



Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Winchester

Course approval: MA Social Work Degree Apprenticeship

Inspection dates: 14-16 January 2025

Report date:	24 April 2025
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	08 May 2025
Date conditions met and approved:	

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	7
Standard one: Admissions.....	7
Standard two: Learning environment	9
Standard three: Course governance, management and quality.....	12
Standard four: Curriculum assessment.....	16
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	36
Annex 2: Meeting of conditions	36
Findings	36

Introduction

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

What we do

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

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

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

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

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

11. The inspectors may recommend in this report that the course is approved with conditions, without conditions or that it does not meet the criteria for approval.

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

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

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

Summary of Inspection

15. Course details: The University of Winchester ('the university') wish to run a MA Social Work Degree Apprenticeship.

Inspection ID	UWICPP469
Course provider	University of Winchester
Validating body (if different)	N/A
Course inspected	MA Social Work Degree Apprenticeship
Mode of Study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	30
Proposed first intake	September 2025
Date of inspection	14-16 January 2025
Inspection team	Kate Springett (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Lainy Russell (Lay Inspector) Michael Isles (Registrant Inspector)

Language

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

Inspection

17. An onsite inspection took place from 14-16 January 2025 at the University of Winchester, where the education provider is based. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, employers and people with lived experience of social work.

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

Conflict of interest

19. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

20. The inspection team met with students from all levels on the BSc Social Work course and the BA Apprenticeship. Discussions included; the admissions process, student involvement in their courses, attendance, multidisciplinary learning, and support.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff including the programme lead, senior lecturers and the placement coordinator.

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 current social work courses as well as the proposed new programme. Discussions included their involvement in the admissions process, equality diversity and inclusion (EDI) and their involvement in the social work programmes.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including from Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council and West Berkshire Children's Services.

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 inspectors felt that the documentary evidence provided prior to inspection sufficiently met the standard. Narrative explained applicants underwent a skills scan which was designed to assess English, Math's and ICT functional skills. Additionally applicants were required to have a first degree 2.2 and above in a relevant subject, and have social care experience. The inspection team felt the documentary evidence determined that applicants met the competencies set out in this standard.

26. During the inspection, the inspection team triangulated information with various stakeholder groups, and agreed that based on conversations with the course team, employer partners and students, the application process was robust and appropriate.

27. The inspection team agreed the standard was met.

Standard 1.2

28. Narrative evidence provided prior to inspection stated that it was a requirement that students were employed in a relevant job to undertake the apprenticeship.

29. During the inspection, employer partners were able to explain what the minimum requirement/experience was required, and students explained how the course provider considered which level/year of the course they entered on to, based on their experience.

30. The inspection team felt it was clear that applicants' prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions processes, and agreed the standard was met.

Standard 1.3

31. Prior to the inspection, narrative was provided which stated that employers and experts by experience were involved in the admissions process. The course provider gave examples of involvement which included but was not limited to; interviews, review of the process's, written work, and initial assessment skills scanning.

32. The inspection team agreed documentary evidence demonstrated how people with lived experience of social work (PWLE) were involved and a document for the group exercise was provided which explained their involvement. However there was no documentary evidence which confirmed involvement of employers/placement providers. Despite this, given the course was an apprenticeship it was clear employers and placement providers were involved in the admissions process as employers were responsible for putting applicants forward for the programme.

33. During the inspection, the inspection team spoke with PWLE who confirmed they were involved in the admissions process, and they reported feeling valued in their role.

34. Employer partners also confirmed their involvement in admissions and explained how they consider who to put forward for the programme.

35. The inspection team agreed the standard was met.

Standard 1.4

36. Narrative evidence provided stated that all applicants were DBS enhanced checked as part of their employment. Documentary evidence demonstrated that the course provider and employer partners communicated when declarations were made, and these were seriously considered and discussed.

37. There was also documentary evidence provided which demonstrated there was an annual process for declarations, and when the inspection team met with students on similar courses, they were aware of the forms they had to complete about suitability.

38. The inspection team agreed the standard was met.

Standard 1.5

39. The university wide EDI policy was provided as documentary evidence for this standard. The policy mentioned tailored support for learners with disabilities and under-representation.

