

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Gloucestershire

Course approval: BSc (Hons) Social Work and
BSc (Hons) Social Work (Yeovil)

Inspection dates: 21st to 24th February 2023

Report date:	5 th April 2023
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	23 rd May 2023
Date conditions met and approved:	1 st September 2023

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Introduction

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

What we do

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

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

10. Once the inspectors and officer are satisfied that an inspection can take place, this is usually undertaken over a three to four day visit to the education provider. We then draft a report setting out what we found during the inspection and if and how our findings demonstrate that the course meets our standards.

11. The inspectors may recommend in this report that the course is approved with conditions, approved without conditions or that it does not meet the criteria for approval. Where the course has been previously approved we may also decide to withdraw approval.

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

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

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

Summary of Inspection

15. The University of Gloucestershire was inspected as part of the Social Work England reapproval cycle; whereby all course providers with qualifying social work courses will be inspected against the new Education and Training Standards 2021.

Inspection ID	URG1
Course provider	University of Gloucestershire
Validating body (if different)	N/A
Course inspected	BSc (Hons) Social Work BSc (Hons) Social Work (Yeovil)
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	50 for BSc (Hons) Social Work 30 for BSc (Hons) Social Work (Yeovil)
Date of inspection	21/02/2023 – 24/02/2023
Inspection team	Caroline Reynolds - Education Quality Assurance Officer Gill Nixon - Education Quality Assurance Operations Manager Bradley Allen - Lay Inspector Gary Dicken - Registrant Inspector
Inspector recommendation	Approval with conditions
Approval outcome	Approval with conditions

Language

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

Inspection

17. A remote inspection took place from 21/02/2023 to 24/02/2023. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, placement providers, and people with lived experience of social work.

18. These meetings formed the basis of the inspection plan, agreed with the education provider ahead of inspection. 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 several student reps from the course who were at different stages of their study. This included one student from Yeovil and several students from Gloucestershire. Discussions included access to support services within the university and at the Yeovil campus, experience of teaching, learning and assessment including receiving meaningful feedback on their progression and performance, placement experiences, reflection on the admissions process, academic support, input into course improvements, and preparedness for practice.

Meetings with course staff and senior management

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members including the Vice Chancellor, head of the School of Health and Social Care, the strategic lead for quality and student experience, academic staff from the social work course team including the programme and course leads and senior lecturers, and the senior admissions officer for health and social care.

Meeting with support services

22. The inspection team met with staff involved in providing support services, including library, student wellbeing, counselling, finance, student advice and guidance.

Meeting with practice-based learning and placement provision staff

23. The inspection team met with staff involved in practice-based learning and placement provision. Discussions included placement matching, placement auditing, the involvement of placement providers in the design of simulated practice scenarios, procedures for resolving any placement breakdowns, and training for practice educators.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

24. The inspection team met with a number of people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in the social work course. Discussions included their involvement in the admissions processes, access to training and support, and how their feedback is incorporated into course design.

Meetings with external stakeholders

25. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including Gloucestershire County Council Children's and Adult's Services, Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust, and Somerset County Council Adult and Children's Social Care. Discussions included their involvement in admissions, audit of placement provision, involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of the course, and workforce planning.

Findings

26. 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

27. Through the review of extensive information provided by the university prior to the inspection and throughout the meetings held with students and staff involved in the admissions process, the inspection team were able to understand the holistic admissions assessment process. The university outlined their pandemic process and their subsequent return to face-to-face interviews. The interview process consists of three key stages, one of which includes observed group work. The inspection team were satisfied that the university has a robust, holistic and comprehensive approach to entry onto the course and therefore agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

28. The inspection team were able to review documentary evidence prior to the inspection including the university's Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy 2020. The meetings held with admissions and course staff provided further confirmation that prior relevant experience is assessed and considered. Mature candidates who do not meet the entry requirements are viewed on a case-by-case basis, and they are required to complete a mature candidate admissions essay. The inspection team were satisfied that the university demonstrates consideration of applicants' prior relevant experience during the admissions process and therefore agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

29. The Admissions Procedures 2022 and programme specification provided by the university demonstrates that a sufficient number and range of people are involved in interview panels. The inspection team met with several placement partners, practice educators and people with lived experience of social work, who further evidenced their involvement in the admissions process, and corroborated that reasonable adjustments are made for those candidates who cannot attend interviews in person. During the meetings with admissions and course staff, the inspection team heard about the contingency plan that is in place in the event that interview panel members are unable to attend. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

