Social Work England

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Plymouth

Course approval: MA Social Work

Inspection dates: 28th – 31st January 2025

Report date:	14th April 2025
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	27th May 2025
Date conditions met:	18th February 2026

Contents

Introduction

1. Social Work England completes inspections as part of our statutory requirement to approve and monitor courses. Inspections form part of our process to make sure that courses meet our education and training standards and ensure that students successfully completing these courses can meet our professional standards.

2. During the approval process, we appoint partner inspectors. One inspector is a social worker registered with us and the other is not a registered social worker (a 'lay' inspector). These inspectors, along with an officer from the education quality assurance team, undertake activity to review information and carry out an inspection. This activity could include observing and asking questions about teaching, placement provision, facilities and learning resources; asking questions based on the evidence submitted; and meeting with staff, training placement providers, people with lived experience and students. The inspectors then make recommendations to us about whether a course should be approved.

3. The process we undertake is described in our legislation; the Social Worker Regulations 2018[1], 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

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[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 it we decide the conditions are not met.

Summary of Inspection

15. Course details: the University of Plymouth wish to run a two-year MA Social Work programme.

Inspection ID	CPP477
Course provider	University of Plymouth
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	MA Social Work
Mode of Study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	10
Proposed first intake	September 2025
Date of inspection	28th – 31st January 2025
Inspection team	Joseph Hubbard (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Louise Robson (Registrant Inspector) Glenn Mathieson (Lay Inspector)
Inspector recommendation	Approval with conditions
Approval outcome	Approval with conditions

Language

16. In this document we describe the University of Plymouth as 'the course provider' or 'the university' and we describe the MA Social Work as 'the course', 'the programme', or 'the MA'.

Inspection

17. A remote inspection took place from 28th – 31st January 2025. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, employer partners 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 4 students on current programmes, including a number of students representatives. Discussions included admissions, placement experiences, readiness for practice, reasonable adjustments, interprofessional learning, pastoral and academic support, and assessment feedback.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the course team, admissions team, senior management, practice-based learning team, and support services.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in the course through the university's Social Work Consultative Group. Discussions included admissions, readiness for practice, module content, and assessment.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from employers including Plymouth City Council and Cornwall Council. The inspection team also met with both LA-based and independent practice educators.

Findings

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

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

25. The university provided documentary evidence for this standard including the programme approval document, operational specification, and programme specification. These documents and the mapping form confirmed that entry requirements include a minimum 2:2 undergraduate degree, GCSE maths and English at grade C/4 or above, and some formal study within the past 5 years. Applicants must also have at least 12 months' experience working with "vulnerable or disadvantaged people" in a social care capacity. The admissions process is mapped to the entry level requirements of the British Association for Social Workers' (BASW's) Professional Capability Framework (PCF). International applicants must have a score of 7 in the IELTS to demonstrate sufficient command of the English language.

26. Applicants shortlisted for interview following the initial application are interviewed by a panel of one academic, one member of the Social Work Consultative Group (SWCG), and when possible, an employer partner representative. No further details were provided of the interview process, such as interview questions or a scoring matrix. A group task was referenced verbally but no details or documentation were provided regarding this aspect . At inspection, the university were asked how thresholds are communicated to panel members to ensure consistency, and reference was made to a score sheet, however the inspection team had not been provided with this in the evidence submission.

27. Without seeing the interview questions or score sheet, the inspectors did not feel able to determine how the admissions process assessed the suitability of candidates. In addition, with no evidence of any other facets to the admissions process besides application form and interview, the inspectors did not feel the university had evidenced a multidimensional admissions process. The inspectors determined that this standard was not met, and immediate assurances evidence was requested for this standard due to time sensitivity, as admissions for the programme was due to begin.

28. The university provided a score sheet for the individual interview process and the group interview. The interview questions for the individual interview were also provided,

and the scoring sheet supports a judgement on responses to those questions. The inspectors agreed that the standard is now met, with a recommendation to provide specific and measurable marking criteria to ensure the members of the interview panel are using the same standards. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 1.2

29. The university's documentary evidence submission confirmed that the entry requirements for the MA include 12 months' experience working with "vulnerable or disadvantaged people" in a social care capacity. The programme specification outlined the relevant policies and procedures for recognition of prior learning. The inspectors determined that this standard was therefore met.

Standard 1.3

30. Documentary evidence confirmed that interview panels will include a member of the SWCG, and an employer partner representative "when possible". Additional evidence was requested for further detail of stakeholder involvement in admissions processes, and it was confirmed that for all programmes the interview panel will have a SWCG member and an representative from practice learning. No evidence was provided regarding stakeholder involvement in the design or development of the admissions process.

31. At inspection, employers and practice educators (PEs) were asked about their knowledge of or involvement in the proposed MA programme, and confirmed that they have not been involved in any work with the university regarding this. Consideration was given to whether inclusion on interview panels would be sufficient involvement for this standard to be met. The inspectors determined that, as the written evidence was not definitive regarding the intention to include employers, interview panel membership was not sufficient in this instance to fulfil the spirit of the standard. The inspectors therefore agreed that this standard was not met, and immediate assurances evidence was requested for this standard due to time sensitivity, as admissions for the programme was due to begin.

