

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Lincoln

Course approval: BSc Social Work Practice

Inspection dates: 24th January 2023 – 27th January 2023

Report date:	30.01.2023
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	17.04.2023
<i>(Delete if not required)</i> Date conditions met and approved:	18.09.2023

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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, new course approval and annual monitoring processes on our website.

What we do

5. When an education provider wants to make a change to a course, or request the approval of a new course, they are asked to consider how their course meets our education and training standards and our professional standards, and provide evidence of this to us. We are also undertaking a cycle of re-approval of all currently approved social work courses in England following the introduction of the Education and Training Standards 2021.
6. The education quality assurance officer reviews all the documentary evidence provided and will contact the education provider if they have any questions about the information submitted. They also provide advice and guidance on our approval processes.
7. When we are satisfied that we have all the documentary evidence required to proceed with an inspection we assign one registrant and one lay inspector. We undertake a conflict of interest process when confirming our inspectors to ensure there is no bias or appearance of bias in the approval process.
8. The inspectors complete an assessment of the evidence provided and advise the 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- or four-day visit to the education provider. We then draft a report setting out what we found during the inspection and if and how our findings demonstrate that the course meets our standards.
11. The inspectors may recommend in this report that the course is approved with conditions, without conditions or that it does not meet the criteria for approval.
12. A draft of this report is shared with the education provider, and once we have considered any comments or observations they may wish to provide, we make a final decision about the approval of the course.
13. The decisions that we can make are as follows, that the course is approved without conditions, the course is approved with conditions or that the course does not meet the criteria for approval. The decision, and the report, are then published.
14. If the course is approved with conditions, we will write to the education provider setting out how they can demonstrate they have met the conditions, the action we will take once we decide that the conditions are met, and the action we will take if we decide the conditions are not met.

Summary of Inspection

15. Course details: University of Lincoln ('the University') wish to run a three year Bachelors of Science in Social Work Practice.

Inspection ID	ULIR2
Course provider	University of Lincoln
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	BSc Social Work Practice
Mode of Study	Undergraduate
Maximum student cohort	25
Proposed first intake	September 2023
Date of inspection	23 rd January – 27 th January 2023
Inspection team	Catherine Denny (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Bradley Allan (Lay Inspector) Deborah Brown (Registrant Inspector)
Inspector recommendation	Approved with conditions
Approval outcome	Approved with conditions

Language

16. In this document we describe University of Lincoln as 'the education provider' or 'the university' and we describe the BSc Social Work Practice as 'the course'.

Inspection

17. An onsite inspection took place from the 23rd to 27th of January 2023 across the campus where the education provider is based. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, employers and people with lived experience of social work.

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

Conflict of interest

No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

20. The inspection team met with the year 2 cohort of the MSc Social Work at the university as well as students from years 2 and 3 of the Social Work Degree Apprenticeship.

Discussions included student experience of selection and admissions, placement allocation and support, curriculum, assessment and support available through the university.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the course team, those involved in selection and admissions, the senior leadership team, staff involved in placement-based learning and student support services.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in the delivery of the apprenticeship as well as other courses within the school. Discussions included their role in interview processes, their contributions towards course design and evaluation, their role within teaching and assessment and the support they receive to undertake their role.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including NHS, North Lincolnshire Local Authority and Lincolnshire Local Authority. The inspection team also met with a representative from the Humber Social Work Teaching Partnership.

Findings

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

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

25. The education provider submitted documentary evidence including admissions guidance developed by the school, an application form, interview questions, examples of tasks developed for interview and an admissions screening tool. The course team outlined that it was currently working to a model of holding remote interviews in line with other courses, and that this was an opportunity to assess ICT skills, but that this was under review.

26. As the documentary evidence contained details of a review of interview processes, the inspection team were eager to understand what the status of these discussions were during the inspection visit. Through meetings with the course team and employer partners, the inspection team heard that all proposed changes to interview processes had been agreed and that there was a sound rationale for the changes. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

27. Within the documentary evidence provided the inspection team were able to see that the assessment of prior learning and experience is factored in throughout the application process. Applicants are required to reflect upon their prior learning and experience within the application form and this is reviewed through the admissions screening tool. The interview process ensures that there is further reflection and exploration of this with candidates. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

28. The admissions guidance developed by the school outlined the intention to include employers, practitioners, people with lived experience and students in admissions processes. During meetings with university staff and representatives from the service user and carer group, known as the Together Group, the inspection team heard that there is an expectation that all interviews should include an academic member of staff, employer partner and service user or carer. On rare occasions where there might be extenuating circumstances such as illness, interviews may proceed with an academic and practitioner.

