



## Inspection Report

**Course provider:** Leeds Beckett University

**Course approval:** Post Graduate Diploma  
Social Work Apprenticeship

**Inspection dates:** 30 September – 2 October 2025

|                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Report date:                | 14 November 2025            |
| Inspector recommendation:   | Approved with no conditions |
| Regulator decision:         | Approved with no conditions |
| Date of Regulator decision: | 29 December 2025            |

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction .....   | 3  |
| What we do.....  | 3  |
| Summary of Inspection .....  | 5  |
| Language .....   | 5  |
| Inspection.....  | 6  |
| Meetings with students .....   | 6  |
| Meetings with course staff.....  | 6  |
| Meeting with people with lived experience of social work .....                 | 6  |
| Meetings with external stakeholders.....                                       | 6  |
| Findings .....   | 7  |
| Standard one: Admissions .....   | 7  |
| Standard two: Learning environment .....                                       | 9  |
| Standard three: Course governance, management and quality.....                 | 11 |
| Standard four: Curriculum assessment.....                                      | 15 |
| Standard five: Supporting students .....                                       | 19 |
| Standard six: Level of qualification to apply for entry onto the register..... | 22 |
| Proposed outcome.....  | 22 |
| Annex 1: Education and training standards summary.....                         | 23 |
| Regulator decision .....   | 30 |

## 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<sup>1</sup>, and the Social Work England ([Education and Training](#)) Rules 2019.
4. You can find further guidance on our course change, new course approval and annual monitoring processes on our website.

## What we do

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

---

<sup>1</sup> <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- or four-day visit to the education provider. We then draft a report setting out what we found during the inspection and if and how our findings demonstrate that the course meets our standards.

11. The inspectors may recommend in this report that the course is approved with conditions, without conditions or that it does not meet the criteria for approval.

12. A draft of this report is shared with the education provider, and once we have considered any comments or observations they may wish to provide, we make a final decision about the approval of the course.

13. The decisions that we can make are as follows, that the course is approved without conditions, the course is approved with conditions or that the course does not meet the criteria for approval. The decision, and the report, are then published.

14. If the course is approved with conditions, we will write to the education provider setting out how they can demonstrate they have met the conditions, the action we will take once we decide that the conditions are met, and the action we will take if we decide the conditions are not met.

## Summary of Inspection

15. Course details: Leeds Beckett University wish to run a twenty-two-month Post Graduate Diploma Social Work Apprenticeship.

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Inspection ID                  | LBUCPP509  |
| Course provider                | Leeds Beckett University   |
| Validating body (if different) |  |
| Course inspected               | Post Graduate Diploma (PG Dip) Social Work Apprenticeship  |
| Mode of Study                  | Full time  |
| Maximum student cohort         | 30   |
| Proposed first intake          | September 2026   |
| Date of inspection             | 30 September – 2 October 2025.   |
| Inspection team                | Sam Jameson (Education Quality Assurance Officer)<br>Luke Tibbits (Lay Inspector)<br>Bev Blythe (Registrant Inspector) |

## Language

16. In this document we describe Leeds Beckett University as 'the education provider' or 'the university' and we describe the PG Dip Social Work Apprenticeship as 'the course' or 'the programme'.

## Inspection

17. An onsite inspection took place from 30 September – 2 October 2025 across sites in Leeds Beckett University where the education provider is based. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, employers and people with lived experience of social work.

18. These meetings formed the basis of the inspection plan, agreed with the education provider ahead of inspection. The following section provides a summary of these sessions, who participated and the topics that were discussed with the inspection team.

### Conflict of interest

19. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

### Meetings with students

20. The inspection team met with students from the MA course and BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship, including student reps and graduates. Discussions included their experiences of the teaching and learning within their course, their access to support services of the university, admissions process, placements and how ready they felt for practice.

### Meetings with course staff

21. 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

22. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work who are members of the Advice By Experience Leeds (ABEL) group. Discussions included what area(s) of the new and current social work courses they were involved with, how much input and feedback they had and were able to provide to the university and what training they received in this role.

### Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with practice educators and representatives from placement partners including Leeds Adults and Health Directorate, St Annes Alcohol Services and Leeds Children's Services Workforce Development Team.

## Findings

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

### Standard one: Admissions

#### Standard 1.1

25. Information submitted and discussions with staff involved in selection and admissions to the new course provided insight into the framework for entry to the course. The written application, English language requirements and selection interview process were all discussed during the inspection week. Interviews are held online, with two stages of the process being utilised to assess applicants through values-based interview questions and a case study exercise.

