

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Sussex

Course approval: Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work (Step Up)

Inspection dates: 13 – 15 February 2024

Report date:	21 February 2024
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with no conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with no conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	24 May 2024

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Introduction

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

What we do

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

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

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

Summary of Inspection

15. The University of Sussex and Post Graduate Diploma Social Work (Step Up) course 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	USUSR2_CP288
Course provider	University of Sussex
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	Post Graduate Diploma Social Work (Step Up)
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	15
Date of inspection	13– 15 February 2024
Inspection team	Sam Jameson Education Quality Assurance Officer Rebeca Khanna (Lay Inspector) Michael Isles (Registrant Inspector)
Inspector recommendation	Approved with no conditions
Approval outcome	Approved with no conditions

Language

16. In this document we describe University of Sussex as ‘the education provider’ or ‘the university’ and we describe the Post Graduate Diploma Social Work (Step Up) as ‘the course’ or ‘the programme’.

Inspection

17. A remote inspection took place from 13 - 15 February 2024. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, placement providers, and people with lived experience of social work.

18. These meetings formed the basis of the inspection plan, agreed with the education provider ahead of inspection.

19. The following section provides a summary of these sessions, who participated and the topics that were discussed with the inspection team.

Conflict of interest

20. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

21. The inspection team met with four students from the course, including student reps, graduates, and students at different levels of the course. Discussions included their experiences of the teaching and learning within the course, their access to support services of the university, admissions process, placements and how ready they felt for practice.

Meetings with course staff

22. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the senior management team, staff involved in selection and admissions, library and academic support services, the social work course team, staff involved in placement-based learning, disability support services and student support.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

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

Meetings with external stakeholders

24. The inspection team met with representatives from placement providers, including Practice Educators (PEs), and representatives from Brighton and Hove Council, East Sussex County Council and Change, Grow, Live (CGL) organisation.

Findings

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

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

26. The documentary evidence submitted by the course team prior to the inspection provided a clear and rigorous framework for entry to the course, as set by the Department for Education (DfE) for all Step Up courses, that sets out eligibility criteria and the process of assessing knowledge and skills of applicants to the course.

27. The DfE website clearly identifies that applicants to the course must have a minimum 2:2 undergraduate degree qualification, level 6, 6 months' full-time or equivalent direct experience, either in a paid or voluntary capacity, of working with vulnerable children, young people and/or families, carers, or vulnerable adults. As well as GCSEs in English or English language and mathematics at grade 4, C, or above, or an approved equivalent.

28. The inspection team were provided with information from the university that clearly demonstrated that the DfE admissions process to the course offers a multi-dimensional assessment approach, including a written exercise, practice scenario, group activity and individual interview. The selection process is undertaken online which demonstrates the applicant's capability to use information and communication technology (ICT).

29. The inspectors were assured that the admissions and selection process to the course ensures that applicants are appropriately assessed regarding their capability and potential to develop and meet the professional standards upon completion of the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

30. As identified in standard 1.1, the DfE clearly sets out in the course eligibility criteria that applicants must have at least 6 months direct experience of working with vulnerable children, young people and/or families, carers, or vulnerable adults, to apply to the course. The course team provided documentary evidence to demonstrate this, including the DfE Application Form, and guidance that this is managed by the DfE as part of their assessment of the applicant during the selection process.

31. The inspection team learnt that an applicant's prior relevant experience is drawn upon within the individual interview, where candidates are encouraged to use examples from their previous employment and roles, as outlined in the documentary evidence, Assessment Centre - Individual Interview and Panel Interview Assessor Guidance. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

32. The documentary evidence provided by the university identified that the selection and admissions process is laid out by the DfE, confirming that each panel in the assessment centre includes a social work academic from the university, a registered social work practitioner or PE from one of the placement providers and partners, and a member from the university EbE network.

33. The inspection team were provided with examples of involvement in the course selection and admissions process from the above key stakeholders, expressing to the inspectors that there was an inclusive approach throughout, that promoted equity in their involvement and views on the applicants to the course. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

34. Documentary evidence and information contained within the course education and training standards mapping form outlined that responsibility for the assessment of students' suitability is covered in the university Policy and Procedure for Suitability for Professional Practice, within the Step Up Course Handbook, that the inspection team were able to review prior to the inspection.

35. The inspectors were provided with detail of how students, following the successful admissions process and before they start the course, must complete a Declaration of Suitability form, that includes fitness to practice and study, any lived experience of social work and willingness to manage health needs, including a Pre-Course Health Questionnaire. The enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is overseen by the DfE, the university confirmed that any candidates who are offered a place on the course are required to provide an enhanced DBS and that the university uses an online DBS database called uCheck to manage this process.

36. During their review of the above documentary evidence, the inspectors considered whether the Pre-Course Health Questionnaire, that is outsourced with an external provider, raised any concerns regarding whether the information within this document was at risk of being part of the admissions decision-making process. However, it was clearly answered by the course lead that this form is not sent out until an applicant has already been offered a place on the course. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

37. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the University of Sussex Equality and Diversity Policy. The inspection team were assured from documentary evidence and discussions with staff involved in selection and admissions that all staff involved in the admissions process had appropriate training for this role. The inspectors were assured from documentary evidence and discussions with staff involved in admissions that if a student chose to write about any health-related condition or impairment in their personal statement, or talk about this during the individual interview, it would not impact on decisions taken about whether they are offered a place on the course.

