



Inspection Report

Course provider: TEC Partnership – Grimsby Institute for Further and Higher Education

Course approval: BA (Hons) Social Work and BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship

Inspection dates: 5th to 8th August 2025

Report date:	19/09/2025
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	07/11/2025
Date conditions met and approved:	

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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. Course details: The TEC Partnership - Grimsby Institute for Further and Higher Education (GIFHE) wish to run a 3-year BA (Hons) Social Work and a 3-year BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship.

Inspection ID	TECP CPP503 and CPP507
Course provider	TEC Partnership - Grimsby Institute for Further and Higher Education (GIFHE)
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	BA (Hons) Social Work and BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship
Mode of Study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	10 for the BA (Hons) Social Work 12 for the BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship
Proposed first intake	September 2026
Date of inspection	5 to 8 August 2025
Inspection team	Caroline Reynolds, Education Quality Assurance Officer Dr Rebecca Khanna, Lay Inspector Michael Isles, Registrant Inspector Katie Parkin, Education Quality Assurance Officer - observing
Inspector recommendation	Approved with conditions
Approval outcome	Approved with conditions

Language

16. In this document we describe the TEC Partnership or the Grimsby Institute for Further and Higher Education, or the 'University Centre Grimsby' as 'the education provider', 'the course provider', 'the organisation' or 'the provider' and we describe the BA (Hons) Social Work and the BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship as 'the courses', 'the programmes' or the 'apprenticeship' where relevant.

Inspection

17. An onsite inspection took place from 5th to 8th August 2025 at the University Centre Grimsby where the education provider is based. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students from other programmes, 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 one current student from the FdA Children Young People and Families course and two former students. One alum was from the BSc Psychology course, this individual was a student rep and president of the student Senate, and the other alum was from the FdED Early Childhood Studies programme. Discussions included their experiences of the admissions and selection processes, their involvement in the monitoring, evaluation and improvement of their courses, multidisciplinary learning and assessments.

Meetings with course provider staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with a number of staff members including senior management. This included the CEO for the TEC Partnership, the HE Principal, the Chief Executive & Training Officer, the Head of Area for STEM & Education, the HE Academic Registrar, the Programme Leader for Social Work, the Head of Staff & Development, the Group Executive and Director of Apprenticeships, several Programme Leaders for other programmes, the Head of Admissions, the Employment Engagement Manager, the HE Skills & Employability Trainer and the Director of Learner Services.

22. Discussions focused on the strategic and operational oversight of these new programmes, and the ongoing participation and development of these courses, including quality assurance, practice-based learning and student support services.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

23. The inspection team met with two people with lived experience of social work. Discussions included their involvement in the development of these new programmes, including the continuation of their ongoing involvement, and support that they envisaged being offered.

Meetings with external stakeholders

24. The inspection team met with representatives from employer partners and Practice Educators, this included representatives from North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC) Adults Social Care Services, NELC Children's Social Care Service, and Friendship at Homes. Prior to the inspection, written feedback was also provided by an Adults Principal Social Worker at North East Lincolnshire Council.

Findings

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

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

26. Comprehensive documentary evidence was reviewed prior to the inspection; this included an admissions flowchart for both programmes which also highlighted the liaison between the education provider and employers in relation to the apprenticeship programme. The entry requirements for both programmes were clearly stated on the course provider validation documentation.

27. For the BA (Hons) Social Work, entry is via UCAS or direct application to the GIFHE. For the apprenticeship programme documentary evidence identified that applicants apply through their employer organisation, and their application is jointly assessed by the employer and the course provider. During the inspection the inspection team explored the processes in place for assessing the capabilities and skills of apprenticeship applicants. The inspectors heard that applicants must have a contract of employment with their employer which covers the full duration of the apprenticeship, and an apprenticeship agreement.

28. Applicants take part in a practical task; a 10-minute presentation using ICT. The assessment process also comprises a panel interview and a written exercise. These activities further evidence the applicant's command of English and suitability for the programmes, including their capability to meet academic requirements.

29. The inspection team reviewed the application form and the criteria for scoring. The inspectors were informed that the HE pre-interview questionnaire is used alongside the

application form as a decision-making tool. The interview questions are mapped to the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).

30. An admissions decision form is completed by the interview panel which confirms the outcome and the decision made, this is then submitted to the enrolment team/Learner Services.

31. During the meeting with the student and alumni, they provided positive feedback on their application experiences including the support that was provided to them.

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

Standard 1.2

33. The inspection team heard that applicants demonstrate their suitability and prior experience within the application form and during their interview. The admissions interview questions were reviewed, these showed that the questions allow candidates to highlight their relevant experience. It was clear within the documentary evidence submission that decision making is captured using a scoring criteria within the marking rubric.

34. For the apprenticeship programme, the inspection team were informed that applicants should have a period of relevant experience, as determined by their employer offering the apprenticeship. During the inspection, employers stated that they normally consider 12 months as relevant prior experience.

35. During the meetings with staff and stakeholders, the inspectors questioned how the consistency and transparency of the consideration of prior relevant experience for both programmes would be considered, given that there is no set guidance/criteria for panel members.

36. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

37. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 1.2. The detail of the recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard 1.3

38. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the Stakeholder Engagement Handbook which sets out how employers, placement providers and individuals with lived experience of social work will form part of the interview panels and contribute to the decision-making process of the applicant's suitability for both programmes.

39. The admissions to course form contains the interview questions and practical task information, and this is completed by the interview panel members to evidence the

applicant's suitability for entry onto these programmes. This document records the names and roles of panel members, and this is signed by a course provider representative.

40. Due to the emergent nature of the development of a list of stakeholders who will be part of the interview panel for the apprenticeship programme, the inspection team further raised questions regarding this during the inspection. Admissions staff provided assurance that stakeholder advisory panel group members would be called upon to further develop the interview process and take part in interview panels to ensure suitable apprentices are selected.

41. During the inspection meetings, the inspection team heard more about how employers and people with lived experience of social work will be briefed and supported to participate in the admissions and selection processes. Employers commented about the open and transparent information provided by the course provider, and they felt fully assured they would participate in selection activities.

42. The inspection team were satisfied that employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work will be involved in admissions processes and agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

43. Prior to the inspection, the course provider stated that the admissions processes to assess the suitability of applicants, including in relation to their conduct, health and character, including criminal conviction checks is evidenced through the application form, and interview questions.

44. The pre-interview questions require applicants to declare any criminal convictions and applicants are mandated to disclose any short or long term physical or mental health conditions.

45. At the point of application an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check of each applicant is completed. The inspectors heard that applicants are required to register for the online update service. In the event that an applicant declares a criminal conviction or caution, they are contacted by Safeguarding Learning Services to obtain further information. During this period the enrolment process and application is halted until confirmation and reassurance is provided via the safeguarding team that the application can continue.

46. If an applicant declares learning or other health-related needs, an assessment is carried out to look at what support and reasonable adjustments can be made to support the applicant in meeting the academic and placement requirements. This

information is captured through the HE Advanced Screening Form which was reviewed by the inspection team.