30. The university submitted evidence which showed the clear requirement for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), health statements and references within the admissions procedure. This was further evidenced by information on the university's website and within the presentation that is given during interview days. The risk assessment procedure is clear if an applicant provides evidence of previous convictions or other reasons for possible disqualification. The inspection team were satisfied that the university has a clear process for assessing the suitability of a candidate in their conduct, health and character and criminal conviction checks. Therefore, the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

31. The inspection team reviewed the university's admissions procedure prior to the inspection. This document references the reasonable adjustments made for students when attending interviews such as additional time for dyslexia applicants. The university's procedure clearly states that the interview process is inclusive and the access and participation plan provides further evidence of the university's recruitment activity in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. During the meetings with placement partners and people with lived experience of social work, it was clear that dialogue takes place regarding the interview process. Equality, diversity and inclusion training is provided to staff members involved in the interview process. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

32. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 1.5. We recommend that the education provider consider equality, diversity and inclusion training for non-staff members who are involved in the interview process. Further details of the recommendation can be found in the [recommendations section](#) of this report.

Standard 1.6

33. The inspection team were assured that applicants are provided with information to make an informed choice. Prospective applicants can view information on the university's website, and information is provided on open days, interview days and taster days. The pre-application information states the role of Social Work England and the professional regulations. During the meeting with students, the inspection team heard how they had reviewed different sources of information which enabled them to make an informed decision. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

34. The inspection team concluded that the university had appropriate plans in place to ensure statutory placement requirements were met. The documentary evidence submitted demonstrated that the mandatory skills days are planned in over the three years of the course. These included up to 32 skills days, 70 days in placement during year two and 100 days in placement in year three. It was evidenced that attendance on skills days are

recorded and there is a process in place for students to catch up if days are missed. The course team, placement team, placement partners and practice educators demonstrated the collaborative approach to the placement provision, the processes undertaken and the types of contrasting placement settings. This was further evidenced in the meeting with students.

35. From reviewing the evidence provided and the information gathered through the inspection meetings, the inspection team felt confident that students were well prepared for placement. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.2

36. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were provided with evidence which demonstrated the wide range of statutory, private, voluntary and independent sector placement opportunities which met the professional standards. During meetings with the course and placement teams and practice educators, the placement content and practice learning agreement were explored.

37. The inspectors were able to hear that there is a matching process in place for students who declare an interest in a particular area, and there are a sufficient number of placement opportunities available. It was further evidenced that placement breakdown contingencies are in place. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

38. The university provided a range of documentation prior to the inspection including the first and final practice placement handbooks. The handbooks outline the expectations, roles and responsibilities of students, the practice educator, placement supervisor and the link tutor. The practice learning agreement outlines what students should expect to receive during their induction and this was further explored during discussions with the placement team and the practice educators. The inspection team heard from students who spoke of their positive placement induction experiences. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

39. The practice placement handbooks provided to the inspectors stipulate the level of responsibility that a student should be given on placement. The placement application form is used to match the student with a placement, and this is signed by the link tutor following consultation. A pre-placement interview is also carried out. Practice educators confirmed the process and discussed the learning development plan.

40. The inspectors heard that students receive good learning experiences appropriate for their stage of education and training, and they are supervised appropriately and regularly to ensure their safety and the safety of people with lived experience of social work. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

41. The inspection team reviewed the admissions process and the checks carried out for the DBS, together with the checks to assess each student's preparedness to safely undertake

practice learning. The inspection team heard that skills day are spread out, and that content is pertinent to the preparation for practice. Sessions on simulated practice are provided in years five and six and the university have made significant investments in new practice environments at Yeovil. In the meeting with students they corroborated that skills days and the simulated practice sessions prepared them for difficult situations in practice. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

42. During to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the practice educator standard CV template. This document records the practice educator qualifications, training, experience and registration information. Once completed these individual documents are held on a SharePoint site which is overseen by the placement quality and allocations manager. At the time of the inspection this post was vacant and the university were unable to demonstrate how they were providing full oversight of all practice educator's registration and continued CPD in the absence of a postholder. The inspectors heard how placement providers are required to confirm the qualifications of offsite practice educators and the Practice Education Professional Standards (PEPS) training is delivered by a coach in practice from the university.

