, with an aim to enhance their involvement within the admissions processes. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

33. Prior to the inspection, and as part of a request for additional evidence, the course provider submitted the Suitability for Social Work Self-Declaration Form. Guidance and information were provided on the admissions web page and included the fitness to practice process, online health questionnaire and requirement for an enhanced DBS check.

34. During the meeting with the course admissions team the inspection team explored the fitness to practice processes and how the enhanced DBS checks were undertaken. The central apprenticeship team worked alongside the admissions team to ensure all applicants had an enhanced DBS check, along with their health assurances and declaration of suitability. The inspection team also heard that the employers checked the online update service, where employees were registered, and reported on their status to the university.

35. Within narrative documentary evidence and during meetings with the course staff, the inspection team were provided with an overview of a clear and differentiated process followed where positive declarations were made. This included an assessment of suitability and risk assessment, and involved the practice placement lead, the course lead, and member of the senior leadership team. Employer partners were also included in this decision-making process, where deemed appropriate. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

36. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were provided with the Admissions Policy, the Health Questionnaire, the undergraduate admissions web page and the

Access and Participation Plan. Narrative evidence was focussed on the postgraduate route, which meant it was unclear how the processes for reasonable adjustments applied to the apprenticeship course. However, during the inspection they heard how the disability support services were able to support the provision of reasonable adjustments at interview.

37. The inspection team identified that there was an absence of equality, diversity and inclusion training provided for people with lived experience of social work or employer partners. The inspection team explored the reciprocal mentoring programme and use of data alongside the analytics tool, Power BI with admissions and course staff. The inspection team felt unable to fully understand how they were used, or to gauge the impact of their application on the admissions processes. As a result, the inspection team agreed that they were unable to identify a robust evidence base to assure this standard was met.

38. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 1.5 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the conditions section of the report.

Standard 1.6

39. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were able to review evidence on the course page website. This included information on the course, modules, the campus and facilities, benefits and support available, entry requirements and how to contact the team. Open days were provided, and interview days included a presentation on the course.

40. The course webpage did not provide information about the role of Social Work England and professional regulation, including the registration requirement. Recent course changes in relation to practice placements and assessment were also not reflected on the webpage.

41. The inspection team were assured that there were no additional costs within the course, other than those provided on the website, and that this standard was met.

42. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 1.6. They recommend that the course webpage

is reviewed to ensure it includes further relevant course detail. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the recommendation section.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

43. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team requested additional evidence in relation to how apprenticeship students were provided with 200 days of learning in practice settings. The inspection team were informed that employer partners were responsible for providing the 70 and 100 day placements and that these were managed, by them, in a variety of ways.

44. During the meeting with apprenticeship students, the inspection team heard of a range of experiences in relation to practice placements. These included feeling unprepared, start dates being delayed, length of placements changing with little notice given, and a lack of clear distinction between placement days and those spent in their substantive on-the-job work-based learning posts.

45. The inspection team were informed that a new practice placement 100-day module was introduced in September 2024 with the aim of providing more structure and clarity in relation to placement experience and assessment. The inspection team fully acknowledged the requirement of this new module, and also the need for the formalisation of the 70 day placement. Apprenticeship students and employer partners told the inspection team about the confusion and challenges they had experienced in relation to its introduction. The inspection team heard that the introduction of the new module had altered expectations for placements with little notice, had created additional requirements on employer partners, and resulted in some stakeholders experiencing a lack of preparation for the changes it necessitated.

46. The inspection team were informed that placement details were collated by the Coach in Practice team and apprenticeship students' learning needs were discussed at the Independent Learning Review (ILR) meetings. However, the inspection team were unable to identify evidence which assured them that apprenticeship students completed 170 days on placement or that there was a robust mechanism in place to manage the provision of contrasting placement experiences for every apprenticeship student.

47. During the inspection, the inspection team explored the processes followed in order to quality assure and audit placements to determine whether they met the statutory definition, according to the requirements within this standard. The inspection team

were unable to identify evidence to show how the course provider assured itself that all apprenticeship students were provided with at least one statutory placement.

48. Both prior to and during the inspection, the inspection team explored how apprenticeship students were provided with 30 skills days throughout their course. The inspection team were informed that skills days were provided to apprenticeship students in a variety of ways, but they were unable to identify the provision of 30 skills days throughout the course. During the meeting held with apprenticeship students and employer partners, the inspection team were made aware of an absence of understanding in relation to these requirements within both groups.

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

Standard 2.2

50. As part of the initial and additional documentary evidence submission, the inspection team reviewed the Learner Mentor Handbook, the Course Handbook and the Level 6 Placement Handbook. During the inspection, the inspection team heard that the Independent Learning Review (ILR) meetings, convened 3- 4 times a year, were responsible for covering a number of aspects of the apprentice's development and progression monitoring. Although the inspection team acknowledged the critical and necessary role the ILR meetings played, they were unable to be satisfied that the meetings alone were sufficient to demonstrate that this standard was met.

51. The inspection team acknowledged that the course team had plans to implement the Quality Assurance in Practice Learning audit function, the results of which plan to be collated and presented at the Practice Assessment Panel (PAP) meeting. The inspection team understood how this could support the course team in ensuring the content and quality of learning opportunities available for apprenticeship students.

