

Inspection Report

Course provider: Sheffield Hallam University

Course approval: MA Social work and PG Dip social work (masters exit route)

Inspection dates:

Report date:	18 th December 2023
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	16 th February 2024
Date conditions met and approved:	7 th June 2024

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

Summary of Inspection

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

Inspection ID	SHUR1
Course provider	Sheffield Hallam University
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	MA Social work and PG Dip social work (exit route)
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	25
Date of inspection	14 to 17 November 2023
Inspection team	Laura Gordon (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Michelle Loughrey (Lay Inspector) Aidan Philips (Registrant Inspector)

Language

16. In this document we describe Sheffield Hallam University as ‘the education provider’ or ‘the university’ and we describe the MA social work and PG Dip social work (Exit route) as ‘the course’.

Inspection

17. An onsite inspection took place from 14 to 17 November 2023 across the Heart of the Campus in Sheffield where Sheffield Hallam University 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.

19. During the same week a separate inspection team also inspected the BA (Hons) social work, BA (Hons) degree apprenticeship and the BSc (Hons) Nursing (Learning disability) and social work courses. Some meetings across the week were held jointly. Details of this inspection are covered in a separate report.

Conflict of interest.

20. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

21. The inspection team met with five students, two first year students and three second year students, including a student representative. Discussions included admissions, placements, assessments and feedback, support and different areas of learning on the course.

Meetings with course staff

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

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 social work courses from two service user groups. Discussions included their involvement in admissions, design and development of the curriculum, monitoring and evaluation of the course, and any training and support available to assist them.

Meetings with external stakeholders

24. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including Derbyshire County Council, St Wilfrids, Fostering to Inspire and an NHS mental health trust, and 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.

26. The university has advised of proposed changes to the MA and PG Dip social work (exit route) courses. They have confirmed that current students will continue on the current version of the course until completion of the course and that the new course will commence from March 2025.

27. Therefore, as part of the inspection process the inspectors have considered the reapproval of the current course and the approval of the new provision. Any proposed changes to the course are noted under the appropriate standards.

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

28. The university provided documentary evidence prior to the inspection including the admissions handbook and details of the online assessment of applicants via written task, group task and interview.

29. During the inspection, the inspection team heard how the admissions process is carried out in practice through meetings with the course team, admissions team and people with lived experience.

30. The admissions process is mapped to the PCF (Professional Capabilities Framework) and there are systems in place to ensure consistency and fairness of marking.

31. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that the university had a clear and holistic approach to admission on to the courses and agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

32. The evidence received prior to inspection detailed how recognition of prior learning (RPL) is available. During the inspection this was discussed during the admissions meeting, where it was explained how this works in practice.

33. The university website provides clear information about the requirement for prior relevant experience, and this is tested in the interview process where students are required to draw on their relevant experience.

34. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

35. The documentary evidence provided by the university indicated that their people with lived experience group is involved in the admissions group task and that employer partners are involved in the interview stage. It also provided evidence of the consultation of both groups in the proposed changes to the admissions process for the course.

36. During the inspection, the inspection team met with employer partners and people with lived experience, who confirmed their direct involvement in the selection day.

37. The people with lived experience confirmed that they are supported to be involved in the process and are prepared before coming in and after their involvement in the admissions process.

38. They also confirmed their involvement in writing the questions to be asked and felt that their input was valued. They told the inspection team that the course team had consulted them on how they could be further involved in the course generally as well as in the admissions process.

39. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

40. Documentary evidence confirmed the process in place for pre-admission declarations, a requirement for Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal record checks and for occupational health screening.

41. The additional evidence requested prior to the inspection included a copy of the self-declaration form template. This required applicants to declare if they have been dismissed from employment previously and if they have ever started a relevant course at another university previously.

42. The inspection team heard more from the admissions and course team about the process of suitability and how it works in practice. In particular, they were told about the criminal records consultative panel (CRCP) process and how it links in to the fitness to practise process.

43. There is a risk assessment process in place for DBS checks, and the inspection team heard more about the immunisation process and how this is managed.

