

Inspection Report

Course provider: Solent University

Course approval: BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship

Inspection dates: 5th – 8th March 2024

Report date:	25 th April 2024
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	13 th June 2024
Date conditions met and approved:	28 th January 2025 (with the exception of condition set against standard 4.1b)
Date condition set against standard 4.1b met and approved:	29th September 2025

Contents

Introduction	3
What we do.....	3
Summary of Inspection	5
Language	5
Inspection.....	6
Meetings with students	6
Meetings with course staff.....	6
Meeting with people with lived experience of social work	6
Meetings with external stakeholders.....	6
Findings	6
Standard one: Admissions.....	7
Standard two: Learning environment.....	9
Standard three: Course governance, management and quality.....	12
Standard four: Curriculum assessment.....	15
Standard five: Supporting students	21
Standard six: Level of qualification to apply for entry onto the register.....	24
Proposed outcome.....	25
Conditions	25
Recommendations	26
Annex 1: Education and training standards summary.....	28
Regulator decision	35
Annex 2: Meeting of conditions.....	36
Findings	37

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 of social work and students. The inspectors then make recommendations to us about whether a course should be approved.
3. The process we undertake is described in our legislation; the Social Worker Regulations 2018¹, and the Social Work England [\(Education and Training\) Rules 2019](#).
4. You can find further guidance on our course change, approval and annual monitoring processes on our website.

What we do

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

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

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 to four day visit to the education provider. We then draft a report setting out what we found during the inspection and if and how our findings demonstrate that the course meets our standards.
11. The inspectors may recommend in this report that the course is approved with conditions, approved without conditions or that it does not meet the criteria for approval. Where the course has been previously approved we may also decide to withdraw approval.
12. A draft of this report is shared with the education provider, and once we have considered any comments or observations they may wish to provide, we make a final regulatory decision about the approval of the course.
13. The final decisions that we can make are as follows, that the course is approved without conditions, the course is approved with conditions or that the course does not meet the criteria for approval. The decision, and the report, are then published.
14. If the course is approved with conditions, we will write to the education provider setting out how they can demonstrate they have met the conditions, the action we will take once we decide that the conditions are met, and the action we will take if we decide the conditions are not met.

Summary of Inspection

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

Inspection ID	SSUR2
Course provider	Solent University
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship
Mode of study	Work-based learning
Maximum student cohort	20
Date of inspection	5 th – 8 th March 2024
Inspection team	Kate Springett (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Zoe Burke (Education Quality Assurance Operations Manager (observing)) Lyn Westcott (Lay Inspector) Lisa Brett (Registrant Inspector)

Language

16. In this document we describe Solent University as ‘the education provider’ or ‘the university’ and we describe the BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship as ‘the course’.

Inspection

17. A remote inspection took place from 5 - 8 March 2024. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, employers and people with lived experience of social work.

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

Conflict of interest

19. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

20. The inspection team met with students, four from year one of the BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship, and students from year two and three on the BA (Hons) Social Work course. Discussions included placement, support and assessments.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members including the Course Lead, Practice Coordinator, Admissions Tutor and teaching staff.

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 with the university for a varying number of years, the earliest being since 2011. Discussions included admissions and contributions to the course.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from employer and placement partners including staff from South West Advocacy Network, Christchurch and Poole Council, and Bournemouth Council.

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. Documentary evidence was provided in support of there being a holistic/multidimensional approach to admissions. Documentary evidence also outlined the make-up of the interview panel.

26. There was clarity around what the English requirements are to gain entry to the course, as well as it being clear that there are different types of assessments as part of the admissions process.

27. During the inspection, the inspection team were able to triangulate and were satisfied that entry to the course was confirmed by a holistic assessment process with employer contribution. However, it was unclear who makes up the interview panel. We heard evidence that the interview panel is made up of either an employer or person with lived experience of social work, alongside a member of academic staff, however the learner handbook presented prior to the inspection says that the panel usually comprises of representatives from the employer, an academic from the university and a service user who has lived experience of social work.

28. It was noted by the inspection team that not all employers choose to do a group activity, and the written exercise is chosen by employers. As a result, the inspection team concluded there is potential for lack of parity of opportunity for applicants.

29. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team agreed the standard is met, however they are making a recommendation in relation to standard 1.1. We [recommend](#) that the education provider is clear about the makeup of the interview panel, including the amount of people on the panel and who the panel consists of. We also recommend that if the written exercise continues to be selected by employers, there is a process in place to ensure equity and parity for applicants.