40. During the inspection, the inspection team heard the university had a system for monitoring data, and they were working closely with employers in inclusivity.

41. The senior management team also made reference to how they were working on widening participation, and when the inspection team met with PWLE and the admissions staff, they confirmed they had EDI training.

42. The inspection team agreed the standard was met.

Standard 1.6

43. Prior to inspection, the course provider directed the inspection team to website links for similar social work provision at the university. Whilst the inspection team felt the information provided was informative, it was not specific to the proposed course.

44. Aside from the university website, there was an array of relevant information provided via other sources and during the inspection the course provider, employer partners and students all talked about open days, events, online and social media information.

45. Students on other social work courses felt that they got all the information they needed, and they were clear about the process and requirements.

46. The inspectors felt that it would be necessary for the course provider to create a webpage specific for the proposed course, as this would enable applicants to have all the information they need to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the course.

47. 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

48. Documentary and narrative evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrated that there were two 100 day placements on the proposed course which made up the 200 days in practice learning settings.

49. It was advised that placements were contrasting, and this was triangulated and confirmed when the inspection team met with employer partners and placement providers.

50. Narrative evidence stated that the placement providers provided statutory complex work, and statutory social work tasks and the inspection team were satisfied this was an accurate representation of the placements. This was also supported during the inspection as the inspection team heard how placements were supplied by local authorities and involved statutory tasks.

51. The inspection team agreed the standard was met.

Standard 2.2

52. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection referred to an existing social work course, however the inspection team felt confident this would apply to, and not differ for the proposed programme.

53. Documentary evidence included examples of learning opportunities which the inspection team felt was sufficient, as well as an ofsted report concluding the quality of education on the current social work provision was good. Additionally it demonstrated that the mid way reports ensured students were on track with their placement and were developing adequate knowledge and skills.

54. The inspection team were able to meet with stakeholders to not only triangulate but gather evidence on this standard. They felt that collaboration with employers partners and placement providers was strong, and the meetings allowed discussion of quality of placements and opportunities for learning.

55. The inspection team also heard there was an emphasis on stretching students learning and agreed that the course provider was able to provide practice learning opportunities that enable students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards.

56. The inspection team agreed the standard was met.

Standard 2.3

57. Documentary and narrative evidence was provided in support of this standard. The course provider evidenced having a practice learning agreement as well as tripartite meetings. The course provider explained that the learning agreement meeting outlined learning opportunities, support, induction and assessment of practice. The inspection team triangulated with employers that the agreements and meetings were in place.

58. The inspection team felt that there were clear lines of communication between the course provider, placement providers and students, and this contributed to ensuring that the requirements of the standard were satisfied, as well as the formal processes which were in place.

59. The inspection team agreed the standard was met.

Standard 2.4

60. Limited documentary evidence was provided prior to inspection in support of this standard, and therefore the inspection team were keen to have conversations with relevant stakeholders.

61. The documentary evidence provided was a tripartite meeting document which demonstrated consideration could be given to ensuring that the work students did on placement was appropriate for their stage of education and training.

62. When meeting with practice educators (PEs), it was made clear that tasks given to students were bespoke to the individual, and there was ongoing evaluation to ensure the work was appropriate.

63. Staff involved in placement provision advised the inspection team that there was good communication between the placement provider and the course provider and there were various mechanisms in place to ensure this standard was met, these included tripartite meetings, skills coaches, personal academic tutors, and the practice learning agreement.

64. As this was a new course and yet to commence, the evidence provided was relevant to other social work provision, however the inspection team were satisfied this would apply to the course under consideration.

65. The inspection team agreed the standard was met.

Standard 2.5

66. In narrative provided prior to inspection, the course provider stated that learners on the MA Social Work Apprenticeship undertook a Readiness to Practice module which assessed their readiness. The inspection team also noted that all applicants were DBS enhanced checked as part of their employment, as stated in standard 1.4.

67. The module descriptor for the readiness for practice module was provided which explained that the module was non-credit bearing, however it was a requirement for students to pass the module.

