



Inspection Report

Course provider: Leeds Trinity University

Course approval: MA Social Work & PG Dip
Social Work (masters exit route)

Inspection dates: 8 – 10 October 2024

Report date:	02 December 2024
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	24 December 2024
Date conditions met and approved:	09 May 2025

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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, 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

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

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

9. During this time a draft plan for the inspection is developed and shared with the education provider, to make sure it is achievable at the point of inspection.

10. Once the inspectors and officer are satisfied that an inspection can take place, this is usually undertaken over a three- 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. Leeds Trinity University proposed an MA Social Work and PG Dip Social Work (masters exit route only). The courses were inspected for approval against Social Work England's education and training standards 2021.

Inspection ID	LTU
Course provider	Leeds Trinity University
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	MA Social Work PG Dip Social Work (masters exit route only)
Mode of Study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	15
Proposed first intake	September 2025
Date of inspection	8-10 October 2024
Inspection team	Kate Springett (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Michelle Loughrey (Lay Inspector) Graeme Currie (Registrant Inspector)

Language

16. In this document we describe Leeds Trinity University as 'the education provider' or 'the university' and we describe the MA Social Work and PG Dip Social Work (masters exit route) as 'the course'.

Inspection

17. An onsite inspection took place from 8 – 10 October 2024 at Leeds Trinity 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 who had been involved in the consultation of the course. This included current Leeds Trinity University students who are studying differing courses, as well as an alumni student who was studying the MA Social Work at a different education provider. Discussions included the consultation of the programme, as well as the support services at the education provider.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members which included the head of school, programme lead, professors and lecturers, placement staff and the deputy dean.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in the consultation of the programme. Discussions included the admissions process, curriculum and overall involvement in the programme.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including Leeds City Council, Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Behind Closed Doors.

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. Prior to inspection, the course provider provided documentary evidence to satisfy the requirements of this standard.

26. The application process included consideration of experience, qualifications, references and a personal statement which enabled the course provider to consider whether applicants would have the capability to meet academic standards, including ICT skills.

27. The programme specification outlined clear entry requirements, and it was evidenced that there would be a values-based interview for applicants. In addition to this there was an ICT Task for applicants to demonstrate a good command of English and ICT Skills. It was also identified that the Social Work England Professional Standards were used as a reference point for the assessment of applicants.

28. During the inspection, the inspection team met with admissions staff who were able to provide more details about the admissions process.

29. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met.

Standard 1.2

30. Evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrated that interviews were designed to explore applicants' prior relevant experience. In addition to this, on the course providers draft website it was stated that it would be desirable for the applicant to have some relevant work or lived experience as demonstrated through a personal statement.

31. The inspection team met with admissions staff, and they were able to provide examples of what relevant experience would be. It was clear to the inspection team that prior relevant experience was a consideration by the course provider during the admissions process.

32. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met.

Standard 1.3

33. Prior to inspection, the course provider stated in their evidence mapping document that employers, placement providers and people with lived experience were involved in the interview process.

34. During the inspection, the inspection team met with the groups to confirm the same, and whilst employers did not explicitly state they were involved in interviews, they confirmed co-creation, involvement and engagement in the admissions process.

35. The course team confirmed they will host a training programme, which will include people with lived experience and employers, about the admissions process and these stakeholders will be involved in the interview process.

36. The inspection team were satisfied that the standard was met.

Standard 1.4

37. Evidence provided prior to inspection showed that students applying to the MA Social Work were required to complete an enhanced DBS check and occupational health screening upon receipt of their conditional offer. In addition to this, there is a requirement for a character declaration to be signed at interview.

38. The inspection team met with admission staff to discuss the above and felt confident that the standard was appropriately met.

Standard 1.5

39. Evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrated that the course provider had a university wide Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy.

40. EDI was explored further during the inspection. The inspection team met with the senior management team who explained how diversity data was collected and reviewed.

