

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Brighton

Course approval: MSc Social Work and PGDip
Social Work

Inspection dates: 18 – 21 July 2022

Report date:	22 September 2022
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	06 March 2023
Date conditions met and approved:	24 July 2023

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Introduction

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

What we do

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

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 two to three-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. As a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, inspections are currently being carried out via remote virtual arrangements, and typically last three to four days.
11. The inspectors may recommend in this report that the course is approved with conditions, approved without conditions or that it does not meet the criteria for approval. Where the course has been previously approved we may also decide to withdraw approval.
12. A draft of this report is shared with the education provider, and once we have considered any comments or observations they may wish to provide, we make a final regulatory decision about the approval of the course.
13. The final decisions that we can make are as follows, that the course is approved without conditions, the course is approved with conditions or that the course does not meet the criteria for approval. The decision, and the report, are then published.
14. If the course is approved with conditions, we will write to the education provider setting out how they can demonstrate they have met the conditions, the action we will take once we decide that the conditions are met, and the action we will take if we decide the conditions are not met.

Summary of Inspection

15. The University of Brighton's MSc Social Work course and the PGDip Social Work course 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.

16. During the inspection visit a second inspection team inspected the BSc (Hons) Social Work Apprenticeship course and the BSc (Hons) Social Work course, and as such a separate inspection report has been compiled based on the findings of that team.

Inspection ID	UBRIR2
Course provider	University of Brighton
Validating body (if different)	N/A
Course inspected	MSc Social Work course and PGDip Social Work course
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	25
Date of inspection	18 th – 21 st July 2022
Inspection team	Daisy Bragadini - Education Quality Assurance Officer Lyn Westcott (Lay Inspector) Lisa Brett (Registrant Inspector)
Inspector recommendation	Approved with conditions
Approval outcome	Approved with conditions

Language

17. In this document we describe the University of Brighton as 'the education provider' or 'the university' and we describe the MSc Social Work course and PGDip Social Work course as 'the course'.

Inspection

18. A remote inspection took place from 18th July to 21st July 2022. 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.

19. 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

20. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

21. The inspection team met with 8 students, 2 of whom were studying on the postgraduate route. Discussions included curriculum content, student support services, practice placements and learning experiences.

Meetings with course staff

22. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the admissions team, student support services, the teaching team and staff responsible for practice placements.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

23. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in the admissions process, assessment and Practice Assessment Panels through the Experts by Experience Forum. Discussions included how they were supported to carry out their roles, training they received, how their contributions influenced the course and the work they were involved in.

Meetings with external stakeholders

24. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including employer partners and representatives from the teaching partnership, the South Coast Regional Centre for Social Work Education composed of Brighton and Hove City Council,

East Sussex County Council, Sussex University and the University of Brighton. The inspection team also met with practice educators.

Findings

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

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

26. Prior to the inspection, inspectors reviewed evidence which illustrated how prospective applicants are assessed via a holistic assessment. Candidates are assessed through their application form, written task and interview questions. Applicants' command of English is assessed through their written application, written task, interview and relevant qualifications. The course entry requirement is a 2:1 or above with Honours in the applicant's first degree. The application process itself requires competent use of Information Technology and from September 2022 will additionally involve accessing resources from the internet. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

27. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to standard 1.1.

Standard 1.2

28. Inspectors were provided with documentary evidence which highlighted how applicants' prior relevant experience is considered. As part of the course entry requirements applicants are made aware that relevant experience within the care sector is a prerequisite and is reviewed at the application stage by the admissions tutor. Particular interview questions require candidates to reflect on past experience and link this to social work skills. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

29. Inspectors reviewed documentary evidence and met with a range of people involved in the admissions processes. People with lived experience of social work and practice partners from local authorities are panel members during the interview and inspectors heard how both receive appropriate training and preparation to assist them to carry out their roles. Inspectors heard that the teaching partnership (South Coast Regional Centre for Social Work Education) funded Anti-Racist and Inclusive Recruitment training sessions which all academics, people with lived experience of social work and practice partners were invited to. During the meeting held with the admissions staff, inspectors heard how opinions of all panel members are given equal weighting with plenary sessions held to discuss outcomes from interviews. In addition, members of the Experts by Experience Forum have been involved in designing questions at interview. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

30. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to standard 1.3.