26. The inspectors were assured that the admissions process is designed to assess applicants' academic readiness, professional motivation, values alignment, and communication skills. The aim of the process is to ensure that candidates have the potential to meet the professional standards required for registration as social workers upon completion of the new course.

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

#### Standard 1.2

28. Information submitted by the course provider in the education and training standards mapping form identified that applicants' prior relevant experience is recognised through the admissions process in terms of its importance in preparing individuals for the academic and professional demands of the course.

29. The personal statement, interview questions and case study exercise will allow the course provider to ensure that an applicants' prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions processes to the new course. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

### **Standard 1.3**

30. Discussions with employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work during the inspection week provided examples of where and how they are involved in the admissions process for current social work courses at the university. Members of the ABEL group spoke of how they have developed questions, and have equity throughout their development, involvement and participation in the admissions process.

31. The inspection team heard that annual reviews with key stakeholders would take place for the new programme, and this would include the review of the admissions process.

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

### **Standard 1.4**

33. The inspection team learnt that all applicants to the new course will undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check as part of the admissions process to assess their suitability. Documentary evidence, and discussions with staff involved in selection and admissions, outlined that guidance will be provided to applicants through the university DBS and Health Checks Guidance FAQs, which outlines the steps involved in both the DBS and health screening processes.

34. Information within the education and training standards mapping form identified that applicants who declare criminal convictions are subject to an additional review process. This involves a virtual panel, comprising senior managers from the Leeds and Wakefield Social Work Teaching Partnership (LWSWTP), who assess the applicant's suitability.

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

### **Standard 1.5**

36. During discussions within the inspection week, the inspectors explored how the course provider ensures that its admissions processes are in line with equality, diversity and inclusion principles. The inspectors learnt of the work being undertaken for the new course following the university Apprentice Research Study 2024-2025. Staff involved in selection and admissions and the course team identified that they are aware of the current social work courses not reflecting the local community. These members of the university staff and employer partners identified the work being done within the employer partner forum and LWSWTP to seek to provide greater equity within pathways and access to the new, and future, course.

37. As a result of discussions with key stakeholders, and their review of documentary evidence, the inspectors were assured that the course provider ensures that staff involved in selection and admissions have appropriate training to support applicants who may require additional support and/or reasonable adjustments during this process. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

#### **Standard 1.6**

38. In the lead up to the inspection, the inspectors were able to review evidence of how the course provider and employer partners plan to communicate with applicants to the new course, and the support that will be provided at each stage of their application journey. The inspectors heard from representatives of current students and apprentices, including alumni, who spoke of the information and support they received. They clearly identified this helped them to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on their course.

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

### **Standard two: Learning environment**

#### **Standard 2.1**

40. Practice learning days were articulated in the documentary evidence, with placements of 70 days, 100 days and 30 skills days, spread across the new course. The inspection team learnt that there is a structured approach to ensuring all placement and skills days are attended and this is monitored, with processes for making these days up as/when required.

41. The education and training standards mapping form outlined that apprentices will have placements in practice settings that provide contrasting learning experiences. This will include a minimum of one placement taking place within a statutory setting and a framework for how this is effectively managed within their substantive directorate/post. The inspectors were assured, following their meetings with employer partners and staff involved in placement-based learning, that placements will provide experience and sufficient numbers of statutory social work tasks involving high risk decision making and legal interventions.

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

#### **Standard 2.2**

43. Prior to the inspection the inspectors were assured from their review of documentary evidence that the new course will provide practice learning opportunities that enable apprentices to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards. The inspectors were able to triangulate this

information with students, apprentices and alumni from other social work courses, including staff involved in practice-based learning.

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

#### **Standard 2.3**

45. Examples of the Practice Learning Agreement (PLA) were submitted by the course provider, including information of the tripartite meetings and interim reports. These identified the framework for apprentices on the new course regarding the support they will receive during their induction, outlining supervision arrangements, access to resources and arrangements for a realistic workload.

46. During the inspection week the inspectors were able to explore how an apprentice's workload will be, and currently is, managed in their substantive place of work, learning of the work and the monitoring carried out by the Practice Lead, Coordinator, Practice Educator and the Degree Apprenticeship Assessor. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

#### **Standard 2.4**

47. The inspection team learnt about the pre-placement checks and audit process of placements, Practice Learning Agreement (PLA) meeting, and tripartite review that are all in place to ensure that apprentice's responsibilities will gradually increase, under appropriate supervision, as their knowledge and skills develop in the new course.