41. The course team explained that the social work cohorts were small and therefore data would not be statistically significant to make specific decisions; however, the data would be used to inform wider university analysis. The course team confirmed that EDI and unconscious bias training would be a requirement for anyone involved in admissions.

42. The inspection team also explored how the EDI Policy was implemented and monitored. The admissions team were able to explain that EDI data was separated out from any academic decision making, but they looked at offer rates to black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. They had a strategy for targeting underrepresented groups

and engaged in outreach, by visiting colleges and schools to improve access to participation for those groups.

43. The admissions team also provided examples of reasonable adjustments during the admissions process, and these included providing additional time, tasks written in braille, and British sign language (BSL) interpreters.

44. The inspection team were satisfied that the standard was met.

Standard 1.6

45. Prior to inspection, the course provider submitted evidence which included a draft website and programme guide. The inspection team felt these contained an adequate and wide range of information to enable applicants to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the course.

46. This included learning and teaching, entry requirements, fees and bursaries, Social Work England standards, and how to apply to the register. There was also an admissions values based interview guide submitted which explained to students that they would be expected to travel up to 1.5 hours, maximum, to and from placement.

47. As the course was new, the inspection team were not able to triangulate with students, but the inspection team were satisfied enough information was provided to meet the standard.

48. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to standard 1.6. We recommend that more information is provided students prior to admissions on associated costs of the course, such as business insurance should they use their car to travel to and from placement.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

49. Evidence and narrative provided prior to inspection showed that the 200 days in a practice setting would be split into the following: 80 day placement, 90 day placement, 30 skills days. It was evidenced that placements would be contrasting, and the final placement would be in a statutory setting.

50. The inspection team met with placement staff who explained how they had built relationships with local placement providers and been able to secure appropriate placements. This was triangulated with placement providers and the inspection team were satisfied that the 80 and 90 day placements would be achieved.

51. The inspection team also explored attendance monitoring of the placement days with the course team and were assured that there was a robust process in place to

ensure completion of the full placement. The 80 and 90 day attendance was monitored and contingencies were in place for missing days.

52. In relation to skills days, the inspection team heard that this was a standalone, non-credit bearing module which will be mandatory. The inspection team identified gaps in the skills days plan as there was no evidence of how these were to be mapped across the course, what the content would be, and how they would enable students to develop skills for practice.

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

Standard 2.2

54. Evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrated the course provider had a Practice Learning Strategy for placements, and various documentary evidence provided demonstrated the capabilities the course provider had to meet the standard. This included the practice educator handbook which set out expectations of placements.

55. Narrative provided stated that new placements would be vetted to ensure they provided the right level of support and opportunities for students. These would be reviewed annually through placement evaluations, and quality assured by the practice evaluation panel.

56. The inspection team were keen to triangulate evidence and narrative received prior to inspection with the practice based learning team during the inspection.

57. The practice learning team explained the onboarding process for new placement providers, and the steps taken to ensure suitability. The inspection team felt the process was robust. As well as documentary checks and quality assurance, it included the practice learning lead visiting the placement before students are allocated. The inspection team queried the steps taken if concerns arose during the quality assurance process or when onboarding new placements and were satisfied the course provider had a strategy in place for this.

58. The inspection team were satisfied that the standard was met.

Standard 2.3

59. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrated that there were procedures in place to ensure students have appropriate induction, supervision, support, access to resources and a realistic workload. The documentary evidence included the practice educator handbook where information was provided to practice educators about their role and responsibilities. The handbook included information around the practice learning agreement, supervision arrangements, student wellbeing and student support.

60. The inspection team were able to triangulate the above evidence during the inspection, with the course team and practice based learning team. The inspection team heard that supervision arrangements were 1.5 hours formal supervision for every 5 placement days. They also heard about students having a 2-week induction to the placement where they were shown policies/procedures. Students had the opportunity to raise concerns to their practice educator or tutor throughout the placement. There were also mid-point reviews to ensure that placements were appropriate, and students were on track.