68. The inspection team noted that there was little indication of assessment on the module descriptor, however when the inspection team met with PWLE, they heard that students on current social work provisions at the university did presentations, case studies, and group work as part of the module.

69. The inspection team felt that the aural evidence heard was adequate and would apply to the proposed course. The inspection team were satisfied the standard was met.

Standard 2.6

70. Narrative provided prior to inspection stated that PEs are all employed by their respective local authorities. The inspection team understood from narrative that the course provider had confidence that PEs were on the register and that they had the

relevant and current knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning, however they did not have oversight of this, as the standard required.

71. The inspection team were keen to gain clarity on this during the inspection and met with the course team to discuss the same. It was explained that there was a robust process in place for checking offsite (independent) PEs, however employer partners were relied upon for oversight of onsite (local authority employed) PEs and the local authority monitored this through their own internal systems.

72. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against 2.6 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard 2.7

73. The inspection team reviewed documentary evidence prior to inspection which demonstrated appropriate policies were in place. The inspection team understood that the policies were available for placement providers and students, and support was available for any students who used the policies.

74. When the inspection team met with students on the current social work provision, they confirmed that they were aware of the policies and had an understanding of them.

75. When meeting with employer partners, the inspection team heard that the placement providers had their own whistleblowing policies, however they were not aware of the university whistleblowing policy.

76. The inspection team agreed the standard was met, however following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to 2.7. We recommend the course provider share their whistleblowing policy with placement providers to ensure there are no contradictions in the policy.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

77. Documentary evidence provided in support of this standard included documents around structure, however the inspection team were not provided with evidence specific to the proposed programme.

78. Despite this, there was narrative which gave an explanation of management and governance of programmes, including links to school and faculty, and the university center for degree apprenticeships.

79. The inspection team were keen to meet with the senior leadership team (SLT) during the inspection week in order to explore and clarify the organisational structure.

80. The SLT gave the inspection team a relevant and detailed explanation as to how the proposed course linked up, and the inspection team felt there was a thread from the course team to the pro-vice-chancellor (PVC), who was responsible for two departments which aligned to social work.

81. The inspection team agreed that the SLT were knowledgeable and involved on the programme, and it appeared there was clear communication between staff.

82. They also heard that although there was a clear process in place in relation to resourcing and staff/student ratios, this was subjective and if additional staff were required this would be considered.

83. The inspection team agreed that following meeting the SLT, they understood there were clear lines of accountability, and it was clear how the governance structures fed into the university corporate structures.

84. The inspection team were satisfied that the standard was.

Standard 3.2

85. Documentary evidence provided demonstrated there was a Partnership Agreement which gave an overview of the responsibilities of placement providers and the university.

86. The inspection team felt that it was necessary to meet with stakeholders to triangulate evidence in relation to the proposed programme.

87. The inspection team felt that based on conversations with the course team, employer partners and PEs there was evidence of a robust partnership where all positive learning experiences for students was provided, and communication in relation to this happened both formally and informally. It was also understood that if a stakeholder had issues, they did not wait for formal meetings to raise concerns.

88. The inspection team heard examples of placement breakdown in relation to current social work provision, and were satisfied this would be replicated on the proposed programme.

89. Additionally, the inspection team felt that employer partners and PEs were knowledgeable, experienced and supportive.

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

Standard 3.3

91. Documentary evidence provided demonstrated there was a wide variety of provision for students to access, all of which was clearly signposted on the course providers website and within the onboarding process with students at the university. Additionally, employers had their own policies and their own support provision.

92. The inspection team understood that the tripartite meetings ensured that the assessment of students functioning in placement was continuing, and appropriate.

93. Based on meetings throughout the week, the inspection team felt that students on current social work provision were well supported, and current students confirmed that they knew about health questionnaires, wellbeing and risk policies.

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

Standard 3.4

95. Documentary evidence provided in support of this standard included employer invites to teaching sessions and various presentations, as well as workshops on similar programmes.

96. As the proposed program is an apprenticeship, employers were responsible for providing applicants, and it was confirmed during the inspection that employers were involved in the interview process.

97. It was also demonstrated that employers were responsible for providing PEs and there was documentary evidence of a good working partnership.