38. During their meeting with representatives from the student cohorts, the inspection team were given examples regarding reasonable adjustments made for them, which covered tailored support provided to individuals during their admissions process. Within their selection process the DfE asks candidates if they require any reasonable adjustments as part of the assessment centre and selection day, which the university confirmed they are notified of and support accordingly. The inspection team concluded this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

39. The inspection team were assured from the documentary evidence submission that there was a robust range of initiatives provided to applicants to enable them to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the course. The DfE provides information and guidance regarding the course tuition fees and bursary to applicants. The inspectors noted the level of detail supplied to applicants in the Draft Timetable, that covered the course structure, number and nature of assignments, core texts and the range of placement opportunities, which is also covered in the open evening for the course.

40. Documentary evidence and discussions with the course team identified that research interests of staff are outlined on staff members' profiles on the main department of social work and social care website. This information is shared during the open evening and daily welcome by the course lead during the assessment centre selection days. As well as guidance to candidates that the course follows the standards set by Social Work England, and upon completing the course and qualifying that makes them eligible to apply for registration. The inspection team were able to triangulate this information within their meeting with representatives from the student cohorts and graduates from the course. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

41. Course documentation provided prior to the inspection, Step Up Course Handbook and Practice Learning Handbook, gave the inspectors a comprehensive overview of the framework within the course to ensure that students spend at least 200 days in practice learning settings. The Practice Development Workshop Handbook clearly sets out the 30 skills days and intended developmental structure of these. This information was triangulated within the presentation from the course team, identifying the theme of each of the practice development workshops, the module it falls under and the number of days the workshops include over the course's entirety.

42. The inspection team learnt that the course ensures contrasting placement settings for its students through its long-standing relationship with the Private, Voluntary, and Independent (PVI) sector organisation CGL. During the inspection week the inspectors were able to meet with representatives from CGL, that provided insight into the organisations' range of services, including support for individuals, families and communities who are affected by crime, substance misuse, homelessness, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, social deprivation, and lack of opportunity. The inspectors learnt that students are placed within CGL for their first placement of 70 days.

43. The education and training standards mapping document and documentary evidence, the Inter-Authority Agreement for the South Coast Regional Centre (SCRC) for Social Work Education, between East Sussex County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council, University of Brighton, and University of Sussex, confirmed that part of this agreement ensures all students are then offered a 100-day placement within their respective sponsoring local authority. The inspectors were assured, from their review of documentary evidence and meeting with the course team, students, and placement providers, that this second placement provided learning and development opportunities in a statutory setting which involved appropriate decision making and legal interventions. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.2

44. The inspection team was able to learn from the course Director of Practice Learning (DPL), of their work with CGL Workforce Leads to source and provide placements with appropriate learning opportunities, that meet the university expectations and in line with Social Work England standards.

45. The university partnership with Brighton and Hove City Council and East Sussex County Council through the SCRC supports the management and assurance of quality statutory placements and ensures that these provide suitable learning opportunities that allow students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards.

46. During discussion with the DPL, the inspection team were able to triangulate documentary evidence that highlighted a range of continuous monitoring mechanisms of placement learning to ensure that suitable learning opportunities were in place for students. These included placement visits by the DPL, Academic Adviser meetings with students, mid-way and final practice assessment panels, ongoing preparations for training workshops with students and the Quality Assurance in Practice Learning (QAPL) process.

47. The inspection team received positive feedback from student representatives regarding the matching process for allocation to placements, that included the clarity of practical information provided regarding the placement, the learning opportunities, what would be expected from them and how they would be supported during the placement. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

48. Information submitted within the education and training standards mapping form provided a clear overview of the robust process of matching students to placements, with the student Profile Form and any existing Student Support Statement key to identifying prior experience, students' individual learning needs and any areas of support. This process enables the DPL to match the student to an appropriate placement setting, which can offer a student the induction, supervision, support, access to resources and a realistic workload in line with their level of learning and development.

49. The inspection team were able to review the Practice Learning Handbook that is shared with, and outlines the roles and responsibilities of, practice supervisors, practice educators and practice education consultants. The inspection team were assured from their review of documentary evidence and discussions with the course team, students and staff involved in placement-based learning that the Practice Learning Agreement (PLA) document and meeting sets out and provides the student with all the required information and guidance they need to meet this standard.

50. The inspection team learnt of the key role in this process of the Academic Advisor (AA) who monitors the placement and the above areas of the PLA, chairing the midway review meetings to ensure the students' learning and development needs are being met and identifying any additional learning or support that is required. The inspection team heard from students that they felt well supported by their AA and PEs, with regular supervision and support as they required. The students also highlighted the supportive nature of the social work student hubs, identifying that their tutors and practice supervisors would encourage and support them to prioritise attending these. They spoke of the benefit they took from these regarding reflective practice, peer support and sharing knowledge and best practice. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

51. As identified in Standard 2.3, the PLA meeting, and role of AA, is a source of ensuring that a student has clear learning opportunities and a realistic workload, providing a platform to support students whilst they are on placement and ensure their responsibilities are appropriate to their stage of learning and development. The inspectors were assured from their discussions with PEs, students, and staff involved in practice-based learning of the work that is done in matching students to appropriate placement settings, and then the review and support frameworks in place during placements, to ensure that students do not undertake practice that is not appropriate for them at their stage of learning.