48. Information submitted prior to the inspection provided an overview of the processes and procedures in place from the course provider of how they ensure that whilst on placements, apprentices' responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of education and training. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

#### **Standard 2.5**

49. Information contained in the education and training standards mapping form identified that within the Practice Placement 1 module, for the new course, apprentices will participate in a structured interview with a person with lived experience and written reflective assessment. The inspection team learnt that this follows preparatory teaching, role-play practice and forms part of the Readiness for Placement Assessment, which must be successfully completed before apprentices begin their first placement.

50. The inspectors were able to triangulate this within their meeting with employer partners, students, apprentices and alumni representatives. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

#### **Standard 2.6**

51. The inspectors were able to identify from the Practice Educator Profile Forms one of the mechanisms that the course provider has in place to check and 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. There are, and will be for the new course, further checks and recordings within the Placement Audit process and First Placement Form, with feedback collected from apprentices and practice educators within the Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) process.

52. Information contained within the education and training standards mapping form outlined that the development of practice educators is embedded within the LWSWTP training programme, which aligns with the Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) for Social Work, including access to a dedicated practice educator support group.

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

#### **Standard 2.7**

54. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the Placement Apprenticeship Handbooks and a link to detailed information and guidance, including policies and procedures, regarding university student regulations. The inspectors were assured that policies and procedures are in place to support apprentices and students in raising concerns, reporting poor practice, whistleblowing, or making formal complaints. These are outlined in the Placement Handbooks and are also covered during teaching on the new course and will be covered within the placement induction and the PLA meeting.

55. The inspection team concluded that the discussions with staff involved in placement-based learning, practice educators and employer partners, alongside documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection, were able to demonstrate that this standard was met.

### **Standard three: Course governance, management and quality**

#### **Standard 3.1**

55. The inspectors met with members of the senior management team, which enabled the inspection team to triangulate documentary evidence that detailed the structure and the governance of the new course and where it fits within the wider social work programmes, including the links between the course, committees and boards within the university.

56. The inspection team were assured of the close working relationships and clear lines of communication and accountability across individuals and governing groups involved in the new, and current, social work course management and governance.

57. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

#### **Standard 3.2**

58. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to the inspection outlined the agreements that the course provider has in place with employer partners and placement providers. The Memorandum of Understanding details the agreements in place for the new course and discussions during the inspection week explored the organisation and monitoring of placements by the Practice and Development Group within the LWSWTP.

59. The inspection team were assured from evidence and examples provided, that there are processes and checks in place of how the new course will provide placements and education and training that meets the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards. During the inspection week the inspectors were provided with examples of the framework and support mechanisms in place for students and apprentices when their practice placement was at risk of breakdown. The inspection team met with the Placement Lead and Placement Coordinator, learning how they respond to any concerns that the placement cannot meet the student's/apprentice's learning requirements and how they have sought alternative placements where this is necessary and appropriate.

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

#### **Standard 3.3**

61. The inspection team were assured that the new course will include an audit of placement settings, that includes checking the relevant policies and procedures are in place for apprentices in relation to risk, well-being, health and safety. The inspection team learnt that this is again checked and confirmed during the induction process and in the PLA meeting. Discussions with staff involved in practice-based learning, and information within the education and training standards mapping form, outlined the work done by the university with their employer partners and placement providers to gather their feedback, alongside apprentice and practice educators regarding the placements to ensure any areas of development are identified.

62. Apprentice, student and alumni representatives that the inspection team met with spoke of their experiences of the support and responsive approach from their placement providers, employer partners and the course team in relation to their individual health, well-being and safety needs. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

#### **Standard 3.4**

63. The inspection team heard from placement providers and employer partners of the collaborative approach that their organisations and the course team have in place

regarding the development and monitoring of the new course, including the planning for allocation of placements. The university was able to demonstrate through its documentary evidence that employer partners and placement providers are represented in the course management and governance structure and groups. The inspectors learnt of the collective work done between the course team and the working groups of the LSWTTP, that includes representatives from placement providers and employer partners, including wider representation within the Apprentice Employer Forum.