32. The university provided meeting minutes evidencing that both employers and people with lived experience of social work have been invited to take part in MA interviews. An interview schedule was also provided demonstrating that employer partners and people with lived experience of social work are represented on interview panels. The inspectors agreed that this standard is now met.

Standard 1.4

33. The programme specification confirmed that applicants are subject to an Occupational Health declaration and enhanced DBS check, followed by a self-declaration at enrollment. If an applicant has any convictions, their suitability for the programme is assessed by the Faculty Professional Issues Committee.

34. At inspection, the inspection team were provided with details of this process and a copy of the declaration form, along with details of how the suitability panels work if anything is declared. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met.

Standard 1.5

35. The course specification confirms a university-wide commitment to equal opportunities for applicants, and provision of reasonable adjustments. There is also a separate reasonable adjustments policy that encourages applicants to disclose any relevant disability on application or as early as possible.

36. During the inspection, the inspection team heard more about how reasonable adjustments are put in place for existing programmes. However, it was not clear how the university collect and analyse equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) data at admissions stage, nor how they implement and monitor EDI-related admissions policies at a course level.

37. The operational specification lists one of the admissions tutor's responsibilities as ensuring that interview panel members have received EDI training prior to interviewing. However, SWCG members that met with the inspection team confirmed that they have not received regular EDI training for their involvement in admissions, nor regular training more broadly. The inspectors determined that the standard was not met.

38. A condition is therefore being recommended against this standard. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it was deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. The inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 1.6

39. Prior to the inspection, documentary evidence was provided in the social work BA subject guide (it was noted that the MA version of this is still in development) and the programme handbook. The handbook confirms that graduates of the programme gain eligibility to apply to register and states that the programme is regulated by Social Work England. The subject guide provides information on the role of a social worker and the generic nature of the qualification.

40. However, the subject guide states "once you graduate you can become a qualified social worker and register with Social Work England"; this does not make clear to applicants that registration is not guaranteed, nor that registration is a prerequisite of using the protected title social worker. There was no content relating to costs or finance in either document, and information relating to the department's research interests also did not appear to be provided in materials for applicants.

41. The inspection team determined that this standard was not met, due to the lack of available information regarding finances or research interests, and the incorrect wording in the subject guide regarding registration. Immediate assurances evidence was requested for this standard due to the time sensitivity, as admissions for the programme was due to begin.

42. The university provided a completed MA programme website, noting that this will take the place of the subject guide. The website provided details of costs associated with the programme, and staff research interests could be reviewed by following links to staff profiles. Regarding registration, the web page correctly notes that on successful completion of the programme, graduates will be eligible to apply for Social Work England registration. The inspectors determined that the standard is now met, with a recommendation to provide more explicit reference to the professional standards. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the proposed outcomes section of this report.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

43. The programme handbook and module records confirm that students will complete 30 skills days in the year 1 module Professional Practice, a 70-day placement in year 1, and a 100-day placement in year 2. The handbook purported to quote a Social Work England requirement that students must have experience of providing services to at least two user groups, citing childcare and mental health as examples. It is unclear where this quote has come from, however, as it does not align with relevant guidance stating that, although contrasting placements are required, these can nonetheless be achieved through the same service user group. A template practice learning agreement form was provided for the existing programmes.

44. During the inspection, the university outlined how placement days are recorded and verified. The inspection team requested clarity on the details of skills days, such as how many there are and when in the programmes these happen, as no detail was provided in the documentation beyond stating that 30 skills days will take place. A module guide for the readiness for practice module on the BA programme was provided, however it was confirmed that this would not be the same for the MA, particularly given the differing timeline for a two-year programme. The inspection team remained unsure

what skills days would look like for the proposed programme, and the course provider was still in negotiation with placement providers around details such as the number of shadowing days. A further meeting with the course team confirmed that the monitoring of each student's skills days attendance is carried out piecemeal by members of staff across the team; the inspectors felt this left the process particularly vulnerable to human error.

45. The placement team outlined the process for ensuring a contrast and that statutory tasks were completed, confirming that there are processes in place for this. However, the employer partners who met with the inspection team raised concerns around how the university determines that a placement is statutory. The university and placement providers also gave conflicting information regarding placement capacity, with the former stating they have a surplus of placements and the latter stating capacity is very stretched. There were no service level agreements or memoranda of understanding with placement providers to reassure the inspectors regarding placement capacity. The inspection team agreed that there was evidence of processes in place to ensure students receive the number and type of placement days required, but were not assured that these processes are fully robust. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was not met.

46. A condition is therefore being recommended against this standard. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it was deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. The inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 2.2

47. Documentary evidence confirmed that there are processes for assessing and auditing placements, as well as initial and mid-point meetings which serve to check placements are meeting individual students' needs. The university provided copies of the template placement learning agreement and placement activation form.