48. Students informed the inspection team of their experiences of placements being in CGL first and statutory placement second, with a planned and supported growth in their workload and responsibility between these contrasting placements. The inspectors were reassured from speaking with the DPL that students are matched to appropriate placements, their individual learning needs are fully incorporated into this decision and both the safety of the student and people with lived experience of social work (PWLE) was central throughout this process. The inspectors noted the innovative work carried out by the course team to ensure that students had contrasting placements within PVI and statutory settings, which provided alternative perspectives on learning and practice knowledge.

49. The inspection team heard from students that they found the PLA meeting very supportive, to ask questions and cover areas they had not thought of, and the support from the DPL was open, honest, and prepared them for what placement would involve. The inspectors noted that students are also provided with 4 structured Preparation for Placement sessions by the DPL, alongside a range of workshops throughout placements that are scheduled at key milestones by the DPL to support student progression, including, PCF, professional standards, report writing, unconscious bias training, and holistic assessments. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

50. Prior to the inspection the inspectors reviewed documentary evidence, including but not limited to Step Up Course Handbook, anonymised examples of students' individual Personal and Professional Development Plans (PPDP) and Readiness for Practice (RDP) Level, that illustrated how students on the course undergo assessed preparation for direct practice and ensure that they are safe to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting.

51. The inspectors learnt that this is assessed through a 2-part process, with the progression paths, assessment, and implications of not meeting the necessary requirements set out in the above and other supporting documentary evidence provided to the inspection team. The inspectors heard of the role of the AA in assessing a student's readiness for practice at

stage 1, alongside a panel consisting of a social work practitioner and member from the EbE group, Practice Assessment Panels (PAPs), in stage 2 of the assessment process.

52. The inspection team was assured that a further check on students' safety for practice learning is underpinned by having the placement view the student's DBS check when they start, providing an external confirmation that a satisfactory enhanced DBS check has been done and viewed. The inspection team heard from placement providers and employer partners that students were ready and safe to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting. Students told the inspectors that they felt prepared, knew what was expected of them and had a balance between the two placement experiences from the 70- and 100-day settings. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

53. The inspectors were able to identify that the PLA within the Portfolio and the Practice Learning Opportunities Audit Form, submitted as documentary evidence, requires confirmation of the PEs' Social Work England registration number. The inspection team was able to view the programmes database of independent PEs that also checks and records PE registration details and records that they have relevant and recent knowledge, skills, and experience to support safe and effective learning.

54. Documentary evidence, Practice Educator & Supervisor Resource Pack 2022, and Practitioner workshop dates 2022-2023, submitted to the inspection team clearly outlined the robust range of supportive learning and development opportunities for PEs, including Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS, BASW, 2019) stage 1 and 2 that the university provides. With further training and workshops ran by the course team and DPL throughout the academic year for PEs, that range from principles of adult learning theory, processes of placement and reflective supervision and assessment.

55. The inspection team heard from PEs that they are asked for their Social Work England registration and CPD details and that this is shared with their learning and development team, including the DPL for the course. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.7

56. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard clearly identified that all students and placements are provided with a copy of the Practice Learning Handbook, with details of the policies that students may need to refer to while on placement, including the university Whistleblowing Policy. The inspection team heard from the DPL that the placement preparation workshops introduce students to the importance of whistleblowing, the steps to take should they need to and adherence to the university Policy on Raising Concerns during this process.

57. Within their meetings with the placement providers, staff involved in placement-based learning and the course team, the inspectors were informed that a student's induction would always cover relevant policies and procedures regarding a student challenging unsafe behaviours, cultures, and organisational wrongdoing, with check ins at supervision to ensure they knew how to report any concerns. The inspectors were able to triangulate this within their review of documentary evidence that reinforced these areas are always covered within the PLA meeting, midway meeting and end-point meeting, including support from their AA, individual tutorials, and group seminars.

58. Students that the inspectors met with identified they felt able and reassured to make their concerns known and who to speak to. The inspection team were assured from their discussions with student support services and the course team that there was a robust, respectful, and supportive framework in place for students to raise any concerns. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management, and quality

Standard 3.1

59. Documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection included the Course Governance and Management Plan, which highlighted the key roles and responsibilities within the course team and wider university School of Education and Social Work, with these roles and accountabilities explained in the Course Handbook. During the inspection, the inspectors met with the senior management team who provided further insight into the oversight of the development, resourcing, staffing and quality assurance of the course. That enabled the inspectors to triangulate documentary evidence regarding the course's annual cycle of review and programme report that feeds into the course and university boards, panels, and senate.

60. The inspectors were assured that the course lead for the programme is a registered social worker with Social Work England. Throughout the inspection week the inspectors were provided with robust narrative evidence, to triangulate the depth of documentary evidence, that reinforced the social work expertise that is thread throughout the course team and wider management and governance structure.

61. The inspectors noted that the EE Report June 2023 provided a highly affirmative perspective on the course management and organisation within the university. The inspection team was assured that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

62. Following their review of the documentary evidence and their discussions with staff involved in placement-based learning and placement providers, the inspection team were able to triangulate that the course has agreements in place with placement providers. The

inspection team were assured from these discussions with key stakeholders, and meeting with student representatives, that these placements provided education and training learning opportunities in line with the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards.

63. The Practice Education Handbook, which is shared with all parties involved in the practice learning environment, contains guidance and procedures in relation to contingencies if a placement terminates early or breaks down.