64. The inspection team learnt that employer partners and social work practitioners will be invited to participate in the admissions interview process and contribute to the Practice Assessment Examination Committee. They will also contribute to taught components of the new course, with examples provided of current involvement they have in other social work courses at the university. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

### **Standard 3.5**

65. As identified in standard 3.4 of this report, the inspection team were satisfied that employer partners and placement providers will be involved in the monitoring and improvement of the new course.

66. Documentary and narrative evidence outlined the range of monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems in place for the new course at strategic and operational levels. Representatives from the ABEL group, apprentices, alumni and students that the inspection team met with all identified that they felt valued and involved in the monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems for current social work courses. The inspection team were advised that the planning and frameworks are in place for this same involvement for the new course. Some of the examples that these key stakeholders provided included the course representatives' meetings and forums, ABEL group report and meetings, module and curriculum reviews.

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

### **Standard 3.6**

68. The inspectors were satisfied that, following their review of documentary evidence and discussions with the course team and senior management team, the number of apprentices admitted to the new course is identified from a clear strategy, including consideration of local and regional placement capacity.

69. Within meetings with key stakeholders and staff involved in practice-based learning, the inspection team heard of the regular, established, and collaborative meetings and planning that they undertake to ensure that apprentices on the new course will have

access to quality placements and support in appropriate settings. These will aim to enable apprentices to undertake learning opportunities which will help them develop the knowledge, skills, and behaviours to meet the professional standards by the time they complete the new course.

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

#### **Standard 3.7**

71. Documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection included detailed information about the Course Director. The evidence identified their role, confirming their registration with Social Work England, appropriate qualifications, and experience.

72. 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**

73. The inspectors reviewed documentary evidence submitted by the course provider in support of this standard, including, Staff CVs, the Staff Deployment document for the new course and the Academic Workload Allocation Framework. Within their meetings with members of the course team and senior management team the inspectors were able to explore the plans for the new course, and how this will fit into the workload planning, resourcing and teaching within the staff team.

74. The inspection team were assured that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff, with relevant specialist subject knowledge and expertise, to deliver an effective new course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

#### **Standard 3.9**

75. As a result of their review of documentary evidence and discussions with the course team and members of the senior management team the inspectors were able to learn that the new course will have biannual module and exam boards. These will monitor results, and the annual course director report will provide an analysis of results and highlight any areas of focus or development, including the reporting of any issues relating to equality and diversity.

76. Further mechanisms for monitoring and analysing apprentices' progression or any areas of development also include the Social Work Apprentice Employer Forums, the School Degree Apprenticeship Operational Group and the Practice Assessment Examination Committee. The inspection team learnt that an Inclusive Course Design Tool has been developed and sets out ways of enhancing inclusive teaching, learning

and assessment for apprentices on the new course. Information contained within the education and training standards mapping form highlighted that any issues relating to inequality are explored in the Curriculum Review and have led to the development of listening circles in Leeds Adults placements and strengthening of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role.

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

#### **Standard 3.10**

78. Information submitted in support of this standard included details and links to the university's People and Organisational Development and the Centre for Learning and Teaching. Documentary evidence and discussions with members of the senior management team confirmed that the course team are supported to develop and enhance their learning, development and teaching in relation to social work professional practice. The course team are supported through a personal development review process, including specific time allocated for professional development. Some examples provided included attending training courses, undertaking practice research and direct work through Best Interest Assessor and Approved Mental Health Professional roles.

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

### **Standard four: Curriculum assessment**

#### **Standard 4.1**

80. The inspectors were satisfied that the documentary evidence, including additional information provided prior to the inspection was able to demonstrate that the content, structure, and delivery of the new course is in accordance with relevant standards, guidance and frameworks.

81. Following their discussions with the senior management team, course team and employer partners, the inspectors were assured that the new course is designed to enable apprentices to demonstrate that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards upon completion of the programme.

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

#### **Standard 4.2**

83. Documentary evidence and discussions with employer partners allowed the inspectors to triangulate that they have been involved throughout the internal validation process for the new course, helping to shape its curriculum. The inspection team heard of the close working relationship and strong lines of communication with employer partners and placement providers, with structured opportunities for employers to

influence future curriculum development and ensure alignment with workforce needs and regional priorities through the LWSWTP and the Apprentice Employer Forum.

84. Representatives from the ABEL group that the inspection team met with identified that they felt valued and involved in the design, ongoing development and review of the curriculum for current social work courses. The inspection team were advised that the planning and frameworks are in place for this same involvement for the new course. Some of the examples that these key stakeholders provided included the admissions and selection process, teaching and assessment within the course materials and readiness for direct practice, the ABEL group report and meetings, module and curriculum reviews.