52. However, the inspection team identified a current lack of evidence which could illustrate how the university ensured that placements offered learning opportunities which enabled apprenticeship students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards.

53. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 2.2 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the conditions section of the report.

Standard 2.3

54. Preceding the inspection, the course provider submitted the Learner Mentor Guide. This outlined areas such as roles and responsibilities, direct observations and arrangements for placements, including supervision. The guide stipulated that each employer made arrangements for placements, and that these would differ between employers.

55. Coaches in Practice and mentors provided support for apprentices, meeting with them quarterly as part of the Independent Learning Review (ILR) meetings where issues relating to workload and access to resources were addressed.

56. The inspection team noted that the new 100-day placement module contained a requirement for supervision, but they were unclear how this would be arranged for the 70-day placement. During the course of the inspection, the inspection team understood that there was a variety of provision between regional partners and local authorities, with each one providing different support. Apprenticeship students spoke about concerns around a lack of guidance and support at placement, which indicated an absence of a set standard applied by the university in relation to how placements should be delivered.

57. The inspection team concluded that there was a lack of evidence to demonstrate how a systematic and cohesive process ensured consistency in supervision or induction, and concluded that this standard was not met.

58. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 2.3 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 conditions section of the report.

Standard 2.4

59. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed evidence which highlighted how each employer partner managed apprenticeship students' responsibilities using their own processes. During the inspection, the practice learning team described the role of the Independent Learning Review (ILR) meetings and were informed about how the practice educators closely monitored workload. The practice-based learning team spoke about how the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) was used to support apprenticeship students' learning and progression and how direct observations were used.

60. However, the inspection team heard that the apprenticeship Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour framework was not applied consistently throughout the course and had only recently been reintroduced. Although the inspection team identified some evidence of how apprenticeship students were expected to be provided with responsibilities appropriate for their stage of education, they were unable to identify how the university were able to ensure this was happening. The inspection team concluded that they were unable to identify a consistent planning process in place to monitor apprenticeship students' development against relevant learning outcomes, aligned to their stage of training, and agreed that this standard was not met.

61. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 2.4 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the conditions section of the report.

Standard 2.5

62. During the inspection, the inspection team explored how apprenticeship students underwent assessed preparation for direct practice. They heard that apprenticeship students were required to pass all year 1 modules, complete and update their PCF tracker, complete 4 Independent Learning Review (ILR) meetings, and evidence these within APTEM, their online apprenticeship progression platform. Apprenticeship students were also required to complete a direct observation and simulation, which included a reflection session, and were observed and assessed by a person with lived

experience of social work and a lecturer. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

63. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 2.5. They recommend that communication to apprenticeship students should be strengthened and enhanced to ensure they understand the implications if they are assessed as not ready or safe to carry out practice learning. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the recommendation section.

Standard 2.6

64. Preceding the inspection, the course provider submitted a blank practice educator CV form, the Learner Mentor Guide and the practice educator training handbook and module guide. The blank CV form required practice educators to provide details of qualifications, employment history, training and development, and their Social Work England registration number. Narrative evidence outlined that the university maintained a register of off-site practice educators using these documents, and facilitated the provision of off site practice educators if employer partners required their support.

65. During the inspection, oversight of the qualification, currency and registration of onsite practice educators was explored with practice placement and course staff. The inspection team heard that there was an expectation that onsite practice educators were qualified and registered, but they were unable to identify how the course provider assured themselves of the particular status of the practice educators working with apprenticeship students.

66. The inspection team concluded that there was a lack of evidence which demonstrated a robust and systematic process in place to ensure all practice educators had relevant experience, currency, qualification and were registered with Social Work England. This standard was not met.

67. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 2.6 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the conditions section of the report.

Standard 2.7

68. Preceding the inspection the inspection team were provided with the Student Charter which outlined the process for dealing with concerns and difficulties, the Apprenticeship students' Complaints Procedures and detailed information on complaints, bullying and harassment. Whistleblowing whilst on placement was covered within documentation for the apprenticeship students, which enabled them to know where to access support.

69. The final placement handbook contained relevant information for apprenticeship students on how to raise concerns and use the whistleblowing policy. During the meeting with apprenticeship students the inspection team were confident that they were aware of the processes to be followed and where to access support. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

70. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 2.7. They recommend that the whistleblowing process is included within the course handbook. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the recommendation section.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

71. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed documentary evidence which outlined how the course was managed in relation to delivery, resourcing and quality management. The inspection team reviewed evidence to show how the committee and board structures functioned and provided quality assurance oversight and governance structures for the course. This included the Quality Assurance Handbook, the Academic Regulations for Taught Provision and the Assessment Principles and Procedures. Evidence illustrated how the Academic Course Enhancement Monitoring process was undertaken annually. This was informed by module and placement evaluations and facilitated the enhancement and performance of the course.

72. In relation to this standard, and prior to the inspection, the team requested the external examiner's report, although this was not shared.

73. The inspection team were informed that the Programme Management Committee's work had been suspended in order that the Social Work Employer Board Apprenticeship Management meetings prioritised the identified issues within the course. The inspection team reviewed evidence which showed that the group had met every 6 weeks to work on the improvement plan which had been collated, and would continue

to meet quarterly from January 2025 due to the improvement plan being considered complete.