64. The inspectors noted the emphasis placed on the potential vulnerability of students during this process and the support mechanisms in place, including linking in with university support services. The inspection team heard from student representatives of their experience of this process, who highlighted the timely and professional response they received, identifying the strength of the structure in place so that they felt informed and supported throughout this time. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

65. As identified within standard 2, the DPL for the course approves all potential placements through an audit visit, that includes criteria of checking the relevant policies and procedures are in place for students in relation to equality, diversity and health and safety. The inspection team learnt that this is again checked and confirmed during the student's induction process and in the PLA meeting.

66. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors were able to review the Practice Learning Opportunities Audit Form (PLOAT) and the PLA, which is reviewed and signed off by the student, PE, Practice Supervisor and AA, ensuring that these have been checked and policies and procedures that are relevant to students' health, safety and risk are in place.

Documentary evidence and links within the education and training standards mapping document highlighted the appropriate sections of the PLA to emphasise the proactive and supportive measures in place to uphold students' health and safety whilst they are on placement.

67. The inspection team were able to triangulate the documentary evidence within their meeting with placement providers. CGL gave an example of their specific student policy that focuses on health, wellbeing, and risk procedures of the student whilst in placement at the organisation. As identified in standard 3.2, students spoke highly of the supportive structure in place for when they had raised a concern during placement. The inspection team advised that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

68. The university was able to robustly demonstrate through its documentary evidence, Qualifying Courses Management Committee (QCMC) Meeting Minutes and Step-Up Steering Group Terms of Reference and Sample Minutes, that employer partners and placement providers are represented in the course management and governance structure and groups. The inspection team heard from placement providers of the collaborative approach that their organisations and the course team have in place regarding the monitoring of the course and allocation of placements. The inspectors were told of the collective work done between the DPL, course team and placement partners regarding the placement allocation and matching process.

69. As identified in standard 1.3, the inspection team learnt that employer partners and social work practitioners participate in the admissions interview process; as members of a three-way admissions interview panel, they also contribute to taught components of the course, supported through the programme titled 'Practitioners Who Teach'.

70. The inspectors noted the inter-agency focus of sharing knowledge and expertise across organisations, organised within a hub model of the SCRC for Social Work Education, between East Sussex County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council, University of Brighton, and University of Sussex. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

70. As identified in standard 3.4, the inspection team were satisfied that employer partners and placement providers were involved in the monitoring and improvement of the course. The inspection team learnt from discussions with the course team, and review of the EE Reports, that the EE is invited into the programme to support a review of the course, meeting with students and supporting the overall evaluation of the programme.

71. The inspection team heard from student representatives of the range of platforms that they can engage with for the monitoring of the course. Documentary evidence highlighted this further through the Student QAPL Form, university website links and guidance regarding the Student Experience Group, Board of Study, School Teaching and Learning Committee, School Research Degree Committee, and QCMC Meetings. Students told the inspectors of attending the Step-Up Steering Group, and meetings that they have with the course lead that provides them with the opportunity to provide feedback and analysis of their experience of the course.

72. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors reviewed the Expert by Experience Network Handbook that outlines EbE members' role in the quality assurance of the course. During inspection, inspectors heard from members of this network, of their attendance and participation at the QCMC meetings, Board of Studies, and Step-Up Steering Group meetings, where their views, feedback and the Annual Course Review are considered. The EbE members that the inspection team met with spoke of feeling respected and valued

throughout their involvement in the programme's reviews and improvement systems, identifying that they had equity with everyone else there and everyone's voice is heard. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

73. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included SCRC Workforce and Labour Market Plan SCRC 22-23 and the DfE Application Cohort 8, Grant Offer Letter – Letters of Commitment by Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) and East Sussex County Council (ESCC). The inspection team were informed that the number of students admitted to the course is reviewed at the time of bidding for each cohort to the DfE, based on both the workforce requirements among employer partners and placement providers. The information provided within the education and training standards mapping document identified that this includes the capacity and availability of placements from their employer partners and placement providers, and this information is shared within the SCRC Teaching Partnership Steering Group and Practice Learning Hubs. The inspection team learnt that the DfE have approved fifteen places for each of the four Step Up cohorts.

74. As identified within this report, the inspection team were assured of the strong working relationships between the course team, DPL, and their employer partners and placement providers. Within meetings with these key stakeholders, the inspection team heard of the regular, established, and collaborative meetings and planning that they undertake to ensure that students on the course have access to quality placements in appropriate settings, that allow students to undertake learning opportunities which will help them develop the knowledge, skills, and behaviours to meet the professional standards by the time they complete their course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

75. Documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection included detailed information in the education and training standards mapping document of the lead social worker for the course. The evidence identified their role, responsibilities in the Department of Social Work and Social Care Staff Expertise and CPD Overview document and the Course Governance and Management Plan, confirming their registration with Social Work England, appropriate qualifications, and experience. The inspectors were able to check and verify this information. The inspection team concluded that the documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection was able to demonstrate that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

76. As identified in standard 3.7, the Department of Social Work and Social Care Staff Expertise and CPD Overview document gave the inspection team a summary of the course team's background, registration status, expertise, CPD and links to web profiles for each member of the team. The inspectors were assured from this information and discussions

with the course team and senior management team that there were an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff, including those registered with Social Work England, with relevant specialist subject knowledge and expertise to deliver an effective course.