Standard 1.2

30. Documentary evidence was provided in the form of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy. The inspection team acknowledged that prior experience/learning is recognised, narrative provided outlined the process further advising that all applications for the award of credit through RPL are subject to formal academic scrutiny and are the responsibility of the RPL sub-committee of the Progression and Award Board. The award of RPL is based on the achievement of equivalent, not identical, learning outcomes. This means that the learning achieved should be equivalent in terms of the level, breadth, depth,

volume and currency. However, during meetings, the inspection team observed that not all those involved had a clear view of how this is assessed/considered.

31. Recognition of prior learning/experience was explored in the admissions staff meeting, and the employer partners and placement providers meeting. Despite having a university policy, the inspection team were informed that there is not set way to assess prior relevant experience for the apprenticeship as there are no set criteria. It was also established that the currency (in terms of age) of qualifications is not considered.

32. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard is met, however following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 1.2. We recommend that the education provider has a clear criteria or formalised framework for recognition of prior learning/experience which would inform their decision and provide a context by which they can respond to any students appealing and/or not being offered a place on the course. hello

Standard 1.3

33. Documentary evidence was provided to demonstrate that people with lived experience of social work are involved in the admissions process. Evidence provided included training information/documents.

34. During the inspection the inspection team were able to confirm with employers, placement providers and people with lived experience of social work that they are involved in the process.

35. Employers/placement providers were able to explain that they are involved in all aspects of admissions and examples were provided. People with lived experience of social work confirmed that their input to admissions is fully embraced and their contributions are valued equally.

36. The inspection team concluded that this standard is met.

Standard 1.4

37. Documentary evidence provided demonstrates that the education provider has an appropriate criminal convictions procedure and policy in place, the inspection team were also provided with evidence that Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are completed at enhanced level.

38. The inspection team met with course team who confirmed that students knew they had to update their 'declaration of suitability' at the beginning of terms.

39. The inspection team were provided with a copy of the Occupational Health and Wellbeing services External referral form and narrative outlined that health checks form

part of the of the on-boarding process, where applicants are invited to disclose any health issues so that the education provider can determine with the applicant how needs can be met in support of their studies. If health issues are disclosed, depending on their nature, the applicant will either be referred to 'Access Solent' or in exceptional circumstances, a referral made to the Head of Department for an Occupational Health Assessment, so that appropriate support can be determined.

40. The inspection team agreed that this standard is met.

Standard 1.5

41. Documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection demonstrated that the education provider has an equality policy. Evidence provided also included an Apprenticeship enrolment form which contains an 'equal opportunities' section, a candidate disclosure form in relation to health, and information accessible on the Solent website in relation to reasonable adjustments, access and provision.

42. Evidence was triangulated at the inspection in meetings with the admissions team and employer partners and placement providers. The inspection team agreed that this standard is met.

Standard 1.6

43. Narrative provided prior to the inspection demonstrated that information is provided on the website, as well as in the course handbook (which is given to applicants prior to enrolment).

44. Employers advised the inspection team that they go into the university and the university staff go into the workplace to talk to potential candidates.

45. As outlined in standard 1.2, following meetings with the education provider, the inspection team concluded that there was a lack of information in relation to recognition of prior learning and how it's assessed.

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

47. Documentary evidence was provided in the form of a student guide which demonstrates that apprentices complete 200 days of placement whilst on the course, this is split into one 70 days at level five and one 100 days at level six, with the addition of skills days.

The inspection team met with staff involved in practice based learning and placement provision, where it was explained that the 30 skills days are flexible. It is understood that apprentices opt-in to skills days, any skills days not attended will be added onto the placement term and there is currently no procedure in place for monitoring attendance for the skills days.

48. The inspection team felt that there is currently a lack of process and clarity on the requirement of skills days and who and/or how these will be monitored.

49. As students started the course in September 2023, placements and skills days are yet to begin. While there was acknowledgement during meetings that there is a requirement for contrasting placements, the inspection team heard differing responses to where the contrasting placement would be and what the criteria for that placement will be.

50. The inspection team didn't see evidence of a standardised system for tracking and monitoring of the skills days, where employers have optionality of whether apprentices join skills days or have additional placement days.

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

Standard 2.2

52. Documentary evidence was provided in the form of the Degree Apprenticeship level 5 placement guide which outlines learning. The inspection team met with students, practice educators and placement providers during the inspection.