74. Ordinarily, the Programme Management Committee met quarterly and worked to use stakeholder feedback to inform the course and held overall strategic responsibility in the delivery and implementation of the course. It was unclear to the inspection team when the work of this committee would restart.

75. The inspection team concluded that the course was supported by a management and governance plan and that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

76. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed evidence which illustrated the 6 -weekly employer review meetings which addressed progression and student needs, along with the provision of Independent Learning Reviews. The inspection team reviewed evidence of the Placement in Difficulties Process and narrative evidence which highlighted how the course provider responded to a placement breakdown.

77. Consent was gained for direct observations of practice, but how this process worked, and how consent was obtained from people with lived experience of social work for apprenticeship students to work with them, was less clear.

78. Although examples of formal written agreements with employer partners were requested, the inspection team were unable to objectively identify evidence of such agreements. Therefore, they concluded that they were unable to see how the university was assuring itself that agreements covered the provision of education and training which met the professional standards and education and training standards, and that this standard was not met.

79. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 3.2 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the conditions section of the report.

Standard 3.3

80. Preceding the inspection the inspection team reviewed the Quality Assurance in Practice Learning feedback presentation and the Practice Assessment Panel Guidance from the direct entry route.

81. Narrative evidence received outlined that it was the responsibility of the employer to ensure relevant aspects of apprenticeship students' health and wellbeing and risk was provided for. Additionally, the inspection team understood that the university was in the process of developing best practice guidance for placements to support agreements in place with employer partners.

82. However, the inspection team were unable to identify how the university ensured that an oversight mechanism was in place for employer partners to have the necessary policies and procedures in place in relation to apprenticeship students' health, wellbeing and risk. A formalised oversight process, included within a quality assurance process, would enable to the university to assure themselves of the support available for apprenticeship students. This standard was not met.

83. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 3.3 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 conditions section of the report.

Standard 3.4

84. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed data from the 6 weekly - employer reviews and the apprenticeship board action plan and minutes. Further evidence highlighted how feedback had been gathered and incorporated from employer partners in relation to the end point assessment changes, for example. Evidence of employer partner involvement in assessment of a case study was submitted.

85. Both the Social Work Employer Board Apprenticeship Management meetings and the Programme Management Committee were formalised mechanisms which enabled employer partners to be involved in elements of the course including monitoring and management.

86. During the meeting held with employer partners, the inspection team heard an overall intention from the group of aspiring to achieve the best possible outcomes for the apprenticeship students, and to work collaboratively with the course team to

deliver a successful and effective course. However, the employer partners were clear in sharing a number of challenges and concerns the course had encountered.

87. Examples shared included the structure and management of placement timings and expectations; delays in information sharing in relation to assignments and preparation planning for placements; a perceived lack of updates in relation to the course action plan, and an absence of a clear 3-year course overview and timetable.

88. Employer partners acknowledged the timeline within which they had provided their feedback and shared challenges with the course team, which extended beyond the previous academic year. In addition, employer partners, were keen to impress on the inspection team praise and acknowledgement for the intentions and efforts which had been evident from the university to address their feedback. Despite the challenges shared, employer partners also acknowledged the constructive and timely support from the Coaches in Practice and the course lead, along with the university's central apprenticeship team.

89. The inspection team concluded that employer partners were provided with opportunities to provide their feedback, and that this had informed some changes to the course, although this was part of an ongoing process.

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

Standard 3.5

91. Within documentary evidence, the inspection team reviewed how the Quality Assurance in Practice Learning (QAPL) would be introduced to gain feedback from the 100 day placement module, to capture student and practice educator feedback. An annual course enhancement and monitoring cycle was in place, alongside the university's quality enhancement processes, informed by student feedback.

92. Feedback from apprenticeship students was collated within the student representative meetings which were held monthly, and through the student voice framework. The inspection team were provided with minutes from these meetings, and were able to see how student feedback had been incorporated within improvement plans and had been responded to. In addition, student feedback was fed into the Annual Course Enhancement and Monitoring plan. During the meeting with apprenticeship students, the inspection team heard evidence of changes which had been made to the course in response to feedback. For example, apprenticeship students reported improved verbal communication in relation to their particular learning needs being met.

93. During the inspection, the inspection team were informed of plans to ensure that module evaluations were completed for all modules, and the course leader had developed monthly video newsletters for apprenticeship students with invitations to 'meet the course lead' sessions.

94. Monitoring and improvement systems which took into account the views and feedback of employer partners have been detailed above, in relation to standard 3.4.

95. The inspection team were unable to identify regular and effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems which involved people with lived experience of social work. As part of the meetings held during the inspection the inspection team explored their involvement and heard plans to increase the group in size with an aspiration to develop and enhance their involvement in the course. Consequently, they agreed that this standard was not met.

96. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 3.5 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the conditions section of the report.

97. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 3.5. The inspection team recommend that module reviews and results from placement feedback through QAPL processes are systematically evaluated and embedded into the course. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the recommendation section.