44. The inspection team agreed that there was clear information for applicants about disclosures and the support available to applicants, and effective checks of suitability are in place. As such the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

45. The university provided evidence of the university-wide admissions policy and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies prior to the inspection.

46. The website also provides information to applicants in the form of a disability disclosure booklet, which provides information about the disabled student support team (DSST). This team can provide assessment and support, and there are FAQs for concerns about making disclosures.

47. During the inspection, the inspection team heard how the university targets areas for widening participation and use marketing and communication materials. The university use their EDI dashboard to ensure that the demographic of applicants is mapped at each stage of the application process and reviewed.

48. The inspection team also heard examples of the Sheffield Hallam University Progress Project and the Black British Project, which is a mentorship programme available before applicants start the course.

49. The inspection team heard examples of reasonable adjustments and how the admissions process is made accessible for applicants.

50. The course team confirmed that staff training includes EDI training and that staff have to complete EDI modules as part of their appraisal process. The people with lived experience that met with the inspection team also confirmed that they had unconscious bias training.

51. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

52. The website information provided to applicants includes information relating to social work careers, the course modules, placements, costs and additional costs, Social Work England and assessments.

53. During the inspection, the inspection team heard how information is provided at open days, and students confirmed the responsiveness of the university when they had admissions queries.

54. It was noted by the inspection team that there was reference within some of the documentation available on the website to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

55. The inspection team agreed that this information needed to be updated and that this could be addressed under standard 5.5, as there was sufficient information on the website that referenced that Social Work England is the current regulator.

56. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

57. The documentary evidence confirmed that in the current provision of the course, students receive a 70-day first placement, 100-day second placement and attend 30 skills days.

58. The course team confirmed how attendance was monitored, and the opportunities for students to make up placement days or skills days that have been missed.

59. The proposed changes to the course will provide students with two 100-day placements, and skills days will be incorporated into the modules for the course.

60. During the inspection, the course team clarified how they ensure that students have placements in two contrasting settings and confirmed that at least one of these will be a statutory placement.

61. The inspection team also spoke with members of the placement team who confirmed the matching process, and to students who confirmed that they have had contrasting placement experiences.

62. The course team also confirmed the relationship with the South Yorkshire Teaching Partnership, which the course is not formally part of, and provided more information about the university's broad network of placement providers.

63. The inspection team were satisfied that that this standard was met.

Standard 2.2

64. Documentary evidence received prior to the inspection detailed the process for ensuring that students receive appropriate practice learning opportunities through the Practice Learning Agreement (PLA) meetings, mid-way reviews and placement handbooks.

65. Placements are comprehensively audited and reviewed every two years. The learning outcomes are mapped to level 7 and the PCF and ensure an incremental journey of learning for students.

66. Student learning is checked at the PLA and midway meetings, and students complete an application form before placement which is used to inform placement matching on an individual basis. This is to ensure students can develop the skills that they have from prior experiences and from their first placement.

67. The inspection team heard from the course team and students themselves that students have the opportunities on placement to gain the necessary knowledge and skills.

68. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

69. The university provided placement handbooks, placement learning expectations and practice learning roles and responsibilities handbooks prior to the inspection. These documents detailed students' access to induction, supervision, support, and resources. The need to ensure a realistic workload and responsibilities for students is also clearly set out in these documents.

70. The inspection team met with students and practice educators who confirmed that they check in with students about workload, the level of supervision that takes place and gave examples of support provided to students.

71. The practice educators confirmed that students receive a clear induction process and that employer partners also meet with students before placement. There is a review of student workload at the midway review, and this considers what is right for individual students.

72. The employer partners confirmed that they have good lines of communication and felt supported by the university to ensure that support is in place for students. They confirmed that individual student learning contracts can be shared with them, with consent from the student, to assist with support for students with additional needs/reasonable adjustments.

73. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

74. Both the documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection and the further evidence received during the inspection confirmed how student responsibilities are monitored and checked.