53. The inspection team heard evidence and examples from the placement group supportive of the education providers monitoring, they also confirmed that the university look at standards and portfolios, as well as the level of skills/knowledge of students. Practice Educators advised that university monitor opportunities for students in tri-partite meetings.

54. In the meeting with students, positive feedback was provided in relation to placements, and explanations were provided in relation to how their learning develops from placement one to placement two.

55. Whilst the inspection team were not furnished with the level six placement guide prior to inspection, discussion during inspection assured the inspection team that the standard is met.

Standard 2.3

56. Documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection included an induction presentation and placement guide. The inspection team met with students and support services during the inspection and were able to triangulate evidence.

57. Support services confirmed that students can access support whilst off campus/on placement and examples were provided. Students were satisfied with support services and provided examples of support provided and the inspection team agreed that this standard is met.

Standard 2.4

58. Documentary evidence was provided which demonstrated learning needs for the different levels of study.

59. At the inspection, the team met with students who explained they are aware of responsibilities and expectations, and the inspection team were satisfied these are reasonable.

60. The inspection team also met with the senior management team who explained that students complete a quality assurance form at the end of their placement which is reviewed/audited.

61. The inspection team agreed that this standard is met.

Standard 2.5

62. In preparation for inspection, the inspection team were able to review the course structure which includes readiness for practice modules. The course structure details that two out of the three modules at level five must be passed prior to placement.

63. At the inspection, the inspection team met with the course team who explained that apprentices must pass all modules at level four before they can go on placement. In the meeting with employers, it was established that they considered the apprentices were prepared by the education provider prior to going on placement. This was triangulated with students who explained that they were prepared for placement and satisfied with the steps taken by the education provider to prepare for placement.

64. The inspection team agreed that this standard is met.

Standard 2.6

65. Prior to inspection, the inspection team were provided with documentary evidence to demonstrate that the education provider clearly tracks Practice Educators by using a monitoring form.

66. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met prior to inspection.

Standard 2.7

67. Documentary evidence was provided to demonstrate there is a whistleblowing policy in place. The inspection team were also provided with a copy of a student speak up policy which outlines a mechanism by which any student of the university can raise legitimate and genuine serious concerns about the perceived behaviour and activities of staff or other students within the university, without fear of victimisation or harassment or of a detrimental effect on his/her academic results. They also saw details of the complaints process.

68. The inspection team were satisfied that the policies was appropriate and clear to apprentices and thus agreed the standard is met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

69. The documentary evidence provided demonstrated how the course is managed and showed the staffing structure. Documentation provided included staff CVs and the roles/responsibilities of team members.

70. The inspection team heard evidence from the course team and senior management team, and they were satisfied that there are clear management processes and a governance plan in place.

71. The inspection team had questions around the education providers resourcing and whether this was sufficient. The course team were able to provide examples of how the team worked during key staff absence. The inspection team were reassured that, as a result staffing is managed and thus agreed the standard is met.

Standard 3.2

72. Documentary evidence was provided which outlines the expectation to Practice Educators to provide an appropriate range of learning opportunities, which would meet

both the professional standards and the education and training standards. The inspection team agreed that the placement documentation provided prior to the inspection is clear about roles/responsibilities or placement providers.

73. The education provider was able to provide evidence to demonstrate there is a process to follow when there is potential placement breakdown. Triangulation was attempted during the meeting with students (on the BA course), however the students did not have experience of placement breakdowns and did not present any issues about their placements.

74. The inspection team agreed that the standard is met.

Standard 3.3

75. Documentary evidence was provided which demonstrates that the education provider has a clear procedure and process for placement evaluation, additionally there is bi-annual internal feedback meetings to review feedback from placements.

76. The inspection team met with support services and the information provided was that students were responsive to the support on offer. It was explained that priority is given to apprentices at certain times of the day to ensure that support is available.

77. During the inspection, employers advised they are impressed with the support provided by the university, in relation to student health and wellbeing. The inspection team agreed that the standard is met.

Standard 3.4

78. Documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection demonstrates that employers are involved in the admissions process as well as being involved in monitoring and the management processes, such as the Stakeholders Forum. Terms of reference for the Practice Learning Coordinator's forum and minutes of meetings were also provided. The inspection team were able to meet with employers, who fed back they are heavily involved in the development of the course and the inspection team understood that practitioners deliver skills days and teaching.