61. The inspection team were satisfied that the standard was met.

Standard 2.4

62. Evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrated that consideration was given to students' responsibilities to ensure they were appropriate for their stage of education and training. This included the placement learning agreement highlighting the learning needs of the student, what learning opportunities the student needed, and any support for the student.

63. The inspection team met with the practice learning team who explained that they ensured the students had the right learning opportunities to meet the professional standards and PCF domains. This was reviewed at the midpoint review meeting and consideration as to whether students achieved the desired outcomes was done when marking the portfolio.

64. It was also heard that students' responsibilities increase over the 2 placements, and there was a placement management system, which recorded and mapped students' experiences and their learning needs.

65. The inspection team were satisfied that the standard was met.

Standard 2.5

66. Evidence of the Preparation for Social Work Practice module was provided in the evidence submission, prior to inspection. Narrative provided explained that this module was a pre-requisite, which must be passed for the students starting placement. It was stated that it provided a strong foundation for practice.

67. The inspection team met with the course team who explained the module and assessment in more detail, and the inspection team felt that the assessment was robust. The assessment was a pass/fail interview about what students had learned from people with lived experience on the module. Students were also expected to complete 20 skills days before going out on placement.

68. During the week, the inspection team met with people with lived experience, who were also able to confirm to the inspection team that they were going to be part of the module and had been consulted on this.

69. As the course was yet to start, the inspection team could not meet with social work students; however, they were satisfied that on the evidence presented, the standard was met.

Standard 2.6

70. The inspection team felt that from evidence provided prior to inspection, there was clear demonstration of how this standard was met for off-site (independent agency) practice educators. The evidence provided showed that off-site practice educators completed a form detailing the following: Social Work England registration number; DBS; insurance; Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPs); currency; areas of specialism.

71. Narrative provided also stated that annual checks for Social Work England registration would be completed, as well as qualification checks. Further to this, refresher training would be provided.

72. The inspection team were keen to explore how the course provider met this standard in relation to on-site practice educators. The inspection team met with the course team who confirmed the above process for off-site practice educators. In relation to on-site practice educators, it was understood that the course provider relied on the local authority to check the practice educators' Social Work England registration.

73. The inspection team were satisfied with how on-site (local authority employed) practice educators' currency/knowledge was checked, as they had support for training/CPD, but were not satisfied there were robust checks for ensuring the registration of on-site practice educators.

74. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 2.6 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and

we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard 2.7

75. The inspection team felt that this standard was met, based on evidence provided prior to inspection. The module handbook contained relevant policies and processes, and the placement documentation (practice learning agreement) also contained reference to the placement complaints procedure and whistleblowing policies.

76. The inspection team were unable to meet with social work students; however, they met with students on other courses. The students were able to confirm that they were aware of the whistleblowing procedure.

77. During the meeting with the course team, it was confirmed that students were made aware of/reminded of the whistleblowing policy in the Preparation for Professional Practice Sessions. The sessions ensured students were fully aware of the policy and its implications in practice placements. In addition to this, 24-hour support for students was also available, so that students could raise concerns at any time.

78. The inspection team were satisfied that the standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

79. During the inspection, the inspection team met with the senior leadership team to explore and clarify the organisational structure.

81. Following the meeting, the inspection team felt that there were clear lines of accountability, and these linked to the wider departmental structures. This included the roles, responsibilities of governing groups such as the academic board, programme studies board, and learning, teaching and student experience committee. In addition to this, it was clear how the course was going to be embedded within the university.

82. The inspection team agreed there was a clear structure in place in terms of governance and the course was led by people with relevant experience of the social work profession. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

83. As stated in standard 2.2, the inspection team reviewed evidence that the education provider had robust quality assurance of new placements, which ensured they were appropriate.

84. The inspection team met with the course team and felt that there were adequate relationships with placement providers, and felt confident there were commitments from placement providers for year 1 and year 2 placements. It was noted that partner agreements had not yet been signed due to waiting for Social Work England approval for the course.

85. Documentary evidence and oral evidence demonstrated that there were processes in place to deal with placement breakdowns. This included action plans and a concerns meeting. The inspection team was able to meet with a practice educator who shared their experience of managing placement breakdown.