98. In addition, the inspection team is making a further recommendation in relation to standard 3.5. The inspection team recommend that the education provider ensures themselves that apprenticeship students and people with lived experience remain involved in governance of the course. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the recommendation section.

Standard 3.6

99. In relation to this standard, and as part of the documentary evidence, the inspection team reviewed narrative evidence which outlined the university's membership of the Social Work Academy Board in Gloucestershire Children's Services. Within this, workforce development was considered in line with local workforce need.

100. During the inspection, the inspection team met with the Deputy Head for Admissions who was involved in strategic planning meetings in relation to capacity and apprentice numbers recruited to the course. The inspection team heard that at the start of each year a strategic workforce board managed the formal capacity planning for the course.

101. The inspection team were informed that each employer partner was allocated an agreed number of prospective apprentices, based on capacity, with an overall target number of 50 apprentices recruited each year, although they reported they had recruited under this target this year.

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

Standard 3.7

103. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with evidence which confirmed the appropriate qualification and experience of the lead social worker for the course. This included a CV and the professional registration details. The register confirmed current registration, and the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

104. Prior to the inspection the course team submitted updated CVs for teaching and learning staff which illustrated appropriate qualification, experience and specialist subject knowledge. The inspection team were aware that a number of course staff were relatively new following a period of staff change, and sought and gained assurance from senior managers that there were currently no unfilled posts.

105. During the meetings with apprenticeship students and employer partners, the inspection team heard some examples of teaching staff who had delivered lectures in place of colleagues with little notice. This had become apparent when teaching resources had been shared, for example, or when learning objectives had not been clear. It was unclear to the inspection team if this was an impact of reduced staff capacity.

106. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

107. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team were provided with the Access and Participation Plan, the Terms of Reference for the Module Boards of Examiners and the School Award and Progression Board of Examiners. Evidence of data from apprenticeship students' 6 weekly employer progress reviews was also provided along with the Annual Course Enhancement and Monitoring guidance, which was used to inform the Integrated Course Performance Plan. These mechanisms were linked to improve outcomes for continuation, completion and progression.

108. A Power Bi portal for the course was used to provide equality, diversity and inclusion data for apprenticeship students from admissions to graduation, which was applied at the Award Boards. During the meeting held with senior managers, the inspection team heard that the Head of School was Chair of the awarding gap steering group which used student feedback to inform changes necessary to address the identified award gap. The inspection team heard that data collected in the preceding 2 weeks had demonstrated a 2 per cent improvement in the award gap.

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

Standard 3.10

110. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were provided with examples of academic development, involvement in research and past attendance at a social work education conference. In addition, the inspection team heard details of the Anti-Racism Conference which had been convened in partnership with Gloucestershire and Somerset council leaders. The inspection team were also provided with some examples of members of the teaching team's involvement in professional practice and the completion of PhD studies.

111. However, the inspection team were unable to identify how the course team were actively supported through oversight of their activities by the department to maintain knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice. The inspection team agreed that this standard was not met.

112. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 3.10 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the conditions section of the report.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

113. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the Course Handbook, programme specification and module descriptors, and were unable to identify where the professional standards were referenced.

114. During the inspection, the inspection team were provided with additional evidence which demonstrated where the Apprenticeship Standard's Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour statements (KSBs) were taught through the course modules, as part of mapping documentation. Further mapping documents were also provided during the inspection and illustrated how the PCF and the professional standards were aligned to the course module content. Apprenticeship students were expected to maintain a PCF Tracker throughout their training which supported their learning in line with each domain and stage of development.

115. However, the inspection team were unable to identify clarity concerning which frameworks were embedded and being applied consistently and coherently throughout the curriculum. This was supported through the meetings held with employer partners and apprenticeship students where it was expressed that expectations around the reference and use of the apprentice KSBs had not been clear and were not established within the course. As a result, the inspection team agreed that this standard was not met.

116. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 4.1 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the conditions section of the report.

Standard 4.2

117. As referenced within standard 3.4, the inspection team identified evidence which demonstrated how views of employers were incorporated into the curriculum, for example through the apprenticeship board meetings.

118. Evidence provided in relation to this standard included the Course Handbook, the programme specification and module descriptors, the course assessment strategy and the apprenticeship board meeting minutes and plan.

119. The inspection team met with the group of people with lived experience of social work and heard examples of their involvement in assessing apprenticeship students, role play activities, guest lecturing, and the positive support they received from the course team.

120. However, during the documentary evidence review and the inspection meetings held, the inspection team were unable to identify evidence that the views of people with lived experience of social work were incorporated into the curriculum. The inspection team heard details of the planned work by the course team to increase the input of the group with lived experience of social work, and their aspirations for this to be incorporated into the design, ongoing development and review of the course. Whilst they acknowledged these plans, the inspection team agreed that this standard was currently not met.

121. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 4.2 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the conditions section of the report.

Standard 4.3

122. In relation to this standard the inspection team were provided with Belonging: Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, the Course Handbook, programme specification and module descriptors, and the university's Outreach and Widening Participation policy. The inspection team identified how the relevant strategies and policies informed the course design and content.