47. The inspectors reviewed the Higher Education Terms and Conditions which is sent out to applicants during the application process, this sets out contractual information including disability and reasonable adjustments, the requirement for applicants on professional courses to obtain an enhanced DBS, and a satisfactory Occupational Health report.

48. The inspectors reviewed the course providers Fitness to Study Policy which provides details around the code of practice followed should there be any concerns around applicants and students' fitness to study.

49. During the onsite meetings, the inspection team explored the initial and continuing assessment of applicants conduct and character such as unprofessional conduct, including the capturing and recording of this information. There was no identifiable documentation provided for this within the documentary evidence submission.

50. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 1.4 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard 1.5

51. As referenced within standard 1.4, the inspection team reviewed the Higher Education Terms and Conditions which highlights the course provider's commitment to make reasonable adjustments and to provide an inclusive and accessible learning agreement.

52. The inspection team reviewed the course provider's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy which is monitored by the EDI Committee, and local responsibility is held at faculty level.

53. During the inspection, staff outlined their commitment to improve EDI during recruitment activities at course level, and it was clear from discussions with stakeholders and the course provider that recruitment will be focused on the local region.

54. The inspectors heard that all staff are provided with EDI training including refreshers in all areas of work including recruitment, and during the inspection the oversight of the

provision and monitoring of training was further explored. The inspectors heard about the 'one big thing' which is a training event that takes place for all staff.

55. During the meeting with the student and alumni, they provided examples of physical health challenges, and the support that the education provider put in place during the application process. They spoke positively about the screening processes and support with applying for disability services.

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

Standard 1.6

57. Information provided by the course provider confirmed that applicants will have access to the provider's prospectus together with further information about studying in higher education.

58. Course provider staff explained that that intention is for details of both programmes to be available on their website and the copy would be reviewed in order to fulfil the Competitive Market Authority (CMA) requirements in line with consumer protection. The inspection team reviewed further additional evidence showing example screenshots setting out what the website information could look like.

59. The course handbooks were reviewed by the inspection team. These set out the module requirements, placement information, and professional requirements. The inspectors heard that handbooks are to be made available to applicants.

60. It was clear that in addition to the information not yet made available to applicants in order for them to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on either of these programmes, there was also essential information missing from both the website and course handbooks together with misleading statements regarding eligibility to apply for Social Work England registration.

61. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 1.6 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 two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

62. Comprehensive information was submitted by the course provider in relation to practice learning. Within the programme validation documentation, it was evidenced that students on both programmes will spend 200 days in practice placement learning, 70-days on placement one which would take place within the first semester of year two, and 100-days on placement two which would take place within the second semester during year three. This would be supported by 30 critical skills days referred to as Skills for Practice which are embedded into both programmes.

63. For the apprenticeship programme, the inspectors heard that students would have two contrasting placements within their own organisation where possible, with at least one taking place within a statutory setting, and both placements would take place in a different area to where they currently work.

64. Information was provided in relation to the four statutory placement providers namely North East Lincolnshire Children's Services, North East Lincolnshire Adult Services, North Lincolnshire Children's Services and North Lincolnshire Adult Services, and the wide variety of private, voluntary and independent (PVI) placement partners with whom the education provider has built connections. During the inspection, employers confirmed their understanding of placement requirements.

65. The inspectors met with members of the placement team who have a responsibility for sourcing placements. They outlined their approach including allocation methods, skills scan and preplacement profiles which students completed in order to identify different placement opportunities.

66. The inspectors reviewed the practice placement handbook which sets out the requirements for the 200 days, and the inspectors were assured that Quality Assurance Practice Learning (QAPL) processes were in place to assess and quality assure the suitability of all placements for both programmes.

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

Standard 2.2

68. As referenced within standard 2.1, the QAPL is the intended method for auditing placements to ensure they meet the professional standards. All new placements would be audited and reviewed on an annual basis, and this will be overseen by a qualified social worker within the academic team to ensure they align with the professional requirements.

69. The inspectors reviewed a range of documentary evidence including the practice placement handbook, the practice placement information record, service user feedback forms and supervision records provided by the course provider.

70. Students on both programmes would complete a portfolio of evidence demonstrating how they are meeting the professional standards and the PCF. The inspectors heard that students will be supported by Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) level 2 qualified practice educators, and their allocated placement tutor will monitor and evaluate the quality of their learning opportunities on a least three occasions; at the learning agreement, midway and end of placement meetings.

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

Standard 2.3

72. As referenced within standard 2.2, the placement information document reviewed by the inspection team sets out the induction arrangements/plan, supervision, the ongoing support arrangements, and the expected tasks and activities. This document details the requirement that practice educators must provide information on the relevant policies and procedures such as health and safety. The document will be located within the student's placement learning portfolio, and the inspectors heard that it will be completed on the first day of each placement. Oversight would be provided by the education provider in the review of this document.

73. A mid-point review meeting will take place between the course provider, the student and the practice educator where the student's progress will be reviewed and monitored, to ensure the student is undertaking appropriate work and they receive the right level of support.

74. The inspection team heard that as part of placement visits, the development of the student's skills and support would be reviewed, together with the learning outcomes.

75. Employers stated that whilst they haven't yet provided social work placements, they spoke of the collaborative and established relationship they have with the provider for other programmes in social care and counselling and felt positive and assured that this would continue on these new programmes.

76. In the event that placement concerns are raised, the course provider outlined that they would meet with the relevant employer to discuss the concerns and form a contingency plan which would include looking at alternative suitable learning opportunities, and support for the student.

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

Standard 2.4

78. Prior to the inspection, the course provider submitted the unedited British Association of Social Workers (BASW) QAPL document. During the inspection, a more contextualised document entitled 'review of tried and tested placements' was created by the course provider and this was provided to the inspection team. The purpose of this document is to review and identify changes within the placement which may impact on a student's experience, together with the capturing of feedback. The inspectors were informed that this document will be completed prior to a student starting their practice placement.

79. As highlighted in standard 2.2, the audit of new placement providers will be completed on an annual basis to ensure they are compliant and meet the appropriate standards.

80. As highlighted within standards 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, practice placement documentation was reviewed which included the service level agreement template that sets out the standard expectations and commitment from placement providers, the placement information record, the mid-point review form, and the end of placement report. Within the practice placement handbook there is a specific section for articulating workload and the mechanism for the oversight of the placement, and the placement information record will identify the tasks and learning objectives and the tracking of progress throughout the placement.

81. During the inspection, the education provider and employers outlined how the allocation of workload tasks will work in practice, including their understanding of potential risk and mitigations. The inspectors heard that within the first year, students will engage in observation, shadowing, and be supported in direct work. In the final year, students will be expected to manage a more complex caseload under supervision and demonstrate greater autonomy within their practice.