77. The inspectors noted the course team's diverse expertise in relation to social work, covering different areas of child and family and adult social work, as well as generic topics across the life course, such as loss, grief and bereavement, spirituality, and law. The inspectors were provided with examples of how the EbE group and social work practitioners are part of the development and delivery of the curriculum to ensure current social work practice and learning from those who have direct experience of social work services is incorporated into the delivery of the course.

78. The university was able to demonstrate through the documentary evidence reviewed by the inspection team and within the inspection meetings, that the course team are appropriately resourced and supported by the senior management team and wider university support services. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

79. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included Module Assessment Board (MABs) examples and Reports and Progress and Award Board (PABs) examples and reports. The inspection team were able to review the University of Sussex Access and Participation Plan, and they noted the inclusion of 'Engage for Change 2025 Strategy' and 'Inclusive Sussex'. The inspection team were able to identify that student performance, progression and outcomes are evaluated through the MABs, that analyse current student performance, progression, and outcomes for each module against the data for previous cohorts.

80. Documentary evidence and discussions within the senior management meeting identified that data from the MAB feeds into the PABs which run throughout the academic year, where the progress and awards for each student per each course are reviewed and confirmed, with input from external examiners.

81. The inspection team was informed of the Annual Course Review which focuses on data regarding students' performance, progression, experience, and outcomes across the cohort and for specific groups, that feeds into the wider social work department and other programmes development, including the Action Plan for the School.

82. The inspection team was able to review the School of Education and Social Work Equalities Attainment Data 2021 and Equalities Data Request 2021 as part of the documentary evidence submission. The inspection team was informed that as a result of the size of the course's cohorts their EDI data is compressed. The inspectors noted the

university and course's approach to this, as set out in the education and training standards mapping form, regarding the external review in 2022 by Dr Prospera Tedam.

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

Standard 3.10

84. As identified in standard 3.8 the inspection team reviewed the Department of Social Work and Social Care Staff Expertise and CPD Overview document that provided insight into the course team's diverse expertise, research, and practice in relation to social work. These documents covered different areas of child and family and adult social work, as well as generic topics across the life course, such as loss, grief and bereavement, spirituality, and law.

85. Through meeting with the course team the inspectors were able to triangulate documentary evidence and they were provided with a wide range of examples of how they maintain and develop current social work practice, including involvement with academics in practice, working in social work frontline services, and research within social work and wider relevant professions.

86. The inspectors met with the senior management team during the inspection, who identified that the course team are supported to undertake scholarly activity and maintain their professional currency, including completion of higher education certificates, attending training courses, and the university appraisal process. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

87. The inspection team were satisfied that the comprehensive documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection was able to demonstrate that the content, structure and delivery of the course is in accordance with relevant guidance and frameworks and is designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards upon completion of the course. This was triangulated within meetings with placement providers and PEs who identified that students were of a high standard and at the expected level of knowledge and competency for their stage of learning and development.

88. The inspection team were able to triangulate the documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection within their meetings with the course team, who described both the course structure and philosophy underpinning its design and robust links to relevant standards and frameworks. The Step Up Course Handbook clearly sets out for students how the curriculum and module learning outcomes map to the Professional Standards, PCFs and The Knowledge and Skills Statement for Child and Family Practitioners (DfE, 2018) and The

Knowledge and Skills Statement for Social Workers in Adult Services (DfE, 2015). The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

89. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included an Experts by Experience Network Handbook, Practice Development Workshop Handbook, Step Up Steering Group Terms of Reference, and South Coast Regional Centre for Social Work Education FAQs for Practitioners. The inspectors were satisfied that the documentary evidence identified the variety of ways in which employers, social work practitioners and PWLE, are incorporated into the design, ongoing development, and review of the curriculum.

90. Following their review of documentary evidence and meetings throughout the inspection week the inspection team were assured that all key stakeholders identified in this standard attend the university QCMC, where all routine and developmental aspects of the course are discussed and agreed upon.

91. The inspection team were able to triangulate this information within their meetings with key stakeholders during the inspection. Members from the EbE group explained that they are offered the role of associate tutor in the course, which both they and the course team identified was an individual choice for each member of the group and can be taken up at their own discretion. The module handbooks provided inspectors with documentary evidence of examples of EbE members involvement in the co-production of teaching on the course. The inspection team heard that members of the group attend and play an active role in the Step Up Steering Group, they are on the admissions interview panel and told the inspection team of their feelings of equity throughout their involvement with the course.

92. Within their meetings with PEs, employer partners and placement providers, the inspection team learnt that social work practitioners participate in the PAPs, admissions interview process, as members of a three-way admissions interview panel. They also contribute to the taught components of the course, supported through the programme titled 'Practitioners Who Teach' and teach and lead in practice skills workshops.

93. The SW Qualifying Courses Review Report 2022, highlighted how key stakeholders were involved in reviewing the university social work courses and how this course development activity fed into the University Annual Course Review and informed the action plan for the following academic year. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

94. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence, the university Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy, including links and further information to the School of Education and Social Work's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity Committee, that

demonstrated the course had been designed in accordance with appropriate EDI Principles, Human Rights, and legislative frameworks. The inspectors were satisfied from reviewing the course modules and their discussions with the course team that these principles were embedded throughout the course.