29. Representatives from the Together Group outlined how they value their involvement in interviews. They explained that they are offered training prior to take part in admissions processes and that this happens alongside staff. All representatives who sit on interview panels are also offered the opportunity to speak with university staff before and after interviews to discuss issues and concerns. The representatives that met with the inspection team explained that they feel like an equal partner in the process and have the ability to influence decision making. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

30. The inspection team were assured that appropriate processes were in place to assess the suitability of applicants via the documentation provided. The university submitted their guidance in relation to conduct health, character and criminal conviction checks which also included reference to reasonable adjustments and the university 'fitness to proceed' process. During the inspection visit, conversations with different stakeholders confirmed the processes in place were fit for purpose and implemented consistently. The course team confirmed that the processes in place for other social work courses would be adopted for the BSc Social Work Practice. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

31. The university submitted evidence of their statement and commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) along with examples of how the training of staff is monitored. Whilst the university also provided some narrative about their expectations for the training required of different stakeholders involved in admissions processes, the inspection team requested further clarity about the content and frequency of training provided during the inspection event.

32. Meetings with key participants assured the inspection team that the course team expect all stakeholders to either complete university based EDI training or complete a declaration to show this has been completed within an employer organisation. The requirement is for members of admissions and interview panels to complete this on an annual basis, which is beyond the usual university expectation for this type of training. Furthermore, the inspection team were also able to view a sample of what the training entails and the test of understanding that is used. As a result of discussions and the additional evidence submission, the inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

33. The course provider shared the website page for the course which would be a source of information for prospective candidates. This had been in development during the course of the inspection and was nearing completion during the inspection visit. On the web page there was information about entry requirements, fees and funding, a brief overview of assessment, an introduction to the modules and some detail relating to placement partners.

34. The inspection team noted however that there was little information available regarding the blended nature of the course and some information suggested that face-to-face teaching was a priority. 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. Full details of the condition can be found in the [conditions](#) section of this report.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

35. The course provider provided a summary of the plan for placements on the course which included 30 skills days, 26 of which would be delivered during year 1 of the course. The further 4 would be offered during years 2 and 3 and may require returning to the university from placement; the inspection team questioned whether the impact of these skills days may be lost when returning during placement periods as students may be more concerned with placement related issues. 170 practice placement days were then spread over years 2 and 3. There was appropriate planning in place to ensure that at least 1 of the placements would be delivered within a statutory social work setting. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met with a recommendation in relation to the communication relating to skills days whilst on placement. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [recommendations](#) section of this report.

Standard 2.2

36. The course provider confirmed that the design of the BSc was based upon the structure of the social work degree apprenticeship. The inspection team were able to see documentation which outlined the process of determining placement suitability and allocation. Meetings between the practice learning hub within the university and placement providers prior to allocation, ensured that providers are aware of their obligations to provide appropriate tasks and learning opportunities for students. The QAPL process used by the university also reviews the suitability of practice learning opportunities on an ongoing basis.

37. An e-portfolio used to support practice placements on other social work courses provided a place for students to record the characteristics of the placement and available expertise alongside their own learning needs. Details of supervision and support to develop specified areas of practice were also evident within the portfolio. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

38. The course provider submitted a copy of their practice handbook alongside a range of documents which set out the range of placement practice roles. The inspection team saw

evidence of the briefings which were provided to on-site supervisors, practice educators, mentors and students ahead of their placement allocation. Further evidence was provided in the form of QAPL documentation which requires aspects of induction, supervision and workload to be evidenced.

39. During the inspection event, the inspection team heard about the range of processes that were in place to support students experiencing difficulties, such as the cause for concern process. During a meeting with placement partners, participants were able to articulate their understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to student support. Some student representatives who the inspection team met with were also able to provide examples of the support they received during placement which was positive and helped to address any issues.

40. Despite there being positive examples provided to support this standard, the inspection team heard about occasions where the standard had not been consistently met. During meetings with student representatives from the MSc, some students shared experiences where feelings of exclusion occurred within the work place. They explained that when this had happened, the support described that should be available through placement based staff was not available.

41. 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. Full details of the condition can be found in the [conditions](#) section of this report.