75. The practice educators that spoke with the inspection team confirmed how they provide support to students, and that they will encourage students to develop and stretch their learning where appropriate.

76. The university have briefing sessions for both offsite and onsite practice educators, and this information is recorded and shared with anyone that is unable to attend. There are also workshops available for onsite supervisors.

77. A holistic assessment at the end of the first placement is included as part of a bundle provided to the second placement, and this includes any recommendations for further learning needs.

78. The inspection team agreed that progression points are clear and aligned to the PCF and as such this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

79. The documentary evidence and course team confirmed that readiness for practice is currently assessed through the mandatory attendance at 20 skills days prior to the first placement.

80. As part of this, students complete reflections on the sessions that they have attended, and these are checked and monitored by the course team. The course team confirmed that there are opportunities to make the required days up if they are missed.

81. In the proposed new course provision, the skills days will be incorporated into the modules.

82. The course team confirmed that all year one modules must be passed before students can go out on their first placement. The skills themes within the modules have been designed to test the skills needed for first placement, and the learning is scaffolded with ongoing assessment that will be through a number of formats.

83. The course team confirmed that the changes have been considered in consultation with employer partners and students, who provided feedback that they wanted the skills days to be more clearly aligned to the modules.

84. Both the employer partners and practice educators that the inspection team spoke with confirmed that they felt that students were ready for practice.

85. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

86. Documentary evidence received prior to the inspection indicated the process for ensuring practice educator registration, currency and experience.

87. During the inspection, the inspection team heard more about how this is achieved, with the practice educator register being a live document for all practice educators. This register includes information on their registration, continuous professional development (CPD), practice educator professional standards (PEPS) training, and how currency is checked.

88. The university offers PEPS training and workshops and there has been a practice educator conference.

89. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.7

90. The university provided evidence prior to the inspection of the concerns process, whistleblowing policy, placement handbook and PLA. The PLA contains an induction checklist, which includes whistleblowing, and must be completed within 10 days of starting placement.

91. The PLA checks that the employer partner has their own whistleblowing procedure in place and that the student is aware of the university whistleblowing policy also. It also provides information about placement breakdown and reporting concerns. Advocacy support is also available to students through the students' union.

92. The inspection team spoke with students who confirmed that they felt able to report concerns and knew who to contact if they needed to do this.

93. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

94. Documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection detailed the structure of governance of the course, and the links between the course and various committees.

95. During the inspection the quality assurance processes were explained, and it was clarified how the South Yorkshire teaching partnership subgroups link informally to the course.

96. Further information was also provided about the involvement of the social work partnership meetings in the course, and of the stakeholders that attend these meetings.

97. The inspection team met with members of the senior management team who shared their understanding of various aspects of the governance of the course, and this demonstrated their close ties to the social work courses.

98. The inspection team heard about governance at course level and about the members of the college leadership team. They also heard how issues such as staff resourcing, number planning, and budget setting were addressed.

99. The inspection team agreed that the course had sufficient resources available through dedicated admissions and placement teams.

100. The inspection team therefore concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

101. Documentary evidence was provided detailing the placement audit process, and service level agreements were provided as additional evidence.

102. During the inspection, the inspection team heard more about the placement audits and how this works in practice. The inspection team also heard from employer partners, who confirmed that appropriate consents are in place through the PLA and prior to students having contact with service users.

103. Examples were provided of placement breakdown and the process in place to pause or defer placements.

104. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

105. The first and final placement handbook provides evidence of support for students and ensures that providers have the necessary policies and procedures, along with the service level agreements and placement auditing.

106. The employer partners provided examples, during the inspection, of how they manage issues during placement. They confirmed that this is managed through clear communication with the university and confirmed that they received support and timely responses to issues raised with the course team.

107. The inspection team agreed that the PLA meeting covers the necessary policies, procedures and support, and as such this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

108. The inspection team met with employer partners who confirmed the ways in which they can provide feedback. They confirmed that they have been consulted on changes to the course and are updated on curriculum changes.