98. Additionally, there was evidence of sessions being run with employers to consider the overall approach of the programme and best practice for working together.

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

Standard 3.5

100. Various documentary evidence was provided for this standard, which included but was not limited to; Student QAPL (Quality assurance in practice learning), PE QAPL, evidence of meetings with partners and service users' recruitment activities and collaboration.

101. In addition to evidence presented in standard 3.4 above, employers informed the inspection team that when feedback was given to the course provider, this was addressed and discussed.

102. The inspection team met with PWLE during the inspection, and it was clear that they felt able to contribute to the programme. The inspection team noted that members of the group were experienced, and they reported feeling valued. They explained that they were asked to contribute to different activities on the programme, and had a role in the course evaluation and improvement.

103. When the inspection team met with students, they heard that there was opportunity to be involved in the current social work provision thoroughly and this involved all aspects of delivery and improvement. The inspection team felt satisfied this would be replicated in the proposed programme.

104. The inspection team agreed there was evidence of relevant involvement of all stakeholders and agreed that the standard was met.

Standard 3.6

105. Prior to the inspection the course provider stated in their mapping that the apprenticeship was an increasingly popular route for employers and employees, and there was data to back this up. The inspection team identified there were relationships with local authorities which was essential for securing placements.

106. When the inspection team met with employer partners, it was evidenced through discussions that the course provider had consideration of student numbers and placement capacity.

107. The senior leadership team also advised the inspection team that the course provider had a strong relationship with local authorities, and they reviewed suitability of numbers annually through continuous monitoring with practice partners.

108. The inspection team agreed the course provider carefully considered student numbers both in relation to placement capacity and staff to student ratios, and were assured the standard was met.

Standard 3.7

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

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

Standard 3.8

111. Prior to inspection, the inspection team reviewed the academic staff CVs, which showed they were appropriately qualified. Additionally, the inspection team felt that the staff CPD ensured continued quality and knowledge of the teaching staff.

112. Narrative provided prior to inspection explained that there was a strong emphasis on collaboration with employer partners which contributed to an enriched curriculum and ensured that staff remain connected to real-world practice. The inspection team felt satisfied with this from speaking with stakeholders, and agreed that the standard was met.

Standard 3.9

113. Documentary and narrative evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrated the course provider had a data platform which was utilised to collate data, and data collected included grades/student performance data as well as EDI data.

114. Narrative advised that grades were collected via an internal interactive learning environment which enabled module leaders to have an overview of apprentice's progress. Students were also able to track their own progress and they reported this was useful.

115. The course provider advised that progression was monitored regularly to ensure that students met the required academic and professional standards.

116. When the course team met with the senior leadership team, it was made clear that data was analysed to identify trends for improvement, all learners had equal opportunities to succeed, and there was also a focus on widening participation.

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

Standard 3.10

118. Documentary evidence provided included a spreadsheet showing CPD undertaken by course team members, which demonstrated staff were keeping their knowledge current.

119. The inspection team were keen to hear about how the course team were supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice as part of the inspection and heard from the senior management team that there was a workload allocation system, and staff members were given time to engage in research and attend events such as conferences.

120. The course team also provided examples of CPD which included tribunal work, research and relevant voluntary work. The inspection team felt satisfied the course team were supported to maintain their knowledge by the university, and agreed the standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

121. During the inspection week, the course provider provided documentary evidence which demonstrated that the proposed modules were mapped to the professional standards. The SLT also explained how the professional standard were embedded into the course.

122. When the course team met with the inspectors, they explained that the learning journey was an individualised one which was adapted to students' specific needs, and further to this, PEs explained how they ensured that training was appropriate, current and relevant.

123. The inspection team felt that the modules intended for the programme were clear, appropriate, in a sequential manner, and enabled students to demonstrate that they had the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards.

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

Standard 4.2

125. Narrative evidence provided prior to inspection explained that, PWLE, practitioners and employers were meaningfully involved in the course, including the design, development and review of the curriculum. The course documentation provided stated that the course provider worked in partnership with various local authorities to ensure that the curriculum and training was relevant to the demands of social work practice.