Standard 2.4

42. Evidence provided by the course provider detailed their expectations in relation to ensuring that student responsibilities remain appropriate for the stage of their training. The inspection team observed this within the practice learning handbook, expectations documents for key stakeholders involved in placements, the mentor handbook, QAPL processes and through briefing documents. As with standard 2.3, there was evidence of the course providers intention and vision, however experience was that this was not being implemented consistently and at times staff within the team around a student did not fully understand the expectations of the university in relation to student support in placement. As a result, the inspection team agreed that the standard applied to standard 2.3 was also applicable for this standard. Full details of the condition can be found in the [conditions](#) section of this report.

Standard 2.5

43. The course provider detailed the assessment point for students' readiness for professional practice within the programme specification for the course. Within the evidence provided, the inspection team saw the intent for students to complete a readiness

for practice assessment and interview before being provided with their 'ready for social work practice assessment record'. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

44. The course provider submitted detail of their Practice Education Management System (PEMS) which tracked the registration, currency and training of Practice Educators (P.E.s). During the inspection event, members of the course team demonstrated how the system works and explained that the currency of P.E.s is checked annually and PEMS is updated as a result. Where P.E.s haven't supported a student recently, they are required to complete a monitoring form which explores the currency of their practice. If the currency of practice is not deemed as current, the course team will work with individual P.E.s to bring this up to date so that they can be readded to the university register.

45. In order to support the currency of P.E.s on an ongoing basis, the university offer regular refresher training throughout the academic year. The university also delivers PEP's stage 1 and 2 which are planned to run before each placement cycle. This is discussed with key stakeholders so that they can nominate staff to join each iteration of the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.7

46. The course team submitted an example of the practice learning handbook for the apprenticeship, as an example of what would be developed for the BSc, which included guidance on the process for raising concerns and whistleblowing. The university also provided a narrative of more formal processes such as Cause for Concern and Problem Resolution Protocol, however during the review of evidence, the inspection team found it difficult to find substantive evidence that detailed the stages of the process and responsibilities of stakeholders within it. The inspection team were assured that key staff understood how the process would be initiated and managed through conversations during inspection but agreed a recommendation around formalising this and presenting it in a way that was easy to understand would be beneficial. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [recommendations](#) section of this report.

47. During a meeting with students, the course team heard that there were some concerns raised about the behaviour of some practice educators. Students reported that, at times, they felt unable to raise their concerns and as a result, such behaviour continued unchallenged. The inspection team acknowledged that there were policies and procedures in place to support this standard however, how they fit together and are applied in relation to practice is less clear. 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. Full details of the condition can be found in the [conditions](#) section of this report.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

48. The course provider submitted a copy of their Health and Social Care Programmes Governance Structure which provided detail of the ongoing management of programmes at school level and details of roles and responsibilities of staff in relation to different aspects of governance. The narrative to support the evidence also provided the inspection team with further detail about how policies are implemented to ensure effective governance and quality assurance of the programme.

49. During the inspection visit, the course team were able to clearly articulate their roles and responsibilities and demonstrated a clear understanding of colleague's roles within the course structure. There was good support for the course team from staff within focused quality assurance roles in the university which ensured accountability and consistency. The inspection team observed a collaborative approach to course management which was shared with all stakeholders involved in the delivery of the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

50. The university submitted a selection of signed agreements that were in place with various placement providers. Within the agreements, there was evidence of need for providers to offer learning experiences that meet the learning needs of the apprentice and Social Work England professional standards. There was also evidence provided of the cause for concern process in place and who was able to initiate this.

51. During meetings with the course team and placement partners, the inspection team explored management of consents for students on placement and processes in place to manage placement breakdown. The inspection team consistently heard that all students declare their position when undertaking direct work with service users. The placement team were able to articulate the steps taken to support students experiencing placement difficulties and an understanding of this process was shared by the wider course team. Where difficulties were persistent or significant, there is a formal process which determines whether a placement can continue. These decisions are made by the placement lead for the course who is able to work alongside colleagues to determine appropriate next steps. During conversations with employer partners and students, the inspection team were assured that university processes had been communicated effectively with all stakeholders. This was further supported by information shared through P.E forums which explored issues associated with placement challenges and are attended by representatives from the university. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

52. The signed agreements submitted in relation to standard 3.2 also provided assurance against this standard with all agreements outlining the expectation to hold and share policies relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk. This was further supported by the confirmation of placement and QAPL documentation which checks the availability of, and access to, policy documentation for students on placement. Students were able to speak confidently about their understanding of key policies and confirmed that these were shared with them ahead of commencing placement. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

54. The inspection team heard how employer partners are involved in forums to ensure they remain involved with all aspects of the course, these included the Social Work Partnership Education Group (SWPEG) and the Humber Social Work Teaching Partnership. Representatives from local employer organisations are also invited to form panels in the event of a fitness to practice concern which involves a social work student.