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

#### **Standard 4.3**

86. Information contained within the education and training standards mapping form explained that the new course, and all university courses, are developed to the university's Inclusive Course Design Plan. This is regularly updated and reviewed to support and develop equality, diversity and inclusion principles throughout courses and their teaching materials, with further reinforcement through the university Learning and Teaching Inclusive Practice guidance.

87. The inspection team met with university student support services who provided an overview of the robust support apprentices can access for upholding their physical and mental health, including any additional resources and support that may be required both onsite at the university and whilst on placement. Student, alumni and apprentice representatives that the inspectors met with spoke of the individualised support that they received from both the course team and wider university support services. They expressed that the level of support was in line with their own personal needs and requirements to support their learning, access, and development opportunities.

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

#### **Standard 4.4**

89. Documentary evidence submitted by the course provider prior to the inspection outlined that the Curriculum Development Group meets twice a year to review and identify areas of emerging social work practice that will be integrated into the new course. The inspection team were able to learn that social work practitioners from the LWSWTP will be involved in teaching sessions for the new course, helping to ensure that the course is continually updated reflecting developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice.

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

#### **Standard 4.5**

91. The inspectors were assured that the documentary evidence provided by the course provider demonstrated that the integration of theory and practice is central to the new course, and threads throughout its modules and teaching materials.

92. Documentary evidence was triangulated within meetings with the course team, student, apprentices and alumni representatives, and practice educators, which enabled the inspectors to hear directly how social work theoretical frameworks are introduced, developed through modules, and consolidated within placement settings, and further academic learning.

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

#### **Standard 4.6**

94. Information shared by the course provider in the lead up to the inspection outlined the Interprofessional Learning Days that apprentices on the new course will attend. The inspectors were able to learn from staff involved in practice-based learning and employer partners of how apprentices on current social work courses, and the new course, are/will be given the opportunity to work with, and learn from, other professions to support multidisciplinary working, including in integrated settings.

95. The Interprofessional Learning Days include learning and development opportunities from across the School of Health at the university, linking in with students from, but not limited to, adult and mental health nursing, counselling, nutrition, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy.

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

#### **Standard 4.7**

97. Information submitted by the course provider prior to the inspection assured the inspectors that apprentices will spend enough time in structured academic learning for them to meet the required learning outcomes, to demonstrate that they can meet the professional standards by the time they complete the new course. The inspection team were able to triangulate this information within their discussions with student, alumni and apprentice representatives, employer partners and the course team.

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

#### **Standard 4.8**

99. As a result of their documentary evidence review and discussions with the course team, practice educators and employer partners, the inspectors were assured that

assessments are mapped to the module learning outcomes and the professional standards.

100. From their discussions with these key stakeholders the inspectors were satisfied that those who successfully complete the new course will have developed the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards. The inspection team were able to triangulate this information regarding the mechanisms in place, including internal and external marking and moderation processes, to ensure that assessments are robust, fair, reliable and valid.

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

#### **Standard 4.9**

102. Documentary evidence, including the Assessment Schedule PG Dip SW Apprenticeship 2026-27 and PG Course Specification SW Degree Apprenticeship, highlighted that there are varied assessments, and these are all mapped to the learning outcomes and scaffolded to increase progression incrementally throughout the new course.

103. The inspectors heard from student, apprentice and alumni representatives that they felt the assessments undertaken on their respective courses were carried out at appropriate stages during their course and matched their level of learning and development.

The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

#### **Standard 4.10**

104. Documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection outlined how a range of feedback is provided on both formative and summative assessments for students and apprentices, including how this will be organised for the new course.

105. Students and apprentices spoke about how the feedback they receive on their course was timely, helpful, and informed them of their progression and areas of development. If there were any areas they needed clarification on, they identified that members of the course team were readily available and responsive to meet and discuss their learning and development needs.

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

#### **Standard 4.11**

107. The inspectors were satisfied that there were appropriately expert, qualified and experienced staff who will carry out assessments for the new course, including an external examiner who is registered with Social Work England.

108. The inspectors learnt that the course adheres to the University External Examiner Guidelines, and the interview and appointment of the external examiner is overseen by the Course Director and the University External Examiner Scrutiny Panel.