126. During the inspection week, when meeting with PWLE the inspection team heard examples of when suggestions were made to improve the course, and changes were made as a result.

127. Employers also explained that they had been involved in co-producing the course, and they met twice a year to discuss any changes to the provision.

128. The inspection team understood from both documentary and aural evidence that all stakeholders were involved in development and review of the curriculum and stakeholders felt involved and valued.

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

Standard 4.3

130. The inspection team agreed there was evidence of EDI throughout the course as there was a focus on EDI in course modules, for example, human rights were taught as part of the law module.

131. When the inspection team met with staff from the course team, they heard about how they used their research base to enable students to develop, in terms of

experiencing human rights and equality and employers and PEs told the inspection team that EDI policies were integrated into supervision sessions with students.

132. Further to this, the inspection team met with support services, which demonstrated that there were processes in place for supporting students on the course who had health impairments, and examples of reasonable adjustments were given.

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

Standard 4.4

134. Prior to inspection, evidence was presented which demonstrated the course provider ensured educators maintained professional practice, and as mentioned in standard 4.3, staff were able to use their research base to inform their teaching.

135. When the inspection team met with the course team, they heard how they kept up to date with their own specialist areas. The course team also understood the importance of keeping up to date as students were working in practice and needed to be aware of developments.

136. The inspection team agreed that the course team had vast experience and kept up to date with research, legislation, government policy and best practice.

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

Standard 4.5

138. Prior to inspection, documentary evidence was provided which demonstrated that the course provider ensured there was integration of theory and practice on the course, and on similar social work provision, and the external examiner had provided positive feedback on this.

139. As part of the inspection, the inspection team met with PEs and students who were able to provide evidence in support of this standard.

140. The inspection team understood that the PEs felt it was integral for the students to be able to apply the theory in their workplace. PEs reported that they ensured students thought about theory when practising and examples were given about how they achieved this.

141. Students explained that even when they did not identify a link between theory and practice, their PE helped and supported in their understanding of this.

142. Despite aural evidence being for current social work provision, the inspection team felt this would also apply to the proposed course, and the inspection team were satisfied that the standard was met.

Standard 4.6

143. Prior to inspection, documentary evidence was provided in support of this standard. Evidence included planned sessions with other disciplines, multi-disciplinary teaching mapping, and email correspondence in relation to planned multi-disciplinary learning. The inspection team felt the documentary evidence was comprehensive and the standard was met subject to triangulation with stakeholders.

144. When the inspection team met with students, it was clear students knew they were part of multi-disciplinary teams, and they gave examples of how social work students could work with other industries. Additionally, students said there was a multi-disciplinary day where primary education, nursing, and simulations of working together were put into place.

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

Standard 4.7

146. Documentary and narrative evidence provided the inspection team with assurance that the course structure provided students with sufficient structured learning hours, under the direction of an educator, which enabled them to meet the required level of competence. The university also has an attendance policy which ensures that students are completing a sufficient amount of learning.

147. In addition to structured academic learning, students must have completed 200 days in a practice learning setting.

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

Standard 4.8

149. Documentary evidence provided outlined assessment methods, and it was advised by the university that the assessment methods went through a scrutiny panel for approval. Additionally the external examiner verified the effectiveness of the assessments.

150. The assessment methods did not include exams, however they were varied and included; presentations, portfolios and written assignments.

151. The inspection team felt that the breadth of assessment methods was adequate and were designed to ensure that students developed the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the Professional Standards.

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

Standard 4.9

153. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection included programme specifications, and briefs for all the modules. The inspection team felt that assessments were sequenced appropriately and were logical.

154. Students on similar social work provision fed back that they felt assessments were compressed, however they raised this with the course team, and as a result of feedback, this was changed.

155. The inspection team agreed that assessments were mapped to the curriculum and were appropriately sequenced to match students' progression through the course.

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

Standard 4.10

157. Documentary evidence submitted for this standard demonstrated that feedback was given formally at various points on the course, including feedback on observations, academic work and placement.

158. During the inspection, the inspection team met with relevant stakeholder in relation to evidence gathering for this standard.

159. The inspection team heard that feedback was given on a regular basis, via supervisions, 1:1s, tripartite meetings, and on assessments.