79. The inspection team agreed that the standard is met.

Standard 3.5

80. Documentary evidence provided demonstrates that the education provider has clear monitoring structure in place, including detailed involvement from employers.

81. Evidence of minutes from meetings with people with lived experience and students were provided, however, these were for another undergraduate course, therefore the

inspection team were keen to meet with people with lived experience of social work and students, to be able to consider whether this standard is met.

82. Meetings were held with both groups. People with lived experience of social work were able to explain to the inspection team that they are involved at an operational level and in delivery of the course.

83. Student representatives confirmed that they are involved in evaluation/improvement of the course as they provide feedback which is acted upon by the education provider and examples were provided.

84. The inspection team agreed that the standard is met.

Standard 3.6

85. Documentary evidence was provided in the form of a strategy document.

86. The inspection team were able to triangulate evidence at the inspection during meetings with the course team and placement providers. The inspection team agreed that the apprenticeship is aligned to a clear strategy and there are no issues with capacity or placements.

87. The inspection team agreed that the standard is met.

Standard 3.7

88. Prior to inspection, the inspection team reviewed the Course Leader's CV and confirmed they are a registered social worker.

89. The inspection team were assured that this standard is met.

Standard 3.8

90. Documentary evidence provided by staff CVs demonstrated that the staff are experienced and appropriately qualified to deliver/teach on the degree apprenticeship.

91. The inspection team met with the senior management team. It was outlined that the course team is stable, with most staff having been in role for some time. It was advised there is an approved senior leadership post, which can be recruited to when/if required.

92. The inspection team were satisfied that consideration is given to staff to student ratios and were reassured that the university would consider spreading out programme lead roles, should cohort numbers increase.

93. The inspection team were assured that this standard is met.

Standard 3.9

94. Documentary evidence in relation to this standard was provided which demonstrates the education provider has policies and processes in terms of performance, progression and outcomes.

95. The inspection team requested the education provider provide external examiner reports to support the standard, but due to the relative newness of the course these were not available. However, despite this, during the inspection the course team were able to evidence that this was an area of strength, and many examples of evaluation were provided. Examples included there being various systems to track information, and this includes 'Access to Solent', 'Open Solent' and 'in the job' and 'off the job' trackers where students are supported with tracking their own information.

96. In addition to this, the inspection team met with the Senior Management Team who explained they use data in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and advised they monitor this data.

97. The inspection team were assured this standard is met.

Standard 3.10

98. Documentary evidence was provided to demonstrate the support given to Practice Educators and the inspection team felt this was good. However, prior to inspection there appeared to be gaps in the evidence in relation to what support is given to teaching staff on the course.

99. The inspection team met with the senior management team where they were informed about the workforce management system. The staff have specific time allocated for research and scholarly activity. They also heard that a number of the team already have PhDs, which involves active research, and there is one professor on the team.

100. It was further explained that new staff are supported to become fellows of higher education via a teaching course, which the inspectors felt is good practice in the sector.

101. The course team explained that they go out and learn from people who teach on skills days to develop their knowledge.

102. The inspection team were assured that this standard is met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

103. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence submitted which included the course specification, course handbook, and an example skills day session.

104. On review of the evidence the inspection team noted that in the course specification there was reference to being 'Able on qualification to achieve Social Work England qualification' rather than being eligible to apply to register with Social Work England.

105. The inspection team were made aware of changes that would be made to the course for the end point assessment (EPA) to align with changes implemented by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. The inspection team requested additional evidence from the course team to support these changes and discussed the changes during meetings with the education provider. However, they did not feel that the evidence adequately aligned with the requirements of the EPA and gateway or that it provided the necessary detail to apprentices about what to expect.

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

107. The inspection team were able to meet with employers and practitioners who provided evidence and examples of their involvement, including delivery of skills days which the inspectors were satisfied with.

108. People with lived experience of social work also met with the inspection team and explained that they are involved in delivery of the course including skills days and readiness for direct practice. The inspection team considered that there is a potential gap with people with lived experience of social work's involvement with the course at a strategic level. They were provided with Terms of Reference for, and minutes of Solent's Stakeholder Group for November 2023, but there was no detail of any future planning in this area and people with lived experience of social work were unable to provide any examples of experience in this area.

109. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 4.2 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 4.3

110. Documentary evidence was provided which demonstrated that the course is designed within the University's equality, diversity and inclusion policies.

111. At the inspection, the inspection team were able to triangulate when they met with various stakeholders. The Senior Management Team shared that students have their own gateway they can access and apply for grants/bursaries. The course provider are able to see what demographics are accessing services and this is supportive of equality, diversity and inclusion.