82. The inspectors heard that OneNote is utilised on both programmes to record plans, progress and concerns during placements, including the recording of the learning agreement. There are specific sections for the placement provider to record information such as tasks and activities to ensure they are appropriate for the student's stage of learning. Students record their reflective journals, and the system records supervision and attendance. For the apprenticeship programme an additional e-portfolio system is utilised called Smart Assessor which records the development of the student.

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

Standard 2.5

84. The inspection team heard that at the beginning of their placements, all students sign an agreement to confirm that they understand practice requirements and expectations. This agreement is recorded within the placement information record, reviewed by the inspection team.

85. As referenced within standard 1.4, students have an enhanced DBS check as part of their enrolment process, and they are required to sign up to the online renewal programme. The education provider confirmed that where students are not signed up for the online DBS renewal, they cannot progress on either programme. Formal clearance is required from the education provider's safeguarding team, in the event that a student's DBS flags up a concern.

86. Both programmes include a Skills for Practice: Readiness for Practice module which is a pre-requisite before students are able to go on placement, the content of the module was reviewed by the inspection team. This module will be delivered within the second semester of the first year of study. It covers critical skills days as well as assessed readiness for practice. Students complete two assignments, one is a practice-based simulation/role play, and the second is a reflective piece of work on how students have met the PCF readiness for practice criteria.

87. Employers stated that the education provider had spoken to them about their anticipated involvement in the assessment of the readiness for practice module.

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

Standard 2.6

89. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team was provided with an example list of practice educators and a list held by the education provider with accompanying narrative, to state that practice educator registration would be reviewed annually.

90. During the inspection, further discussions were held to gain a deeper understanding of the processes in place for the oversight of these two programmes in regard to practice learning quality assurance, and the skills and experience of practice educators to support safe and effective learning. It was unclear both within documentary and verbal evidence what processes the education provider has in place to check that practice educators meet the standard in specific relation to the oversight of their continual professional development (CPD) and currency.

91. 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

92. The inspection team reviewed the education provider's Whistleblowing Policy which is aligned to relevant legislation and guidance, and the placement information record which cites the policies and procedures. Academic staff informed the inspection team that prior to students going on placement a briefing is provided which includes whistleblowing.

93. During the meeting with the student and alumni, they expressed that they were aware of the policy and where to go to in raising a concern and in seeking support. One of the alumni was a former member of the Senate who sat on the Board of Governors, and they outlined the processes for reporting concerns.

94. Within the meeting with practice educators, they stated that they would contact the programme leader directly should there be an incident, and they would also inform the workplace.

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

96. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 2.7. The detail of the recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

97. The inspectors were provided with the Quality & Standards Handbook which sets out the deliberative committee structure and continuous improvement of quality within the organisation.

98. The inspectors heard that all higher education programmes are within the oversight of the Higher Education Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee (HECQSC). This senior academic level committee is responsible for quality issues such as resources, teaching and learning, and standards such as awards made and the appointment of External Examiners. The committee reports into the Executive Leadership Team and the Corporate Board, which provides oversight and assurance of all higher education provision. The committee flowchart clearly sets out the committee structure, demonstrating how this feeds into the Executive Leadership Team.

99. During the inspection, the course provider gave a presentation setting out the strategic priorities through to 2030, and they provided an overview of their growth mission and curriculum priorities. They outlined the consultations that had taken place for these new courses, and this included the involvement of employers and people with lived experience of social work. Staff outlined the initial and ongoing development of their Stakeholder Advisory Panel for these two new programmes.

100. As referenced within standard 3.7, there is a programme leader in place for the social work provision who reports into the Head of Area for STEM & Education. The Head of Area holds overall responsibility for the operational leadership and management of the programmes.

101. The inspection team concluded that these new courses are supported by a clear 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.

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

Standard 3.2

103. The inspectors were provided with a standardised template Service Level Agreement (SLA) which was further developed and adapted prior to the inspection. A further draft of the SLA was provided within the additional evidence submission, this outlined the roles and responsibilities of the education provider and the placement provider, quality assurance and funding and it is signed by both parties. The adapted draft SLA clearly sets out the agreement for securing and confirming a placement that meets the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards. Whilst the SLA sets out the responsibilities of each party, including escalation of concerns, it does not specifically document the position and process should there be a placement breakdown.

104. During the inspection, the inspectors gained a deeper understanding of the quality assurance and expectations of placement providers, the consents and safeguards and the approach to the management of placement breakdowns and suitability.

105. During the meeting with practice-based learning and placement provision staff, they talked through how they ensure consents are forthcoming in relation to service users' awareness and agreements to work with a student, and the way in which this will be recorded. Consent and the expectation around consents is recorded and detailed within the placement handbook.

106. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 3.2 in relation to the approval of this course.

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

Standard 3.3

107. The inspectors reviewed the Employer Work Placement Health, Safety and Welfare Record, this is completed by an employer's appropriate representative. This document sets out the employer's health and safety, risk assessment and control, and safeguarding information. Completed records are quality assured by the social work programme leader, and the placements team through an audit that ensures all placement providers meet the necessary criteria. The outcome of these audits is included within reports that go to the HECQSC.

108. As referenced within standard 2.4, the inspectors reviewed the 'review of tried and tested placements' document, the purpose of which is to review and identify changes in placement providers.

109. As referenced in standard 3.2, the SLA ensures that health checks are completed such as occupational health, and identified recommendations are carried out prior to students commencing their placements.

110. The practice learning handbook provided clear information with regard to disabilities and/or learning needs, setting out the responsibilities of the education provider and each placement provider to ensure reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate student's needs.

111. The inspectors were assured that appropriate qualified and experienced practice educators would be in place as they are critical to the education, professional development and support of students.

112. During the inspection, further information was provided about the extent of quality assurance at programme level and how documentation is put into practice by all stakeholders to gain assurances that placement providers will have the necessary policies and procedures in place in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk, and there are support systems in place to underpin these.

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

Standard 3.4

114. Documentary evidence was provided evidencing that a range of stakeholders have been involved in the creation and development of these two new programmes. This involvement included their views and feedback on the programme content, the indicative content of the modules and their input into the content of the critical skills days referenced within standards 2.1 and 2.5.

115. The inspectors were informed that a key Stakeholder Panel has been created which will provide ongoing monitoring and development of both programmes. The inspectors reviewed the Stakeholder Engagement Handbook which identified the framework for stakeholder involvement and sets out their commitments in the monitoring and development of these programmes.

116. The Stakeholder Panel Membership document sets out the current membership of the panel, this included employer organisations and people with lived experience of social work, some of whom the inspectors met during the inspection.

117. Within the senior management meeting, the inspectors were informed that a total of seven organisations are involved and they would be involved throughout the entire lifecycle of these programmes. The inspectors were informed that the Stakeholder Panel would meet twice per year.

118. A number of screenshots of emails received from employers were reviewed by the inspection team. This provided evidence of their support for these programmes and their commitment in offering practice placement opportunities.

119. For the apprenticeship programme, the education provider provided assurance that employers will play a critical role in selecting suitable candidates for the programme and there will be close collaboration with employers.