109. They advised that they attend the social work partnership meetings and are involved in the design and delivery of the skills days.

110. The course team confirmed that there are focus groups to gather employer partner feedback and gave an example of one that took place in relation to the skills days, which resulted in changes to include more micro skills following the employer partner feedback.

111. The curriculum development group also discusses the academic elements of the course, and the social work partnership group considers practice learning, placements, and placement audits.

112. The course team also confirmed that employer partners sit on fitness to practise and CRCP panels, assessing criminal conviction declarations.

113. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

114. The documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection detailed how the existing course has been subject to on-going critical review through semester reviews, course committees, internal surveys, student focus groups and module reviews. The integrated care curriculum has been consulted on, with a specific social work consultation having taken place with students and service users.

115. During the inspection, the inspection team heard from the course team about the various quality assurances processes in place. This is a continuous process throughout the course, and includes annual reviews, with a post-graduate taught experience survey considering data and student feedback. There are also module evaluations, placement audits, placement evaluations, and various meetings to review the course.

116. As stated above under standard 3.4, the employer partners are involved in the social work partnership meetings on a bi-monthly basis, and the people with lived experience who met with the inspection team confirmed that they also attend these meetings. Both groups confirmed that they have been consulted on the changes to the content of the course.

117. The course team confirmed, during the inspection, that there has been a project with people with lived experience to co-produce course content and ensure that what is being taught on the course is right for service users, as well as being practitioner led.

118. The inspection team met with students who confirmed that they have opportunities to provide feedback through module evaluations, and student representatives who attend various meetings. These representatives are supported with training from the student union to help them be advocates. There are also listening events with pods where students can talk about their experiences of the course.

119. The inspection team heard various examples of where feedback from different stakeholder groups had been incorporated into changes to the course.

120. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

121. The inspection team met with members of the senior management team who explained their considerations in relation to student numbers. At college level, meetings around student number planning consider previous years, growth areas, external benchmarking, and recruitment activities.

122. At course level they consider what the national picture is, and the departmental leadership team discuss the current climate in the profession to develop a regional picture across Sheffield, Derbyshire and Nottingham.

123. The senior management team advised that they develop their relationships with employer partners through meetings with both local authority and private, voluntary and independent partners in different locations. They also consider intelligence from graduate

outcomes data to see where graduates have been employed and how it is impacting the region.

124. The university then consider the placement capacity and practice educator capacity. They have looked at developing placement capacity with short courses for PEPS, and some subsidies, to encourage people to become practice educators.

125. During the auditing process of employer partners there is a consideration of capacity when considering student numbers. This is a live, ongoing process to ensure that employer partners can meet the number of placements needed and involves conversations with employer partners.

126. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

127. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the curriculum vitae (CV) for the social work lead for the course who holds overall responsibility for the programme.

128. The inspection team were satisfied that this individual is a registered social worker and appropriately qualified and experienced, and therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

129. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team received CVs for the course team.

130. During the inspection, the inspection team spoke to key members of the course team and heard more about where the team's specialisms are. They advised that consideration is given to match appropriate members of staff to support the different course elements, as needed.

131. The senior management team advised that they look at whether there is a balance in the staffing to ensure that can they cover the curriculum. They also confirmed that associate lecturers and visiting lecturers are utilised to bring specialist practice into the teaching of the course.

132. There was confirmation that there is a staff development budget and staff are supported to complete a teaching qualification within the first 12 months, with career progression following, to ensure that staff remain appropriately experienced.

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

Standard 3.9

134. The documentation provided prior to the inspection indicated that course development plans and annual monitoring are used as the mechanisms of review and monitoring of the course.

135. During the inspection, the inspection team heard more about how students' performance and progression is monitored academically, pastorally and whilst on placement. The inspection team also heard more about the steps taken to reduce the awarding gap, and about the work of the equity accomplice programme and Global Majority Group.

136. The course team indicated their clear knowledge of areas impacting attainment and gave examples of ways they have developed strategies to reduce this.

137. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

138. The documentary evidence showed that staff are supported with annual teaching, learning and assessment conferences, staff development forums, peer review processes and engagement in research.

139. During the inspection, the senior management team gave examples of support for new staff to complete higher education qualifications. They also advised of the provision of secondments, which allow staff to take up opportunities such as shadowing and spending time in practice.

140. The inspection team heard more about the research fund and examples of research that has impacted the course delivery. They also heard about work with local partners on research and how this benefits the course as well as those in practice and in the community.

141. The course team members confirmed that they had access to various CPD activities and research opportunities and gave examples of the projects that they have worked on.

142. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

143. The current course provision module descriptors were provided as part of the documentary evidence prior to the inspection and these indicated that the modules are mapped across the PCF and cover the Social Work England professional standards.

144. The inspection team agreed that there was progression in student learning across the course. However, during the inspection, the inspection team noted that on the university Blackboard site the learning outcomes were mapped to PCF and the HCPC standards.

145. The inspectors agreed that this should be updated to remove reference to the HCPC standards and agreed that this could be dealt with under standard 5.5 as the current course is mapped to the PCF and Social Work England professional standards.

146. During the inspection it was confirmed that validation of the new course provision had been completed with no conditions.

147. The inspection team noted the changes to the course with the removal of some of the modules and assessments, amendment to the length of placements, and incorporation of skills days into the modules. The inspection team heard more about this in the course team presentation and later in the inspection.

148. The course team confirmed the move towards trimesterisation of modules and how changes to the assessments, skills days and placement days had arisen as a result of feedback from students and employer partners.

149. The inspection team received mapping of the new course to Social Work England's professional standards, the PCF and KSS.

150. The students that met with the inspection team also confirmed their knowledge of the Social Work England professional standards.

151. The inspection team were provided with module descriptors for the new provision of the course prior to the inspection. However, it was noted that these had not yet been finalised and lacked some of the detail that could be seen in the current provision module descriptors. The inspectors asked for clarification, during the inspection, about how elements of the current course provision will be incorporated into the new provision, and this was provided by the course team.

152. The inspection team agreed that to be assured that students on the new course provision will have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards, they needed to see how the changes will look in the finalised module descriptors.

153. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 4.1 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. [Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the proposed outcomes section of this report.](#)

Standard 4.2

154. Both through the documentary evidence and meeting with employer partners, the inspection team heard about employer involvement in the delivery and review of the skills days, with examples of specific involvement being provided.

155. The people with lived experience that met with the inspection team confirmed that they are also involved in changes to the curriculum, through talking to students about their experiences and the delivery of the skills days. They confirmed that they felt that their views were heard and that they were supported and given the opportunity to receive appropriate training to support their involvement.

156. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

157. The university's documentary evidence advised that the Integrated Care Curriculum (ICC) steering group includes staff development plans to address facilitation skills and principles of inclusive practice.

158. During the initial course team presentation, the inspection team heard more about the Global Majority Group and work to decolonise the curriculum. Throughout the inspection, the inspection team heard lots of examples of the work done by this group and how this has impacted on changes to the course.

159. The inspection team also heard examples of support and reasonable adjustments that are in place for students across all elements of the course.

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

Standard 4.4

161. The documentary evidence provided by the university advised that there are annual module evaluations and reviews. It also confirmed that the module descriptors have been designed to allow some flexibility in determining the appropriate current content year on year.

162. During the inspection, the inspection team spoke with members of the course team, who provided examples of a number of ways in which they maintain currency and feed this into the content of the course.

163. They advised that teaching is research-informed and gave examples of current issues in practice that have been included in the course. For example, through their work with communities, research around alcohol behaviour in certain communities, and the 'people living on the edge of homelessness' research project.

164. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

165. The documentary evidence received prior to the inspection indicated that theory and practice is part of the skills days. The PLA also includes discussion of which theories and social work methods could be explored during the student's placement.

166. The inspection team heard how students learn the theory on the academic element of the course and then how to apply it with case studies. Practice educators confirmed how they then support students to consider theories on placement.