160. Students on similar social work provision reported that they knew their progress, and feedback was easily accessible, useful and timely.

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

Standard 4.11

162. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the course team CVs. The CVs demonstrated teaching staff had the appropriate expertise to undertake student assessments.

163. The inspection team were satisfied that the external examiner for the education provider appointed was appropriately qualified, registered with Social Work England, and experienced to oversee the course assessment and marking methods.

164. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

165. Documentary evidence confirmed that there were systems in place to manage students' progression, and students also had access to their progress on the VLE and the inspection team felt this was accessible and useful.

166. When the inspection team met with PEs, they outlined that they had access to students' progress which they found useful, and they were able to give feedback to students both formally and informally.

167. The inspection team heard that progress boards were also in place to meet mandatory requirements, including practice based learning and academic requirements.

168. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

169. Documentary evidence provided demonstrated that there were research focus modules on the proposed course, and additionally staff completed relevant research, and used this in their teaching.

170. Additionally, students on the proposed programme were to work with other disciplines, contributing to their overall knowledge and positive approach to practice.

171. The inspection team were also satisfied that there was an emphasis on relating theory to practise on the course, as mentioned in standard 4.5.

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

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

173. Prior to inspection, the course provider demonstrated they met the requirements of this standard by providing website links to support services which included counselling services, occupational health services, and careers advice and support.

174. The inspection team felt that the standard was met based on documentary evidence, however, were still keen to triangulate this during the inspection.

175. The inspection team met with support staff who were able to confirm the services were all in place and were accessible to students. The inspection team felt that support services were comprehensive and there was a thread between different services. It was also confirmed that students were able to self-refer to the services, if required.

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

Standard 5.2

177. Documentary evidence presented demonstrated that students had access to a personal academic tutor (PAT) and there were plans for the academic skills team to support students. It was explained in narrative that academic skills provided teaching

sessions and workshops for students to attend, which were for developing general academic skills.

178. During the inspection week, the inspection team heard that there was support in both academic settings, and at placement and this was provided by PATs, work based supervisors, skills coaches and PEs.

179. The inspection team also heard from library services and were satisfied there was adequate academic resources for students to use.

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

Standard 5.3

181. As referenced in standard 1.4 the course provider provided documentary evidence which demonstrated there was an annual process for declarations, this was in relation to students' conduct.

182. The course provider stated in narrative evidence that students' ongoing suitability was assessed by readiness for practice, assessed practice, assessed academic work, and tri-partite reviews. Additionally, it was explained in narrative that concerns regarding conduct, character or health could be raised by employers, PEs, tutors, module leaders, other students or the student themselves.

183. It was also demonstrated by documentary evidence that there were policies and procedures in place for when questions arose in connection with students' conduct, health or character.

184. The inspection team felt that this standard was met based on documentary evidence.

Standard 5.4

185. Documentary evidence provided included the universities accessible and inclusive learning policy and visuals of the student support section on the university's website.

186. The inspection team met with support services during the inspection where a wealth of information was provided. This included information about what supportive and reasonable adjustments were made for students, as well as information about funding.

187. The inspection team heard about assistive technology from the disability services coordinator, which they felt was supportive and additional examples of reasonable adjustments were given which included screen readers and lecture recordings.

188. Support services explained how there was a survey applicants or students completed which helped identify what support was required.

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

Standard 5.5

190. During the inspection, the inspection team met with the course team who explained that students are made aware of the AYSE (assessed and supported year in employment), transition to registered social worker and CDP through their employer, however this was also discussed within tripartite meetings, interim reviews and presentations. Additionally the course team advised that all students were invited to job and CPD fayres where they learned about the ASYE and CPD.

191. Documentary evidence was also provided which demonstrated students were told that upon completion of the course they could apply for registration, and they were signposted to information on this.

192. The inspection team agreed that there was a lack of documentary evidence to suggest students were provided with information on the curriculum, practice placements, and assessments which would be ordinarily located within the student handbook. The inspection team understood that as the course inspection was new, the handbook was yet to be completed.

193. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 5.5 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 5.6

194. Documentary evidence provided demonstrated that there was an attendance policy showing there was a minimum attendance requirement of 80% for the taught course and 100% for the practice experience days.