120. During the meeting with employers and practice educators, they outlined their awareness in how they will be involved going forward such as being part of the Stakeholder Panel, annual course reviews and inputting into course content. There was an overwhelming consensus that they were confident in what had been developed, and they were committed in continuing with their support for these programmes. Overall, they stated that it would be a positive move for the local area given the demand.

121. The inspection team concluded there are processes and formative commitments in place to ensure that employers are involved in elements of these courses and therefore determined that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

122. As highlighted within standard 3.4, the education provider has developed a Stakeholder Panel which involves key stakeholders including people with lived experience of social work. The inspectors reviewed the Stakeholder Engagement Handbook and the panel membership.

123. As referenced within standard 3.1, there is a HECQSC committee in place which reviews continuous improvement and the quality of programmes. The education provider has a deliberative committee structure and continuous improvement of quality policy, referenced in standards 3.1 and 3.9, which provides the framework and commitment for ensuring there is effective governance, continuous improvement of academic standards and quality, staffing processes and student engagement in place.

124. During the inspection senior management and programme staff explained how the programme governance interfaces with the provider's quality processes in practice.

125. The programme team stated their commitment to grow the pool of people with lived experience of social work. The two people with lived experience whom the inspection team met, outlined the ways in which they would continue to be involved in these programmes, and stated that the education provider has offered them relevant training.

126. In the meeting with the student and alumni they provided information on the methods utilised for their input into the regular and effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement of their course such as feedbacking through module evaluations, and attending quality meetings with other students, and staff. They provided some examples of changes that the provider had implemented such as increasing experimental learning opportunities within the psychology programme and reviewing pinch points within programmes.

127. The inspection team agreed that monitoring and evaluation systems and processes are in place and concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

128. The education provider set out their Ambition 2030 strategic plan to the inspection team. The plan sets out an aim of creating programmes that meet local needs and help increase their higher education numbers using their degree awarding powers. The senior leadership team and the employers whom the inspection team met, stated that these new social work programmes would address the growing demand for skilled social workers to meet the needs of local and regional employers.

129. During the meeting with employers, they stated that these programmes are essential in order to meet the ever-growing demand within the regional social care

sector. They outlined how they had been involved in the development of these programmes, and how they anticipate they would be involved going forward as referenced in standard 3.4. It was clear that employers were positively engaged, committed and very supportive of these new programmes. Several employers stated that they had discussions with the programme leader in regard to workforce planning to help inform the number of students admitted onto these courses.

130. The education provider outlined that consideration was given to the regional placement capacity, and key discussions had taken place with key stakeholders. It was further evidenced that there were confirmed commitments in place from employers in providing placements opportunities.

131. The inspection team determined that the number of students admitted is aligned to a clear strategy, which includes consideration of placement capacity, employer engagement and commitments and were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

132. Documentary evidence was provided prior to the inspection which confirmed that the programme lead for social work holds overall responsibility for both programmes. The inspection team were satisfied that this individual is a registered social worker and they are appropriately qualified and experienced.

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

Standard 3.8

134. Prior to and during the inspection, the inspection team were informed that as these are two brand new programmes there is currently only one full time registered social work academic in place. As referenced in standard 3.7, this individual holds overall responsibility for both programmes.

135. The education provider stated that upon approval from Social Work England's regulator they would commit to recruiting more staff for these programmes including at least one other registered social work academic staff member. At the time of the inspection, there was a live vacancy for an adult social work academic.

136. During the meeting with the senior management team, the inspectors were informed that other tutors and programme leaders would teach their specialist subject areas on these programmes, and they provided the example of a psychologist academic teaching the human growth and development module content. It was also stated that they would utilise external stakeholders.

137. The inspection team heard that the course provider has a dedicated apprenticeship team who support all apprentices throughout their student journey, and this includes visiting apprentices in their workplace at least every 12 weeks.

138. Within documentary evidence, and from speaking to staff during the inspection, it was clear that there is a separate placements team in place who provide support to students around their practice placements.

139. Given the breadth and depth of these social work degrees, the inspection team agreed that there is currently not an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff, with relevant specialist subject knowledge and expertise to effectively deliver these programmes.

140. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 3.8 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 3.9

141. The inspection team reviewed the Quality & Standards Handbook which encompassed a range of policies including the Exam Boards and External Examiners Policy. This policy makes clear the education provider's expectations regarding administrative conduct and preparation leading up to, including and upon completion matters relating to the external examiner's process.

142. Within the Quality & Standards Handbook the inspectors also reviewed the deliberative committee structure and continuous improvement of quality document as highlighted in standards 3.1 and 3.5, which reflects the provider's commitment to ensuring governance in academic standards and quality processes.

143. The inspectors heard that all programme leaders for higher education programmes are required to complete an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), which draws upon data sources, and this captures suggestions for areas for improvement. All AMR submissions are reviewed by the HE Quality Office.

144. The inspectors heard about the Self-Evaluation and Enhancement Documents (SEED) which are annually completed by each department. Further information regarding SEED was provided for the inspectors to review.

145. The education provider collects data and publishes an annual report on EDI, and the institution has an approved access and participation plan that sets out the equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups.

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

Standard 3.10

147. The inspectors were signposted to the education provider's Staff Development Policy which provided clear expectations around staff training and development.

148. During the inspection, the inspectors gained a deeper understanding of the approach taken to support staff who are on similar programmes such as those involved in teaching and assessment, together with the approach taken to assure educators maintain their currency of knowledge and understanding of professional practice.

149. The inspectors were informed that there is a broad staff development offer. Teaching staff on professional programmes have two days allocated per year where they go back into their industry/sector to update their knowledge. The Head of Area of STEM & Education has oversight of this for the social work programmes. Funding is offered for Masters and Doctoral studies, and staff are encouraged to undertake CPD to further support their progression.

150. The inspection team determined that educators are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice and therefore concluded that this standard was met.

151. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 3.10. The detail of the recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

152. The inspectors reviewed the validation documents for both programmes and heard that the content of each programme, including the learning outcomes had been designed and benchmarked against the professional standards, the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviour Standards (KSBs), the Education and Training Standards, and they were in accordance with the education provider's Academic Regulations.

153. As referenced within standards 2.1 and 2.5, the Skills for Practice: Readiness for Practice modules have been built into the programme, together with 30 critical skills days.

154. The education provider stated that all assignments for both programmes are aimed at providing students with a variety of assessment methods, all of which have specific module learning outcomes.

155. The inspection team reviewed the module guides which contained the draft contents and structure of both programmes subject to delivery of the programmes, which aligns with standard 3.8. The inspection team had concerns regarding the delivery of both programmes in accordance with the provider's current staffing levels, and it was clear within the module content that several key areas including mental health and law were deficient.

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

Standard 4.2

157. As referenced within standards 3.4 and 3.5, the inspection team reviewed stakeholder panel information including details regarding the establishment of the Stakeholder Panel and the Stakeholder Handbook.