Standard 1.4

31. Ahead of the inspection, inspectors reviewed documentary evidence including an initial Suitability Declaration Form, Application Guide and an Applicant Social Worker Impact Assessment Form. Applicants are required to complete the Suitability Declaration Form and the admissions tutor requests further information at this stage where necessary. Disclosures can then be reviewed by the Subject Lead, and employer partners are consulted with where appropriate. DBS checks are managed by the central admissions team and health checks are completed as part of the suitability form and occupational health assessments. The inspectors were satisfied that the standard was met.

32. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to standard 1.4.

Standard 1.5

33. Inspectors were able to gain insight into how the university implement their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy within their application processes, and heard examples of how applicants gain the support they need. The Interview Day Information provides guidance for applicants about how to request additional help alongside the Applicant Guide. Staff at the university are provided with mandatory training, covering Dignity at Work, Equality and Diversity in Practice and Unconscious Bias. Inspectors also reviewed the Course Handbook which outlines how equality and diversity policies are applied and monitored. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

34. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to 1.5.

Standard 1.6

35. Prior to the inspection, inspectors were provided with a range of evidence to illustrate how prospective students are able to access the information they need about the course and make an informed decision to take up an offer. Information about placements is provided through the open day presentation and the website, which includes a blog, Spotlight on Social Work Placements. Other sources of information, which included information about financial aspects of the course, research interests and professional registration were presented within the Applicant Guide, a flyer provided to applicants invited to interview and via the Admissions Tutor. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

36. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to 1.6.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

37. Inspectors reviewed documentary evidence which outlines that students complete their 70-day placement in year 1 and their 100-day placement in year 2, alongside 30 skills days covered across both years. The Course Specification and the Course Handbook describe these requirements to students and all staff involved in practice learning, including the necessity of at least one statutory placement and for placements to be contrasting. Inspectors also reviewed evidence in relation to quality assurance and monitoring processes followed by the staff responsible for placements and employer partners, including the teaching partnership. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

38. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to 2.1.

Standard 2.2

39. Inspectors were provided with information about the quality assurance processes, which are followed to ensure that students gain knowledge and skills through learning opportunities on placement to develop the professional standards' requirements. Feedback is gathered throughout placements and at their conclusion. The Practice Learning

Agreement, along with the Midway Assessment Report supports the monitoring of student progress in relation to professional standards and the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF). The majority of the statutory placements are provided through the local authorities and the teaching partnership. Learning opportunities and the nature of the placement are discussed and explored to ensure that students gain appropriate statutory experience within their second placement. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

40. Preceding the inspection, inspectors were provided with documents and narrative outlining the processes followed at the start of, and through the course of practice placements. The Practice Learning Agreement sets the expectations regarding induction, supervision, support, workload and access to resources, and these are established at the start of each placement and checked and signed by a university tutor. Workshops are provided for practice educators and practice supervisors which is where expectations are confirmed. The Midway Assessment meeting is one of the opportunities where issues and concerns can be shared and addressed, along with tutorials held in groups or on an individual basis. The inspectors agreed this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

41. As part of the documentary evidence review and through meetings with staff involved in practice learning, the inspectors understood how students' responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of education and training. Inspectors noted how expectations around placements and student progression increases from the first to the second placement. The module handbooks and module descriptors illustrated this progression through the learning opportunities and learning and teaching within placements. Inspectors also saw evidence that skills days from year 1 and 2 are informed by the stage of training, increasing in complexity to match the responsibilities covered in each placement. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

42. The inspectors were provided with the Course Specification which outlines how students are assessed for their preparation for direct practice. The Practice Assessment Panel is involved in assessing students before they start their first placement, which is part of the module Practice Placement 1. This assessment work includes a video recording of a role play involving people with lived experience of social work and a Reflective Shadowing Log.