48. The inspection team met with practice educators (PEs) who confirmed that students were well-prepared for placement. The students that met with the inspection team confirmed that they were broadly satisfied with their placements.

49. It was noted that there is not currently a clear placement provision strategy, which is discussed in further detail at 2.1. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met, with a recommendation for the course provider to continue collaborating with placement providers to ensure they provide students with good

quality learning opportunities. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 2.3

50. The university provided a copy of the BA programme's placement module handbook which included a template practice learning agreement for existing programmes. This agreement states that agencies must provide induction, and students must flag up if induction is not provided or not comprehensive. The agreement template includes a brief list of policies to be included in induction, but is not clear which of these are required or not as there is no checklist and the list ends with "etc.". The agreement does not make reference to placement responsibilities or expectations regarding workload.

51. At inspection, students on existing programmes reported being content with the induction and support their received on placement. The inspectors determined that this standard was met, as the guidance for the standard is not prescriptive about how the course provider ensures appropriate induction, support, and workload. The inspectors agreed that the university would benefit from a recommendation to bolster the documentary safeguards around this standard, for example by making expectations clearer in the practice learning agreement. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 2.4

52. The BA placement module handbook was provided as evidence of how this standard is met. The template practice learning agreement requires the student to complete an overview of learning opportunities, and notes that these must be in line with the professional standards at their level of practice. The placement handbook also states that the practice supervisor must ensure the student has sufficient and appropriate learning opportunities.

53. At inspection, students on existing programmes reported no concerns around the appropriateness of their placement responsibilities for their stage of education. The handbook and practice learning agreement have not yet been adapted for the MA. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met, with a recommendation to ensure that the relevant documentation is appropriately adapted to reflect the needs of MA students. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 2.5

54. The documentation directed to for this standard was the Professional Practice module within the definitive module records, which listed the assessments as an

essay, workbook, and "assessed preparation for practice". There was no further detail provided in the document regarding how readiness for practice would be assessed.

55. Additional evidence was requested for this standard, and the university provided a module brief for the BA's readiness for practice module. The BA module brief states that assessment for the module will be via a portfolio which must cover 5 elements, as well as 7 pieces of supporting evidence. The brief states that "failure of any one [...] of these elements could result in the requirement for referral work" – inspectors considered this unclear on whether all elements needed to be passed or not. Later in the document, it is stated that "Where a marker discovers that documents are missing in whole or in part, this will lead to an automatic fail of the module." – this was not consistent with the above information found earlier in the document.

56. While the information within the BA module guide provided some further detail of the readiness for practice assessment for the BA programme, it was acknowledged that the equivalent module for the MA would not be the same. The university stated that readiness would be assessed in the same way as it has been on the PGDip Social Work, but the equivalent module guide for this programme was not provided. The inspectors agreed that this standard was not met, as details of how readiness for practice would be assessed on the MA had not been provided.

57. A condition is therefore being recommended against this standard. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it was deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. The inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 2.6

58. The programme handbook stated that PEs receive regular training and learning opportunities, but did not reference requirements around registration or qualifications. The operation specification stated that PEs must be registered with Social Work England, and listed stakeholder meetings and practice learning business group as avenues for identifying PE training and support needs.

59. At inspection, it was confirmed that there is a robust process in place for gathering the required information when onboarding independent PEs (those not employed by a placement provider). However, there is no policy or process in place for ensuring that PEs remain registered after onboarding. For PEs employed by placement providers, it was confirmed that the university relies on the employer to ensure these PEs are

registered and qualified. The university confirmed that they do not ask employers to provide confirmation that they check PEs' registration status or how often.

60. The inspectors agreed that due to the lack of robust process in place for ensuring all PEs' qualifications and ongoing registration with Social Work England, this standard was not met. A condition is therefore being recommended against this standard. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it was deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. The inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 2.7

61. The programme handbook provided contains a section which outlines how students can raise concerns around placement, and the university also provided a link to the university-wide Speak Up whistleblowing policy.

62. At inspection, students confirmed they are aware of these processes, and the course team provided an example of the concerns process in use. The inspectors agreed that the standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

63. The operational specification provided for the programme outlined the management roles and governance arrangements. These included detail of the annual review process and planning arrangements. The inspectors agreed that the information provided in the documentation was sufficient to determine that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

64. The operational specification for the MA provided information on processes for placement monitoring and working in partnership with placement providers. The template practice learning agreement, mid-point review, and final report outline that the student must achieve learning outcomes in line with the Professional Capability Framework (PCF). There is a specific staff team in place who have responsibility for oversight and arrangement of placement.

65. Regarding contingencies for the management of placement breakdown, a placement incidents and concerns policy was linked to through the university's central placements information website. However, this document appeared to be tailored particularly to health professions placements, and was also overdue for review in 2021.

Though not mapped for this standard, the programme handbook section 'when there are difficulties' does include a brief section on issues arising while on placement.

66. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met, with a recommendation for agreements to make explicit the requirement to provide education and training that meets the professional standards and the education and training standards. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 3.3

67. The operational specification for the programme notes that there is a placement team who holds responsibility for carrying out quality assurance of placements before a student is allocated to them.