158. Further documentary evidence included a record of stakeholder feedback which included people with lived experience of social work, and employers from meetings which had taken place during March to April 2025. This evidenced that their views and feedback had been considered on the programme content, including the indicative module content and critical skills day suggestions. The Stakeholder Handbook clearly evidenced the involvement of stakeholders in the contribution to these programmes.

159. During the meeting with employers and practice educators, it was evident there was a strong commitment, and they felt included in how their views were incorporated into the design of the programmes, and the ways in which they would be involved in the ongoing development and review of the curriculum.

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

161. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 4.2. The detail of the recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard 4.3

162. The inspection team reviewed the education provider's Academic Regulations which sit within the Quality & Standards Handbook. The inspectors heard that academic regulations are fully aligned to the Equality Act (2010).

163. All programmes are aligned to QAA Subject Benchmarks, and the validation process checks for equality and inclusion principles such as entering a programme fairly, treating each student as an individual, and making reasonable adjustments as appropriate.

164. Programmes are validated against appropriate external structures such as relevant legislative frameworks, and within the validation documentation reviewed by the inspection team these contained details on how EDI principles are designed, delivered and evaluated within each programme.

165. During the inspection, the student and alumni shared their experiences of EDI themes being integrated on their programmes such as the embedment of learning, modules and assignments around EDI issues. They also spoke of the inclusive campus such as accessible spaces and facilities, and the support services for learning and mental health issues.

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

Standard 4.4

167. The inspection team heard that all programmes are reviewed annually as part of the AMR process, referenced within standard 3.9. Feedback from the Stakeholder Panel would form part of these reviews.

168. Revalidation of all programmes occurs every six years. However, the inspectors heard that where a revalidation is required earlier due to evidence, this can be initiated.

169. The education provider gave assurance that the content on both programmes would be updated annually to reflect relevant changes to ensure the content remains current in line with developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice and that stakeholders would be involved in this process through the Stakeholder Panel membership. It was clear that there is a clear framework in place including quality improvement mechanisms to ensure that these programmes will be continually updated.

170. The HE Academic Registrar outlined the continuous improvement mechanisms during the inspection, including the assessment of performance against key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics, the creation of action plans and quality enhancement reports which are signed off by the Board of Governors.

171. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

172. The validation documentary evidence set out the programme structures, including the learning outcomes, the two practice learning placements, and the relationship between theory and practice was evidenced within the module specifications.

173. Within the programmes there is a module which delves into social work theory specifically, and the link between theory and practice forms part of this module.

174. A range of assessments have been designed around practical based role play/simulation settings. This is evidenced within three Skills for Practice modules, the Social Work Theory and Approaches module and the Social Work with Children and Families module. The inspectors heard that these modules aim to develop students' abilities to link theory to practice in a safe simulated environment.

175. As referenced within standard 2.1, students will have two practice placements and will be supported by practice educators to link theory to practice, which will be evidenced within each student's reflective journal as well as within end of placement reports. During the meeting with practice educators, they provided an example of using theory cards to link theory to practice.

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

Standard 4.6

177. Prior to the inspection, the course provider outlined that whilst on the 70-day and 100-day practice placements students will learn from other professions in order to support multidisciplinary working, including working within integrated settings.

178. During the inspection, the inspection team heard more about how students would learn from other professionals in the context of practice learning, together with the strategic approach taken to integrate opportunities into the overall programmes.

179. The inspectors heard that the education provider invites guest speakers to share their knowledge with students, this includes professionals from across the social work profession, and those with psychology, counselling and health care experiences. An example was provided of Navigo Health and Social Care CIC who came on campus during mental health day, and the wider programme team outlined that multi agency professionals come in to give demonstrations on real life scenarios on other programmes, which provided challenge and enlightenment for students.

180. The social work lead spoke of bringing in lawyers to undertake court work with students on these new programmes as part of the critical skills days. The student and alumni corroborated that they had undertaken a variety of projects working with other

professionals and spoke of the police and psychiatrists coming onto campus to give talks.

181. During the inspection, the inspection team were taken on a tour of the simulation facilities at the campus. The facilities included clinical skills rooms where students on these programmes would work with students from other programmes. Examples were provided by the wider programme team of people with lived experience of social work coming onto campus to role play and undertake simulation activities with students.

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

Standard 4.7

183. Validation documentation for both programmes sets out the number of academic weeks, together with the credit breakdown for each module. Each module descriptor describes the direct and indirect teaching hours based upon the credit structure. The education provider stated that the emphasis on teaching is face to face, and each module descriptor indicates the relationship between direct and indirect teaching hours.

184. For the apprenticeship programme documentation states that students will spend one day per week in education, and the remaining four days in their work-based employment. Off the job training is delivered over a period of 46.4 weeks, and the apprentice must have a contract of employment which covers the full duration of the apprenticeship. During the meeting with employers and practice educators, the inspectors gained a deeper understanding of the monitoring mechanisms to safeguard students from day-to-day casework pressures such as regular supervision, workload allocation and triaging.

185. The course structure diagrams reviewed by the inspection team set out how these courses will be delivered across the academic years/semesters.

186. During the inspection, the wider programme team outlined that where students miss placements or critical skills days, it is mandatory that they make up these days. Critical skills days are recorded and students would be expected to review the recording alongside undertaking further work.

187. The inspection team determined that the number of hours spent in structured academic learning is sufficient to ensure students meet the required level of competence and agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

188. The module descriptors reviewed by the inspection team outlined the intended assessments, and it is clearly stated that all assessments must be passed. A variety of

assessment methods will be used including multimedia work, essays, and report writing which address different learning styles and the development of academic and professional writing. The inspectors heard that a range of practical assignments such as presentations, role play and podcasts will take place, enabling students to develop a different variety of skills.

189. Each student will have a module handbook which provides them with understanding around the assessment requirements together with clear guidance. The student and alumni corroborated that they received the handbook before the next semester and these provided details of reading materials and a breakdown of assessments.

190. During the inspection, the inspection team gained a deeper understanding of the assessment strategy for both programmes including formative and summative assessments.

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

Standard 4.9

192. The validation documentation reviewed by the inspection team shows that assessments have been mapped against the curriculum and the learning outcomes to ensure students demonstrate their knowledge and skills within different areas. Each learning outcome is designed in accordance with the provider's education framework standards/Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) descriptors.

193. As referenced within standard 4.8, students will have a blend of assessments including written and practical based assignments, as well as individual and group tasks. An example was provided of two podcast assignments taking place in year one and year three. The year three assignment aims to showcase the student's development through the course and to support them in building their confidence with non-traditional forms of assessments, whilst also reinforcing core academic skills such as critical thinking, synthesis and research.

194. The student and alumni felt their assessments were spread out appropriately considering their progression throughout their student journey. One spoke of periods where they can overlap which they felt was unavoidable but generally they all expressed there was a good balance between them.

195. The inspection team concluded that assessments are mapped to the curriculum, and they are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression throughout their student journey. Therefore, they agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

196. The inspection team were shown that students are supported through multiple feedback mechanisms designed to enhance their academic and professional development. Weekly group tutorials are held each semester, providing students with opportunities for regular feedback and discussion on their progress. In addition, students are entitled to three individual tutorials per academic year (one per semester), where personalised feedback is given to address any concerns or areas for improvement.