123. Additionally, the inspection team were able to identify evidence which illustrated how apprenticeship students were supported with reasonable adjustments, how health and wellbeing was promoted, and how the physical environment and particular learning needs were considered and resourced. They concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

124. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team were provided with the Course Assessment Strategy, the programme specification and module descriptors, and the course enhancement framework. An action for the course, stipulated as part of the Apprenticeship Board, required the course modules to reflect contemporary research, legislation and policy, and best practice.

125. The inspection team heard how course documentation had been refreshed to reflect changes in relation to relevant safeguarding guidelines, teaching resources such as PowerPoint slides had been updated, and Moodle, the online learning platform, presented international perspectives and global practice examples. The inspection team also heard details of a joint participatory action research project with Gloucestershire Council and Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board, and how the course team developed criticality and anti- oppressive practice. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

126. In relation to this standard the inspection team were referred to a range of modules where apprenticeship students were introduced to theories. These included Values, Ethics and Diversity, Professional Knowledge 2, and Intervention and Skills 3. During the meeting with practice educators, the inspection team heard how interactive models and learning resources were used through supervision and plans for direct observations. Additionally, the inspection team heard how the Coaches in Practice integrate reflection on theoretical application in relation to practice during the Independent Learning Review (ILR) meetings with apprentices. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

127. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed the module descriptor for Contexts and Organisations, where apprenticeship students were provided with learning opportunities to support multi agency working. During placements, the inspection team understood that the Independent Learning Review (ILR) meetings oversaw the learning opportunities provided to apprentices in relation to multidisciplinary working.

128. However, through further exploration with the course team and the apprenticeship students, the inspection team identified limited opportunities provided for apprentices to work with, and learn from, other professions. The inspection team felt that this was acknowledged by the course team and that they were already in the process of

developing new opportunities and enhancing the use of their simulation flat and mock court room to support this.

129. The inspection team agreed that this standard was not met.

130. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 4.6 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the conditions section of the report.

Standard 4.7

131. The inspection team reviewed the course specification and module descriptors and the course webpage on the university website which outlined the structure of the course and the credit allocation. Narrative evidence included the details of the apprenticeship course, and the provision of structured academic learning. Apprentices were required to evidence 750 hours of 'off the job' learning. Weekly 6-hour teaching sessions were provided through a mixture of in person and online learning. The inspection team agreed that this was sufficient to show how apprenticeship students were enabled to meet the required level of competence through their apprenticeship course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

132. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were assured that the evidence provided demonstrated this standard was met, subject to triangulation. They were able to review the Course Assessment Strategy, Course Handbook and programme specification and module descriptors.

133. The evidence demonstrated a comprehensive course assessment strategy, which included diversity in assessment, clear differentiation of assessment, information about assessments within the Course Handbook, grade descriptors and the level 6 marking rubric. Reasonable adjustments were provided to apprenticeship students and learning plans developed where these were required. As an example, the inspection team heard of circumstances where apprentices were provided with quieter assessment environments.

134. During the inspection the inspection team requested clarification on the changes for the End Point Assessment (EPA). They were informed that the last use of the previous version would be in December 2024, after which all apprentices would be following the newly proposed assessment, through the reallocation of 60 credits to the new dissertation and 100-day placement modules. During the inspection, the inspection team were also provided with the relevant module modification documentation which illustrated this change. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

135. In relation to this standard the inspection team reviewed the assessment regulations within the Academic Regulations for Taught Provision, the Course Assessment Strategy and the course specification and module descriptors. The assessment strategy demonstrated how each level of the course supported the building and development of knowledge and skills. The inspection team reviewed the contents of the module descriptors and were able to see how progression was structured in line with the course learning outcomes and the arrangement of teaching activities and assessments. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

136. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 4.9. The inspection team are recommending that, linked to 4.1, the Course Assessment Strategy is reviewed to ensure that assessments are mapped to the relevant frameworks. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the recommendation section.

Standard 4.10

137. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were provided with evidence which outlined the roles of the Coaches in Practice and the feedback they provided to apprentices. Feedback was provided on an ongoing basis throughout the course to learners from lecturers and personal tutors. In addition, apprentices were expected to collate feedback from colleagues, people with lived experience of social work, and other professionals. Apprentices were expected to be provided with at least one assessment tutorial for each module where they could receive guidance and advice on their assignments.

138. During the inspection, the team heard some comments from apprenticeship students in relation to the feedback they received on their assessments. Some felt, that at times, it lacked an element of constructive criticism or a consistent approach. The

inspection team were assured that all apprenticeship students were aware of how they could share this feedback to the course team through the representatives in their year, which some had already done.

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

Standard 4.11

140. As part of the documentary evidence submission, the inspection team were provided with a range of CVs for the course team. This illustrated the appropriate experience and expertise held by the course team who were responsible for completing assessments as part of the course.

141. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team requested additional evidence in relation to the external examiner appointed to the course. The inspection team were informed that the course team were in the process of recruiting to this role as the previous examiner's term had ended. Therefore, the inspection team agreed that this standard was not met.

142. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 4.11 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the conditions section of the report.

Standard 4.12

143. The documentary evidence submitted outlined the direct observations which took place as part of the first and second placements and which were observed by practice educators. Evidence illustrated the roles of award and progression boards, board of examiners and re-assessment board in manging apprenticeship students' progression. The Terms of Reference for the Module Boards of Examiners detailed that module leaders presented analysis of student outcomes for review and discussion.