Students must have also provided satisfactory references and have their DBS and health clearances complete. The inspectors agreed this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

43. Inspectors reviewed documentary evidence and accompanying narrative surrounding the mechanisms through which the university ensures the registration, knowledge, skills and experience of the independent practice educators they work with. This included a spreadsheet containing relevant information and its currency, recruitment documents, a practice educator letter of agreement and the Practice Learning Module Handbook. Practice educator and practice supervisor workshops are provided by the university to help provide guidance on all aspects of the placement to these staff. Practice educators are also invited to 3 forums, at the start of the placement, before the Midway Review meeting and prior to the completion of the final report.

44. During meetings held with staff involved in practice learning, inspectors understood that the university relied on the local authority to maintain oversight of practice educators they work with. Within the Practice Learning Agreement meeting the practice educators' registration number is recorded but it was acknowledged by staff that the university do not ensure oversight of the quality assurance processes currently carried out by the local authorities.

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

Standard 2.7

46. Ahead of the inspection the inspectors were able to review the university's whistleblowing policy and understand how processes embedded within the course ensure students understand how to challenge unsafe behaviours. The placement preparation sessions and the placement module handbooks clearly state how the policy is to be used and what support is available for students who use it. The Practice Learning Agreement provides for a requirement that students read and understand the university and the

agency's whistleblowing policy and sign to confirm this has been done. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

47. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors were provided with narrative and evidence which outlined how the course is governed and managed. This also showed lines of responsibility and accountability and described processes relating to quality management. Social work courses are part of the School of Humanities and Social Science and inspectors heard that this relatively recent relocation as a result of the university-wide 'Size and Shape' review has strengthened the wider university's commitment to social work courses. The Qualifying Social Work Management Group provides the forum for stakeholders to review, plan and quality assure the course, and is responsible for advising the Board of Study on the strategic running of the course. Inspectors reviewed the School Academic Leadership and the University Governance Structure along with the terms of reference for the steering group and student learning hub, which work as part of the teaching partnership. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

48. Evidence submitted in relation to this standard included a Placement Agreement Form, placement audit forms, a Health and Safety Audit form and a Letter of Expectation for placement providers. Inspectors heard how the majority of the statutory placements are arranged through the work of the teaching partnership, and other placements are arranged through long-standing and robust working relationships, all underpinned by agreements with the university. The Practice Learning Handbook outlines the process to be followed where there is a placement breakdown, and during meetings held inspectors heard no concerns about how they are managed. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

49. Prior to the inspection the inspectors reviewed a range of policies which are in place to support aspects of students' health, wellbeing and risk. These are shared and agreed with placement providers and expectations are established around how and when students access support. At the Practice Learning Agreement meeting and the Midway Review meeting, policies and student needs are reviewed and discussed. Tutors provide the link

between the placement and support services available for students, predominantly based at the university.

50. During the meetings held with the course team and the staff involved in practice-based learning the inspectors heard that quality assurance and audit processes were focussed on individual placement experiences and were not about university oversight of a placement partner. Consequently, the inspectors determined that the course team were unable to ensure that relevant policies adhering to students on placement were being quality assured appropriately. Please also refer to observations outlined under standard 3.5 in relation to regular and effective monitoring and evaluation.

51. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a [condition](#) is set against standard 3.3 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [conditions table](#).