55. Within quarterly SWPEG meetings discussions cover topics such as, design and delivery of the curriculum, selection and admissions, student feedback and issues relating to practice placements. During meetings with placement providers, the inspection team heard how partners feel valued by the university and value the forums that are available to them to discuss key issues. The inspection team also learned that the idea for the development of the new BSc course as a blended model was developed following requests from employer to support their strategic workforce planning within an area that does not have ease of access to a university campus. Both employers and representatives from the course team acknowledged that the collaborative relationships that had been developed had resulted in reciprocal benefits. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

56. As outlined in standard 3.4, there was clear evidence of the involvement of employers in monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems for the course. This was supported via conversations with organisational placement leads, representatives from the teaching partnership and P.E.s. During the inspection, student representatives from established courses shared their experiences of involvement in course monitoring and improvement. Student representatives represented their cohort on subject committee events and explained that student module evaluations and QAPL documentation also feeds into course development and design.

57. The inspection team were eager to better understand the role of the Together Group, which is made up of people with lived experience of social work, in more detail during the inspection. Documentation provided by the university outlined the range of ways that Together Group members might be involved in the course, however further clarification was

required to assure inspectors that this included meaningful opportunities to feed into the review of the course. During a meeting with Together Group representatives, the inspection team heard that members feel that they are part of the thinking of the design and delivery of the course from start to finish. A plan for the ongoing involvement of the Together Group was developed by the course team and shared with members via online meetings for their input. There was also a role within the academic staff team developed which is focused specifically on maintaining meaningful engagement with the Together Group. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

58. The inspection team were satisfied with the evidence presented to support this standard. Reference to placement capacity was evidenced within practice placement agreements and through the terms of reference (where placement capacity is a feature of meetings) from the SWPEG. As outlined above, the development of the course was a result of demand from employers and employer representatives confirmed that there is the capacity to offer placements within their organisations. Placement providers confirmed that capacity was a running agenda item in partnership meetings and explained that they will often work in partnership with colleagues from other services or local authorities to meet the demand for contrasting placements. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

59. The evidence provided to support this standard included a CV for the course lead which detailed relevant experience, qualifications and skills. The course lead was also present throughout the inspection event and was able to demonstrate appropriate leadership for the course informed by their knowledge and skills. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

60. The inspection team reviewed the CV's of for the course team which identified that the staff team for the course are appropriately qualified and experienced. It was possible to determine specific roles and responsibilities from the documentation and it was evident that there was a mixture of experienced academic staff and those recently joining higher education from social work practice. The course provider confirmed that any new staff joining the university are expected to complete their Postgraduate Certificate (Pg Cert) in higher education and work towards obtaining fellowship.

61. Alongside academic teaching staff in place to support the delivery of the course, the inspection team met with staff from student support roles and staff focused upon quality assurance activity. The inspection team were satisfied that roles within the team had been

appropriately identified and developed in relation to the needs of the course and were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

62. The course provider submitted an overview of the University Board of Examiners, which is the formal process in place for the evaluation of students' performance, progression and outcomes. In addition to this, the narrative provided by the university detailed the role of subject boards health, performance and quality reviews and the annual report process in which programmes are expected to report on a range of aspects pertinent to the success of the programme, including EDI issues.

63. The inspection team were eager to understand more about the ways in which the course team analysed attainment data in relation to EDI matters and how this then filtered into action planning. The course team provided an example report from their course programme monitoring process which evidenced consideration of and action planning in relation to EDI. The inspection team were satisfied that the processes within the university support the analysis of key data and subsequent evaluation and action planning and therefore agreed that the standard was met.