144. During the meeting held with the senior management team, the inspection team heard how the progression board worked, and the range of individuals involved in providing input into progression. They included practice educators, Coaches in Practice, people with lived experience of social work, mentors and lecturers.

145. During the meeting with people with lived experience of social work, the inspection team heard that they had received support from lecturers on providing feedback to apprenticeship students. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

146. The inspection team identified a lack of evidence to illustrate a clear mechanism used to manage the progression of apprenticeship students who had failed their first placement. During the meeting held with the course managers, the inspection team heard that some modules were completed outside of the academic year, which resulted in some apprenticeship students who missed the exam boards.

147. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 4.12. The inspection team are recommending that the course provider provides clear, documented guidance governing progression, and in particular addresses instances where apprenticeship students fail their first placement. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the recommendation section.

Standard 4.13

148. In relation to this standard the inspection team were referred to the programme specification and module descriptors. These provided examples within the course of how apprenticeship students were taught to develop an evidence-informed approach to practice. This was further evidenced through the new dissertation module and assessment brief, which enabled apprenticeship students to learn how to apply research and evidence, to practice- based decision making. The course team provided examples of how this module would be taught, and practice educators provided examples of how they supported apprenticeship students to apply research and evaluation. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

149. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 4.13. The inspection team are recommending that the course modules are reviewed to ensure that opportunities for apprenticeship students to develop an evidence-informed approach to practice are explicit within the curriculum. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the recommendation section.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

150. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with documentary evidence which outlined the support services available to apprenticeship students on the course. These included confidential counselling services accessed through the Helpzone, and personal tutors were provided with a Student Welfare Guide to aid them in signposting apprenticeship students to appropriate help. Further student services teams provided financial advice, future planning for careers and referrals to the NHS Working Well Occupational Health services.

151. During the inspection, the inspection team met with the university staff responsible for delivering these services. This provided insight into how apprenticeship students were made aware of the services they could access as well as how the different teams collaborated with one another to deliver them. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

152. All apprenticeship students were provided with a personal tutor with the expectation that they would remain consistent for the duration of a student's studies. The university also provided a senior tutor role which supported personal tutors, oversaw schemes of support and managed additional needs for apprenticeship students, such as extenuating circumstances.

153. The inspection team were provided with the webpage for the Supported Studies Procedure and the Disability and Dyslexia support team, and met with the staff involved in these services as part of the inspection.

154. The Student Achievement Team offered a range of services which supported apprenticeship students to improve academic work, and included understanding feedback, English language support and confidential appointments. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

155. Documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection included the Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practice Procedure which covered health, conduct and character. This outlined the processes followed if a student apprentice was referred to the University Fitness to Practise procedure. A Social Work Student Learning Contract was also provided, which included fitness to practice, and declarations in relation to Health, Conduct and DBS, disciplinary and social work involvement.

156. Documentary narrative explained that ILRs took place with the apprenticeship student, employer and a representative from the university which provided an opportunity for ongoing suitability to be monitored and issues to be addressed if concerns arose.

157. In a meeting with the course team, the inspection team heard that annual checks have recently been introduced. This was a new procedure whereby the Social Work Student Learning Contract was circulated to Apprenticeship students for signing and line Managers were asked confirm that there were no issues regarding apprenticeship students' ongoing suitability. During the inspection, the inspection team also saw an example of a class contract which covered professional conduct, respect, use of technology and academic engagement. The inspection team heard how university staff had worked with employers, safeguarding leads and Local Authority Designated Officers (LADOs) to address fitness to practice concerns. The course team also explained how they worked with employers to ensure the ongoing suitability of any apprentice student who had had a break in learning.

158. During the meeting held with apprenticeship students, they explained how they submitted a DBS check for each year of the programme. Apprenticeship students also referred to their employer being present for ILR meetings and how they learned about safeguarding, The Prevent Duty and British Values as part of their curriculum. Apprenticeship students confirmed that they had signed a Suitability for Social Work Self-Declaration Form when they started the course, which included agreeing to tell the University about any changes to their personal details, but not all seemed aware of the recently introduced Social Work Student Learning Contract. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

159. Within the documentary evidence submission, the inspection team reviewed the Disability and Dyslexia support services provision, and heard how a new student record system would incorporate a student plan which outlined the reasonable adjustments in place. Guidance and advice were available to lecturers in how support could be offered to apprenticeship students, and included practical advice about how to make effective reasonable adjustments. The inspection team were also provided with a Social Work Student Learning Contract which required apprenticeship students to provide an update if changes in their health impacted on their ability to study or practice.

160. During the meeting held with professional support services at the university, the inspection team heard from the disability services and how support plans included

support in their workplace if needed. Screening was offered through the Disability and Dyslexia support services. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

161. The inspection team reviewed a range of sources of information which detailed elements of the course. These included the Course Handbook, course specification and module descriptors, and Learner Mentor Guide.