43. 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 [conditions table](#).

Standard 2.7

44. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the Student's Charter and the practice placement handbooks which detail the guidance on whistleblowing and the complaints and appeals procedure. During the meeting with students, they stated they were given allocated time to read through the information, they understood how to raise concerns and they felt supported in doing so. In the meeting with placement partners and practice educators they confirmed that they discuss policies and processes with students. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

45. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence which gave an overview of the governance processes across the university including the lines of responsibility, accountability, the strategic plan and financial forecasts. During the inspection a presentation was given by the senior leadership team, this set out the context of the social work programme within the overall university course provision.

46. The inspection team heard that the university has acquired the former Debenhams building to house the School of Health and Social Care. The university plans to build a community house within the building which will simulate different environments to enable students to experience what it is like to go into people's homes. The inspection team also heard of the investment at Yeovil with the enhanced practice based learning environments.

47. The inspection team reviewed the CVs of the course leaders who are social work qualified. They are responsible for the day to day operation of the course and the preparation of an annual course evaluation report. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

48. Prior to the inspection, the university provided an overview of the placement provision, and the process for managing agreements with placement providers. The practice placement handbooks provided to the inspection team detailed the process and the contingencies in the event of practice placement difficulties and breakdowns. From further reviewing the evidence, the inspection team learnt that each placement provider signs a Memorandum of Agreement which shows the provision of education and training.

49. During the inspection, discussions with the placement team and the placement partners provided evidence that there are consents and safeguards in place. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

50. Prior to the inspection, the university provided the Memorandum of Agreement which evidences the commitment requirement for placement providers. This includes the necessary policies and procedures in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk. It was further evidenced that placement learning agreement checks are undertaken. During discussions with students, placement partners, and placement staff, students who are experiencing problems whilst on placement are quickly responded to and there are support mechanisms in place. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

51. Documentation provided to the inspection team showed that placement partners attend the university's Quarterly Programme Management Committee. This committee reviews and evaluates the course content and course delivery. The Selection and Access Committee meeting notes showed the involvement of placement partners within the admissions, recruitment and selection process.

52. The Guest Speakers Detailed Module Input 2022-23 document provided to the inspection team showed the involvement of many stakeholders in the delivery of course content. The inspection team heard from placement partners regarding their involvement in the course, and this included the management and monitoring elements. The allocation of practice educators was well evidenced, and in the meeting with placement partners they spoke of their strong partnerships with the university. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

53. As stated in Standard 3.4, the inspection team reviewed the Quarterly Programme Management Committee minutes and the Selection and Access Committee meeting notes which showed the range of membership and the course discussions. These minutes demonstrate that placement partners, people with lived experience of social work and students input into the regular and effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the course. The inspection team reviewed the QAPL which showed the review mechanisms of placements, and the Student Voice and Student Experience Monitoring Meeting provides feedback into the evaluation systems within the university. The Access and Participation Plan also reviewed by the inspection team, shows the detailed and effective monitoring and evaluation of recruitment activity.

54. In the meetings held with students, people with lived experience of social work, placement partners and practice educators they confirmed their involvement in the regular and effective course monitoring, evaluation and improvement activities. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

55. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors reviewed documentation which showed that the lead for health and social care placements and the strategic lead for partnerships and projects oversee the recruitment on all the social work courses, to ensure that the number of students accepted onto the course does not exceed the placement capacity. The Review of Admissions Social Work PowerPoint presentation provided to the inspection team showed the in-depth analysis of applications, admissions and targets.

56. The inspection team heard from senior managers who clearly outlined that they were not looking to extend the social work provision. Meetings with placement partners and the course team corroborated that workforce needs are fed back to the university. The current provision aligns with the capacity for placements within Gloucestershire and Yeovil. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

57. The inspection team reviewed the University of Gloucestershire's and the University of Gloucestershire's (Yeovil) academic course leaders CVs, which confirmed current registration with Social Work England and the possession of appropriate qualifications. Each academic course leads work in collaboration across the two campuses. The inspection team agreed that based on the documentary evidence and from discussions with the senior management team that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

58. Prior to the inspection the inspectors reviewed the CVs of current staff within the course team. The inspection team heard and read about the range of experiences and qualifications held including research areas and specialisms, and two PhD students have been funded by the School. The inspection team also heard that student numbers are carefully matched with the capacity of the teaching team as well as practice placements.