Standard 3.10

64. Further to the overview provided in relation to standard 3.8, the inspection team heard that all staff within the course team feel their own continuous professional development is enhanced by the learning that takes place between colleagues, particularly where there is the addition of those who have recently left social work practice. The course team explained that they have access to multiple research opportunities through practice links and there are further development opportunities provided through the teaching partnership. Staff also explained that their ongoing links with representatives from the Together Group enhance their understanding of contemporary social work issues. The inspection team were assured that the senior leadership team within the university were supportive of staff development and whilst specific opportunities were offered, there was also a route for staff to highlight personal research interests through appraisal processes. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

65. Documentary evidence demonstrated that the course, structure and delivery of the programme is in accordance with the relevant frameworks, including reference to the teaching of Social Work England Professional Standards. The structure of the new course was based around already established courses within the university that have delivered positive student outcomes. Within the programme specification for the course the appendix

which demonstrated the curriculum map showed a gap in mapping for the module 'being a social worker' against programme outcomes. 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. Full details of the condition can be found in the [conditions](#) section of this report.

Standard 4.2

66. The course provider submitted a range of documentary evidence to support this standard including, terms of reference for the SWPEG, service user and carer participation handbook, minutes from stakeholder meetings and details of the Humber Social Work Teaching Partnership. The inspection team met with representatives from employer organisations and the Together Group who confirmed they are involved in ongoing course development activities.

67. Employer partners were able to give examples of staff from their organisation who had been involved in teaching on other university courses. Planned meetings of the SWPEG provided opportunities for stakeholders to discuss the design, delivery and evaluation of the course on a regular basis as well as feedback on issues relating to practice placements, P.E recruitment and development and quality assurance processes.

68. Representatives from the Together Group spoke positively about their engagement in the courses already delivered by the university and could provide specific examples of ways in which they had contributed to the development of social work provision. All representatives articulated that they felt valued within the course team and were seen as a partner to academic staff and other stakeholders in the development of the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

69. The university submitted policies which demonstrated the organisational approach to EDI principles. The narrative provided against this standard demonstrated how such policies are integrated into course validation processes and that the course team are required to demonstrate how the course design is fair, equitable and meets the needs of all learners. In addition, the role of support services was detailed in relation to its role in supporting students to declare additional needs to enable them to access the course successfully.

70. Whilst the inspection team were able to see evidence of the course providers intention in relation to addressing issues relating to EDI, meetings with students and practice educators demonstrated that these were not always successfully translated into practice. During meetings with a selection of student representatives, the inspection team heard that some international students had experienced feelings of social exclusion whilst on placement. A further meeting with practice educators highlighted a concern for them in

relation to working with international students and their lack of preparation for this. 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. Full details of the condition can be found in the [conditions](#) section of this report.

Standard 4.4

71. The course provider submitted evidence relating to the school's active research portfolio and how this shapes the curriculum for social work courses. The evidence relating to the involvement of colleagues from practice and people with lived experience in course design and review provided further assurance that the course is continually updated. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

72. The inspection team were able to see through programme and module specifications how the content of taught sessions and module assessments addressed the integration of theory and practice. This was supported through discussions with the course team and key stakeholders during meetings throughout the course of the inspection. The course team were clear about the design and delivery of modules which develop this skill and had a joint focus on supporting student to apply learning in practice. Students and practice educators highlighted the importance of high quality supervision which developed skills in reflective practice and the value of on-site supervisors in supporting this standard on a daily basis. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

73. The course provider submitted the inter-school programme for interprofessional education which includes social work courses. Alongside opportunities for students to learn with and from other professions, the programme demonstrated the involvement of the Together Group in supporting the delivery of this work. During conversations with the course team, the inspection team were assured that multidisciplinary learning, and the importance of this, was at the forefront of the team's strategic thinking. Students also shared positive experiences in relation to this both through directed content on courses and via placement opportunities. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

74. The inspection team were assured that the learning and practice hours for the programme were in line with both the academic and professional standards for the course. This was further supported via triangulation during the inspection event. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

75. The programme specification for the course evidences the range of assessments for the course which test the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for social work. There is clarity within documentation that completion is dependent upon successful attainment of modules at different levels. Members of the course team were able to share the rationale for the type and breadth of assessments on the course and outlined their focus on adopting a universal design approach for assessments to ensure they are accessible to all. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

76. The programme and module specifications for the course provided evidence of how learning outcomes and assessments were mapped to the curriculum. The learning outcomes for the course are appropriately structures to match progression through the course from level 4 to 6 and from PCF readiness for practice to the end of final placement. Through discussions with the course team, there was a shared understanding of student development through the course and how assessments lead them to the next stage of their learning. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