68. The template placement learning agreement provided includes an 'agency induction' section which lists some policies that must be in place and provided to the student during induction, but is not clear which of these are required or not as there is no checklist and the list ends with "etc.". As discussed at standard 2.3, at inspection students on existing programmes reported being content with the induction and support they received on placement.

69. The inspectors determined that this standard was met, as the guidance for the standard does not specify particular policies that placement providers must have in place. The inspectors agreed that the recommendation on standard 2.3 should also apply to this standard, to bolster the documentary safeguards around placement policies and support systems. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 3.4

70. The operational specification makes reference to employer involvement in the programme, stating that employers will attend programme meetings, including a specific meeting to discuss placements and the allocation of practice education. The document also states that the academic lead for social work attends a local employer network for discussion of practice learning and social work education more broadly.

71. At inspection, employers acknowledged that routes for employer involvement are in place, though they stated that they have not yet had involvement in the MA planning specifically. The inspection team also met with PEs, who stated that they had some involvement in planning for the apprenticeship programme, but not plans to move back from the PGDip to an MA. The inspection team determined that as the structures are in place and in use for existing programmes this standard was met, with a recommendation to ensure that the MA is specifically included when involving employers and people with lived experience in management and monitoring of

programmes. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 3.5

72. The arrangements for regular evaluation and improvement systems, including an Annual Quality Review and a number of relevant committees, were laid out in the operational specification provided. These appear to demonstrate a comprehensive approach to programme monitoring.

73. At inspection, it was confirmed which mechanisms have representation from each stakeholder group. The annual programme review has representation from employers and people with lived experience of social work, the Social Work Consultative Group gathers feedback from people with lived experience, and the student-staff liaison committee provides a route for student involvement in evaluation and improvement of programmes. The inspectors agreed that this standard was therefore met.

Standard 3.6

74. The evidence provided for this standard was narrative on the mapping form which stated that student numbers across the university's social work programmes is decided by the Head of School and Academic Lead. The mapping stated that the decided numbers are informed by the faculty's admissions strategy. However, no detail was provided as to the decision-making process, or what information is taken into account when making these decisions.

75. At inspection, it was confirmed that there is no written strategy available, and conflicting information was provided by the university and employers regarding placement capacity. The university stated that they had a surplus of placements, whereas employers reported placement capacity is stretched very thin and they struggle to meet the university's requirements. As the evidence did not demonstrate a clear strategy including consideration of local placement capacity, the inspectors determined that this standard was not met.

76. A condition is therefore being recommended against this standard. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it was deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. The inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 3.7

77. The operational specification and academic lead's CV provided evidence in support of this standard, with the mapping confirming that the academic lead holds overall professional responsibility for all of the university's social work courses. The academic lead's CV provided evidence that they are appropriately qualified and experienced, and the register was checked to confirm they are also registered with Social Work England.

78. At inspection, it was confirmed that Social Work England registration is a requirement of this role. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met, with a recommendation that the requirement for Social Work England registration is made explicit in the relevant person specification or equivalent document. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 3.8

79. Staff CVs were provided as evidence for this standard, with the mapping document noting that the university also utilise practice educators and other professionals in course delivery. The inspectors agreed from this evidence that staff members appeared to have appropriate qualifications, experience, and expertise.

80. Additional evidence was requested to confirm the total number of full time equivalent staff, and clarification as to whether staff taught across all programmes; this information was provided.

81. At inspection, it was confirmed that the university's workload allocation tool is currently being amended, in recognition that this requires redevelopment. The guidance for this standard states that the course provider must be able to justify the number of staff employed and the amount of time they spend on the course, as well as the number of students.

82. Verbal evidence at inspection indicated that the university intend to maintain current staffing levels on the basis that staffing for the existing programmes is sufficient and workload is not expected to change significantly through the addition of this programme due to falling recruitment on other courses.

83. However, no workload allocation or other documentary evidence was provided to evidence that current staffing levels are sufficient, or that the workload will not increase overall with the proposed addition of an apprenticeship programme to the university's social work provision. The inspectors therefore agreed that this standard was not met.

84. A condition is therefore being recommended against this standard. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it was deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. The inspection

team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 3.9

85. Evidence for this standard included details of the university's annual quality review process, and stated that the programme lead collates progression data to inform the programme action plan. The minutes of the annual programme review for the BA programme confirmed that the analysis of progression data in this process includes review and discussion of EDI data. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

86. The narrative evidence for this standard stated that staff engage in regular practice-related research activity, such as research meetings, conference presentations, and research projects related to practice. Staff also engage with practice by delivering teaching sessions within employer partner agencies. A research summary was provided which outlined the team's collective research activities.