112. Employer partners and placement providers spoke highly of the education providers approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. People with lived experience of social work also spoke of being involved in modules where equality, diversity and inclusion is targeted.

113. The inspection team felt this was an area of strength and that the standard is met.

Standard 4.4

114. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team felt that there were gaps in evidence provided by the education provider in relation to the standard. Documentary evidence included course material, a copy of an external examiner report (for the BA), reading lists, and staff CVs but this left queries with the inspection team around currency and the use of contemporary themes within the course.

115. However, the inspection team felt discussions with students and library services were reassuring in relation to currency and students provided examples of using appropriately dated information/references.

116. Students felt they were well educated and prepared and resources are relevant and current. Students and the course team explained that contemporary themes are included in the learning, again giving examples.

117. The inspection team were satisfied from meeting with stakeholders and in reviewing CVs, that the course team are research active.

118. The inspection team agreed that the standard is met.

Standard 4.5

119. Documentary evidence provided demonstrates there is a clear connection of theory to practice within the module specifications. It is shown that placements provide a platform to apply concepts to enable evidence-based practice.

120. Examples of integrating theory and practice were provided by the course team during the inspection. This was triangulated in the meeting with students. Students spoke highly of the teaching staff and their learning in relation to integration of theory and practice. It was explained that what is learnt throughout the week on placement aligns with the theory taught by the academic staff at the university.

121. The inspection team felt this was an area of strength and were assured this the standard is met.

Standard 4.6

122. Documentary evidence provided demonstrated that interprofessional learning is included in the BA students' induction timetable. The inspection team felt it was unclear whether the apprenticeship students would attend this, and they were unsure if apprentices attend the entire induction period.

123. The inspection team appreciated that apprentices would have some interprofessional learning from attending placement, however wanted to gain more information from the education provider about further opportunities available to students.

124. The inspection team met with the course team and were informed that during the induction week apprentices do attend the session on interprofessional learning.

125. The inspection team were informed apprentices have the option to attend a skills day with nursing students. Whilst it is understood that the skills days bring in a mix of expertise, these are not mandatory, and the inspection team felt opportunities could be improved.

126. In the meeting with students, students felt this area could be developed more, and would welcome working with students from other courses such as Health or Law, where possible.

127. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to standard 4.6. We recommend that the course provided develops their interprofessional learning potential and pursues further opportunities to work with different courses.

Standard 4.7

128. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were provided with an example module descriptor, detailing the number of hours a student is expected to engage with learning on a module and indicative timetables. The inspection team didn't consider that the timetables adequately outlined the structured academic learning for the degree apprenticeship that aligned with the one day a week off the job learning for apprentices.

129. The inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 4.7 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 4.8

130. Documentary evidence was provided including the module assessment brief peer review document and internal moderation record, which demonstrates that the education provider has procedures in place to ensure that assessments are fairly marked and moderated.

131. The inspection team met with the course team who explained that there is marking criteria which guides their marking, and the criteria/rubrics are university wide and not specific to social work.

132. The inspection team heard evidence about a range of assessment types with students advising that as well as assignments, there are differing assessments such as role play activity.

133. The inspection team were assured the standard is met.

Standard 4.9

134. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection was a course specification for the BA and not specifically for the degree apprenticeship. The inspection team were unclear from the evidence whether or not all modules had to be passed before being able to begin placement.

135. The inspection team met with the course team who confirmed that the apprentices must pass level four prior to moving onto level five.

136. The course team were confident that the assessment criteria is appropriate for the level of study and is appropriately sequenced.

137. The inspection team were assured the standard is met.

Standard 4.10

138. Documentary evidence provided demonstrates that there are procedures for feedback opportunities and marking/moderation and the inspection team were confident that they would be able to recommend that the standard is met.

139. Evidence was triangulated at the inspection, in meeting with students they explained that feedback was informative and effective.

140. The inspection team met with the course team and felt assured that there are many feedback opportunities throughout the course.

141. The inspection team were assured the standard is met.

Standard 4.11

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

143. The education provider was unable to provide a current external examiner report with the course being newly run, however the inspection team were satisfied that the external examiner the education provider appointed is appropriately qualified, registered with Social Work England, and experienced to oversee the course assessment and marking methods.