86. The course team explained the contingencies in place should a placement break down and were able to show planning to prevent and/or reduce the possibility of placement breakdowns. The inspection team were also satisfied following conversations with the course team that there were processes in place to ensure consents.

87. The inspection team were satisfied that the standard was met.

Standard 3.3

88. Documentary evidence provided in support of this standard included the module handbooks, placement templates, learning agreement templates, QAPL new agency registration form and review form. There was also an induction log which included Health and Safety and reference to related policies, such as the Lone Working policy. The inspection team felt the documentary evidence was sufficient to meeting the standard.

89. The inspection team met with the practice learning team who confirmed that relevant policies were seen by students in their induction. The QAPL placement review form included working/setting related risk assessment and procedures in place if any concerns arose during the placement. The team also explained what support is available to students on placement as demonstrated in standard 2.3.

90. The inspection team met with support services who explained what support was in place for students on placement, and it was heard reasonable adjustments and support would be given both whilst students were in university and out on placement.

91. The inspection team were satisfied that the standard was met.

Standard 3.4

92. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrated collaborative working with employer partners, as multiple employer consultations had taken place in relation to the course. Topics included but were not limited to: the curriculum,

recruitment, DBS, support and admissions. Being part of the consultations and advisory groups demonstrated how employers would be involved in monitoring of the course.

93. During the inspection, the inspection team met with employer partners and identified strong relationships with a range of statutory and non-statutory placement providers.

94. Employer partners confirmed they were involved in the development of the course and explained that they were to be involved in admissions and placement allocations. They also told the inspection team what the practice learning opportunities would be for students on placement.

95. The inspection team were satisfied that the standard was met.

Standard 3.5

96. Various pieces of documentary evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrated there were processes in place to monitor, evaluate and improve the course.

97. Evidence included but was not limited to module evaluations which took place twice per year per module. These gave students the opportunity to feedback so improvements could be made during the delivery of the module. Other opportunities for students to be involved in improvements were through the student experience committee and student survey.

98. Documentary evidence also demonstrated that there was a stakeholder advisory group, which was an opportunity for employers, people with lived experience and students to provide feedback on the programme. Additionally, people with lived experience and employers were involved in the practice evaluation panel (PEP) where they could monitor and evaluate practice placements.

99. The inspection team were satisfied with the various ways employers, people with lived experience and students were involved in monitoring, evaluation and improving the course, and agreed the standard was met.

Standard 3.6

100. Evidence provided prior to inspection included various strategic plans, which assured the inspection team that consideration had been given to student numbers and placement capacity.

101. During the inspection, the senior leadership team spoke about their relationship with placement providers as well as their plan for admitting students, which included a commitment to widening participation.

102. The inspection team felt assured that the number of students had been carefully considered and there would be an adequate number of placement opportunities. Therefore, they were satisfied that the standard was met.

Standard 3.7

103. Prior to inspection, the inspection team reviewed the programme leader's CV and confirmed they were a registered social worker and had the appropriate qualifications and experience.

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

Standard 3.8

105. Following review of evidence submitted prior to inspection, the inspection team were keen to discuss the plan for staffing with the senior leadership team. It was unclear to the inspection team whether the academic staff appointed had relevant specialist subject knowledge and expertise to deliver an effective course.

106. The senior leadership team were able to provide reassurance to the inspection team that the existing academic staff had been mapped to the curriculum, and where a gap in staffing was identified, this was filled.

107. The inspection team were satisfied that the number of staff was appropriate, as well as the proposed staff to student ratio.

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

Standard 3.9

109. Evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrated that there were various processes in place to evaluate information on student performance and progression, and the inspection team successfully triangulated the documentary evidence with the course team during the inspection week.

110. During the inspection, the course team explained that they stored the following data: attendance/engagement data, pass rate data (including first time passes), EDI data and trends at module level (this list is not exhaustive). EDI data was used to inform analysis at panels and governing boards. It was also monitored at progression points.