167. In the proposed course changes, the course team confirmed that the practice skills learnt during the course will be aligned to the module learning.

168. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

169. The current course provision has a module called 'Understanding Complexity in Practice', which allows students to learn and work with other professional disciplines. The module uses a problem-based approach and realistic case scenarios to help students understand the realities of multi-agency social work.

170. In the proposed new course, this module has been removed from year one and incorporated into year two in line with other departments across the university. The inspection team heard more during the inspection about the ICC model, which has been co-created with other departments across the college and will be taught in a career specific way.

171. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

172. The module descriptors for the current provision were provided prior to the inspection. Each one confirmed, for each module, the notional study hours, teaching and independent learning hours.

173. During the inspection, the course team confirmed that for the proposed new course this information will be included in the new module descriptors. There will be a standardised approach of 30 hours per 20 credits, which is a university-wide approach.

174. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

175. The university provided documentation detailing the assessment strategy and guidance in relation to assessment, marking, moderation and quality assurance processes. It also confirmed that assessments have been mapped to the module descriptors.

176. The documentary evidence indicated that across the course there are a broad range of assessment methods such as exams, viva, coursework, and presentations. Summative assessment methods are used that build skills that are transferable to the professional world. Formative assessments are embedded throughout the course, rather than stand-

alone assessments, and have been developed to directly inform and support the summative assessments.

177. The course team confirmed, during the inspection, that with the proposed new course provision they have made changes to reduce the number of assessments following feedback. They also confirmed that assessments are scaffolded for progression and designed to reflect social work practice.

178. During the inspection, the inspection team saw how assessment information is communicated to students through briefings for assessments, and guidance. The inspection team also heard more about the marking and moderation processes.

179. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

180. The documentary evidence confirmed that assessments are mapped to the learning outcomes and scaffolded to increase incrementally throughout the course. As stated above, this includes formative and summative assessments.

181. The design of the proposed new course has considered the learning needs of students whilst considering the assessment burden to students throughout the course.

182. The course team confirmed during the inspection that students receive formative feedback for each assessment and that this is matched to the type of assessment.

183. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

184. The documentary evidence confirmed that feedback is provided on all formative and summative assessments.

185. During the inspection, the course team explained more about the feedback model, which allows for three things done well, three things to do better and three areas of improvement. The course team explained more about how feedback is standardised with marking grids and through moderation.

186. The inspection team spoke with students who confirmed that they received feedback on time and that it was constructive. Some students mentioned differences in length of feedback depending on who it came from, but they agreed that feedback was generally supportive of their development.

187. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

188. Additional evidence was received prior to the inspection confirming the external examiners' qualifications, experience and registration.

189. The university confirmed that all assessments are carried out by members of the academic teaching team who are all registered with Social Work England.

190. The assessment element of placements is carried out by a qualified practice educator, and a register of practice educators is kept confirming their training and registration.

191. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

192. Documentary evidence confirmed that direct observations and service user feedback form part of placements.

193. The course team advised of the processes in place where students may need to resit assessments or apply for extenuating circumstances. They also confirmed the process if students have reasonable adjustments within their learning contract which provide additional support, for example more time for assessments.

194. The course team indicated that they are planning to include people with lived experience in the assessment of students' readiness for practice.

195. During the inspection, the inspection team heard more about the support mechanisms to manage student progression through the course, with a triangle of student support. There is a student support advisor providing support on assessment, progression, and development; an academic advisor who also becomes the placement tutor, and an employability advisor, in addition to a variety of support services.

196. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

197. The module descriptors provided evidence of the inclusion of research skills and knowledge development throughout the modules on the course.

198. During the inspection, the inspection team heard how students are supported to develop critical analytical skills and research mindedness.

199. Examples of where this takes place were given by the course team, including an example of a student's research project that has been fed back into potential changes that can be considered for the curriculum.

200. The inspection team concluded that the standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

201. The documentary evidence detailed the support services available to students including counselling, careers advice and occupational health services.