87. At inspection, it was confirmed that staff have 200 hours per year of protected time for scholarly activity, and a budget for continuing professional development (CPD). Staff participate in annual development reviews, and maintain their proximity to practice through research, CPD activities, and supporting students on placement. PEs confirmed that they are provided with regular workshops and sessions to support them in maintaining their knowledge of practice. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

88. The programme specification was provided which contained mapping of the course to Programme Learning Outcomes, which were stated to align with the Social Work England professional standards and BASW's PCF. An appendix was also provided which mapped the Occupational Duties (KSBs), PCF, and Social Work England professional standards against each other. The university also provided a completed professional standards mapping form for the programme. The inspectors determined that this standard was met on the basis of the documentation provided.

Standard 4.2

89. Evidence was provided to demonstrate that overarching governance and quality assurance structures are in place within the university to involve employers, practitioners, and people with lived experience of social work in programme design and

development. However, as the curriculum for the proposed programme has not yet been developed, and employer partners stated at inspection that they have not yet been involved in development of the MA, the inspectors determined that this standard was not met.

90. A condition is therefore being recommended against this standard. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it was deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. The inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 4.3

91. The university provided a university-wide EDI policy to evidence this standard, and directed to a number of relevant sections of the operational specification. For example, there are sections laying out approaches to reasonable adjustments, and to alternative and inclusive assessment principles. The definitive module records document and professional standards mapping form also demonstrated areas of the programme content which are related to and aligned with the principles of EDI. The inspection team agreed that the standard was met.

Standard 4.4

92. The mapping narrative for this standard directed to the social work team research summary document as evidence of how the team maintains up to date knowledge of social work research and best practice. It also stated that the team hold regular research meetings and team days to share knowledge and consider how developments can be incorporated into the programmes. The programme operational specification outlines the regular review processes that programmes are subject to annually to ensure they are up to date.

93. At inspection, examples of the above were provided to support the documentary evidence, confirming that the team are research active and bring their knowledge into the programmes they deliver. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

94. Aspects of the proposed programme laid out in the module guides, definitive module records, and programme specification provided evidence that the programme aims to centre the integration of theory and practice. The placement documentation also requires students to complete two practice analyses, and the template for these

includes a section for the student to reflect on how they have applied theory to practice.

95. At inspection, students and PEs confirmed that integration of theory and practice is a key feature of the learning that takes place while on placement. The inspectors determined that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

96. The evidence provided for this standard was the module information included for the two placement modules and Skills for Social Work module in the definitive module guide document. The content summaries and learning outcomes for both placement modules include reference to multi-disciplinary working.

97. At inspection, specific examples were provided of the sort of interprofessional learning opportunities that the university provides for students to engage in, such as Schwartz Rounds. Events are put on by Plymouth Integrated Health and Social Care Education Centre which involve students across a number of professions coming together to work on a case study. The course team confirmed that at least one of these events is timetabled to ensure all students access interprofessional learning opportunities. The inspectors agreed that the standard was met.

Standard 4.7

98. The number of hours and corresponding credits for each module and for the programme as a whole is outlined in the definitive module records document. This document also outlines the requirements around attendance. These details were triangulated at inspection, and the inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

99. The programme specification provided broad information regarding assessment strategy and design, and inspectors requested information regarding how the assessment strategy for the programme was developed. The university responded that programme developments are discussed during regular team meeting and biannual team development days.

100. As discussed within standard 2.5, inspectors were not assured that a coherent and robust assessment of readiness for practice had yet been developed for the programme at the time of inspection. The inspectors determined that as this standard requires assessments to be robust, fair, reliable, and valid, the standard was not met due to the lack of detail provided around the assessment of readiness to practice.

101. The condition applied to standard 2.5 is therefore also being recommended against this standard. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified

would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it was deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. The inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 4.9

102. The narrative for this standard directed inspectors to the module frameworks within the definitive module records document, which provided outlines of the proposed assessments for each module and the assessed learning outcomes. However, on review of the assessment schedule provided in the MA approval document, the inspectors noted that this did not provide any estimated dates for assessments beyond the semester they would take place in. The inspectors agreed that without a more detailed assessment schedule they could not determine whether assessments would be appropriately sequenced to support students' progression, and therefore this standard was not met.

103. A condition is therefore being recommended against this standard. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it was deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. The inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 4.10

104. The operational specification for the programme indicated that feedback is provided from various sources during placement, and through academic assessments outside of placement learning. The approval document outlined where in the programme formative and summative assessments would take place, as well as the process for marking assignments, and the programme handbook outlined the assessment policy.

105. At inspection, as well as in SSLC minutes, students reported finding that feedback does not consistently assist them in how to improve their work, and requested more concrete and developmental feedback. Taken alongside the lack of assessment scheduling detail outlined at standard 4.9, the inspectors agreed that they were not assured that feedback would reliably support students' development. The inspectors therefore determined that this standard was not met.

106. A condition is therefore being recommended against this standard. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not

be suitable for approval. However, it was deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. The inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section of this report.