78. The inspection team were able to review the university assessment charter and management of assessment policy which detailed expectations in relation to timely, effective and useful feedback for students. The course team also provided details of the processes for standardisation and moderation of feedback. During conversations with the course team, further detail was provided about timescales for providing feedback and use of rubrics to promote consistency. The report from the external examiner supported the processes described by the course team and responses to external examiner recommendations were evident through the CPM export report. There was some difference of experience from students studying on other courses in relation to the timeliness of feedback, however when feedback was received it usually supported student progression. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

79. The inspection team were satisfied that staff involved in assessments had the necessary experience and qualifications, this was evidenced via CVs for the course team and external examiner. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

80. Documentary evidence included the university general regulations which evidenced the mechanism for general progress decisions on courses. This was supported by the programme specification for the course which documented the requirement for students to

successfully complete each level prior to progression. Further to this, the module specifications, and other documentation in relation to placements, highlighted where direct observations were included within assessments. During meetings with students, there was clarity around the requirements for progression on other courses. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

81. The course provider outlined their philosophy in relation to developing students as independent learners with the confidence to think critically and apply learning to practice. The inspection team were also able to review a copy of the school learning and teaching strategy which outlined a focus on learning from people, experience and research. During meetings with the course team, the inspection team heard staff articulate their approach which was in line with the evidence provided. Furthermore, through review of course documentation and discussions with key stakeholders, there was evidence of elements of the strategy being developed in practice. The course team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

82. The inspection team were able to review a dedicated area of the course providers website which detailed the range of services available through student support services. Services available to students included 'Togetherall', a dedicated counselling service, health and disability advice and information to support general wellbeing. The university outlined their occupational health offer, contacted by a third party and dedicated information relating to careers and employability.

83. The inspection team also heard about the development of key services within student support such as out of hours services and the addition of translators and international student leads which further enhanced the support available. Student representatives from other social work courses confirmed their understanding of the services available and demonstrated an awareness of how to access this. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

84. Documentary evidence provided included the course providers personal tutor handbook which provided detailed information about the remit and expectations of the role. Triangulation during meetings with staff and students assured the inspection team that the personal tutoring system process was robust and students spoke positively about their relationship with tutors.

85. During a meeting with student services, the course team had the opportunity to meet with the subject librarian for the course who provided a detailed overview of the support available to students. Students confirmed that the subject librarian was a key source of support in relation to academic study skills. Staff from student services were also able to offer information about the support available to students with caring responsibilities or those who might experience financial challenges on the course. The inspection team were assured that the processes in place to support such students were communicated effectively. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

86. The course provider shared information in relation to management of cause for concern, fitness to practice, DBS and occupational health processes. For the course, all students will have a DBS check completed via the university. There will then be an expectation that all students complete a self-declaration prior to any placement to confirm there have been no changes to their suitability to practice. During meetings with key stakeholders, the inspection team were assured that there was a joint understanding of the processes in place to ensure the ongoing suitability of students on the course. As a result, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

87. As with standard 5.1, the inspection team accessed the course providers website to review information about the services available to support students with additional needs. The inspection team also heard about the PASS plan process used by the university which ensures that students with additional needs receive an assessment by university support services. Following the assessment, a tailored, individualised PASS plan is created which is owned by the student and can be shared with the programme team and beyond. The university have also recently contracted an educational psychology service to support with assessments for students, which can be accessed both face to face and remotely.

88. During meetings with key stakeholders during the inspection, the inspection team heard about the holistic nature of PASS plans and how they work in practice. Representatives from the university spoke about the commitment to ensuring that PASS plans incorporate the needs of students on placement and providers confirmed their ability to translate support to placements. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

89. The inspection team were unable to review evidence to support this standard as the course handbook, which would normally contain the information required, was not yet finalised for the course. The course team were able to articulate the information that would be shared, however without access to a drafted version, the inspection team were unable to recommend that the standard is met at the point of inspection. 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. Full details of the condition can be found in the [conditions](#) section of this report.

Standard 5.6

90. The inspection team heard that there were plans to mirror the practice of other courses and include attendance expectations within the handbook which would then be reinforced verbally. As outlined in the review of standard 5.5 however, the absence of the course handbook meant that inspectors were unable to review documentary evidence to support the standard. The inspection agreed that the condition applied to standard 5.5 was also applicable to this standard. Full details of the condition can be found in the [conditions](#) section of this report.