111. It was explained that a meeting was held once per month with the programme lead, and this meeting was underpinned by the data collected. Examples of how data informed outcomes included providing support for students whose attendance was poor, providing support/action plans for students who required intervention, and making changes to the curriculum or delivery of the programme.

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

Standard 3.10

113. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection showed the policies and procedures in place for university staff in relation to their development.

114. The above evidence was triangulated in both the senior leadership team and course team meetings. The inspection team felt that there were adequate opportunities for staff development and support, and this included having scholarly time to do research, attend conferences, complete further study such as a PhD and time for immersion in professional practice to maintain currency with practice.

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

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

116. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection outlined module descriptors. The inspection team felt that they were appropriate as they covered all required areas and demonstrated values and theory into practice effectively. However, the module descriptors were mapped to the PCFs and not the professional standards.

117. The inspection team discussed this with the course team who then provided additional documentary evidence during the inspection week, which included a spreadsheet demonstrating how the modules were mapped to the professional standards. The course team explained that they were confident students would know what they were learning was in relation to the professional standards.

118. The inspection team were satisfied that the course content and delivery equipped students with the tools necessary to meet the professional standards.

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

120. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to standard 4.1. We recommend the university consider that any mapping to the Social Work England professional standards is included in student facing documentation.

Standard 4.2

121. Narrative provided prior to inspection stated that stakeholders of the programme had been consulted on all aspects in the development of the programme, and documentary evidence was provided in support of this statement. These included ways in which the Stakeholder Groups had impacted on the design of the curriculum.

122. During the inspection week, the inspection team spoke with employers and felt there was a high level of partnership engagement throughout the course in relation to curriculum development.

123. When meeting with a practice educator, the inspection team felt assured there was co-creation, and this would continue once the programme starts.

124. People with lived experience explained to the inspection team how they have planned to be incorporated into skills days and thus, contributing to the curriculum.

125. The inspection team was assured by all stakeholder groups and concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

126. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection included a range of university policies relevant to EDI. The inspection team were keen to explore EDI principles with the course provider, and sought to triangulate how EDI was incorporated into the programme.

127. The inspection team felt inclusive practices were embedded throughout the programme. Examples included social justice being at the heart of the curriculum, and a focus on practicing social work in an anti-discriminatory and anti-racist way. It was clear that consideration was given to EDI principles when designing the curriculum, including when designing modules and skills days.

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

Standard 4.4

129. At the inspection, the inspection team were keen to explore how the course is continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice. The course team were able to demonstrate the programme was responsive to change. Examples provided included ensuring the module descriptors were flexible and the team could be responsive to change. It was explained that during the consultation process the course team had considered themes which had come up during consultation with stakeholder groups, and contemporary practice issues raised by partners. The role of the Stakeholder Advisory Group would be to advise on and guide the curriculum.

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

Standard 4.5

131. Prior to inspection, there was a view that the standard could be met based on the documentary evidence provided, this included the programme specification/handbook and curriculum documentation.

132. The inspection team triangulated this with the senior leadership team and course team and found that from explanations given, there was a common thread through the meetings that integration of theory and practice was central to the programme. The course team were able to provide examples of how this was done including specific modules where this was highlighted, and co-creating research projects based on real-world contexts.

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

Standard 4.6

134. The inspection team felt that there were multiple opportunities for interprofessional learning demonstrated throughout the documentary evidence, and evidence heard on inspection from the course team.

135. Examples of interprofessional learning available to students included but was not limited to; joint training with students on similar courses, skills days, the opportunity to attend conferences, and simulated interprofessional learning opportunities.

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

Standard 4.7

137. Evidence submitted prior to inspection demonstrated that the hours spent in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator was appropriate.

138. The inspection team were not able to meet with students to confirm their view on this, due to the course not yet starting; however, the inspection team felt that there was an appropriate balance in academic teaching and study time set out in the module specifications.

