

Inspection Report

Inspection ID	UHR1_ACP226/227
Course provider	University of Hertfordshire
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	PG Cert Applied Mental Health Practice
Mode of study	Full time Part time
Maximum student cohort	30
Date of inspection	26 to 27 May 2026
Inspection team	Becky Madey (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Lee Pollard (Lay Inspector) Tolu Davis (AMHP registrant Inspector)
Inspector recommendation	Approved
Regulator decision:	Approved
Date of Regulator decision:	07 September 2026

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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 approval standards for Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) courses. We approve courses against these standards to ensure that students who successfully complete an AMHP course can meet the requirements set out in the Mental Health (Approved Mental Health Professionals) (Approval) (England) Regulations 2008.
2. During the approval process, we appoint partner inspectors. This will include a registered inspector who will be a qualified AMHP, and a lay inspector who is not AMHP qualified.
3. These inspectors, along with an officer from the education quality assurance team, undertake activity to review documentary information and evidence, and carry out an inspection. This activity could include observing and asking questions about teaching, placements, facilities and learning resources; asking questions based on the evidence submitted; and meeting with staff, people with lived experience and students. The inspectors then make recommendations to us about whether a course should be approved.
4. The process we undertake is described in our legislation: The Children and Social Work Act 2017, [The Social Workers Regulations 2018 - Social Work England](#) , and our [Education and Training Rules 2019](#).
5. In this document we describe the University of Hertfordshire as ‘the course provider’ and we describe the PG Cert Applied Mental Health Practice as ‘the course’.

Summary of Inspection

6. The University of Hertfordshire’s PG Cert Applied Mental Health Practice was inspected as part of Social Work England’s reapproval cycle, whereby all course providers with AMHP courses will be inspected against the new education and training approval standards for AMHP courses.
7. An on-site inspection took place from 26 to 27 May 2026.
8. As part of this process the inspection team gathered feedback from key stakeholders through meetings on inspection. This included course staff, students, employer partners and people with lived experience.

Inspection Findings

9. In this section we set out the inspectors' findings in relation to whether the course meets the education and training approval standards for AMHP courses. We describe the inspection team in this section as 'we'.

<u>Standard 1. Admissions</u>	Met or not met.
1.1 Confirm on entry to the course that applicants have: i. the potential to acquire and demonstrate the competences set out in the relevant legislation governing AMHP practice; ii. the capability to meet the academic requirements of the course; and iii. the capability to use information and communication technology (ICT) methods and techniques to achieve course outcomes	<u>Met</u>
1.2 Confirm that applicants are and remain fully registered with a relevant regulatory body in line with the relevant regulations	<u>Met</u>
1.3 Ensure that the admissions processes assess the suitability of applicants, including in relation to their conduct, health and character. This includes appropriate criminal conviction checks	<u>Met</u>
1.4 Ensure that applicants have suitable prior experience of the practical application of appropriate legislation and policy, specifically including but not limited to mental health, mental capacity and human rights legislation	<u>Met</u>
1.5 Ensure that applicants have a robust level of legal literacy in appropriate legislative and policy areas	<u>Met</u>
1.6 Ensure that employers, placement providers, people with lived experience of social work, and carers are involved in student admissions	<u>Met</u>
1.7 Ensure that there are equality, diversity and inclusion policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored	<u>Met</u>
1.8 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 information about the award level and professional qualification, course content, teaching modes, location of study, assessment	<u>Met</u>

methods, duration, and observation requirements including the expectations around arranging or securing placements	
1.9 Ensure that the admissions process allows candidates from any eligible profession to demonstrate their suitability to join the course	<u>Met</u>

Key observations for standard 1

10. At the time of the inspection, the university accepted both employer sponsored and self-funding applicants onto the course. All applicants were required to successfully complete an interview with the course provider. The interview was assessed by a selection panel, usually comprised of a member of the course team, an employer partner and a person with lived experience. We understood that all applicants were asked the same interview questions relating to the key AMHP competences, legal literacy and prior experience. These interview questions were developed with people with lived experience, employers and students. The interview was marked using a scoring metric to ensure consistency across applicants. (1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)