Standard 3.4

52. Prior to the inspection, the inspectors reviewed evidence in relation to the work employer partners are involved in, including in relation to the monitoring and review of the course. Inspectors gained insight into the work carried out by the Qualifying Social Work Management Group and the work of the teaching partnership through the South Coast Regional Centre for Social Work Education Steering Group. A wide range of tasks are coordinated within these networks and inspectors heard that the work carried out within them plays a central role in the delivery of the course. Employers are involved the matching process between students and placements, teaching on the course and Practice Assessment Panels, for example. Inspectors heard from employer partners during their meetings which assured them that employers' experience of working with the university, including access to feedback mechanisms, clear lines of communication with tutors and involvement in placement allocation was robust. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

53. In relation to this standard, inspectors reviewed evidence which illustrated the range of monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems in place. This included agendas and minutes from the Qualifying Social Work Courses Management Group, the Aims of the

Service User Carer Group, Student Staff Forum agenda and the Examination Board agendas. The inspectors met with employer partners, people with lived experience of social work and students who shared insight into the ways in which they participated in monitoring, evaluation and improvement mechanisms. Inspectors heard examples from these meetings, which included student feedback leading to changes to assessments in relation to their content and timing, and a clear illustration that their views and opinions were responded to. Students were also invited to review each module online and to share their feedback through their student representative.

54. During meetings with the course team and staff involved in placement provision, inspectors explored the mechanisms surrounding ways in which placements are audited, and re-audited. Inspectors were satisfied with aspects of the process followed by the university although through discussions with staff understood that they were not carried out following a regular and comprehensive process. As a consequence, this highlighted a risk that a placement could be maintained without the necessary reliable and frequent quality assurance processes being implemented.

55. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a [condition](#) is set against standard 3.5 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 [conditions table](#).

Standard 3.6

56. In combination with the documentary evidence, including additional evidence requested prior to the inspection, and a meeting held with staff responsible for practice placements, inspectors gained insight into the placement strategy followed by the university. The inspectors heard how the teaching partnership works together with the Qualifying Social Work Management Group to manage and plan for the placements required in relation to placement capacity. Each Qualifying Social Work Management Group meeting has a standing item to discuss student and placement numbers and carry out the work needed to coordinate placement provision. The Student Learning Hub, which is part of the teaching partnership, is also involved in planning processes, and exemplified the collaborative and strategic nature of placement planning the university undertakes. The inspectors agreed this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

57. Prior to the inspection, inspectors were provided with the CV for the lead social worker, which illustrated appropriate qualifications, experience and registration. Inspectors were also provided with the Academic Subject Group Lead Role Descriptor which outlined the role and responsibilities associated with this position. During their meeting with the course team the inspectors were informed that from September a new member of staff will be taking over the role of lead social worker, and through meetings with them, were also satisfied that they met the requirements set out in this standard. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

58. Ahead of the inspection, inspectors were provided with the CVs of the course team, a document outlining the key social work roles and an information page highlighting the research published by the course team. This evidence illustrated the range of experience, areas of expertise and relevant subject knowledge held by the team. Throughout various meetings held, and the review of the documentary evidence submitted, inspectors gathered a range of examples which confirmed to them that the staff deliver an effective course. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

59. Inspectors reviewed documentary evidence including data on module attainment on the course for 3 years, and statistical reports for modules in year 1. Inspectors were also provided with the Academic Health Report which illustrated how the course team plan and monitor action points to improve the delivery of their course. Inspectors gained understanding about the work of the External Examiner within the Examination Board and the data which is provided to the Board. The work of the Board is overseen by Quality Services as part of the quality assurance processes as they observe and provide feedback on attendance, good practice and External Examiner comments, for example. Through the meetings held with the senior managers and specialist support staff, inspectors heard how data in relation to equality and diversity is used to plan project work and improve outcomes for students. One example provided described an Inclusive Practice Scheme, where student leads collaborated with School Leads to decolonise the curriculum. The inspectors agreed this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