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

Standard 4.8

140. Prior to inspection, the inspection team reviewed a range of assessments, marking, and feedback documentation which they felt was appropriate and adequate in relation to being robust, fair, reliable and valid and would equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards.

141. The inspection team were keen to triangulate the documentation with the course team, and heard about how assessments were designed and developed to reflect

professional practice but in doing so, they aimed to benefit students with different strengths. One way of doing this was to allow students to pick a topic for assessment.

142. The inspection team also heard how there was a wide range of formative and summative assessments.

143. The inspection team felt that the strategy in place for assessments was both accessible and inclusive to students, and they agreed the standard was met.

Standard 4.9

144. Based on documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection, the inspection team had concerns/queries in relation to the sequencing of assessments, as it appeared that all assessments in year 1 fell over a 2 week period.

145. The inspection team were keen to discuss this with the course team. The course team confirmed and recognised all assessments did fall into a 2 week period; however, they were able to explain the rationale for this.

146. The inspection team felt satisfied that the course team had considered where assessments were best placed in the academic year, and the fact the assessments were not all the same format (i.e. essay/exam) reduced the need to spread the assessments out.

147. The inspection team felt that the course team has considered the strain of academic assessment whilst students were on placement and wanted to minimize this.

148. The course team further explained that they were open to student feedback and would review the assessment structure at the end of the year.

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

Standard 4.10

150. Documentary evidence and narrative provided prior to inspection demonstrated that opportunities to feedback have been identified throughout the programme. Whilst on placement, feedback included but was not limited to: daily feedback, regular supervisions, mid point reviews and feedback on their portfolio.

151. In relation to the academic element of the course, feedback throughout the programme included but was not limited to having the opportunity to discuss assessment expectations with tutors, verbal feedback and peer discussion, having a personal tutor, and feedback during tutorials.

152. The inspection team were not able to meet with students due to the course not yet starting, however, the inspection team felt assured there was adequate feedback planned into the programme to support students.

153. The inspection team felt assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

154. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the course team CVs that demonstrated they had the appropriate expertise to undertake student assessments.

155. However, as the course has not yet commenced there is not currently an appropriate EE in place and therefore the inspectors were not assured that this element of the standard was met.

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

Standard 4.12

157. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrated that there were various groups who managed students' progression, including the programme panel of examiners, assessment panel and the programme progression and award board.

158. The documentary evidence presented also showed that there was a requirement for direct observations of students a minimum of 3 times whilst on placement.

159. Whilst the inspection team was not able to discuss input with stakeholders or confirm its robustness with students due to the course not yet being approved, they felt assured that opportunities had been planned for practice educators and/or practice learning tutors to provide adequate and consistent feedback in relation to progression on placements, and that this would be done on a regular basis.

160. The inspection team felt assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

161. From documentary evidence provided, it was demonstrated that there was a 60 credit module devoted to research in social work practice.

162. The inspection team met with the course team during the inspection, and they heard how a key feature of the module was about developing students' research skills so that they could undertake research, from which they could develop their knowledge and skills base.

163. The inspection team also felt assured that the academic staff on the programme identified research informed teaching which would assist students in their evidence-based practice.

164. The inspection team felt agreed that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

165. When reviewing documentary evidence prior to inspection, the inspection team felt that there was comprehensive evidence of counselling services; however, there was limited information on careers advice/support and Occupational Health Services.

166. During the inspection, the inspection team met with university support staff who confirmed the variety of services available. These included, but were not limited to, counselling, CBT, EMDR, careers help and occupational health services. It was stated that services were available 9-5; however, there was flexibility for out of hours services if students were unable to access services during the day, for instance, if they were on placement.

167. The inspection team were satisfied that that all support services were not only available to students, but all accessible.

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

Standard 5.2

169. Documentary and oral evidence presented to the inspection team both prior to, and during the inspection demonstrated that students would have a personal tutor, and students would meet with them at various points during the course. As well as tutors, there was access to academic resources contained within the VLE and student learning hub.