162. During the meeting with apprenticeship students, the inspection team heard points raised in relation to a lack of information provided to them for the onboarding process, for example. In addition, during the meeting with employer partners the inspection team heard how the absence of a clear structure, timetable or plan for the course created an obstacle for necessary planning and preparation. Information in relation to placement expectations and skills days requirements needed to be undertaken by apprenticeship students, would further support this.

163. Following a review of the evidence and the meetings held with apprenticeship students and employer partners, the inspection team identified a lack of clear information for apprenticeship students regarding aspects of the course. These included the structure, length and timing of placements; information on what to expect on placement; the format of assessments whilst on placement; information on the professional standards and KSBs, and information about the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and CPD requirements set out in the professional standards. An example of this was that the Course Handbook did not refer explicitly to skills days or practice placement days.

164. The inspection team concluded that this standard was not met.

165. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 5.5 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the conditions section of the report.

Standard 5.6

166. In relation to this standard the inspection team were referred to the Interview Welcome Presentation, the Learner Mentor Guide and the Course Handbook. The inspection team noted that the course documentation provided to apprenticeship students lacked provision of information about parts of the course which were mandatory.

167. During the meeting with apprenticeship students, the inspection team were aware that information regarding mandatory completion of skills days and attendance at placement days was not clear. The inspection team identified an absence of oversight of recording attendance at skills days or placement days, as well as a process to manage compensation for missed attendance.

168. The inspection team agreed that this standard was not met.

169. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 5.6 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the conditions section of the report.

Standard 5.7

170. Documentary evidence submitted in relation to this standard included the Course Assessment Strategy, Course Handbook, marking rubrics, programme specification and module descriptors and the Learner Mentor Guide. In addition to this, narrative evidence outlined how apprenticeship students were provided with timely feedback through formative and summative assessments, due within 20 days of submission.

171. During the meeting with apprenticeship students, the inspection team heard a range of views on the feedback they received on assessments, including some delays which were understood to be caused by technical issues encountered. The inspection team explored processes followed in relation to oversight of feedback and heard from the course team how calibration and moderation exercises were undertaken, in addition to the oversight provided by an external marker.

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

173. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 5.7. The inspection team are recommending that systems for monitoring and moderating the assessment feedback are reviewed to

ensure they are embedded within the course. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the recommendation section.

Standard 5.8

174. Evidence of an academic appeals process was provided to the inspection team, and apprenticeship students were referred to this when required. In addition, this was able to be accessed through student records and learners' MyGlos online account.

175. During the meeting with apprenticeship students the inspection team heard examples of the process being utilised.

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

177. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 5.8. The inspection team recommend that the course provider assures themselves that the appeal process is applied equitably. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the recommendation section.

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

Standard 6.1

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

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

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

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

	Standard not currently met	Condition	Date for submission of evidence	Link
1	Standard 1.1	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates how they assure themselves that applicants have a good command of English and the capability to meet academic standards as part of their admissions processes.	7 June 2025	Paragraph 25
2	Standard 1.2	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates how they ensure that applicants' prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions processes.	7 June 2025	Paragraph 28
3	Standard 1.5	The education provider will provide evidence that the equality and diversity policies which are in place are implemented and monitored to ensure that the experience of apprenticeship applicants is equitable, clear and supportive.	7 September 2025	Paragraph 36
4	Standard 2.1	The education provider will provide evidence of the provision of 30 skills days throughout the course, and	7 June 2025	Paragraph 43

		how the expectation of their completion is communicated to apprenticeship students and employer partners. The education provider will provide evidence of the provision of 170 formalised and assessed practice placement learning days, for all apprenticeship students. The education provider will provide evidence of a systematic oversight mechanism which ensures all apprenticeship students are provided with a contrasting placement learning experience. The education provider will provide evidence of a quality assurance process which enables identification of statutory placements in line with the definition and its requirements, as set out in this standard.		
5	Standard 2.2	The education provider will provide evidence of a quality assurance process for practice learning opportunities which ensures that apprenticeship students can gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards.	7 September 2025	Paragraph 50
6	Standard 2.3	The education provider will provide evidence of a clear protocol which provides for a consistent set of expectations covering induction, supervision, support, access to resources and a realistic workload for apprenticeship students while on placement.	7 June 2025	Paragraph 54
7	Standard 2.4	The education provider will provide evidence of a robust quality assurance process which includes	7 September 2025	Paragraph 59

		ensuring that apprenticeship students are provided with responsibilities whilst on placement which are appropriate for their stage of learning. This should include reference to the relevant leaning frameworks as well as the professional standards.		
8	Standard 2.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates it has a clear and robust mechanism to maintain oversight of the registration, relevant and current knowledge, skills and experience of all the practice educators it works with, and that this is checked at regular and set intervals.	7 June 2025	Paragraph 64
9	Standard 3.2	The education provider will provide evidence of agreements with placement providers to provide education and training that meets the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards.	7 June 2025	Paragraph 76
10	Standard 3.3	The education provider will provide evidence of an oversight mechanism to ensure that placement providers have the necessary policies and procedures in relation to apprenticeship students' health, wellbeing and risk, and the support systems in place to underpin these.	7 September 2025	Paragraph 80
11	Standard 3.5	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates how people with lived experience of social work are involved in monitoring, evaluation, and improvement systems.	7 September 2025	Paragraph 91
12	Standard 3.10	The education provider will provide evidence to demonstrate they are able to assure themselves that an appropriate proportion of the staff	7 September 2025	Paragraph 110