197. Formative feedback is provided for assignments within each module, allowing students to receive guidance early in the assessment process. Assignment deadlines and expectations are outlined in the module handbooks, ensuring students can plan effectively and make use of the formative feedback to improve their work before submission.

198. Upon submission, students receive formal feedback via the virtual learning environment (VLE) portal, with detailed commentary on strengths, areas for improvement, and how well learning outcomes have been met. This feedback is made available through Canvas, giving students a place to have all their feedback in one place to enable them to revisit the feedback for ongoing reflection and improvement.

199. The programme handbooks provided further clarification on the types of feedback, and the support they can access to guide their academic development.

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

Standard 4.11

201. The inspection team heard that all assessors will be registered social workers for these programmes. For all tutors within the organisation, they are required to have registered teaching status (RTS).

202. Prior to and during the inspection, the inspectors heard that as these are new programmes there is currently no External Examiner in place. The same recruitment process for External Examiners on other programmes would be followed, and the inspectors reviewed the policy regarding External Examiners which sits within the Quality & Standards Handbook.

203. 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

204. To effectively manage students' progression, the TEC Partnership has established comprehensive systems that include regular feedback and input from a range of stakeholders.

205. This is evidenced through exam boards, which ensure a fair and rigorous process in assessing students' academic performance and progression. Students' practice placements are key to their professional development, with direct observations forming a critical component of their progression. Each student is required to complete a portfolio documenting their practice, including at least three direct observations, which provide evidence of their competencies and areas for development.

206. The Board of Examiners is integral to maintaining academic standards and ensuring decisions about progression are made with full transparency.

207. For students on the apprenticeship programme, regular tripartite meetings are held every 12 weeks, involving the apprentice, their workplace mentor, and academic representatives, ensuring that the students meet the necessary professional and academic standards. Feedback from these meetings is used to monitor progress and inform decisions about whether students can proceed to the next stage of their training.

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

Standard 4.13

209. The university provided the validation documentation which sets out how the programme has been designed in line with the professional standards and the KSBs. The documentation demonstrated a clear intention to embed the development of evidence-informed practice throughout the curriculum, with explicit reference to research, evaluation, and critical analysis.

210. The inspection team gained a deeper understanding of how this design translated into student learning. The course team explained that assignments are deliberately structured to be practice-focused, encouraging students to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios. Practical simulations and portfolio tasks were highlighted as examples of where students are required to draw on research and evidence to support their decision-making and professional judgements.

211. The inspection team heard that placements form a key aspect of how students' capabilities are developed in this area. Portfolios completed on placement are informed by practice, requiring students to link theory with evidence and to

demonstrate how their learning has shaped their interventions. Practice educators confirmed they are encouraged to prompt students to justify their approaches using evidence and research, ensuring this becomes embedded in their professional identity.

212. The inspection team were informed that a dedicated module, Critical Social Work Practice, includes research and evidence-informed practice as a core component. This module, alongside content in the third year, teaches students how to critically evaluate evidence, apply research findings, and use theory to underpin report writing and assessment. Critical skill days were also identified as opportunities where indicative content relating to research and evidence-informed practice is explored in applied ways.

213. Students are expected to use research consistently within assessments to substantiate their arguments and to evidence the development of their practice. The course team emphasised that the expectation is not only that students gain competence in these skills whilst on the programmes, but that they are equipped to carry them into practice as qualified social workers.

214. The inspection team determined that the course has been designed to enable students to develop an evidence-informed approach to practice, underpinned by research and evaluation, and were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

215. The course team provided evidence to support services outlined in a number of different documents. Students can use their programme handbook to see the support that is available to them and the function of each service. During admissions a HE advance screening form is filled in by students; this is used to support the course team to see if any additional support is required. This also looks at occupational health support.

216. During the inspection, the inspection team met with a range of support staff and were provided with details of the continuity of student support from pre-admission through to completion of the programme. It was clearly evident there is a strong commitment to support students to ensure they receive consistent advice and guidance at each stage of their studies.

217. The student and alumni, together with numerous staff commented that due to the smaller size of the organisation there is a close relationship between the programme teams and student support staff.

218. Learner Services provide a wide range of student support, including success coaches and counselling through PAM, which offers 24/7 access. Academic support is

also available through the Academic Achievement Coach. All students receive information on external mental health and neurodiversity services via their programme noticeboard and University Centre TV screens. Programme Leaders and Success Coaches offer pastoral care through 1:1 sessions and signpost students to internal services, PAM, or external support. Success Coaches also hold private sessions in a dedicated space to support students with issues such as mental health or financial aid, including bursaries. The Employability and Placement Team works closely with Programme Leaders to ensure students receive tailored placement support, careers advice, and assistance with occupational health screening where required.

219. The inspection team were assured that students on placement or those on the apprenticeship programme have continued access to all support services. The inspection team spoke to external stakeholders regarding the apprenticeship places they offered, they explained how they allow their apprentices to access all the support that employees receive.

220. All students have access to a counselling provision called the student assessment programme, it is a telephone service that allows students to speak to a qualified counsellor seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. Students can access this through the student hub. If required, students may also access up to six face-to-face counselling sessions following an initial referral. The inspection team heard how students are introduced to these services during induction and fresher events, where providers are invited to meet them directly. During the inspection, the student and alumni spoke positively of the student support services, and they were all very aware of how to access the services.

221. The inspection team also noted the availability of practical wellbeing support such as a food bank on campus, free sanitary products, and wider signposting by success coaches to external organisations. The inspection team further heard examples where support was accessed immediately, such as a student who disclosed homelessness and was provided with safe accommodation within 24 hours through coordination between the success coach and accommodation services.

222. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

223. The inspection team heard examples from both the student support team, and the student and alumni which demonstrated how support services had facilitated student success and progression.

224. The education provider has a learning centre which acts as a library and support service. The student and alumni provided examples of how they had accessed the learning centre; they felt it had contributed to their achievement. They expressed that resources were readily available and easily obtained when requested.

225. The social work programme leader was identified as taking ownership of academic development, acting as the main personal tutor. Timetabled slots would be offered for students to meet with this individual. Success coaches are also utilised to provide additional academic and pastoral support.

226. Due to the size of the organisation, the inspection team were told that course leaders also act as tutors. The provider, together with the student and the alumni expressed that this helps to strengthen relationships.

227. The inspection team heard how additional academic support is embedded across the academic year, including through the work of the academic coach, who provides both scheduled workshops and one-to-one support in areas such as critical thinking and research skills.

228. The inspection team heard evidence of proactive referral by tutors and success coaches, supported by safeguarding data analysis that had identified dips in student wellbeing linked to academic pressures.

229. The student and alumni shared positive examples of support during times of personal challenge, including one who was supported with extensions and pastoral care when experiencing bereavement. Others described that they did not feel the need for separate tutors, as the programme lead and teaching team were so approachable and consistent throughout their studies.