170. During the inspection, the inspection team heard that there was a specific budget identified for the social work programme, which meant that there would be sufficient library resources available to students.

171. In addition to library/online resources, the university offered financial help for students such as laptop loans, and assisted technology where appropriate.

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

Standard 5.3

173. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection included the Student Charter Code of Responsibilities, Fitness to Study Policy, Fitness to Practise Policy, character declaration, and the admissions-health-check policy, all of which contributed to ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health.

174. Narrative provided stated that students must complete a declaration of character and a health declaration and screening on admission to the programme. These declarations were repeated on an annual basis.

175. The inspection team heard during the inspection that should there be any fitness to practice concerns on admission there was a panel, which involved employers and placement providers, to review the issues and consider whether an offer would be made to the applicant. This included consideration of whether the issue meant a student may have difficulty securing a placement, or a job in the future.

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

Standard 5.4

177. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrated that the course provider provided supportive and reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments. This was outlined throughout various documents including the disability services handbook, programme specification and practice learning agreement.

178. The inspection team met with support staff during the inspection and heard that there were 2 different types of plans: a student inclusion plan, and a separate plan for students going on placement. The plans built strategies for students to support themselves, as well as containing information on any additional needs or reasonable adjustments.

179. Despite not being able to meet with students on the course, the course team were able to provide examples of reasonable adjustments provided to other students and how this would be the same for students on this programme. The course team explained how they assessed reasonable adjustments against a low threshold, which meant more students could have access to support.

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

Standard 5.5

181. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence prior to the inspection, showing that information is provided to students about the curriculum, practice placements, assessments, CDP requirements and transition to registered social worker (being eligible to apply to join the Social Work England register). This was evidenced in the programme specification and assessment handbook.

182. The inspection team felt there may be a gap in the evidence presented as they could not locate information on students being provided information on the assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE). This was explored with the course team who explained that they had discussions with students about the ASYE after their final placement. In addition to this, they planned to invite a practitioner to the university to discuss the ASYE. There was also information given on the ASYE at skills days and careers fairs.

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

Standard 5.6

184. The inspection team reviewed policies and procedures relating to attendance prior to inspection, and these set out clear attendance expectations. The expectation was that students attend 100% of the academic element of the course, and 100% of placement days.

185. Documentary and oral evidence also showed that on placement, students keep a record of their attendance, and this is signed off by the practice educator and university tutor. In relation to attending sessions at the university, this is monitored by a register.

186. The inspection team were satisfied that clear attendance information was provided to students, and therefore the standard was met.

Standard 5.7

187. Prior to inspection, the inspection team reviewed documentation which stated the assessment policy was that feedback for assessments must be provided within 20 working days.

188. The inspection team were not able to meet with social work students to confirm the same, as the course is yet to run; however, reassurance was offered to the inspection team that this would be adhered to.

189. The course team explained that marking is standardised and moderated, and additionally all fails and marks above 70 are moderated. The inspection team were also assured that feedback is developmental, and when students receive their mark they are provided with information about how their work has been marked against the rubric and comments are provided.

190. The inspection team felt assured this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

191. Prior to inspection, inspection team reviewed the academic appeals policy, which was available for students to find through the programme handbook.

192. The inspection team met with the course team who advised that the appeals process could be found on the student facing app and VLE.

193. The inspection team met with students from other courses who felt that it was clear where they would find information on the appeals process. This not only included online, but via personal tutors and peer support champions.

194. The inspection team agreed the standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

195. As the qualifying course is MA Social Work and PG Dip Social Work (masters exit route only), the inspection team agreed that this standard is met.