11. To ensure applicants met the academic requirements of the course, they must have evidenced completion of a relevant post-qualifying course. We heard that most applicants completed the university's Pre-AMHP Foundation course, which ensured they were proficient in the relevant information and communication technology (ICT) methods to achieve course outcomes. The course team outlined the support available to applicants through the IT helpdesk. (1.1)

12. We heard that all applicants provided details of their relevant regulatory body registration, DBS certificate and number, which was checked and recorded by the university. Any issues would be raised to the course team, and we were assured that the relevant procedure would be followed. Applicants signed a declaration confirming that they would contact the university should their registration status change or if fitness to practice concerns arose. (1.2, 1.3)

13. The course team confirmed that they provided an opportunity for applicants to request reasonable adjustments prior to the university interview and expected sponsoring employers to provide reasonable adjustments through any pre-selection activity. We were assured that EDI data was collected at admissions stage and considered through the Programme Academic Experience Group (PAEG). (1.7)

14. We saw the course webpage, course factsheet and course flyer, which AMHP leads and applicants viewed prior to applications. These documents outlined details of the course as stated within standard 1.8. We were assured that applicants were given the information they require to make an informed choice as to whether to take up an offer of a place on the course. These

documents also confirmed that the course was open to all eligible professions, which was reiterated within the online application form. (1.8, 1.9)

15. The course provider confirmed that they would be implementing a process from their next cohort to collect data regarding the profession of all applicants, to be monitored through the PAEG. (1.9)

Standard 2. Course governance, management and quality.	Met or not met
2.1 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	<u>Met</u>
2.2 Ensure that regular and effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems are in place, and that these involve employers, people with lived experience including carers, and students	<u>Met</u>
2.3 Ensure that the number of students admitted is aligned to a clear strategy, which includes consideration of: i. local and regional placement capacity; and 1. the availability of part-time or other flexible course arrangements to widen access wherever possible.	<u>Met</u>
2.4 Ensure that the person with overall professional responsibility for the course is a relevant qualified professional with appropriate experience	<u>Met</u>
2.5 Ensure that there is adequate provision of appropriately qualified and experienced staff, with relevant specialist subject knowledge and expertise	<u>Met</u>
2.6 Ensure that educators are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice	<u>Met</u>

Key observations for standard 2.

16. We saw governance and management charts which outlined clear roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability in relation to the delivery and quality management of the course. We understood how management reviewed resourcing requirements through an ongoing process. (2.1)

17. The person with overall professional responsibility for the course was a registered social worker and a qualified AMHP. The course team consisted of three other staff members with relevant knowledge and experience. We heard how staff were encouraged to undertake the PGCert in Higher Education as part of their teaching development, as well as attending workshops that were available to all staff. Development needs were reviewed as part of the university's appraisal process. (2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6)

18. Several visiting lecturers with specialist knowledge taught on the course. We heard that visiting lecturers received feedback on their teaching twice a year, and we were given an example of how teaching had been changed because of this feedback. (2.5, 2.6)

19. The course team outlined how students, people with lived experience and employer partners were able to feedback through the PAEG. This was reiterated by the relevant stakeholders during the inspection. Students confirmed that there were formal and informal opportunities to feedback throughout the course and offered examples of how this had been actioned by the university. (2.2)

20. We heard how the course team collaborated with employer partners to set their student numbers, using two intakes per year to ensure sufficient placement capacity. The university offer a full time and part time version of the course. (2.3)

<u>Standard 3. Curriculum</u>	<u>Met or not met</u>
3.1 The views of employers, practitioners and people with lived experience of mental health services are incorporated into the design, ongoing development and review of the curriculum	<u>Met</u>
3.2 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, including around cross-national border issues in relation to practice in Wales, where this is appropriate	<u>Met</u>

3.3 The course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion principles, human rights and legislative frameworks	<u>Met</u>
3.4 Course content is routinely updated as a result of developments in legislation, research, government policy, and best practice	<u>Met</u>
3.5 The integration of theory and practice is central to the course	<u>Met</u>
3.6 Students understand how the standards of the student's own professional regulator(s), apply to their specialist practice	<u>Met</u>
3.7 The course is designed to enable students to demonstrate an evidence-informed approach to AMHP practice, underpinned by skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to research and evaluation	<u>Met</u>

Key observations for standard 3.