60. Inspectors were provided with information about the workload allocation model which is utilised by staff and helps to facilitate the allocation of 320 hours for academic activity. Through the work of the teaching partnership staff have engaged with the Academics in Practice Programme where they are provided with opportunity to engage with, work with, and observe managers in statutory settings. During meetings with the senior management team the inspectors explored how staff are supported to maintain their knowledge of professional practice and heard how a healthy budget is committed to funding resources for staff to carry out research. They also heard about a community of research for researchers which involves the provision and access to conferences, events, groups and a writing retreat. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

61. Prior to the inspection documentary evidence was reviewed by the inspectors including the module handbooks and the Course Handbook. These illustrated how the mapping of the learning aims and outcomes to relevant frameworks supports student learning, enabling them to develop the skills and knowledge to meet the professional standards. The PCF is used to scaffold and progress student learning while they are on placement and inspectors were able to view the documentation as part of their portfolio to see how this is done. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

62. In relation to this standard, inspectors were provided with minutes and agendas for the Qualifying Social Work Management Group prior to the inspection. This highlighted the work stakeholder groups are involved in and included employers and members of the Experts by Experience forum. Examples of topics reviewed in these meetings included student feedback, changes to curriculum content, developments in the admissions process and staff shadowing practitioners in practice. Evidence illustrating the work practitioners contribute to teaching on the course was also reviewed, and involvement of Experts by Experience and practitioners in admissions and interviews provided further examples of how views of members of these groups are incorporated into the course. Through meetings with members of the teaching partnership and Experts by Experience, inspectors heard a range of examples of involvement and contributions from different forums, including a curriculum review which involved the work of principal social workers in the region. Inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

63. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to standard 4.2.

Standard 4.3

64. As part of the evidence review inspectors were provided with a range of university policies such as the Equality and Diversity policy, the Learning and Teaching Inclusive Practice and Accessibility policy and the Access and Participation Plan. Inspectors heard about a variety of support groups which focussed on particular needs and issues impacting groups such as mature carers and students needing to repeat parts of their course. Placement paperwork and the placement application form represented examples of how policies have been embedded into the course design and provide for support and consideration of a range of student needs. Students were able to access the assistance and expertise of the Student Support and Guidance Tutors, who offer help and advice and signpost students to specialist services. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

65. Research profiles of the course team reflect contemporary research projects and publications, with at least 3 members of the team engaged in recently completed or current doctoral research qualifications. Further evidence was provided to inspectors in the form of curriculum content in module handbooks which showed contemporary and relevant topics and themes. Interprofessional learning and curriculum content exemplified how government policy and best practice are woven into the teaching and learning on the course. For example, teaching sessions in modules included topics such as The Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, poverty and deprivation and contextual safeguarding. During the meetings held with members of the course team and teaching partnership, inspectors gained further insight into how Academics in Practice programme assist in the maintenance of currency of knowledge and resources. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

66. Ahead of the inspection, inspectors were guided to the examples within the Course Specification, module handbooks and Course Handbook of how theory is integrated into the course. Students who participated in the inspection meetings were clear about the opportunities provided to them to apply their theoretical learning to their practice. Inspectors heard that practice educators supporting students provided them with consistent guidance to make links between their learning at university and their practice on placement.

Weekly supervision allowed students further focussed time to apply theory to practice along with group tutorials. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

67. Prior to the inspection inspectors reviewed the Course Handbook which illustrated the opportunities for students to be taught by a range of staff from different disciplines. Students are also provided with opportunity to learn alongside other university students from midwifery, occupational therapy, education and medicine. During the meeting with students, inspectors heard about examples of opportunities they had been involved in which included working with case studies, within workshops and a large-scale online conference with psychology students. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

68. Inspectors were able to review all the module specification templates for the course which provided detail about the hours students could expect to spend in teaching time and independent study. Group and individual tutorials also provide further directed study time, with opportunity to develop reflective skills and be provided with feedback. During the meeting with students, inspectors heard no concerns about the hours spent in structured academic learning. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