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

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

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

	Standard not currently met	Condition	Date for submission of evidence	Link
1	Standard 2.1	The education provider will provide evidence they have; - Mapped the skills days across the course - Ensured that the skills days content develops students' skills for practice - Ensured that the length of skills days are equivalent to the length of a placement day.	24 March 2025	Paragraph 49
2	Standard 2.6	The education provider will provide evidence they have a process in place for checking the registration of onsite practice educators.	24 March 2025	Paragraph 70
3	Standard 4.11	The education provider will provide evidence they have appointed an appropriate external examiner.	24 March 2025	Paragraph 154

Recommendations

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

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	Standard 1.6	The inspectors are recommending that more information is provided to students prior to admissions on associated costs of the course, such as business insurance should they use their car to travel to and from placement.	Paragraph 45
2	Standard 4.1	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider that the mapping to the Social Work England professional standards is included in student facing documentation.	Paragraph 116

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
Admissions			
1.1 Confirm on entry to the course, via a holistic/multi-dimensional assessment process, that applicants: i. have the potential to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards ii. can demonstrate that they have a good command of English iii. have the capability to meet academic standards; and iv. have the capability to use information and communication technology (ICT) methods and techniques to achieve course outcomes.	☒	☐	☐
1.2 Ensure that applicants' prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions processes.	☒	☐	☐
1.3 Ensure that employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work are involved in admissions processes.	☒	☐	☐
1.4 Ensure that the admissions processes assess the suitability of applicants, including in relation to their conduct, health and character. This includes criminal conviction checks.	☒	☐	☐
1.5 Ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.	☒	☐	☐
1.6 Ensure that the admissions process gives applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to	☒	☐	☒

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

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendati on 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.	☒	☐	☐
Course governance, management and quality			
3.1 Ensure courses are supported by a management and governance plan that includes the roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability of individuals and governing groups in the delivery, resourcing and quality management of the course.	☒	☐	☐
3.2 Ensure that they have agreements with placement providers to provide education and training that meets the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards. This should include necessary consents and ensure placement providers have contingencies in place to deal with practice placement breakdown.	☒	☐	☐
3.3 Ensure that placement providers have the necessary policies and procedures in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk, and the support systems in place to underpin these.	☒	☐	☐
3.4 Ensure that employers are involved in elements of the course, including but not limited to the management and monitoring of courses and the allocation of practice education.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
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	Recommendati on 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	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendati on 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.	☒	☐	☐
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	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
5.2 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their academic development including, for example, personal tutors.	☒	☐	☐
5.3 Ensure that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health.	☒	☐	☐
5.4 Make supportive and reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments to enable them to progress through their course and meet the professional standards, in accordance with relevant legislation.	☒	☐	☐
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			

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendati on given
6.1 The threshold entry route to the register will normally be a bachelor’s degree with honours in social work.	☒	☐	☐

Regulator decision

Approved with conditions.

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

If conditions are applied to a course approval, Social Work England completes a conditions review to make sure education providers have complied with the conditions and are meeting all of the [education and training standards](#).

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

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

	Standard not met	Condition	Inspector recommendation
1	2.1	The education provider will provide evidence they have; - Mapped the skills days across the course - Ensured that the skills days content develops students' skills for practice - Ensured that the length of skills days are equivalent to the length of a placement day.	Condition met
2	2.6	The education provider will provide evidence they have a process in place for checking the registration of onsite practice educators.	Condition met
3	4.11	The education provider will provide evidence they have appointed an appropriate external examiner.	Condition met

Findings

This conditions review was undertaken as a result of conditions set during course approval as outlined in the original inspection report above.

With respect to the condition set against standard 2.1, the education provider submitted documentary evidence demonstrating skills days have been incorporated into a non credit bearing module, which must be passed in order for students to be accredited the MA Social Work award.

It was evidenced that the skills days were an appropriate length, and the inspection team felt that the skills days contained a good range of topics, and aligned with the professional standards.

With respect to the condition set against standard 2.6, the education provider has provided an updated partnership agreement, which demonstrates the course provider checks PEs are suitably qualified prior to accepting a student on placement. In addition to this, the inspection team were assured relevant information will be stored on a digital placement system.

With respect to the condition set against standard 4.11 the course provider have evidenced they have appointed an appropriately qualified external examiner and the inspection team are satisfied with this.

Regulator decision

Conditions met.