95. Prior to the inspection the inspectors were able to review the Step Up Course Handbook that identified the course is established on an equal opportunities statement for students. The handbook includes clear policies and procedures for students regarding reasonable adjustments and the support available for students with physical and mental health conditions, including examples of the provision of extended time allocations for assessment activities and submissions, use of suitable learning spaces and customisation of learning resources to meet individual student requirements.

96. The inspection team met with university student support services who provided an overview of the robust support students can access for upholding their physical and mental health and any additional resources and support that may be required both on the campus and whilst students are on placements. Student representatives that the inspectors met with spoke of the individualised support that they felt both the course team and wider university support services had put in place for them, that worked in line with their own personal needs and requirements to support their learning, access, and development opportunities. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

97. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the Workload Planning Guidance, that highlighted all members of the course team have provision in their workload to remain engaged with contemporary developments in social work through their research and scholarship activities. The Department of Social Work and Social Care Staff Expertise and CPD Overview document gave the inspection team a summary of the course team's background, expertise, CPD and links to web profiles for each member of the team, providing further insight into how research is thread throughout the course.

98. The inspectors noted the course team's diverse expertise in relation to social work, covering different areas of child and family and adult social work, including topics across the life course, such as loss, grief and bereavement, spirituality, and law. The inspection team heard from students of their awareness and learning from the course team's own research areas, and the value and development that they took from these publications, research, and specialisms. The university library service informed the inspection team of the work that is done regarding the course reading lists and academic materials, that are reviewed and updated to reflect any changes in practice or services, developments in the profession's research and evidence base, advances in technology, changes in the law and changes in PWLE needs and expectations.

98. As identified in standard 4.2, social work practitioners are involved in teaching on the course, the academics in practice model supports this standard through any developments in best practice and legislation, including current practice, being brought into the programme through its established links and integration with local organisations and placement providers. The inspectors were provided, within both documentary and narrative evidence, examples of how the EbE group and social work practitioners are part of the development and delivery of the curriculum to ensure current social work practice and learning from those who have direct experience of social work services is incorporated into the delivery of the course and supports to maintain the currency of the programme.

99. As identified in standard 3.4, the inspectors noted the inter-agency focus of sharing current knowledge, expertise, and developments across organisations, organised within a hub model of the SCRC for Social Work Education, between East Sussex County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council, University of Brighton, and University of Sussex. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

100. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors were able to review the module handbooks, including Theory, Values & Practice Reflections 1 and 2 and Human Development and the Social World, that indicated the learning outcomes, linking to the Professional Standards and PCF and highlighting where and how social work theory and practice is integrated into the course.

101. Documentary evidence was triangulated within meetings with the course team, students, and PEs, which enabled the inspectors to hear directly how social work theoretical frameworks are introduced to students, developed through modules, and consolidated within practice skills workshops, placements, and further academic learning. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

102. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the Inter-Professional Learning Record, that the inspectors were able to review and learn how students complete this document throughout both of their placements, evidencing how they have learned from and with other professions, and reinforcing that the key location for multidisciplinary working on the course is in the placement setting where students are exposed to a wide range of professionals and inter-professional work settings.

103. The course team provided examples of the opportunities that students on the course have access to regarding multidisciplinary working, including within their placement with CGL that can incorporate working alongside substance misuse workers, housing officers and domestic abuse specialists. The second placement within a local authority setting then provides learning and development opportunities within a statutory setting, that can

include working and learning alongside, for example, police officers, teachers, health-related professionals, and legal professionals.

104. The inspectors heard from the student representatives that they met with how they had a variety of professionals from different services coming in to visit and present in lectures. The students identified that on placement they were actively encouraged to work in other multidisciplinary settings and professional areas they were not familiar with, including shadowing opportunities to develop their learning. The students mentioned that the practice development workshops were key in this area for them, with input from legal professionals and a clinical veterinarian, as some of the examples given. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

105. Documentary evidence submitted to show the sufficiency of the number of hours students spend in structured academic learning included the Step Up Course Handbook, specifically the course structure, placement and university days timetabling, and the Step Up Timetable: January 2024 – March 2025. These were reviewed by the inspectors prior to the inspection.

106. Information within the education and training standards mapping form identified how the course module credit ratings and the time students spend in taught and self-directed academic learning is calculated based on hours per credit. The inspection team were able to review the individual module handbooks and the Step Up Course Handbook that sets out the credit rating for each module, which is also available on Canvas (the university's Virtual Learning Environment).

107. The inspection team heard from PEs, employer partners and placement providers that in their experience students from the course were at the level of competence they would expect and ready for practice. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

108. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the Step Up Course Handbook, Assessment Strategy and the university Regulations for Examination and Assessment. From their review of documentary evidence, including the EE reports, and discussions with students, the inspectors were satisfied that the course assessment strategy and design was robust, fair, reliable, and valid, with clarity regarding how the Professional Standards and PCF were incorporated in the departmental assessment strategy and schedule for the course.

109. As identified within standard 4.7, the inspectors were able to triangulate this documentary evidence within their meetings with the course team, PEs, students, and placement providers. This provided further insight into the students' readiness for practice

resulting from their knowledge and skills developing through their progression of the course, its assessments and developing their ability to meet the Professional Standards.

110. The Step Up External Examiner Reports 2019, 2021, 2023, provided feedback that the range of course assessment methods were rigorous and fair, *“the marking and moderation processes were timely, consistent, with a high standard of balanced feedback that would be helpful for the students to consider for their development”*.