195. The inspection team agreed the standard was met, however following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 5.6. We [recommend](#) the course provider ensure attendance requirements are included in other student facing documentation, for example, the student handbook.

Standard 5.7

196. Documentary evidence provided included an Interim Practice Experience Assessment Report which covered feedback for students on placement. Narrative also explained that students were provided with feedback on placement on a regular basis, through formal and informal supervision with the work-based supervisor/PE.

197. In relation to feedback on academic work, the course provider ensured feedback on assessments were provided within 15 days as per the universities policy.

198. When the course team met with the inspectors, they were able to explain that there was a rubric for marking consistency, and also staff met collectively to mark one piece of work for standardisation exercises.

199. Whilst the inspection team could not meet with current students due to the course being new, they met with students on other social work provision. Students reported that feedback was useful and timely.

200. The inspection team felt the above would be reflected on the proposed course and therefore were satisfied that the standard was met.

Standard 5.8

201. Documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection demonstrated that the university had an academic appeals process, and this was available on the university's website.

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

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

Standard 6.1

203. As the qualifying course is MA Social Work Degree Apprenticeship, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

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

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

	Standard not currently met	Condition	Date for submission of evidence	Link
1	Standard 1.6	The education provider will provide evidence that a student facing webpage for MA Social Work Degree Apprenticeship is created. This must include information applicants require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on a course (information about the professional standards, research interests and placement opportunities).	8 th August 2025	Paragraph 43
2	Standard 2.6	The education provider will provide evidence that they have oversight of all practice educators in relation to their Social Work England registration and currency, and this process must be documented.	8 th August 2025	Paragraph 70
3	Standard 5.5	The education provider will provide evidence that student facing documentation includes information on curriculum, practice placements and assessments.	8 th August 2025	Paragraph 190

Recommendations

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

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	Standard 2.7	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider sharing their whistleblowing policy with placement providers to ensure there are no contradictions in the policy.	Paragraph 73
2	Standard 5.6	The inspectors are recommending that the course provider ensure attendance requirements are included in other student facing documentation, for example, the student handbook.	Paragraph 194

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	Recommendati on given
that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards.			
4.2 Ensure that the views of employers, practitioners and people with lived experience of social work are incorporated into the design, ongoing development and review of the curriculum.	☒	☐	☐
4.3 Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and human rights and legislative frameworks.	☒	☐	☐
4.4 Ensure that the course is continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy and best practice.	☒	☐	☐
4.5 Ensure that the integration of theory and practice is central to the course.	☒	☐	☐
4.6 Ensure that students are given the opportunity to work with, and learn from, other professions in order to support multidisciplinary working, including in integrated settings.	☒	☐	☐
4.7 Ensure that the number of hours spent in structured academic learning under the direction of an educator is sufficient to ensure that students meet the required level of competence.	☒	☐	☐
4.8 Ensure that the assessment strategy and design demonstrate that the assessments are robust, fair, reliable and valid, and that those who successfully complete the course have developed the knowledge and skills	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendati on given
necessary to meet the professional standards.			
4.9 Ensure that assessments are mapped to the curriculum and are appropriately sequenced to match students' progression through the course.	☒	☐	☐
4.10 Ensure students are provided with feedback throughout the course to support their ongoing development.	☒	☐	☐
4.11 Ensure assessments are carried out by people with appropriate expertise, and that external examiner(s) for the course are appropriately qualified and experienced and on the register.	☒	☐	☐
4.12 Ensure that there are systems to manage students' progression, with input from a range of people, to inform decisions about their progression including via direct observation of practice.	☒	☐	☐
4.13 Ensure that the course is designed to enable students to develop an evidence-informed approach to practice, underpinned by skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to research and evaluation.	☒	☐	☐
Supporting students			
5.1 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their health and wellbeing including: i. confidential counselling services; ii. careers advice and support; and iii. occupational health services	☒	☐	☐

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

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

Regulator decision

Approved with conditions.

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

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

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

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

	Standard not met	Condition	Inspector recommendation
1			
2			
3			

Findings