59. At the time of the inspection, there was an academic staff vacancy at Yeovil, and the course team outlined that short term contingency plans were in place. The inspection team heard how teaching is mirrored across Gloucestershire and Yeovil, including delivery of the same modules at the same time, and live streaming of sessions between campuses.

60. The inspection team learnt that the university's academic development unit offer comprehensive Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities to ensure that academic staff are supported to fulfil their professional and teaching roles. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

61. During the inspection, the inspection team were given a demonstration of the course portal and heard about the data analysis that is carried out, including the analysis on equality and diversity data. The course team outlined that the award board looks at the achievement data, including the attainment gaps and diversity. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

62. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 3.9. We recommend that the course team review their evaluation and analysis process to see if enhancements could be made, including how they could further evaluate the data, and further explore links with placement partners to inform students' performance, progression and outcomes. Further details of the recommendation can be found in the [recommendations section](#) of this report.

Standard 3.10

63. Prior to the inspection, the university provided information about the Academic Development Unit (ADU) which offers comprehensive CPD opportunities to ensure that academic staff are supported to fulfil their professional and teaching roles. Several course members were funded to attend the JSWEC Social Work Education and Research Annual Conference in 2022 which aided lecturers practice currency, and learnings gained included contextual safeguarding and contemporary social work practice. The University of Gloucestershire's Workload Allocation Model (WAM) 2022-23 provided to the inspection team detailed the staff development activities, including research and scholarly activities, and the expectations and time allocations for academic staff.

64. During the meeting with the course team, academic staff spoke of their social work practice, some of which is undertaken in a voluntary capacity. The inspection team heard how external learnings are brought back and incorporated into course design. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

65. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were provided with the social work programme specification and the course assessment strategy which outline the course content and modes of delivery, in addition to assessment methodologies, learning outcomes and the links to the professional standards. The course handbook also provided to the

inspection team referenced the relevant guidance and frameworks and highlights that Social Work England's professional standards must be adhered to and demonstrated throughout the course of study.

66. Information regarding the simulated practice scenarios shows how students are prepared for different types of practice, including the ethically complex situation students will experience as professional social workers. The practice skills days documentation, which was reviewed by the inspection team shows the level of opportunities students receive.

67. During the meeting with students they emphasised that Social Work England standards were clearly laid out to them, and they were able to identify key elements of the course that prepared them for professional practice including the recall of practice skills days and simulated practice scenarios. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

68. The Quarterly Programme Management Committee meeting minutes and the Validation and Social Work England Approval meeting minutes provided to the inspection team indicate the involvement of placement partners, placement educators and people with lived experience of social work in the design, development and review of the curriculum and the admissions process. The Guest Speakers Detailed Module Input 2022-23 document and the simulated practice scenario information also provided to the inspection team showed their levels of involvement.

69. During meetings with the inspection team placement partners, practice educators and people with lived experiences corroborated their collaborative involvement in the course, and they outlined the ways in which their views were being listened to. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

70. Documentation provided by the university prior to the inspection demonstrated that the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are included throughout the course from the admissions process through to curriculum content, assessment process, including the appeals and moderation processes.

71. The widening participation initiative shows how the university is aiming to increase the spectrum of access across the community, and the action to widen the diversity of academic staff and to embrace the student mental health charter project indicate an awareness to act on the university's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

72. During the meeting with students they spoke of how they felt supported right from the start of the admissions process, and this carried on throughout the course and during their placements. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

73. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the Quarterly Programme Management Committee meeting minutes, also referenced in Standards 3.4, 3.5 and 4.2. This meeting is attended by placement partners and people with lived experience of social work; they provide input into live issues which are fed into course developments. The

inspection team heard how guest speakers attend sessions and talk about their experiences and discuss live issues with students. Several academic staff are actively involved in practice and research, and learnings are brought back into the course. Students are also encouraged to bring in new ideas from their practice placement, and these are incorporated into the course content. Consequently, the inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

74. Prior to the inspection, documentation provided to the inspection team explained the integration of theory and practice into the course. This was clearly evidenced throughout the course structure, course design and module descriptors. Students explained how they receive evidence-based practice during their skills days and practice placements. Further confirmation came from the meeting with practice educators, who confirmed the setting of clear expectations of students in making links between theory and practice. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

75. The inspection team were provided with an explanation of the interdisciplinary learning opportunities on the course, which included level 4 skills days, level 5 simulation and interprofessional skills day, level 6 simulation and interprofessional days and two practice placements totalling 170 days. These referenced the opportunities for interprofessional learning where students from multiple disciplines take part together in a range of learning activities such as the moot court and ward settings, as well as opportunities for reflections and roleplay activities.