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

Standard 5.3

231. The inspectors were signposted to a range of documents and processes that outlined aspects of how student suitability in relation to conduct, character, and health is assessed. This included reference to the admissions interview process, where applicants are informed of professional expectations, and the completion of the HE advance screening form as referenced within standard 5.1, to capture any support needs. Apprentices also complete a skills scan and self-assessment which is then used to establish goals and identify starting points.

232. During the inspection, the inspectors gained a deeper understanding of the approach taken to monitor suitability on an ongoing basis. Students are reviewed at multiple points during their journey, including through tutorials, tri-summative meetings, and placement reviews. Employers and practice educators described how regular dialogue with the education provider allows for early identification of emerging concerns, and the inspectors heard examples of collaborative approaches where changes in student attributes or risks were addressed promptly.

233. The inspectors noted that DBS and occupational health checks are revisited at the start of each academic year, supported by close communication between course providers and tutors. The ProMonitor system was highlighted as a central case recording tool, enabling concerns to be logged, tracked, and shared across wider teams where safeguarding issues are identified. Fitness to Practise processes were also described.

234. The inspection team concluded that these activities reflected a culture of proactive monitoring with strong informal mechanisms. However, inspectors determined that there is a lack of formal documentation setting out how these processes are governed and overseen across the lifecycle of the programme.

235. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 5.3 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard 5.4

236. During stakeholder meetings, the inspection team heard that reasonable adjustments are discussed and actioned during supervision and at formal review points such as midway meetings.

237. The Head of Student Services confirmed that assessments of student needs are carried out both pre- and post-application, with DBS checks completed during the summer period. The assessments are then used to ensure any support the student requires can be put into place. This information would then be passed on to the student's placement supervisor or, for apprenticeships, their link employer so that the support can continue when they are off-site.

238. The inspection team heard that the programme teams maintain oversight through fortnightly meetings and emergency case discussions where required. Examples were shared of when these meetings were used to support students and how they had benefitted students. Students are supported by an orientation sheet at the start of the programme, and multiple touch points are built into the course, including module tutors, tutorials, and ProMonitor, which tracks student progress and allows staff to record and address emerging issues. The student and alumni shared that they felt supported by the education provider and gave examples of when and how they had been supported.

239. The inspection team further explored how health and wellbeing issues are managed in practice learning. Employers confirmed they are provided with contact details for the provider, enabling quick communication in cases of concern. The inspection team heard examples of collaborative responses where both employers and the provider had acted together to support students experiencing mental health difficulties, ensuring continuity of care through both workplace resources and the education provider.

240. Apprenticeship reviews take place every 10–12 weeks, supplemented by additional visits if required, with issues recorded in Smart Assessor.

241. Students described proactive approaches to wellbeing embedded within the culture of the course, including supervision discussions around burnout, wellbeing walks, and access to activities such as yoga and gong baths. The inspection team concluded that the strong communication between small teams and employers ensured that health issues could be anticipated and responded to in a timely manner.

242. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

243. The programme handbook and the placement handbook are provided to the students to give them a breakdown of the course curriculum, placements and assessments. The inspection team were provided with the programme and module handbooks and were shown the online learning system, which serves as the central point of information for students.

244. Students on the apprenticeship pathway were supported with transition to registered social work and the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), with input from principal social workers.

245. Critical skills days are delivered jointly to integrate learning and professional preparation. One critical skills day is dedicated to the introduction of Social Work England registration and the requirements for CPD.

246. The students and alumni confirmed that they receive timetables and module handbooks at induction and via the online learning platform. They described their course as transparent in setting out expectations, assessment schedules, and career development pathways. Apprentices particularly valued the close integration between academic learning and workplace experience, supported by employer input.

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

Standard 5.6

248. The inspection team heard from the student and alumni that attendance expectations are set at 85%, with clear processes in place to monitor and escalate concerns.

249. Documentation contained within the programme handbook confirmed that all elements of the course are mandatory. On critical skills days, students are informed of the requirement to make up missed learning if they are absent.

250. OneNote is used to record timekeeping, hours, and absence, with entries signed off as part of the portfolio.

251. The student and alumni whom the inspection team met with were all aware of the mandatory attendance on their courses, and shared they felt this expectation was clearly set out by the education provider. They shared experiences of when they had struggled with their attendance and how the provider supported them with this, for example allowing them to wait a year before finishing the final year of their course.

252. The requirements around attendance are also discussed as part of the induction process, and conversations are triggered with the course leads if attendance begins to drop so adjustments can be put in place before any issues arise.

253. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

254. The inspection team discussed with the student, alumni and staff the arrangements for both formative and summative assessment feedback. The student and alumni described their feedback as meaningful, developmental, and accessible in a way that supported their progress. They confirmed that tutors were approachable and available to discuss concerns.

255. The inspection team also noted that practice educators provide structured feedback through observations, planning and reflective reviews, and that feedback from service users is included within student portfolios. Apprentices utilise Smart Assessor, which records regular 10–12 weekly review meetings as an additional feedback mechanism.

256. Practice educators reported they are supported by the education provider through the use of centralised portfolio systems, ensuring consistency in the areas on which feedback is based. They also described being involved in assessment panels, which helped ensure fairness and transparency in decision-making. Both educators, the student and alumni gave the same timeline for feedback noting it was shared in a timely manner.

257. The programme handbook sets out the assessment requirements and the expectations around them. It lays out the dates for each assessment so students know in advance when their assessments must be completed by.

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

Standard 5.8

259. The inspection team reviewed the academic appeals process and further documentary evidence which details the internal procedures and routes of escalation, including referral outside of the course provider to the Office for Students.

260. The student and alumni confirmed that they were able to locate appeals information in their module handbooks and online. They demonstrated a clear understanding of where to go should they wish to raise an appeal. They also described that tutors had been open about this process from the outset, encouraging them to raise concerns where necessary.

261. Success coaches were identified as a further point of guidance for navigating the process.

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

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

Standard 6.1

263. The qualifying courses are BA (Hons) Social Work and BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship. The level of qualification is clearly detailed within the education provider's validation documentation.

264. However, validation and student facing documentation does not explicitly state that where exit awards are available, they have alternative titles and do not provide eligibility to apply for Social Work England registration.

265. The education provider has stated that they will adapt validation documentation and all associated marketing materials accordingly to ensure that where exit awards are available it is made clear these do not provide eligibility to apply for registration.

266. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 6.1 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.