		team are supported to maintain closeness to professional practice.		
13	Standard 4.1	The education provider will provide evidence to demonstrate that the content, structure and delivery of the course is in line with the relevant frameworks. This demonstration should include how it is designed to enable apprenticeship students to have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards.	7 September 2025	Paragraph 113
14	Standard 4.2	The education provider will provide evidence that the views of people with lived experience of social work are incorporated into the design, ongoing development and review of the curriculum.	7 September 2025	Paragraph 117
15	Standard 4.6	The education provider will provide evidence to demonstrate how they are providing opportunities to apprenticeship students to work with and learn from other professions.	7 September 2025	Paragraph 127
16	Standard 4.11	The education provider will provide evidence of the external examiner for the course, including their appropriate qualification and experience, and evidence of their professional registration.	7 June 2025	Paragraph 140
17	Standard 5.5	The education provider will provide evidence that apprenticeship students are provided with clear and comprehensive information about their course. This must include information on: • the curriculum • the structure, length and types of practice placements	7 June 2025	Paragraph 161

		• practice placement assessments • skills days • transition to registered social worker and CPD		
18	Standard 5.6	The education provider will provide evidence of clear information for apprenticeship students about parts of the course where attendance is mandatory. This will include clear information about the requirement to complete 170 placement days and 30 skills days. In addition, the course provider will provide evidence of a robust recording system of attendance of 170 placement days and 30 skills days, and processes for managing when these days are missed.	7 June 2025	Paragraph 166

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	Standard 1.6	The inspectors are recommending that the course website is reviewed to ensure that all the information applicants require is up to date, and includes information about the role of Social Work England and professional regulation.	Paragraph 39
2	Standard 2.5	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider strengthening and enhancing communication to apprenticeship students to ensure the implications of being assessed as not ready or safe to carry out practice learning are clearly understood.	Paragraph 62

3	Standard 2.7	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider including the whistleblowing policy within the course handbook.	Paragraph 68
4	Standard 3.5	The inspectors are recommending that the university systematically evaluate and embed module evaluations and the QAPL process into the course. The inspectors are recommending that people with lived experience of social work and apprenticeship students remain involved in course governance.	Paragraph 91
5	Standard 4.9	The inspectors are recommending that, linked to standard 4.1, the Course Assessment Strategy is reviewed to ensure that assessments are mapped to the relevant frameworks.	Paragraph 135
6	Standard 4.12	The inspectors are recommending that the university provides clear, documented guidance governing progression, and in particular addresses instances where apprenticeship students fail their first placement and implications this has on their progression.	Paragraph 143
7	Standard 4.13	The inspectors are recommending that the course modules are reviewed to ensure that opportunities for apprenticeship students to develop an evidence -informed approach to practice are explicit within the curriculum.	Paragraph 148
8	Standard 5.7	The inspectors are recommending that systems for monitoring and moderating the assessment feedback are reviewed to ensure they are embedded within the course.	Paragraph 170
9	Standard 5.8	The inspectors are recommending that the course provider assures themselves that the academic appeals process is applied equitably.	Paragraph 174

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	☒	☐	☒

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
take up an offer of a place on a course. This will include information about the professional standards, research interests and placement opportunities.			
Learning environment			
2.1 Ensure that apprenticeship 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 apprenticeship students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards.	☐	☒	☐
2.3 Ensure that while on placements, apprenticeship students have appropriate induction, supervision, support, access to resources and a realistic workload.	☐	☒	☐
2.4 Ensure that on placements, apprenticeship students' responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of education and training.	☐	☒	☐
2.5 Ensure that apprenticeship students undergo assessed preparation for direct practice to make sure they are safe to carry	☒	☐	☒

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
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 apprenticeship 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 apprenticeship students' health, wellbeing and risk, and the support systems in place to underpin these.	☐	☒	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
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 apprenticeship students.	☐	☒	☒
3.6 Ensure that the number of apprenticeship 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 apprenticeship 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.	☐	☒	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
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 apprenticeship 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 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 apprenticeship 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 apprenticeship students meet the required level of competence.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
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 apprenticeship students' progression through the course.	☒	☐	☒
4.10 Ensure apprenticeship 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 apprenticeship 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 apprenticeship students to develop an evidence-informed approach to practice, underpinned by skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to research and evaluation.	☒	☐	☒
Supporting apprenticeship students			

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
5.1 Ensure that apprenticeship 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 apprenticeship 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 apprenticeship students' conduct, character and health.	☒	☐	☐
5.4 Make supportive and reasonable adjustments for apprenticeship 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 apprenticeship 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 apprenticeship students about parts of the course where attendance is mandatory.	☐	☒	☐
5.7 Provide timely and meaningful feedback to apprenticeship students on their progression and performance in assessments.	☒	☐	☒

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
5.8 Ensure there is an effective process in place for apprenticeship 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.

A review of the conditions evidence will be undertaken and recommendations will be made 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	Recommendation
1			
2			
3			

Findings

Regulator decision