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

#### **Standard 4.12**

110. The education and training standards mapping form provided the inspectors with an overview of the processes in place to manage apprentices' progression, both in practice learning settings and academic development. The inspection team concluded that the additional documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection, and discussions with the course team and practice learning lead, were able to demonstrate that this standard was met.

#### **Standard 4.13**

111. Information contained within the education and training standards mapping form identified that the curriculum for the new course is grounded in an evidence-informed approach, enabling apprentices to develop the skills necessary to critically locate, evaluate, and apply peer-reviewed research in their practice.

112. The inspectors agreed that based on the documentary evidence provided and from discussions with practice educators, the course team, apprentices, students and alumni, that current social work courses, and the new course, is designed to facilitate an evidence informed approach to practice.

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

### **Standard five: Supporting students**

#### **Standard 5.1**

114. As a result of their meeting with university student support services during the inspection week the inspectors were able to triangulate the documentary evidence submitted by the course provider.

115. These discussions highlighted the comprehensive range of services and resources that apprentices and students have access to support their health and wellbeing. This included, but was not limited to occupational health services, careers advice, academic support, mental health and counselling services. The inspection team learnt of the collaborative working and procedures that the university has in place for support services to link in, refer and work together to support students and apprentices.

116. Student and apprentice representatives that the inspection team met with provided examples of support services they had accessed, explaining that these had been timely in response to their individual needs and of a high standard.

117. The inspection team was assured that this standard was met.

#### **Standard 5.2**

118. Information provided prior to the inspection outlined the access to resources that apprentices on the new course will have to support their academic learning and development. Apprentice and student representatives that the inspection team met with spoke positively about the support and engagement that they had with their personal tutor, wider course team and the Degree Apprenticeship Assessor, identifying the link between academic and pastoral support they provided.

119. The inspectors met members of the Library and Skills for Learning services during the inspection week. Throughout these discussions the inspectors learnt of the robust and varied support services that apprentices on the new course will have access to support their academic development.

120. The inspection team were assured from the discussions with key stakeholders and review of documentary evidence that the support services and processes included support for apprentices who may require additional help or guidance, including referrals to Occupational Health Services and development of Reasonable Adjustment Plans.

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

#### **Standard 5.3**

122. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors were assured from documentary evidence that there is a comprehensive process in place to ensure the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health for current students and apprentices, including for the new course. The inspection team were able to triangulate this within their meetings with the course team, student support services and representatives from students, apprentices and alumni.

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

#### **Standard 5.4**

124. The inspection team learnt that the course provider makes supportive and reasonable adjustments for students and apprentices with additional needs to enable them to progress through their course via the university Reasonable Adjustments Process. The inspection team were able to triangulate this process through their

discussions with the Disability Advice Team, learning that for placement settings this process is adapted into an Individual Support Plan.

125. The inspection team heard from student, alumni and apprentice representatives of examples of this process in practice. These examples spoke of a supportive and collaborative approach that upheld their individual needs whilst helping them to learn and develop through their course.

126. The inspectors noted the positive approach taken by the university of supporting individual learning needs and requirements without the need for a formal diagnosis. Support and plans were put in place for the individual in a timely manner whilst ongoing assessments were carried out but did not hold up the support requirements for that apprentice/student.

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

#### **Standard 5.5**

128. As a result of their discussions with the course team the inspectors were assured that apprentices will receive timely access to all required programme-level material, including detailed information on the curriculum, practice placements, and assessments. Draft documents and course materials provided prior to the inspection outlined these details that the apprentices will receive and have access to.

129. Discussions with student, apprentice and alumni representatives during the inspection week identified that they had the information and guidance they required regarding Social Work England registration and continuous professional development.

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

#### **Standard 5.6**

131. Course documentation that the inspection team reviewed prior to the inspection identified that all taught sessions will be mandatory for the new course, with reviews of attendance at planned and regular times throughout the course. The course team and student and apprentice representatives that the inspection team met with identified that this is, and will be, reviewed and monitored at the PLA meeting and Tripartite reviews.

132. The inspection team learnt of opportunities where learning and work can be caught up on, including the collaborative monitoring and support provided by the course team and employer partners regarding attendance and any issues that may arise for apprentices.

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

### **Standard 5.7**

134. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence regarding how current students and apprentices, and the new apprentices, will receive feedback throughout their course to support their ongoing learning and development. As already identified within this report under standard 4.10, the inspection team were assured of the mechanisms that the university has in place for formative, summative, direct observations, and placement activity feedback to the students and apprentices.