21. Employers and people with lived experience reviewed the curriculum as part of the ongoing PAEG. We heard that employer partners attended quality visits at the university, where they could provide feedback on teaching. People with lived experience confirmed that they delivered sessions as part of the course. Practitioners also had an opportunity to feedback to the university following the completion of the portfolio. (3.1)

22. We saw how the curriculum and learning outcomes were mapped to the AMHP competencies. The inspection team were assured that the content, structure and delivery of the course enabled students to demonstrate that they had the necessary knowledge and skills. The course team offered examples of how the course content was routinely updated through the PAEG and the university's continuous enhancement process. (3.2, 3.4)

23. Students gave examples to demonstrate how they had been supported throughout the course with the implementation of reasonable adjustments. We heard how the course team had made the environment of the course accessible to those without formalised learning needs. The university confirmed that toolkits were available to ensure that courses are inclusive by design. (3.3)

24. We saw through definitive module documents and an assessment handbook that theory and practice were central to the course, and that students must demonstrate how they used evidence from research to inform their practice. We were assured that all students had the opportunity to put theory into practice on placement and were assessed on this through their portfolio. We met with students from a range of professional backgrounds, who outlined how their own regulator standards relate to AMHP practice. (3.5, 3.6, 3.7)

Standard 4. Practice Placements	Met or not met
4.1 Ensure practice placements are integral to the course	<u>Met</u>
4.2 Ensure that the number, duration and range of practice placements is appropriate to support the delivery of the course and the achievement of the learning outcomes	<u>Met</u>
4.3 Ensure that students, practice placement providers and educators are prepared for each placement, which will include information about: i. the learning outcomes to be met ii. the timing and duration of any placement experience iii. the records to be maintained iv. expectations of professional conduct v. assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of failure to progress vi. communication and lines of responsibility	<u>Met</u>
4.4 Maintain clear collaborative arrangements for planning and communication with placement providers including a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements, in order jointly to ensure: i. that practice placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment	<u>Met</u>

ii. that placement providers have equality, diversity and inclusion policies in place which will apply to students, and which they will implement and monitor iii. that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff, with relevant specialist subject knowledge and expertise, at the practice placement setting iv. that practice placement providers support their placement staff to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice, including appropriate practice placement educator training v. that a range of learning and teaching methods that respect the rights and needs of people with lived experience of social work and colleagues must be in place throughout all practice placements	
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Key observations for standard 4.

25. We understood that practice placements were integral to the course. It was confirmed within the practice placement handbook that students were required to complete a minimum of 35 days on placement. We saw the two-part practice learning agreement (PLA), which acted as a formal, written agreement between the university and the placement provider, as well as the agreement between the student and their practice learning educator (PLE). The PLA set out administrative and practical information about the placement, as well as when students would have appropriate learning opportunities. Students confirmed that expectations were clear from the start of the course. (4.1, 4.2, 4.4)

26. The practice placement handbook outlined the tasks, assessments and documents required to meet the AMHP competencies and learning outcomes. Students agreed that they had access to a range of opportunities during practice placements which supported their achievement of the learning outcomes and AMHP competencies. In addition, the course team explained how student progress was tracked through regular placement meetings with their PLE. (4.2)

27. We understood that the PLA and the practice placement handbook were sent to students and PLEs in advance of the placement. The course team confirmed that a full induction prior to the practice placement was completed, as set out in the PLA. Students were able to contact their PLE, the course team, their student representative or their placement support officer if they had concerns regarding their placement or their progress. PLEs confirmed that they felt supported in their role and were aware that the relevant processes were outlined within the handbook. (4.3)

28. To monitor the quality of placements, the course team sought feedback from students and PLEs about their experience. Quality audits took place to ensure that placement providers were evaluated in relation to all aspects of standard 4.4. (4.4)

Standard 5. Supporting students.	Met or not met
5.1 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their health and wellbeing including: i. confidential counselling services ii. occupational health services, where appropriate	<u>Met</u>
5.2 Ensure that students have access to a system of academic and pastoral student support for their progression, development, wellbeing and welfare	<u>Met</u>
5.3 Ensure that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health	<u>Met</u>
5.4 Make reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments to enable them to progress through their course and meet the relevant standards, in accordance with relevant legislation	<u>Met</u>
5.5 Provide timely information to students about parts of the course where attendance is mandatory and have associated monitoring mechanisms in place	<u>Met</u>
5.6 Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students on their progression and performance in assessments	<u>Met</u>
5.7 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	<u>Met</u>

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Key observations for standard 5.