Standard 4.11

107. The approval document provided as evidence included CVs for course staff, which indicated appropriate expertise and experience. The operational standards outlined the requirements for external examiners, and the appointed external examiner's CV was provided to confirm that they met these requirements. The Social Work England register was checked to confirm that the appointed external examiner is registered. The inspectors determined that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

108. As discussed within standard 4.10, the operational specification for the programme indicated that feedback is gathered from various sources during placement, and through academic assessments outside of placement learning, to inform decisions about students' progression. The operational specification also notes that award assessment boards consider students' individual marks, progression, and awards.

109. The approval document outlined where in the programme formative and summative assessments would take place, as well as the process for marking assignments, and the programme handbook outlined the assessment policy.

110. As discussed within standard 2.5, inspectors were not assured that a coherent and robust assessment of readiness for practice had yet been developed for the programme at the time of inspection. The inspectors determined that as the readiness to practice assessment is a key progression point within the programme, the standard was not met due to the concerns around the assessment of readiness to practice.

111. The condition applied to standard 2.5 is therefore also being recommended against this standard. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it was deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. The inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section of this report.

Standard 4.13

112. The module information provided indicated that there are opportunities to develop an evidence-informed approach to practice included in a number of modules throughout the programme. The workbook students complete on placement also requires students to embed an evidence-based approach to practice. The PCFs also support students' development of research and evaluation skills to support decision-making and critical thinking. The inspectors therefore determined that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

113. The programme operational specification confirmed that the university provides confidential counselling services and careers services, and included a link to the student wellbeing service. All offers for the programme are also subject to an occupational health assessment. The inspectors determined that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

114. The evidence provided for this standard was the operational specification, which outlines the support available to assist students in their academic development. These supports included a personal tutoring system, study groups, and relevant support for students with any additional needs.

115. At inspection, it was confirmed that students also have access to a suite of academic skills support, and further support through the university's central library services. Students reported being satisfied with their access to and experience of personal tutors and other academic support. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

116. The programme specification provided for the MA provided information regarding the initial occupational health screening and DBS checks, and the annual self-declaration students are required to complete at enrollment. Inspectors had some concerns that this information was limited to mostly health and DBS, and did not address wider potential suitability issues.

117. At inspection, a copy of the initial suitability declaration was provided, however it was confirmed that this was not the same as the ongoing suitability declaration, and a copy of the latter was requested but not provided. The inspectors could therefore not assess whether the declaration covered an appropriate breadth of potential suitability issues. The inspectors therefore agreed that this standard was not met.

118. A condition is therefore being recommended against this standard. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it was deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. The inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 5.4

119. The operational specification included information outlining the reasonable adjustment and occupational health procedures for the programme. The placement documentation provided within the evidence demonstrated that students' individual needs are recognised and their progress is assessed and documented through the mid-point review and final report, as well as tripartite reviews. It was confirmed that the university also has an institution-wide EDI policy as well as a specific reasonable adjustments policy.

120. At inspection, students confirmed that the support provided was appropriate and that their needs had been met. Support services staff outlined the arrangements in place for supporting students with disabilities and health conditions. It was noted that there is a suite of accessibility software installed on all university IT systems. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

121. The programme handbook provides some information for students regarding the curriculum, placements, assessments, and transition to registered social worker. However, there are gaps in this information due to details of the programme not having been planned yet. There is also no information provided related to requirements for continuing professional development, which is required per the wording of this standard. The inspectors therefore determined that this standard was not met.

122. A condition is therefore being recommended against this standard. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it was deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. The inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 5.6

123. Information regarding attendance requirements for the programme were clearly laid out in the programme handbook. At inspection, students confirmed that communication from the university regarding attendance requirements has been clear. The inspectors considered whether the concerns outlined at standard 4.7, around how the attendance monitoring system would translate to a distance learning programme, had any implications for this standard. However, they noted that this standard concerns communication with students around attendance, which is evidenced in the programme handbook, rather than attendance monitoring itself. The inspectors determined that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

124. As discussed under standard 4.10, the operational specification for the programme indicated that feedback is provided from various sources during placement, and through academic assessments outside of placement learning. The approval document outlined where in the programme formative and summative assessments would take place, as well as the process for marking assignments, and the programme handbook outlined the assessment policy. The mapping document stated that the university requires feedback to be provided within 20 working days wherever possible, and must include annotated feedback.

125. At inspection, as well as in SSLC minutes, students reported finding that feedback does not consistently assist them in how to improve their work, and requested more concrete and developmental feedback. Taken alongside the lack of assessment scheduling detail outlined at standard 4.9, the inspectors agreed that they were not assured that feedback would reliably support students' development. The inspectors therefore determined that this standard was not met.

126. The condition applied to standard 4.10 is therefore also being recommended against this standard. Consideration was given as to whether the findings identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it was deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard. The inspection team is confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the conditions, monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcome section of this report.

Standard 5.8

127. The approvals document provided includes a link to the university's appeals policy, and the programme handbook also provides information on and links to academic regulations. At inspection, students confirmed that they are aware of where to find the appeals policy should they need to. The inspectors determined that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

128. As the proposed course is MA Social Work, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

The inspection team recommend that the course be approved. Any conditions 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, the inspection team are proposing the following conditions for this course at this time.