144. The inspection team were assured that this standard is met.

Standard 4.12

145. Documentary evidence was provided in the form of an anonymised placement final report. The inspection team were satisfied that the education provider evidences there are systems in place to manage progression through assessment of practice and academic work. The inspection team noted that direct observation of practice is part of practice requirements.

146. Tripartite meetings were discussed in the meeting with staff involved in practice-based learning and placement provision and the inspection team were satisfied that student's progression is managed through these meetings.

147. The inspection team met with practice educators who explained that there was good training provided in relation to assessing students and the inspection team felt this was an area of strength.

148. The inspection team agreed that this standard is met.

Standard 4.13

149. Documentary evidence provided for this standard was module descriptors for all levels on the apprenticeship.

150. During the inspection, the inspection team met with the course team and heard about their research informed teaching approach which they were satisfied with.

151. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team noted that the age of some reading materials may not be appropriate, i.e. too old, however they were able to meet with library services and were reassured that teaching staff are continually updating their research knowledge and consideration is given to the currency of reading materials.

152. The inspection team considered that modules are designed to enable students to develop evidence informed social work practice. Mapping against knowledge and skills and research modules inform this development in students. On meeting with students, the inspection team triangulated information provided by the course team and library services. Students felt that the teaching staff research skills were strong.

153. The inspection team agreed that this standard is met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

154. Documentary evidence provided by the education provider demonstrates the university have a range of support services and documentation is detailed. The support ranges across various areas such as disability, mental health, wellbeing and grants/bursaries.

155. Careers advice and support is available to students, and this is evidenced within the student handbook. This ranges from career appointments to workshops throughout the academic year.

156. The inspection team met with pastoral support services. The support team explained that students have access to an online service which includes mental health services covering counselling, CBT, social prescribing, and single session intervention.

157. The inspection team met with the course team to understand if and how apprentices know about support on offer to them. The response demonstrated that there are various ways this is communicated including in welcome week, online on the course page and during tutorial contact.

158. The inspection team noted that occupational health referrals are from the course staff and whilst the service is available, it appears to be discreet and not accessible to all.

159. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 5.1 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 5.2

160. Documentary evidence was provided demonstrating that students have support from tutors, this is contained within the Social Work Student Guide, and was triangulated during the meeting with academic support services.

161. The inspection team explored whether or not students access support whilst off campus. In the meeting with students, the response was positive in relation to accessing support with the course.

162. The inspection team agreed that this standard is met.

Standard 5.3

163. Documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection included an annual student declaration form, as well as a fitness to practise policy, criminal convictions policy and disciplinary procedure.

164. During the inspection, the inspection team triangulated with admissions staff where they confirmed the student declaration is revisited prior to students starting placement, which students sign to say there is no change to their circumstances. It was also confirmed that the DBS check is to an enhanced level.

165. The inspection team met with the course team during the inspection where they were satisfied from discussions there is a clear process for making suitability decisions, and there is a designated safeguarding lead.

166. The inspection team were assured that this standard is met.

Standard 5.4

167. Documentary evidence provided demonstrates that there is support available to students with disabilities and this is outlined to students in the student guide/handbook.

168. The inspection team met with learning support staff who explained that there are funds available to support those with disabilities, and there are processes in place to provide the support.

169. The information provided by learning support staff was triangulated during the meeting with students, where a specific example was provided showing a high level of support to a student, which included reasonable adjustments being made.

170. The inspection team were assured that this standard is met.

Standard 5.5

171. Documentary evidence provided includes resources available to students such as placement information, assignments briefs and grade marking/scales. There is also a virtual learning environment available to students which provides a range of information which is course specific.

172. The inspection team met with the course team where the transition from student to social worker was discussed. The course team were able to explain that they embed information about the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) into their delivery as well as holding employability sessions during the final year of the course.

173. The inspection team triangulated with students who felt well informed about all aspects of the course and the transition to becoming a registered social worker. Students that the inspection team met with advised that they felt well prepared for practice and said that the university could not have done any more to prepare them for placement. They also considered that learning on theory is excellent, relevant and up to date.

174. The inspection team were assured that this standard is met.

Standard 5.6

175. Documentary evidence for this standard was provided which demonstrates students are made aware of mandatory aspects of the course. Information provided to students is that 170 days placement as well as 30 skills days are mandatory.

176. Expectations on attendance is outlined in the student guide and there are processes in place for if attendance falls below the expected level.

177. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team noted the education provider has provided potentially conflicting information in relation to the skills days and the requirement to attend. The learner handbook states that the students will have the option of attending skills days with agreement from the employer.