111. Feedback from students to the inspectors identified that they felt that the assessments are well balanced, students knew what was expected of them regarding assessment requirements, which are all mapped in module handbooks to appropriate Professional Standards that they were made aware of. Students also mentioned that they were all fully aware of the challenges of a fast-tracked course, with timely support available from the Academic Skills Manager. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

112. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the Step Up Course Handbook and the Assessment Strategy for the Course. The inspection team were satisfied that the learning outcomes, assessment points and methods of assessment were all mapped against the Professional Standards and PCF and are appropriately mapped to reflect a student’s development and progression through the course. The inspection team concluded that the documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection was able to demonstrate that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

113. The inspection team were able to learn from the information provided in the education and training standards mapping form, and documentary evidence, that students are provided with a range of feedback methods, including formative and summative, one to one meetings with their AA, feedback from EbE members and from PEs within placement settings. The inspectors were reassured that this is provided in line with the university procedures, Portfolio Guidance for the Reader and Moderator 2023, and details within the Assessment Feedback section of the Step Up Course Handbook, to ensure that feedback is timely and meaningful and comes from a collaborative range of sources to support the student’s assessment and progression. There is further guidance on the Getting Marks and Feedback university webpage, with a variety of links and guidance available to students.

114. As identified in standard 4.8, prior to the inspection the inspectors were able to review The Step Up External Examiner Reports 2019, 2021, 2023. These provided insight and feedback from the EE that the course’s *“marking and moderation processes were timely, consistent, with a high standard of balanced feedback that would be helpful for the students to consider for their development”*. The inspectors heard from students that they felt the feedback that they received was timely, supportive, and provided developmental areas for

their future learning and progression. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

115. Inspectors were able to review the Department of Social Work and Social Care Staff Expertise and CPD Overview document that provided insight into the diverse expertise, research, and practice in relation to the social work course team and staff involved in assessment. The inspectors were satisfied that there was appropriate expertise, qualifications, and experience held by staff who carry out assessments, including registration of the external examiner with Social Work England. The inspectors learnt that the course adheres to the University's External Examiner Policy and the appointment of the external examiner is overseen by the University's Academic Quality and Partnerships service.

116. The inspection team were able to learn all new teaching staff without equivalent experience or qualifications, are allocated time to undertake the Post-Graduate Diploma in Teaching for Higher Education, which provides specialist training in teaching, learning and assessment. The Peer Observation of Teaching Policy and Documentation sets out the input for staff to access peer feedback regarding the content and delivery of teaching materials, alongside internal moderation carried out within the programme. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

117. The education and training standards mapping document provided the inspectors with a substantive overview of the processes in place to manage students' progression, both in practice learning and academic development. The inspection team concluded that the documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection was able to demonstrate that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

118. The inspection team were satisfied that the information provided within the education and training standards mapping document, alongside supporting documentary evidence Example Student Final Portfolio and Organisational Observation Essay, Communicating & Engaging Essay, TVPR1 and 2 Essays, highlighted how an evidence-informed approach to practice is thread throughout the programme, within induction, modules, literature searches, and as a component of each practice placement.

119. The inspectors agreed that based on the documentary evidence provided and from discussions with the course team and students, the course design facilitates an evidence informed approach to practice. The inspection team were informed of students being able to access the Library Subject Guide for Social Work and Social Care, and the University Skills

Hub, which feeds into and develops the student's awareness and ability in relation to research and evaluation. Narrative evidence gained during the inspection and these meetings also reinforced how students' understanding of the complex nature of evidence-informed practice is demonstrated in the academic essays, submitted as part of their practice placement portfolios. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

120. Prior to the inspection the inspectors reviewed documentary evidence, including links and overview of the university Student Centre and My Sussex, regarding the range of support services that students on the course have access to regarding their health and wellbeing. The inspection team were assured that these services provided support including careers advice and support, occupational health services and confidential counselling services, in line with meeting this standard.

121. During the inspection, the inspectors met with representatives from the university support services, including careers, employability and skills service, student experience, including the library and academic skills, and disability advisors. This enabled the inspectors to triangulate documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard, that highlighted the range of student support services on offer to students both on campus and on placement, and throughout their time on the course, including support for graduates.

122. The inspection team was provided with narrative evidence from students, who spoke of the timely support they received, the links and work done between services and teams within the university to meet and uphold their support needs. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

123. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the Step Up Course Handbook, University of Sussex Academic Advising Policy and the Course Governance and Management Plan. The inspectors were able to triangulate documentary evidence that outlined how students on the course have access to resources to support their academic development throughout the programme.

124. Within their meeting with student representatives the inspectors heard of how accessible and supportive their tutors and AA were, expressing that they were easy to contact, identified they never had an email which did not go unanswered, and tutors were very responsive. The inspection team learnt that the course has a Director of Student Experience whose role is to oversee the academic development and support for all students, including progress review for all students. The inspectors were assured that students had a

range of resources and services to support their academic learning and development, including workshops, study skills, online, one to one and face to face sessions and support.

125. The inspection team were provided with an overview of how the university assists with reasonable adjustments for students, ensuring that their individual needs are upheld and support their academic learning and development. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

126. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors were able to review the university Suitability for Professional Practice Policy, and the policy and procedure for the suitability for professional practice in social work within the Step Up Course Handbook and the Practice Learning Handbook. The inspectors were assured that this process was thorough and effective for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character, and health on the course.