76. The inspection team explored the relationship between Gloucestershire and Yeovil, and the senior management team outlined the additional funding for future activities at Yeovil which includes enhanced multi-disciplinary practice environments. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

77. The inspection team were informed that the number of hours allocated to structured learning is governed by the university's academic regulations and this is a standard split between classroom hours and independent study. The inspection team were able to review the social work programme specification and the social work course handbook, both of which outline the number of hours spent in structured learning. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

78. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were able to review several documents including the course assessment strategy 2022-23 which shows the growing level of complexity and depth of understanding that is developed from years 4 to 6. The course assessment scrutiny panel process and the practice assessment panel guidance show the robustness, reliability and validity of the assessments. Within the social work programme specification and course handbook, it is clear that passing all modules each year is mandatory before progression can continue to the next level. The university informed the inspection team that most students on the course graduate with 2:1 or above.

79. During the meeting with students they highlighted their satisfaction with the variety of their assessments. They also outlined the academic and practice-based learning knowledge and skills they have developed in order to meet the professional standards. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

80. The inspection team were provided with the social work programme specification and the module descriptors which indicate that the learning opportunities and assessments in each year's content are linked to the expectations of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) benchmarks, and these relate to the level of understanding required by students at the end of each year. The course assessment strategy also provided to the inspection team maps the assessments against the module learning outcomes.

81. During the meeting with students, one student explained how the course team had made an adjustment to an assessment deadline following student feedback, and during the meeting with placement providers they highlighted their input into assessments timescales. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

82. Inspectors were able to review the External Examiner reports which referenced good practice regarding feedback processes, and the course team outlined that students receive ongoing feedback on formative and summative assessments and work during the duration of their study. Students were complementary regarding the feedback they received; they stated that it was timely, meaningful, strength based and constructive, and this enabled all students including those who are performing well to help them further improve their marks. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

83. The inspection team were provided with the CVs of staff within the course team and staff involved in assessment, which provided satisfaction that appropriate expertise, qualifications and experience were held. The External Examiner is appointed in line with the University External Examiner Policy. There are module boards to ensure consistency of marking and there is a double marking system in place. The university ensures that practice educators are appropriately qualified and experienced to assess students within practice-based settings. The inspectors were in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

84. Inspectors were able to review documentation which outlined that during practice placements there are direct observations of practice at regular intervals, and feedback is supplied by practice educators and people with lived experience; this enables students to demonstrate their progression through their learning objectives. Students are directly observed twice on their 70-day practice placement, and three times on their 100-day practice placement. The social work programme specification makes it clear that students cannot progress onto the next level of study without having passed all modules on their

current level. During the inspection, the inspectors explored the contingencies that are in place if students miss their practice placements.

85. The inspectors reviewed the Practice Assessment Panel (PAP) guidance which monitors the standards of completed practice portfolios. The Examination Board approves assessment grades and passes these through the External Examiner for further monitoring. The Assessment Scrutiny Process ensures that the assessment strategy and tasks are in line with the course assessment strategy. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

86. During the meetings with students and practice educators, the inspectors heard that students were able to apply skills of critical analysis and knowledge of research and articulated an ability to apply evidence in practice. The inspectors were able to review the social work programme specification and module descriptors which showed that evidence informed practice is a major component of the course, evidenced particularly in the professional knowledge and dissertation modules. The practice placements evidenced themes of evidence based practice being key to the development of becoming a professional social worker. The inspectors were in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

87. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors reviewed multiple documents including the Student Welfare Guide, and student support website information which provided evidence of a comprehensive series of support services covering education and pastoral support. During meetings with the course team they provided confirmation that both education and pastoral support services are in place at Gloucestershire and Yeovil.