178. The inspection team met with staff involved in practice based learning and placement provision. They were advised that there is a 70 day and a 100 day placement along with 30 skills days. There is an option for skills days to be missed if it is considered that it is not required, but any days missed would be added on to the number of required placement days a student would have to complete. A combination of placement days and skills days, equating to 200 days, are mandatory.

179. The inspection team were assured that this standard is met.

Standard 5.7

180. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrates that there is a process in place for providing feedback to students. The education provider provided a timetable for when feedback is due to students throughout the year. There is also evidence of a process for helping students if they are at risk of failing a placement.

181. The inspection team met with the course team who explained that the format for providing feedback is university wide and not specific to Social Work and they have received training on providing feedback on assessments.

182. The inspection team understood that the course team work together in relation to giving feedback and they share good practice. The inspection team were satisfied that feedback on placement activities is well documented in the placement portfolios.

183. The inspection team triangulated with students who fed back that that feedback was on time and helpful, and further to this, they are aware of assessment criteria.

184. The inspection team were assured that this standard is met.

Standard 5.8

185. Documentary evidence provided demonstrates that there is an Academic Appeals Policy detailed in documentation for students.

186. The inspection team were satisfied this standard was met prior to the inspection.

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

Standard 6.1

187. As the qualifying course is a BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship, the inspection team agreed that this standard is met.

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

Conditions for approval are set if there are areas of a course that do not currently meet our standards. Conditions 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	1.6	The education provider will provide evidence that: a. There are clear criteria for recognition of prior learning. b. It is made clear to students what prior learning is considered/accepted.	13 th August 2024	Paragraph 43
2	2.1	The education provider will provide evidence to show: a. a process for monitoring the attendance of apprentices at skills days, or additional placement days required, ensuring there is equity in experience for apprentices. b. the criteria for contrasting placements that ensures all stakeholders understand what the requirements of the placements are.	13 th August 2024	Paragraph 47

3	4.1	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates: a. The education provider has amended their course specification to state that on completion of the course the student will be eligible to apply for Social Work England registration. b. that apprentices understand the changes that are being made to the End Point Assessment and that documentation fully reflects the changes being made.	13 th August 2024	Paragraph 103
4	4.2	The education provider demonstrates the involvement of people with lived experience of social work at a strategic level on the course.	13 th August 2024	Paragraph 107
5	4.7	The education provider will provide a timetable that demonstrates the number of hours that apprentices spent in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator sufficient to ensure that students meet the required level of competence.	13 th August 2024	Paragraph 128
6	5.1	The education provider will provide evidence that all students are aware of how they can access occupational health services and that they are available if required.	13 th August 2024	Paragraph 154

Recommendations

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

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	1.1	The inspectors are recommending that the education provider is clear about the makeup of the interview panel, including the amount of people on the panel and who the panel consists of. We also recommend that if the written exercise continues to	Paragraph 25

		be selected by employers, there is a process in place to ensure equity and parity for applicants.	
2	1.2	The inspectors are recommending the education provider has a clear criteria or formalised framework for recognition of prior learning/experience which would inform their decision and provide a context by which they can respond to any students appealing and/or not being offered a place on the course.	Paragraph 30
3.	4.6	The inspectors are recommending that the course provider develops their interprofessional learning potential and pursues further opportunities further opportunities for social work apprentices to work and learn alongside students from other disciplines when not on placement.	Paragraph 122

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

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

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
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 current knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
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.	☒	☐	☐
3.5 Ensure that regular and effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems are in place, and that these involve	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
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 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,	☐	☒	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
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 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.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
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	☐	☒	☐
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.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
5.4 Make supportive and reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments to enable them to progress through their course and meet the professional standards, in accordance with relevant legislation.	☒	☐	☐
5.5 Provide information to students about their curriculum, practice placements, assessments and transition to registered social worker including information on requirements for continuing professional development.	☒	☐	☐
5.6 Provide information to students about parts of the course where attendance is mandatory.	☒	☐	☐
5.7 Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students on their progression and performance in assessments.	☒	☐	☐
5.8 Ensure there is an effective process in place for students to make academic appeals.	☒	☐	☐
Level of qualification to apply for entry onto the register			
6.1 The threshold entry route to the register will normally be a bachelor's degree with honours in social work.	☒	☐	☐

Regulator decision

Approved with conditions.