127. The inspection team noted that throughout their discussions with students, the course team and student support services, the student's well-being was focused upon and sought to be upheld throughout any suitability or fitness to practice procedure. The inspection team advised that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

128. As identified within standard 5.1, The Student Centre provides students with guidance and support regarding reasonable adjustments, including information on eligibility for such support and types of adjustments that can be provided. The inspection team were assured that this covered support for students in relation to different types of assessments, support available during the taught parts of the programme, and guidance for students to make requests due to exceptional circumstances.

129. The inspection team were able to triangulate this within their review of the Step Up Course Handbook that provides students with further detail regarding reasonable adjustments. The inspectors heard of the supportive work that is done both within the university and placement settings to support students who required reasonable adjustments and how these enabled them to progress through the course. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

130. Documentary evidence, the Step Up Course Handbook, provides information for students regarding the course curriculum, practice placements, assessments on the course, including guidance for students regarding their transition to registered social worker, and information regarding CPD. The inspectors were assured from their discussions with key stakeholders that these areas of information are discussed and covered again within the

student's application and admissions processes, including teaching and workshop sessions within the programme.

131. The inspection team heard from students and the course team about the input on the programme from one of the Regional Engagement Leads at Social Work England, who spoke to students about the requirements and expectations for registration and CPD. The inspection team learnt from documentary evidence that students are provided with information about the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and the Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) posts through the careers day for qualifying social work courses. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.6

132. The inspection team were assured that the Step Up Course Handbook and Practice Learning Handbook clearly outlined to students the attendance requirements of the course within university and practice learning, including monitoring processes around this, escalation and implications for absence. The University Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy provided further guidance, which the inspectors were able to review online prior to the inspection.

133. The inspection team were able to triangulate this documentary evidence within their meeting with student representatives who confirmed their awareness of the mandatory attendance requirements of the course, how to record any absences and the requirements of any time missed. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

134. Please see further detail within standard 4.10 of this report regarding feedback to students. The inspectors agreed that the documentary evidence, Step Up Course Handbook, Education and Social Work Staff Guidance on Assessment, and Practice Learning Handbook, provided clarity regarding the course's approach to feedback. The documentary evidence highlighted the structure for feedback and that it is provided within a set timeframe, including a sequenced approach for both formative and summative assessments. The inspectors were assured that students receive feedback from several sources to provide a comprehensive approach to feedback that is timely and meaningful, and supports students' learning, practice, and academic development throughout the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

135. Prior to the inspection the inspectors were able to review the Step Up Course Handbook and Practice Learning Handbook that provided confirmation that there was a robust system in place for students to make an academic appeal on the course. With information and guidance available through the Student Hub, support through the Student

Centre and the Student Union, including an independent review through the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). This information was triangulated within discussions with the student group who were aware of this process and where to access this information. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

136. As the qualifying course is a Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work (Step Up), the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

The inspection team recommend that the course be approved with no conditions.

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.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
1.5 Ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.	☒	☐	☐
1.6 Ensure that the admissions process gives applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on a course. This will include information about the professional standards, research interests and placement opportunities.	☒	☐	☐
Learning environment			
2.1 Ensure that students spend at least 200 days (including up to 30 skills days) gaining different experiences and learning in practice settings. Each student will have: i) placements in at least two practice settings providing contrasting experiences; and ii) a minimum of one placement taking place within a statutory setting, providing experience of sufficient numbers of statutory social work tasks involving high risk decision making and legal interventions.	☒	☐	☐
2.2 Provide practice learning opportunities that enable students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards.	☒	☐	☐
2.3 Ensure that while on placements, students have appropriate induction, supervision, support, access to resources and a realistic workload.	☒	☐	☐
2.4 Ensure that on placements, students' responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of education and training.	☒	☐	☐
2.5 Ensure that students undergo assessed preparation for direct practice to make sure	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
they are safe to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting.			
2.6 Ensure that practice educators are on the register and that they have the relevant and current knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning.	☒	☐	☐
2.7 Ensure that policies and processes, including for whistleblowing, are in place for students to challenge unsafe behaviours and cultures and organisational wrongdoing, and report concerns openly and safely without fear of adverse consequences.	☒	☐	☐
Course governance, management and quality			
3.1 Ensure courses are supported by a management and governance plan that includes the roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability of individuals and governing groups in the delivery, resourcing and quality management of the course.	☒	☐	☐
3.2 Ensure that they have agreements with placement providers to provide education and training that meets the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards. This should include necessary consents and ensure placement providers have contingencies in place to deal with practice placement breakdown.	☒	☐	☐
3.3 Ensure that placement providers have the necessary policies and procedures in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk, and the support systems in place to underpin these.	☒	☐	☐
3.4 Ensure that employers are involved in elements of the course, including but not	☒	☐	☐

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

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
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 students are given the opportunity to work with, and learn from, other professions in order to support multidisciplinary working, including in integrated settings.	☒	☐	☐
4.7 Ensure that the number of hours spent in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator is sufficient to ensure that students meet the required level of competence.	☒	☐	☐
4.8 Ensure that the assessment strategy and design demonstrate that the assessments are robust, fair, reliable and valid, and that those who successfully complete the course have developed the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards.	☒	☐	☐

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

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

Regulator decision

Approved with no conditions.