69. Prior to the inspection, inspectors were provided with reports from the External Examiner which contained affirmative comments on the standards achieved by the students on the course. The course team completed a review of their assessment strategy as part of the periodic review which was undertaken two years previously. Course aims are linked to module aims which inform module learning outcomes and are mapped to assessment criteria. The university's General Examination and Assessment Regulations are used to guide the assessment strategy and the inspectors reviewed evidence which illustrated a wide range of different assessment methods utilised on the course. The course and module handbooks, module specifications and a postgraduate assessment guide all exemplified the quality of the assessments and their ability to support students to meet the professional standards. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

70. In relation to this standard, inspectors reviewed the Programme Specification which showed how all learning outcomes are mapped to relevant assessments, and progression between the assessments for the first and second placement is evident. Module and placement handbooks illustrate the mapping between the curriculum and assessments and how students are supported to transition through each stage of the course. Inspectors also noted how the comments from the External Examiner reports recognise the consistency and appropriate content of the curriculum content and assessments. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

71. As part of the role of the Personal Tutor, feedback is provided to students in their individual tutorial sessions. All summative assessments provide students with written feedback highlighting strengths and areas for development. During student placements, their practice educator provides feedback at various points throughout and formally through the Midway and Final Reports, and after the direct observations of practice. Inspectors viewed the course and module handbooks which outlined the processes associated with feedback and the detail of what students could expect from their feedback. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

72. Ahead of the inspection, inspectors were provided with the CVs for the course team which illustrated the qualifications, experience and expertise held by the staff undertaking assessments. The course team are in the process of recruiting a new External Examiner, with the current post holder being suitably qualified and registered. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

73. The Practice Assessment Panel involves the work of Experts by Experience, practice educators and practitioners, where students are assessed through this as part of their readiness for practice and at the end of each placement. Students are required to undergo 3 formal observations of their direct practice which forms part of their overall portfolio of work for placement. During the meeting with students, aspects of assessment and progression were discussed, and students described the input their practice educators had into feedback and assessment provided by them. Members of the Experts by Experience group are provided with appropriate guidance and strategies to carry out assessments, working collaboratively with academic staff. The Examination Board manages the

progression of individual students and considers recommendations which are informed by a range of regulations and processes in place which contribute to a holistic assessment of student achievement. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

74. Evident within the Course Specification was a thread which ran through all modules, curriculum and learning outcomes, and illustrated a focus on the development of knowledge and skills. Examples of supporting students to develop an evidence-informed approach throughout their course were provided by the course team. They included the Lifespan Development module in year 1 and the Critical Social Work in Practice and Research module in year 2. The opportunity to complete a research project was available to students completing the MSc course within the dissertation module. Application of knowledge and analysis is assessed at several points throughout the course, including essays completed as part of the placement modules. Inspectors reviewed evidence which highlighted the use of the PCF to scaffold the development of skills students need to understand research and evaluation. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

75. Within the induction provided for students an introduction informs them about the support services available, how they can be accessed and the people who are involved in helping them. Students are introduced to Student Support and Guidance Tutors (SSGT) and are provided with the opportunity to meet and talk to a dedicated tutor. Inspectors reviewed information about the role of the SSGT and how they support the mental health and wellbeing of students. The online portal My Brighton is a gateway website and app linking to all support services and sources of information for students. Careers advice and support is available to students and during the later stages of their course they are helped to prepare for employment, including through input from employer representatives and information on becoming a registered professional. Occupational Health services are accessible for students and referrals are completed through the Social Work Lead. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

76. Prior to the inspection information provided within the Course Handbook described the role of the Personal Tutor and what they offer to students. Through group and individual tutorials students use their tutor as the first and main point of contact to raise concerns, discuss their studies and find out where to access specialised help. Specialist support

services are available for financial support and for students with a disability or dyslexia. A Learning Support Coordinator works with students to develop a Learning Support Plan. During meetings held with support staff, inspectors heard examples of support offered including extensions to assessment time, an individual tutor to provide study skills support to students with dyslexia and a mentor to support students with mental health difficulties. Confirmation that these support services and lines of communication were working effectively was sought and received during the meeting inspectors held with students. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