88. During the inspection, the inspection team met with staff responsible for the administration and delivery of support resources including student wellbeing, counselling services, student advice and guidance, adult learning and library services. The inspectors heard about the methods of access, and availability of services including 24/7 library opening times and out of hours student wellbeing appointments. The inspectors were in agreement that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

89. Evidence provided to the inspection team outlined the provision of a personal academic tutor for all students, which begins at the start of the course. The course handbook explains the role of the personal tutor and the link tutor. The personal tutor webpage contains useful information for students and the tutor portal allows personal tutors to monitor attendance, engagement, assessment submissions and outcomes, in addition to library usage. In the meeting with students, they were complementary about their personal tutors and link tutors, and their availability for meeting outside of planned meetings. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

90. The university demonstrated how suitability of students' conduct, character and health is part of the admissions process, and subsequent review at the start of each academic year. All students are required to complete a DBS before enrolment and before the start of each placement, and the university has a Professional Suitability and Fitness to Practice Procedure in place. The inspectors reviewed the practice placement handbooks which outline the fitness to practice procedures and students must sign a declaration to adhere to Social Work England's professional standards. Throughout the processes, reasonable adjustments are taken into account.

91. Students confirmed that this process is followed, and they recalled what they would need to do if there was a change to their circumstances. Practice educators confirmed that they can refer concerns about students whilst on placement to the university. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

92. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the comprehensive social work student learning contract. This clearly sets out the standards expected of students throughout the course. The contract ensures that students gain support and/or have relevant adjustments in place for any disabilities that might impact their progress throughout the course, these adjustments are also available during the admissions interview process.

93. Prior to and during the inspection, the inspectors heard about the range of the student support services at Gloucestershire and Yeovil, and the level of support available was corroborated by students during the inspection. For those students in need, a learning support plan is in place which follows the student throughout the course, including their practice placements. Placement partners and practice educators that were present during the inspection confirmed that reasonable adjustments are considered, and students are supported whilst on placement. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

94. The inspection team reviewed comprehensive information provided by the university in relation to information about the curriculum, practice placements, assessments and transition to registered social worker, including information of the required CPD. Information is included within open days and the interview process, the social work programme specification, course handbooks, and practice placement handbooks. There is clear information on the requirements for progression and post qualifying eligibility to register with Social Work England.

95. During one of the placement modules, employers speak with level six students to inform them about their Assisted and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and what to expect in relation to ongoing CPD. The Your Future Plan webpages and documentation prepared students for post qualifying and CPD activities. Students and placement partners corroborated the amount of information that is readily available. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.6

96. Inspectors were able to review extensive documentation which contained information about parts of the course where attendance is mandatory. Information is included within open day and interview days presentations and documentation, induction timetables, the social work programme specification, course handbook, practice placement handbooks and the course assessment strategy. The information details how attendance is monitored and sets out the expectations of students.

97. During meetings with the course and practice placement teams and practice educators, inspectors were given an oversight of the processes if students miss practice placements or skills days. ARC is used to monitor attendance on placement and weekly timesheets are signed by practice educators. In the meeting with students, they were clear about what was required of them. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

98. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were provided with the course handbook and given an example of anonymised feedback. The marking criteria for each year is included within the handbook and this is used in annotated form to provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each assignment. The feedback process is also included in the course assessment strategy 2022-23.

99. The meeting with students provided further insight. Students felt they received meaningful timely feedback, they were aware of the process, and overall they spoke of the value of the feedback they received. Therefore, the inspectors agreed this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

100. The university provided information to the inspection team about the academic appeals process available to students, including a case study of an academic appeal which detailed the process. The process is outlined on the university's website and in the course handbook. In the meetings with students during the inspection, they were aware of the appeals process and knew where to find the information. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

101. As the qualifying courses are BSc (Hons) Social Work and BSc (Hons) Social Work (Yeovil), the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

102. The inspection team recommend that the course be approved with one condition. This will be monitored for completion.

Conditions

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

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

	Standard not currently met	Condition	Date for submission of evidence	Link
1	2.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates the oversight of practice educators, and the regular review of their knowledge, skills and experience.	23 rd July 2023	Paragraph 42

Recommendations

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

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	1.5	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider implementing equality, diversity and inclusion training for non-staff members who sit on interview panels, including people with lived experience of social work.	Paragraph 31
2	3.9	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider reviewing their evaluation and analysis process to see if enhancements could be made, including how they could further evaluate the data, and further explore links with placement partners to inform students' performance, progression and outcomes.	Paragraph 61