135. Library and academic skills support services identified the variety of support and services that will be on offer to support apprentices on the new course with their ongoing learning and development needs.

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

### **Standard 5.8**

137. The inspection team concluded that the documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection was able to demonstrate that there is process in place for students and apprentices to make academic appeals.

138. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

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

### **Standard 6.1**

139. The inspection team were assured from documentary evidence and discussions with the course team and senior management team that the qualifying course is a Postgraduate Diploma Social Work Apprenticeship, and therefore this standard was met.

## **Proposed outcome**

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

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

## Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

| Standard   | Met                                 | Not Met – condition applied | Recommendation given     |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Admissions</b>  |                                     |                             |                          |
| 1.1 Confirm on entry to the course, via a holistic/multi-dimensional assessment process, that applicants:  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. have the potential to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards</li> <li>ii. can demonstrate that they have a good command of English</li> <li>iii. have the capability to meet academic standards; and</li> <li>iv. have the capability to use information and communication technology (ICT) methods and techniques to achieve course outcomes.</li> </ul> |                                     |                             |                          |
| 1.2 Ensure that applicants' prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions processes.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1.3 Ensure that employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work are involved in admissions processes.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1.5 Ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1.6 Ensure that the admissions process gives applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| <b>Standard</b>   | <b>Met</b>                          | <b>Not Met – condition applied</b> | <b>Recommendation given</b> |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| take up an offer of a place on a course. This will include information about the professional standards, research interests and placement opportunities.  |                                     |                                    |                             |
| <b>Learning environment</b>   |                                     |                                    |                             |
| 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) placements in at least two practice settings providing contrasting experiences; and</li> <li>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.</li> </ul> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 2.2 Provide practice learning opportunities that enable students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 2.3 Ensure that while on placements, students have appropriate induction, supervision, support, access to resources and a realistic workload.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 2.4 Ensure that on placements, students' responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of education and training.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 2.5 Ensure that students undergo assessed preparation for direct practice to make sure they are safe to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 2.6 Ensure that practice educators are on the register and that they have the relevant and  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |

| <b>Standard</b>   | Met                                 | Not Met – condition applied | Recommendation given     |
|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 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.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Course governance, management and quality</b>  |                                     |                             |                          |
| 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.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| <b>Standard</b>  | <b>Met</b>                          | <b>Not Met – condition applied</b> | <b>Recommendation given</b> |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 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.                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 3.6 Ensure that the number of students admitted is aligned to a clear strategy, which includes consideration of local/regional placement capacity.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 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.                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 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.                                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 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. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 3.10 Ensure that educators are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| <b>Curriculum and assessment</b>   |                                     |                                    |                             |
| 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   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |

| <b>Standard</b>   | <b>Met</b>                          | <b>Not Met – condition applied</b> | <b>Recommendation given</b> |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 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.                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 4.3 Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and human rights and legislative frameworks.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 4.4 Ensure that the course is continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 4.5 Ensure that the integration of theory and practice is central to the course.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 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.                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 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.                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 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 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |

| <b>Standard</b>  | Met                                 | Not Met – condition applied | Recommendation given     |
|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| necessary to meet the professional standards.  |                                     |                             |                          |
| 4.9 Ensure that assessments are mapped to the curriculum and are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression through the course.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.10 Ensure students are provided with feedback throughout the course to support their ongoing development.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Supporting students</b>   |                                     |                             |                          |
| 5.1 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their health and wellbeing including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. confidential counselling services;</li> <li>ii. careers advice and support; and</li> <li>iii. occupational health services</li> </ul> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| <b>Standard</b>   | <b>Met</b>                          | <b>Not Met – condition applied</b> | <b>Recommendation given</b> |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 5.2 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their academic development including, for example, personal tutors.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 5.3 Ensure that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 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. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 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.          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 5.6 Provide information to students about parts of the course where attendance is mandatory.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 5.7 Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students on their progression and performance in assessments.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| 5.8 Ensure there is an effective process in place for students to make academic appeals.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| <b>Level of qualification to apply for entry onto the register</b>  |                                     |                                    |                             |

| <b>Standard</b>   | <b>Met</b>                          | <b>Not Met – condition applied</b> | <b>Recommendation given</b> |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 6.1 The threshold entry route to the register will normally be a bachelor's degree with honours in social work. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           | <input type="checkbox"/>    |

## Regulator decision

Approved with no conditions.