Standard 5.7

91. The inspection team were provided with evidence to demonstrate the university expectations in relation to assessment, this was further detailed by the course team as outlined in standard 4.10. During the inspection, students agreed that the feedback they had received was helpful in supporting their development and was provided via a range of means. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

92. University regulations submitted within documentary evidence provided an outline of the organisation's academic appeals process. It was not possible to see how this would be communicated at a course level however due to the absence of the course handbook. The inspection agreed that the condition applied to standard 5.5 and 5.6 was also applicable to this standard. Full details of the condition can be found in the [conditions](#) section of this report.

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

Standard 6.1

93. As the qualifying course is a BSc Social Work Practice, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

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

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

	Standard not currently met	Condition	Date for submission of evidence	Link
1	Standard 1.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that the website for the course has been updated to reflect the blended nature of the course and include the same level of detail as other courses within the university.	17 th July 2023	Paragraph 34
2	Standards 2.3 and 2.4	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates there is a university led process to quality assure student experiences of induction, supervision and support whilst on placement and to ensure that university expectations are being consistently implemented.	17 th July 2023	Paragraph 41 Paragraph 42
3	Standard 2.7	The education provider will provide evidence that they have undertaken a review of the policies and procedures in place for students on placement to identify reasons why students may find it challenging to raise concerns.	17 th July 2023	Paragraph 47
4	Standard 4.1	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that all modules have been appropriately mapped to the learning outcomes for the course.	17 th July 2023	Paragraph 65
5	Standard 4.3	The education provider will provide evidence that shows they have developed a plan to tackle issues relating to social exclusion on placement. Within this, the education provider will identify how to address the gaps in knowledge identified for	17 th July 2023	Paragraph 70

		practice educators in relation to supporting international students.		
5	Standards 5.5, 5.6, 5.8	The education provider will provide evidence that draft handbooks have been developed for the course and covers issues relating to attendance, assessment, curriculum and placements.	17 th July 2023	Paragraph 89 Paragraph 90 Paragraph 92

Recommendations

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

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	Standard 2.1	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider developing clear communication to students around the focus of skills days where they are returning from placement to ensure that there is an understanding of what these days entail.	Paragraph 35
2	Standard 2.7	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider developing a flowchart or similar visual to demonstrate how university concerns processes works.	Paragraph 46

It should be noted that all qualifying social work courses will be subject to re-approval under Social Work England's [2021 education and training standards](#).

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Regulator decision

Approved with conditions.

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

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

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

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

	Standard not met	Condition	Inspector recommendation
1	1.6	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that the website for the course has been updated to reflect the blended nature of the course and include the same level of detail as other courses within the university.	Condition met.
2	2.3/2.4	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates there is a university led process to quality assure student experiences of induction, supervision and support whilst on placement and to ensure that university expectations are being consistently implemented.	Condition met.
3	2.7	The education provider will provide evidence that they have undertaken a review of the policies and procedures in place for students on placement to identify reasons why students may find it challenging to raise concerns.	Condition met.
4	4.1	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates that all modules have been appropriately mapped to the learning outcomes for the course.	Condition met.

Findings

In relation to the condition set against standard 1.6, the inspection team were able to review a link to the course providers website which had been amended to reflect the blended nature of the course. The web page for the course also provided detail about modules on the course and details of prospective placement opportunities. The inspection

team were satisfied that the level of detail provided was in line with other courses at the university. As a result, the inspection team were satisfied that the condition was met.

In order to satisfy the inspection team that the condition in relation to standards 2.3 and 2.4 was met, the course provider submitted copies of their learning agreement meeting form and mid-point review form. The course provider explained that the process to support placement oversight had been reviewed and amendments made to key documentation to reflect the importance of induction, support and supervision. The inspection team also noted that the cause for concern procedure was also referenced in the documents provided which offered an additional layer of assurance that students were able to access further advice and support if required. As a result, the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

With regards to the condition set against standard 2.7, the course provider explained that there had been a review of policies and processes and, as a result, amendments had been made to the problem resolution protocol and cause for concern process. Further to this, the course team had developed a presentation which outlined both of the above processes and a document had been written which provided a summary of raising and escalating concerns. The inspection team were satisfied that action had been taken to ensure that students were aware of processes which may help improve confidence in raising concerns. As a result, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

In relation to the condition set against standard 4.1, the course provider submitted a copy of their programme specification and curriculum maps for the course. The inspection team were satisfied that all modules had been mapped to the learning outcomes and, as a result, agreed that the condition was now met.

Regulator decision

Approved.