29. Students confirmed that they had access to resources to support their health and wellbeing, which were outlined within the programme handbook. A pastoral officer met with students at the beginning of the course to signpost to these services and everyone was allocated a personal tutor. The course team confirmed that self-funding students would be able to access occupational health services through the university and sponsored students would typically access this through their employer. Students were also told how to access the library, as well as study skills where required to support academic progression. (5.1, 5.2)

30. We understood that Study Needs Agreements and Practice Placement Needs Agreements could be arranged to make reasonable adjustments for students. We heard examples of how this had been implemented throughout the course in practice. (5.4)

31. As part of the application process, students agree to notify the university if there were changes regarding their suitability. This was also confirmed within their placement midway review meeting. We saw the Fitness to Practise procedures and the Student Discipline Policy which assured the inspection team that processes were in place to address issues regarding suitability. (5.3)

32. The course team confirmed that academic and placement attendance was mandatory through the course, which was noted in the relevant handbooks. Online lectures were recorded and students must have caught up on any missed learning. Online and in person attendance was recorded and then reviewed as part of the student's midway review and their portfolio. We were assured that there were clear processes in place to notify the course team of any absence, which would be shared with the employer. (5.5)

33. Formative assessments were part of the course, which involved both specific and thematic feedback. Students confirmed that they received timely and meaningful feedback which helped to prepare for their summative assessments. (5.6)

34. The practice placement agreement required placement providers to have policies and processing in place to challenge unsafe behaviour, including for whistleblowing. Students knew how to raise concerns throughout the course and during placement. (5.7)

<u>Standard 6. Assessments</u>	<u>Met or not met</u>
6.1 Ensure that the assessment strategy and design demonstrate that the assessments are robust, fair and consistent, and that those who successfully complete the course have developed the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the competencies set out in the relevant legislation and rules as set out in the guidance that accompanies these standards	<u>Met</u>
6.2 Ensure that professional aspects of practice are integral to assessments	<u>Met</u>
6.3 Use objective measures of student performance which ensure safe and effective practice as an AMHP	<u>Met</u>
6.4 Regularly monitor and evaluate assessment standards	<u>Met</u>
6.5 Clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the course	<u>Met</u>
6.6 Clearly specify that any aegrotat award which may be made will not lead to eligibility to be approved as an AMHP	<u>Met</u>
6.7 Clearly specify the procedure for the right of appeal for students	<u>Met</u>
6.8 Clearly specify a process for the appointment of at least 1 external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and from the relevant part of an appropriate professional register	<u>Met</u>

Key observations for standard 6.

35. We saw the assessment handbook, which outlined a variety of assessment methods within the course. We understood that most assessments included a formative opportunity. The course team demonstrated that professional aspects of practice were integral to assessments through mapping to the AMHP competencies. We were assured that these measures of student performance would ensure safe and effective practice as an AMHP. (6.1, 6.2, 6.3)

36. We heard that people with lived experience worked with the course team to mark a presentation and could feedback on assessments more generally within the PAEG. Portfolios were reviewed by a panel of PLEs and all other summative assessments were internally moderated. All assessments are moderated by an external examiner. The inspection team were assured that the assessment strategy was robust, fair and consistent. (6.1)

37. Outcome assessments were reviewed through the PAEG twice a year to identify any issues. We heard from employers that feedback was collected for every intake, which was inclusive of assessment. We understood that there were multiple mechanisms, formal and informal, which allowed students to feedback on assessment. This feedback was then analysed by the course team. (6.4)

38. It was clear within the assessment handbook that students required a minimum mark of 50% to pass graded assessments, and the portfolio was assessed on a pass/fail basis. We were assured that information regarding progression and retake opportunities were clear to students. The programme handbook outlined the procedure for students to make an academic appeal. (6.5, 6.7)

39. We saw the process for the appointment of an external examiner. We also reviewed the CV of the external examiner at the time of inspection and were assured that they were appropriately experienced and qualified. (6.8)

40. The university confirmed that there was no aegrotat award available at the time of inspection. (6.6)

Outcome

The inspection team recommend that the course be approved.

The regulator decision maker agreed with this [recommendation](#).