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 1.4	<p>The education provider will provide evidence to demonstrate that a process and associated student-facing documentation is in place, that enables the assessment of initial and ongoing suitability. The process should articulate any disciplinary record, past or current, by a professional body or relevant termination of employer, as well as noting any lived experience of social work.</p> <p><i>The education provider should note that the condition on standard 1.4 aligns to the condition on standard 5.3.</i></p>	31 January 2026	Paragraph 43
2	Standard 1.6	The education provider will provide evidence of the final website copy which demonstrates that applicants are able to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a	31 January 2026	Paragraph 57

		<p>place on these courses. This should include financial information including accommodation, costs in relation placements, bursary information, and staff research interests.</p> <p>The education provider will provide evidence that amendments have been made in reference to entry on the register to ensure clarity around eligibility to apply for Social Work England registration, also noting that contained awards do not confer this entitlement.</p>		
3	Standard 2.6	The education provider will provide evidence which demonstrates oversight to assure practice educator's relevant and current knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning is captured and recorded on a regular basis.	31 January 2026	Paragraph 89
4	Standard 3.2	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates an audit trail of the placement breakdowns process is in place, and this is described within relevant documentation.	31 January 2026	Paragraph 103
5	Standard 3.8	<p>The education provider will provide evidence of a strategic staffing structure plan that demonstrates sufficient numbers of registered and experienced social workers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. ensure that students learn about professional practice from those who have direct experience of delivering social work services and B. ensures there is sufficient coverage regarding the breadth and depth of these social work courses, allowing for business continuity, staff absences and increasing numbers year on year. The plan should provide oversight 	28 February 2026	Paragraph 134

		<p>of other relevant specialist subject staff who have the knowledge and expertise to effectively deliver these programmes.</p> <p>The evidence should also include all staff members CVs showing their experience and qualifications to teach on these courses.</p> <p><i>The education provider should note that the condition on standard 3.8 aligns to the condition on standard 4.1.</i></p>		
6	Standard 4.1	<p>The education provider will provide evidence as to the aims and purposes of these programmes to ensure that social work students will be able to meet all of the professional standards by the end of their course.</p> <p><i>The education provider should note that the condition on standard 4.1 aligns to the condition on standard 3.8.</i></p>	28 February 2026	Paragraph 152
7	Standard 4.11	<p>The education provider will provide evidence that an external examiner has been appointed, ensuring that they are appropriately qualified and on the register. Their CV should be provided as part of the evidence.</p>	28 February 2026	Paragraph 201
8	Standard 5.3	<p>The education provider will provide evidence to demonstrate that a process and associated student-facing documentation is in place that enables the assessment of initial and ongoing suitability. The process should articulate any disciplinary record, past or current, by a professional body or relevant termination of employer, as well as noting any lived experience of social work.</p>	31 January 2026	Paragraph 231

		<i>The education provider should note that the condition on standard 5.3 aligns to the condition on standard 1.4.</i>		
9	Standard 6.1	The education provider will provide evidence to show that that the information provided as to student eligibility to apply for registration as a social worker has been rectified; clarity is required as to the difference between course completion/achievement and social worker registration, noting that contained awards do not entitle the student to apply for registration with Social Work England.	31 January 2026	Paragraph 263

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 1.2	The inspectors are recommending that the course provider considers developing interview criteria guidance for panel members regarding relevant experience to ensure transparency, consistency, equity and fairness.	Paragraph 33
2	Standard 2.7	The inspectors are recommending that the course provider considers including a confirmatory section to evidence that students have read and understood the Whistleblowing Policy within relevant documentation, such as the placement learning agreement.	Paragraph 92
3	Standard 3.10	The inspectors are recommending that the course provider may wish to develop an annual training plan demonstrating the ongoing professional practice, currency, research and scholarship of social work academic staff.	Paragraph 147
4	Standard 4.2	The inspectors are recommending that the course provider reviews the ways in which employers, practice educators, and people with lived experience of social work are consulted on the design, ongoing development and review of	Paragraph 157

		the curriculum, including setting out how their involvement is made explicit to them.	
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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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Ensure that applicants' prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions processes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.3 Ensure that employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work are involved in admissions processes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4 Ensure that the admissions processes assess the suitability of applicants, including in relation to their conduct, health and character. This includes criminal conviction checks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5 Ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.6 Ensure that the admissions process gives applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2 Provide practice learning opportunities that enable students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.3 Ensure that while on placements, students have appropriate induction, supervision, support, access to resources and a realistic workload.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.4 Ensure that on placements, students' responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of education and training.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.5 Ensure that students undergo assessed preparation for direct practice to make sure they are safe to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.6 Ensure that practice educators are on the register and that they have the relevant and	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
current knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning.			
2.7 Ensure that policies and processes, including for whistleblowing, are in place for students to challenge unsafe behaviours and cultures and organisational wrongdoing, and report concerns openly and safely without fear of adverse consequences.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2 Ensure that they have agreements with placement providers to provide education and training that meets the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards. This should include necessary consents and ensure placement providers have contingencies in place to deal with practice placement breakdown.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3 Ensure that placement providers have the necessary policies and procedures in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk, and the support systems in place to underpin these.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.4 Ensure that employers are involved in elements of the course, including but not limited to the management and monitoring of courses and the allocation of practice education.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.6 Ensure that the number of students admitted is aligned to a clear strategy, which includes consideration of local/regional placement capacity.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.7 Ensure that a lead social worker is in place to hold overall professional responsibility for the course. This person must be appropriately qualified and experienced, and on the register.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.8 Ensure that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff, with relevant specialist subject knowledge and expertise, to deliver an effective course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.9 Evaluate information about students' performance, progression and outcomes, such as the results of exams and assessments, by collecting, analysing and using student data, including data on equality and diversity.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.10 Ensure that educators are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4.3 Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and human rights and legislative frameworks.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.4 Ensure that the course is continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.5 Ensure that the integration of theory and practice is central to the course.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.6 Ensure that students are given the opportunity to work with, and learn from, other professions in order to support multidisciplinary working, including in integrated settings.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.7 Ensure that the number of hours spent in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator is sufficient to ensure that students meet the required level of competence.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.8 Ensure that the assessment strategy and design demonstrate that the assessments are robust, fair, reliable and valid, and that those who successfully complete the course have developed the knowledge and skills	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
necessary to meet the professional standards.			
4.9 Ensure that assessments are mapped to the curriculum and are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression through the course.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.10 Ensure students are provided with feedback throughout the course to support their ongoing development.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.11 Ensure assessments are carried out by people with appropriate expertise, and that external examiner(s) for the course are appropriately qualified and experienced and on the register.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.12 Ensure that there are systems to manage students' progression, with input from a range of people, to inform decisions about their progression including via direct observation of practice.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.13 Ensure that the course is designed to enable students to develop an evidence-informed approach to practice, underpinned by skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to research and evaluation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting students			
5.1 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their health and wellbeing including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. confidential counselling services; ii. careers advice and support; and iii. occupational health services 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendati on given
5.2 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their academic development including, for example, personal tutors.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3 Ensure that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.4 Make supportive and reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments to enable them to progress through their course and meet the professional standards, in accordance with relevant legislation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.5 Provide information to students about their curriculum, practice placements, assessments and transition to registered social worker including information on requirements for continuing professional development.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.6 Provide information to students about parts of the course where attendance is mandatory.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.7 Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students on their progression and performance in assessments.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.8 Ensure there is an effective process in place for students to make academic appeals.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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			
3			

Findings