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
Admissions			
1.1 Confirm on entry to the course, via a holistic/multi-dimensional assessment process, that applicants: i. have the potential to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards ii. can demonstrate that they have a good command of English iii. have the capability to meet academic standards; and iv. have the capability to use information and communication technology (ICT) methods and techniques to achieve course outcomes.	☒	☐	☐
1.2 Ensure that applicants' prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions processes.	☒	☐	☐
1.3 Ensure that employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work are involved in admissions processes.	☒	☐	☐
1.4 Ensure that the admissions processes assess the suitability of applicants, including in relation to their conduct, health and character. This includes criminal conviction checks.	☒	☐	☐
1.5 Ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.	☒	☐	☒
1.6 Ensure that the admissions process gives applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on a course. This will include information about the professional standards, research interests and placement opportunities.	☒	☐	☐
Learning environment			

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

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

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
with relevant specialist subject knowledge and expertise, to deliver an effective course.			
3.9 Evaluate information about students' performance, progression and outcomes, such as the results of exams and assessments, by collecting, analysing and using student data, including data on equality and diversity.	☒	☐	☒
3.10 Ensure that educators are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice.	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum and assessment			
4.1 Ensure that the content, structure and delivery of the training is in accordance with relevant guidance and frameworks and is designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards.	☒	☐	☐
4.2 Ensure that the views of employers, practitioners and people with lived experience of social work are incorporated into the design, 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.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
4.7 Ensure that the number of hours spent in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator is sufficient to ensure that students meet the required level of competence.	☒	☐	☐
4.8 Ensure that the assessment strategy and design demonstrate that the assessments are robust, fair, reliable and valid, and that those who successfully complete the course have developed the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards.	☒	☐	☐
4.9 Ensure that assessments are mapped to the curriculum and are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression through the course.	☒	☐	☐
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:	☒	☐	☐

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

Regulator decision

Approved with conditions.

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

1. 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](#).
2. A review of the conditions evidence will be undertaken and recommendations will be made to Social Work England's decision maker.
3. This section of the report will be completed when the conditions review is completed.

	Standard not met	Condition	Recommendation
1	2.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates the oversight of practice educators, and the regular review of their knowledge, skills and experience.	Condition met.

Findings

4. The conditions review was undertaken as a result of the conditions set during the course approval as outlined in the original inspection report above.
5. The course provider has supplied documentary evidence which demonstrates that a process is in place for the oversight of PEs registration, qualifications and currency. The university has appointed a replacement placements quality and allocations manager for social work and social care. The role holder ensures full oversight of the practice placement provision. An MS Teams site has been set up which houses an excel spreadsheet of independent PEs who are qualified social workers that placement providers can engage with to assess and support students whilst on placement. The spreadsheet includes the registration details, qualifications and engagement with CPD training offered by the university. The data collection supports the university to upskill PEs by identifying gaps and the requirements for refresher training. The system ensures there is a robust mapping and matching of PEs to students/placement needs. The placements quality and allocations manager maintains oversight of electronic subfolders for each independent PE. This includes their CV, registration form, correspondence, and supporting evidence of training and specialisms. The placements quality and allocations manager contacts PEs to update their profiles on a regular and timely basis.
6. The university runs annual CPD sessions aimed at PEs and practice supervisors. These sessions also provide the opportunity to clarify the role that PEs and practice supervisors play within the assessment process, and to highlight what has changed in the support and assessment processes to ensure contemporaneous knowledge in practice. The university

stated that in the future, these sessions will be recorded and they will be available for PEs and practice supervisors to view as an ongoing training resource.

7. Placement quality assurance annual reviews have been put in place to reflect on how placement processes and systems have worked throughout the year. These reviews include placement partners. The placement quality and allocations manager carries out an annual survey to gain the views of placement providers, this has been designed to gain insight into partner agency systems regulating the quality of their PEs, update on how appropriate CPD is offered to PEs and practice supervisors, how their performance is reviewed, how learning is documented and how issues are addressed.

8. The university highlighted that they will offer additional support and advice to placement partners to ensure continuous improvement and high quality in practice learning environments, and share learnings through various forums including the fortnightly placement partner catch up meetings.

9. Following the review of the documentary evidence submitted, the inspection team are satisfied that the conditions set against the approval of the BSc (Hons) Social Work and BSc (Hons) Social Work (Yeovil) is met.

Regulator decision

Conditions met.