202. During the inspection, the inspection team met with people from various support services who provided further information about the support services available to students.

203. They confirmed that support is available at any time, seven days a week, and that support is available online and face to face.

204. The support services confirmed how they work with the course team to ensure that support is incorporated into the course and not just a standalone resource. They also gave examples of how they consider students' personal circumstances, such as caring responsibilities.

205. The inspection team met with students who confirmed that they felt supported throughout the course.

206. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

207. The documentary evidence provided by the university prior to the inspection confirmed that students have academic advisors who will also support them throughout their placements.

208. It also provided details about the student support triangle mentioned above under standard 4.12.

209. The support services that met with the inspection team gave examples of various resources and workshops that are available to support students academically. The library support services included academic skills support, information literacy, learning spaces, and online workshops such as referencing.

210. The inspection team heard how support is provided to international students and to a student on an international placement abroad at the time of the inspection.

211. Students can undertake a skills assessment which then signposts them to support they might need and is linked to different learning styles.

212. The inspection team also heard that there is an academic support page on the intranet, for staff, that provides information and resources to help them to support students.

213. The inspection team was therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

214. Documentary evidence prior to the inspection provided details of the occupational health processes, fitness to practise regulations and procedures, DBS processes, and the joint Sheffield Hallam University and University of Sheffield CRCP policy.

215. The course team confirmed, during the inspection, that the self-declaration completed at the admissions stage is also completed annually by students.

216. They also provided examples of support provided throughout the course to students with health issues, and confirmed that occupational health referrals can be made throughout the course and revisited if needed.

217. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

218. The university provided documentary evidence outlining how students with disabilities can have a learning contract and receive additional support from the disabled student support team. Students with additional caring responsibilities are also able to gain a carers contract which can allow for reasonable adjustments.

219. Once a disability is identified, students are encouraged to register with the student support team and a learning contract is put in place. The team will then meet with the student and discuss if there is any other support that they might need.

220. Throughout the inspection, various people provided the inspection team with examples of adjustments that can be put in place for students, such as extra time with exams or consideration of a need to arrive or leave early, which can be added to their learning contract.

221. They also provided examples of how academics have supported students with developing and building up skills in a supportive environment.

222. There is also a mentoring scheme for students who need support with mental health and ADHD, and students do not need to provide any evidence to receive this support.

223. During placement, support needs are discussed as part of the PLA and midway review, and students are encouraged to disclose any additional needs whilst on placement. If they do not wish to do so, they can discuss this with an employability advisor.

224. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

225. Documentary evidence in the form of the course handbooks and placements website indicated to the inspection team that students are provided with the relevant information.

226. This was verified by the students that met with the inspection team, who confirmed that they received all the information that they needed.

227. The inspection team heard that there is an employability session and advisor available to students, and a session on the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

228. However, the inspection team noted that there were a number of documents and references on the course webpage to the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). As Social Work England have been the regulator for social workers since December 2019, the inspectors agreed that this information needed to be amended and updated to reflect the current regulator.

229. 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 outcomes section of this report.](#)

Standard 5.6

230. The course handbook provided prior to the inspection sets out the mandatory attendance elements of the course and the process in place for non-attendance of the practice and academic elements.

231. Whilst on placement, a daily register of attendance is recorded and signed off by the student's supervisor or practice educator. If placement days are missed, they must be made up at the end of the placement, and there is scope to allow for this within the current provision.

232. Within the current course provision, the skills days form part of the 200 days of placement required and are monitored by the course team reviewing students' submission of reflections following attendance at each skills day.

233. During the inspection, the course team advised the inspection team of the QR code system for recording attendance and of their engagement monitoring system.

234. The new course provision allows for 200 days on placement and as such the skills day will form part of the modules.

235. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

236. The documentary evidence indicated that feedback will be provided to students within 15 working days of submission.

237. As detailed at standard 4.10 above, the inspection team spoke with students who confirmed that they received feedback on time and that this is constructive. Some students mentioned differences in length of feedback depending on who it came from, but they agreed that feedback was generally supportive of their development.