77. Inspectors met with the course team, staff from admissions and students, which along with a review of the documentary evidence submitted outlined a clear set of processes which are followed to ensure student suitability. After initial suitability is assessed before students start on the course, they are required to declare their continued suitability for each year of the course by signing a declaration. The Course Handbook clearly stipulates that if there are any changes to a students' capacity to meet the suitability conditions, they must notify the course team. Support is offered through the Students' Union, the SSGT service and through the university's wellbeing team. A Fitness for Social Work Training Statement was provided to inspectors and further information on the Fitness to Practice process was available in the Course Handbook. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

78. At the admissions stage applicants are invited to notify the course team about any additional needs they have and request reasonable adjustments to be made. Inspectors reviewed evidence outlining occupational health support services and a commitment to equality and inclusivity within the Course Handbook. Learning Support Plans are devised and used to coordinate support for students to ensure their individual needs are met and they can progress through their course. During meetings with students, inspectors heard examples of how this is implemented at university and also when students are on their practice placements. Inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

79. The module and placement handbooks provide a comprehensive range of information for students about their course, including their curriculum, how they will be assessed, requirements for their placements and the roles and responsibilities of the staff delivering their learning. The module Contemporary Social Work in the final year provides the

opportunity for students to learn about the transition into their professional careers and identify their ongoing learning and developmental needs, post qualification. The inspectors met with students who conveyed a clear understanding of different elements of their course and sources of information accessible to them. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

80. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to standard 5.5.

Standard 5.6

81. Prior to the inspection documentary evidence was reviewed, including the Course Handbook and Course Specification which clearly outlined mandatory elements of the course. Students are also provided with information about attendance expectations and thresholds and the processes in place if they are absent on placement days. Students confirmed they understood the requirements of attending placement and skills days and days spent at university engaged with academic learning. The inspectors were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

82. Documentary evidence reviewed by the inspectors outlined the expectation that students should receive feedback within 20 working days which is stipulated within university policy on assessment and feedback, with module handbooks providing a timetable for this. External Examiner reports confirm that feedback provided is timely and meaningful. Throughout the meeting with students, no concerns were raised about the efficacy of the feedback received. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

83. The university's Academic Appeals Office considers academic appeals submitted by students and the process is laid out in the General Examination and Assessment Regulations, submitted as part of the documentary evidence. Inspectors explored this process within their meeting with students who demonstrated a clear understanding of how they would apply for an appeal. Students confirmed that they were made aware of the process and that details of how to appeal are contained within their Course Handbook. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

84. As the qualifying course is a MSc Social Work course and PGDip Social Work course, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

86. 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.

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

	Standard not currently met	Condition	Date for submission of evidence	Link
1	2.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that they maintain oversight of the registration, knowledge, skills and experience for all practice educators they work with.	09 May 23	Paragraph 45
2	3.3	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that they are ensuring placement providers have policies in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk, and the support systems to underpin them. This links to standard 3.5 and the quality assurance processes including audit and re-audit for placements.	09 May 23	Paragraph 51
3	3.5	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that regular and effective evaluation systems are in place for the purposes of auditing and re-auditing placement providers. This will include ensuring that the placement provider audit form reflects the current regulatory environment.	09 May 23	Paragraph 55

Recommendations

88. 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 university consider reinstating the group task during the interview stage of the admissions process involving people with lived experience of social work and employers.	Paragraph 27
2	1.3	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider increased and regular expert by experience involvement within the interview panel to enhance consistency for applicants.	Paragraph 30
3.	1.4	The inspectors are recommending that the university clarify that the requirement is for applicants to complete an enhanced DBS check and that this is made clear on the website.	Paragraph 32
4.	1.5	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider including additional information to provide reassurance to applicants that they will not be discriminated against if they request additional help/reasonable adjustments at the application stage.	Paragraph 34
5	1.6	The inspectors are recommending that the university include comprehensive detail for each of the modules on their website and clarify that completion of the course conveys eligibility to register with the regulator.	Paragraph 36
6	2.1	The inspectors are recommending that the university add clarification within the relevant module record over the number of placement days as it currently states between 70 and 80 placement days.	Paragraph 38