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

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	1.6	The education provider will provide evidence that: a. There are clear criteria for recognition of prior learning b. It is made clear to students what prior learning is considered/accepted.	Condition met
2	2.1	The education provider will provide evidence to show: a. a process for monitoring the attendance of apprentices at skills days, or additional placement days required, ensuring there is equity in experience for apprentices. b. the criteria for contrasting placements that ensures all stakeholders understand what the requirements of the placements are.	Condition met
3	4.1	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates: a. The education provider has amended their course specification to state that on completion of the course the student will be eligible to apply for Social Work England registration. b. that apprentices understand the changes that are being made to the End Point Assessment and that	4.1: A – condition met B – condition not met

		documentation fully reflects the changes being made.	
4	4.2	The education provider demonstrates the involvement of people with lived experience of social work at a strategic level on the course.	Condition met
5	4.7	The education provider will provide a timetable that demonstrates the number of hours that apprentices spent in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator sufficient to ensure that students meet the required level of competence.	Condition met
6	5.1	The education provider will provide evidence that all students are aware of how they can access occupational health services and that they are available if required.	Condition met

Findings

This conditions review was undertaken as a result of conditions set during course.

With respect to the condition set against standard 1.6, the student handbook was provided. This provides applicants with the relevant information on recognition of prior learning, including a definition of experiential and accredited prior learning and credits. In addition to this, a 'Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer' policy was provided and this demonstrates how PRL is considered.

With respect to the conditions set against standard 2.1 the course provider provided the employer handbook, as well as narrative to show and explain how attendance of days spent in practice learning settings is monitored, and the contingencies in place for when a day is missed. In relation to stakeholders understanding what contrasting placement requirements are, the employer handbook was provided which provides sufficient information on this topic.

With respect to the conditions set against standard 4.1, the course provider has provided evidence which demonstrates the course specification has been amended with the correct wording on eligibility. However, the course provider has been unable to evidence changes have been made which demonstrates that apprentices understand the changes that are being made to the End Point Assessment and that documentation fully reflects the changes being made.

The course provider has informed the inspection team that some work is still being undertaken with stakeholders around moderating the curriculum, in advance of the start

year 3 teaching in 2025/26. The course provider has plans to meet with relevant stakeholders in May 2025 in relation to the same. The inspection team recommend that the deadline for providing evidence of meeting condition 4.1b should be extended.

With respect to the condition set against standard 4.2, information was provided on the Solent Social Work Stakeholders Forum. This sets out engagement by all stakeholders in strategic development of the social work provision at Solent University, this includes people with lived experience, as the condition required.

With respect to the condition set against standard 4.7, the course provided have explained how each module is broken down in relation to timetabling. They confirmed teaching comprises of 6 hours per day, with a total teaching time of 6 weeks per module.

With respect to the condition set against standard 5.1, the student handbook was submitted which provides university wide information on how to access occupational health. Additionally, the inspectors were directed to the university wide careers service, which is available to students on the programme.

Regulator decision

Conditions met, with the exception of the condition set against standard 4.1b.

A new deadline for meeting the condition set against standard 4.1b is agreed, and this must be met by 13 June 2025.

Annex 3: 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	4.1b	The education provider will provide evidence that apprentices understand the changes that are being made to the End Point Assessment and that documentation fully reflects the changes being made.	Condition met

Findings

This conditions review was undertaken as a result of conditions set during the inspection of the BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship.

With respect to the condition set against standard 4.1, the course provider has provided evidence which demonstrates they have informed apprentices of changes made to the End Point Assessment.

Evidence provided includes minutes from a course committee meeting where a student representative attended and was informed of the changes.

The course lead has informed Social Work England that the student representative shared the information from the meeting with all students/apprentices on the cohort. The course lead also communicated to Social Work England that he verbally told each apprentice about the changes.

The changes introduced by the university to satisfy the IfATE changes made to the End Point Assessment, included the introduction of a Gateway to Qualifying module. Throughout the review of the conditions several changes have been made to the module descriptor as the inspectors agreed the original version was not accurate and was misleading for students.

The inspectors agree that the university has communicated the change to the End Point Assessment to the apprentices.

Regulator decision

Condition met.

In reaching a decision the regulator has reviewed observations made by the inspectors in relation to the condition set against standard 4.1 and has carefully considered whether this standard is now met. The regulator is satisfied that whilst it is unclear whether the changes made fully adhered to IfATE standards, sufficient steps have been taken to demonstrate that the condition and standard has been met.