238. During the inspection, the course team explained more about the feedback model which allows for three things done well, three things to do better and three areas of improvement. The course team explained more about how feedback is standardised with marking grids and through moderation.

239. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

240. The university provided evidence, prior to the inspection, of the academic appeals process, which the inspection team agreed appears to be robust and clear.

241. The course handbook refers students to the appeals process, which allows 10 working days from date of decision to appeal.

242. The inspection team therefore agreed that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

243. As the qualifying course is an MA social work and PG Dip social work (Masters exit route) the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

245. 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.

246. 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	Standard 4.1 of the new provision	The education provider will provide evidence of the finalised module descriptors or relevant documentation for the modules in the new course provision.	25 th April 2024	Paragraph 153
2	Standard 5.5 of the current provision	The education provider will provide evidence that all course documentation and website information, relating to the course, has been updated to remove reference to the HCPC.	25 th April 2024	Paragraph 229

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

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

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

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
2.7 Ensure that policies and processes, including for whistleblowing, are in place for students to challenge unsafe behaviours and cultures and organisational wrongdoing, and report concerns openly and safely without fear of adverse consequences.	☒	☐	☐
Course governance, management and quality			
3.1 Ensure courses are supported by a management and governance plan that includes the roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability of individuals and governing groups in the delivery, resourcing and quality management of the course.	☒	☐	☐
3.2 Ensure that they have agreements with placement providers to provide education and training that meets the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards. This should include necessary consents and ensure placement providers have contingencies in place to deal with practice placement breakdown.	☒	☐	☐
3.3 Ensure that placement providers have the necessary policies and procedures in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk, and the support systems in place to underpin these.	☒	☐	☐
3.4 Ensure that employers are involved in elements of the course, including but not limited to the management and monitoring of courses and the allocation of practice education.	☒	☐	☐
3.5 Ensure that regular and effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems are in place, and that these involve	☒	☐	☐

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

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

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
4.10 Ensure students are provided with feedback throughout the course to support their ongoing development.	☒	☐	☐
4.11 Ensure assessments are carried out by people with appropriate expertise, and that external examiner(s) for the course are appropriately qualified and experienced and on the register.	☒	☐	☐
4.12 Ensure that there are systems to manage students' progression, with input from a range of people, to inform decisions about their progression including via direct observation of practice.	☒	☐	☐
4.13 Ensure that the course is designed to enable students to develop an evidence-informed approach to practice, underpinned by skills, knowledge and understanding in relation to research and evaluation.	☒	☐	☐
Supporting students			
5.1 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their health and wellbeing including: I. confidential counselling services. II. careers advice and support; and III. occupational health services	☒	☐	☐
5.2 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their academic development including, for example, personal tutors.	☒	☐	☐
5.3 Ensure that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health.	☒	☐	☐

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

Regulator decision

247. Approved with conditions

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

248. 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](#).

249. A review of the conditions evidence will be undertaken, and recommendations will be made to Social Work England's decision maker.

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

	Standard not met	Condition	Recommendation
1	Standard 4.1 of the new course provision	The education provider will provide evidence of the finalised module descriptors or relevant documentation for the modules in the new course provision.	Met
2	Standard 5.5 of the current course provision	The education provider will provide evidence that all course documentation and website information, relating to the course, has been updated to remove reference to the HCPC.	Met

Findings

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

252. In relation to standard 4.1, the course provider supplied updated module descriptors for the new provision of the course. The inspection team noted that the learning outcomes have been mapped to Social Work England's Professional Standards and the PCF and therefore agreed that this standard was now met.

253. In relation to standard 5.5, the inspection team agreed that the course documentation and website had been updated to remove reference to the HCPC and as such this standard was met.

254. Following the review of the documentary evidence submitted, the inspection team are satisfied that the conditions set against the approval of the MA social work and PG Dip social work (master exit route) are met.

Regulator decision

255. Conditions Met.