7	4.2	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider broadening more opportunities for key stakeholders to be involved in the development of the curriculum. This could be through the further planned development of systems, structures and mechanisms to capture and respond to views of key stakeholders (including employers, students and people with lived experience of social work).	Paragraph 63
8	5.5	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider more about how new post graduate students are embedded into level 7 learning and the student support and study services available to them. This should include review and wider communications that enables new students to know the support services they can access throughout the early stages of the programme.	Paragraph 80

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

89. Table breakdown of standards met during preapproval and inspection.

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

90. 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](#).

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

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

	Standard not met	Condition	Inspector recommendation
1	2.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that they maintain oversight of the registration, knowledge, skills and experience for all practice educators they work with. This condition applies to both courses.	Condition met.
2	3.3	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that they are ensuring placement providers have policies in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk, and the support systems to underpin them. This links to standard 3.5 and the quality assurance processes including audit and re-audit for placements.	Condition met.
3	3.5	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that regular and effective evaluation systems are in place for the purposes of auditing and re-auditing placement providers. This will include ensuring that the placement provider audit form reflects the current regulatory environment.	Condition met.

Findings

93. This conditions review was undertaken as a result of conditions set during course reapproval as outlined in the original inspection report above.

94. After the review of the documentary evidence, the inspection team are satisfied that the conditions set against the reapproval of the MSc Social Work and PGDip Social Work courses are met.

95. In relation to the condition set for standard 2.6 the course provider submitted evidence which illustrates the mechanisms for oversight they hold for the practice educators they work with. This included information for independent practice educators and an updated information form for practice educators. In addition, the course provider submitted placement audit forms used to capture relevant information for practice educators employed by the placement provider. These documents outline the relevant information which is collected from practice educators when they start work with the university and is then updated annually. Detailed narrative evidence provided by the course provider outlines the processes they follow in conjunction with the South Coast Regional Centre for Social Work Education Teaching Partnership. This included the plans to develop a Practice Review Process to improve responses to placement breakdown. The course provider also provided evidence of a range of training which is provided to support ongoing skill development. This standard is now met.

96. In relation to the condition set for standard 3.3 the course provider submitted placement audit forms which are used to gather information from placement providers. The information required from placement providers includes travel details, location, health and risk assessments. For each new placement, site visits take place and risk assessments are carried out, policies are checked, and an opportunity is provided to discuss aspects of students' wellbeing and support needs. The Practice Learning Placement Agreement ensures that health and safety measures are in place within placement provision. The course provider also submitted the University of Brighton's Student Placement Policy which covered aspects of health and safety and questions practice educators, students and tutors can ask in relation to placement provision. Within practice educator workshops and training, aspects of student support and wellbeing are covered. The inspectors were satisfied that the course provider provided evidence to show how they monitor placements and assure themselves of their continued suitability for students. The standard is now met.

97. In relation to the condition set for standard 3.5 the course provider submitted Placement Information Forms for both first and second placements. They also outlined the detail of the evaluation systems they use to audit and re audit their placements. This process involves an audit and site visit for all new placements and an annual review of all existing placements to ensure all details are accurate and the placement meets relevant requirements. The audit process also includes a re audit and site visit every 3 years, or earlier if concerns have been raised about the provision of the placement. This re audit process will also include a review of the feedback gathered from placements, to ensure placements are suitable to meet the learning needs of the students. The standard is now met.

Conclusion

98. The inspection team is recommending that as the conditions have been met, the course be approved.

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

Regulator decision

Approval.