	Standard not currently met	Condition	Date for submission of evidence	Link

1	1.5	The course provider will evidence that processes are in place to ensure that;
		  i. admissions stage EDI data is collected and analysed on a regular basis, and
		  ii. interview panel members receive regular EDI training per the operational specification
			27th August 2025	Paragraph 35

2	2.1	The course provider will evidence that robust processes have been developed to ensure that;
		  i. all students complete the required 200 placement days
		  ii. all placements in use as statutory placements meet the requirements of this standard (please see the relevant guidance)
			27th August 2025	Paragraph 43

3	2.5, 4.8, 4.12	The course provider will evidence that a clear and robust assessment	27th August 2025	Paragraph 54

		of readiness for practice has been developed to ensure students are safe to carry out practice learning prior to beginning placement.		Paragraph 99 Paragraph 108
4	2.6	The course provider will evidence that they have developed a robust process for ensuring oversight of all practice educators' ongoing; i. Registration with Social Work England ii. Qualifications iii. Currency	27th August 2025	Paragraph 58
5	3.6	The course provider will evidence that a clear strategy has been developed regarding student numbers, and that this includes consideration of suitable placement capacity.	27th August 2025	Paragraph 74
6	3.8	The course provider will evidence that a robust process is in place to ensure staffing levels are sufficient, to include consideration of the proposed addition of an apprenticeship programme to the university's social work provision.	27th August 2025	Paragraph 79
7	4.2	The course provider will evidence that the views of stakeholders are incorporated in the design and review of the curriculum.	27th August 2025	Paragraph 89
8	4.9	The course provider will evidence that assessments are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression through the course.	27th August 2025	Paragraph 102
9	4.10, 5.7	The course provider will evidence that the timely and meaningful feedback is provided throughout the course to support students' ongoing development.	27th August 2025	Paragraph 104 Paragraph 124
10	5.3	The course provider will evidence that there is a thorough an effective	27th August 2025	Paragraph 116

		process in place to ensure the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character, and health.		
11	5.5	The course provider will evidence that information is provided to students about their curriculum, practice placements, assessments and transition to registered social worker including information on requirements for continuing professional development.	27th August 2025	Paragraph 121

Recommendations

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

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	1.1	The inspectors are recommending that the university provide specific and measurable marking criteria to ensure the members of the interview panel are using the same standards to ensure consistency.	Paragraph 25
2	1.6	The inspectors are recommending that the university provide explicit reference to the professional standards in materials for potential applicants.	Paragraph 39
3	2.2	The inspectors are recommending that the university continue collaborating with placement providers to ensure they provide students with good quality learning opportunities.	Paragraph 47
4	2.3, 3.3	The inspectors are recommending that the university bolster the documentary safeguards around this standard, for example, by making expectations clearer in the practice learning agreement.	Paragraph 50

5	2.4	The inspectors are recommending that the university adapt the relevant placement documentation to reflect the needs of MA students.	Paragraph 52
6	3.2	The inspectors are recommending that the university make explicit in practice learning agreements the requirement to provide education and training that meets the professional standards and the education and training standards.	Paragraph 64
7	3.4	The inspectors are recommending that the university ensure the MA is specifically included when involving employers and people with lived experience of social work in the management and monitoring of programmes.	Paragraph 70
8	3.7	The inspectors are recommending that, for the job role which constitutes lead social worker, the university make explicit the requirement for Social Work England registration in the person specification or equivalent document.	Paragraph 77

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

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

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

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

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

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

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards.			
4.2 Ensure that the views of employers, practitioners and people with lived experience of social work are incorporated into the design, ongoing development and review of the curriculum.	☐	☒	☐
4.3 Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and human rights and legislative frameworks.	☒	☐	☐
4.4 Ensure that the course is continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice.	☒	☐	☐
4.5 Ensure that the integration of theory and practice is central to the course.	☒	☐	☐
4.6 Ensure that students are given the opportunity to work with, and learn from, other professions in order to support multidisciplinary working, including in integrated settings.	☒	☐	☐
4.7 Ensure that the number of hours spent in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator is sufficient to ensure that students meet the required level of competence.	☒	☐	☐
4.8 Ensure that the assessment strategy and design demonstrate that the assessments are robust, fair, reliable and valid, and that those who successfully complete the course have developed the knowledge and skills	☐	☒	☐

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.	☐	☒	☐
4.10 Ensure students are provided with feedback throughout the course to support their ongoing development.	☐	☒	☐
4.11 Ensure assessments are carried out by people with appropriate expertise, and that external examiner(s) for the course are appropriately qualified and experienced and on the register.	☒	☐	☐
4.12 Ensure that there are systems to manage students' progression, with input from a range of people, to inform decisions about their progression including via direct observation of practice.	☐	☒	☐
4.13 Ensure that the course is designed to enable students to develop an evidence-informed approach to practice, underpinned by skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to research and evaluation.	☒	☐	☐
Supporting students			

5.1 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their health and wellbeing including:
 	
   I.   confidential counselling services;
  II.   careers advice and support; and
 III.   occupational health services
	☒	☐	☐

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

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

Regulator decision

Approved with conditions.

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

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

A review of the conditions evidence will be undertaken and recommendations will be made 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	Recommendation
1	1.5	The course provider will evidence that processes are in place to ensure that; i. admissions stage EDI data is collected and analysed on a regular basis, and ii. interview panel members receive regular EDI training per the operational specification	Met
2	2.1	The course provider will evidence that robust processes have been developed to ensure that; i. all students complete the required 200 placement days ii. all placements in use as statutory placements meet the requirements of this standard (please see the relevant guidance)	Met
3	2.5, 4.8, 4.12	The course provider will evidence that a clear and robust assessment of readiness for practice has been developed to ensure students are safe to carry out practice learning prior to beginning placement.	Met
4	2.6	The course provider will evidence that they have developed a robust process for ensuring oversight of all practice educators' ongoing; i. Registration with Social Work England ii. Qualifications iii. Currency	Met
5	3.6	The course provider will evidence that a clear strategy has been developed regarding student	Met

		numbers, and that this includes consideration of suitable placement capacity.	
6	3.8	The course provider will evidence that a robust process is in place to ensure staffing levels are sufficient, to include consideration of the proposed addition of an apprenticeship programme to the university's social work provision.	Met
7	4.2	The course provider will evidence that the views of stakeholders are incorporated in the design and review of the curriculum.	Met
8	4.9	The course provider will evidence that assessments are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression through the course.	Met
9	4.10, 5.7	The course provider will evidence that the timely and meaningful feedback is provided throughout the course to support students' ongoing development.	Met
10	5.3	The course provider will evidence that there is a thorough an effective process in place to ensure the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character, and health.	Met
11	5.5	The course provider will evidence that information is provided to students about their curriculum, practice placements, assessments and transition to registered social worker including information on requirements for continuing professional development.	Met

Findings

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

Condition 1 – The university provided a newly-developed EDI data collection form for use at the admissions stage, along with an overview of how this data will be analysed and actioned. The inspectors' recommendation is that this condition is now met.

Condition 2 – The university provided narrative evidence indicating that their internal definition of statutory placement aligns with Social Work England guidance. Evidence submitted for condition 3 provided evidence for element (i). of this condition, confirming that attendance at skills days is now monitored through the same timesheet system used to monitor 70- and 100-day placement attendance. The inspectors' recommendation is that this condition is now met.

Condition 3 – The university provided a detailed outline of the confirmed assessment process which will be used to assess students' readiness for direct practice prior to beginning placement. This assessment includes attendance of all required skills days, the details of which are now confirmed and include shadowing days within a Local Authority. The assessment also includes an assessment activity with a member of the Service User/Carer Consultancy Group, who then provides written feedback to the student. The inspectors' recommendation is that this condition is now met.

Condition 4 – The university provided a copy of a declaration form which has now been developed, in collaboration with stakeholders, to evidence all practice educators' ongoing registration and suitability. Narrative provided alongside the document confirmed that this will be completed by the relevant local authority, and then verified by the university. The inspectors' recommendation is that this condition is now met.

Condition 5 – The university provided details of the University Planning and Decision-Making Framework, which sits alongside the Placement Capacity Strategy, to evidence that an active approach is being adopted to plan and assess capacity around student numbers. Evidence was also provided of Practice Learning Business Group meetings which take place twice a year and include strategic dialogue with employer partners around placement capacity. The inspectors' recommendation is that this condition is now met.

Condition 6 – The university provided narrative response outlining how workload and staffing are managed within the department and university-wide. A workload model document was also provided to evidence how this works in practice. The inspectors' recommendation is that this condition is now met.

Condition 7 – The university provided evidence of stakeholder engagement in review of the curriculum, in the form of meeting minutes from the annual programme review and Social Work Programme Committee. Evidence demonstrated concrete ways this input has helped to shape the curriculum, such as the inclusion of Trauma Informed Practice. The inspectors' recommendation is that this condition is now met.

Condition 8 – The university provided information to show the detail of assessments planned for the modules throughout the course, with approximate dates given for each to show the sequence of assessments. The inspectors' recommendation is that this condition is now met.

Condition 9 – The university provided a feedback guidance document for markers, along with a finalised programme handbook, to evidence that students will receive timely and meaningful feedback. The narrative response also confirmed that formative feedback will be provided to further support students' ongoing development. The inspectors' recommendation is that this condition is now met.

Condition 10 – The university provided amended declaration forms, along with narrative confirming how and when these are used to ensure students' ongoing suitability. The inspectors' recommendation is that this condition is now met.

Condition 11 – The university provided an amended version of the programme handbook demonstrating that the information required by this standard is provided. Information relating to registration eligibility and requirements for continuing professional development are now explicit. The inspectors' recommendation is that this condition is now met.

Following the review of the documentary evidence submitted, the inspection team are satisfied that the conditions set against the approval of the MA Social Work course is met.

Regulator decision

Conditions met.