

Inspection Report

Course provider: Anglia Ruskin University

Course approval: PGDip Social Work Step Up

Inspection dates: 18th – 20th July 2023

Report date:	1 st September 2023
Inspector recommendation:	Approved
Regulator decision:	Approved
Date of Regulator decision:	20 th September 2023

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Introduction

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

What we do

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

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

9. During this time a draft plan for the inspection is developed and shared with the education provider, to make sure it is achievable at the point of inspection.
10. Once the inspectors and officer are satisfied that an inspection can take place, this is usually undertaken over a 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. Anglia Ruskin University's PGDip Social Work Step Up course was inspected as part of the Social Work England reapproval cycle; whereby all course providers with qualifying social work courses will be inspected against the new Education and Training Standards 2021.

Inspection ID	ARUR3
Course provider	Anglia Ruskin University
Validating body (if different)	N/A
Course inspected	PGDip Social Work Step Up
Mode of study	Full time accelerated
Maximum student cohort	40
Date of inspection	18 th – 20 th July 2023
Inspection team	Daisy Bragadini - Education Quality Assurance Officer Bradley Allan - (Lay Inspector) Christine Stogdon - (Registrant Inspector)

Language

16. In this document we describe Anglia Ruskin University as 'the education provider' or 'the university' and we describe the PGDip Social Work Step Up as 'the course'.

Inspection

17. A remote inspection took place from 18th – 20th July 2023. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, employers and people with lived experience of social work.

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

Conflict of interest

19. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

20. The inspection team met with 18 students who had completed the course as part of the last 2 cohorts. At least one student had been a course representative. Discussions included the admissions process, practice based learning, feedback they received, wellbeing and academic support and how their views influenced the course.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the senior management team, the course team, staff involved in selection and admissions, staff involved in practice placements and staff who delivered specialist support services.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with the Service User and Carer Involvement (SUCI) group. The group have been involved in delivering equality, diversity and inclusion training, assessing students, interviewing applicants for the course and providing feedback. Discussions included the training they were provided with, how the university supported them to carry out their role and how their views and feedback influenced the course.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners from the East Regional Partnership. These included leads and representatives from Cambridgeshire

County Council, Peterborough City Council, Essex County Council, Norfolk County Council, Suffolk County Council, Thurrock Council and Southend on Sea Borough Council.

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. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed the application form and a range of documents which were used to assess, score and evaluate candidates' applications. Candidates were required to complete their application form and written task through the Department for Education's application portal which were assessed by a lecturer at the university and social worker from a partner local authority. Candidates were then required to complete a group task, a practice scenario and a panel interview at an assessment centre. Candidates' capabilities were assessed against the Professional Capabilities Framework Assessment Framework and included a review of their written and spoken English. Candidates' ICT skills were assessed as part of the application process itself through the numerous tasks required to be completed online. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

26. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team were provided with documentary evidence which illustrated how applicants' prior relevant experience was considered as part of their application. The entry requirements for the course stipulated that candidates must have a minimum of 6 months of work experience, and the information provided on the university course's website outlined the nature of this experience. Candidates were required to include the details of this within their application form which could then be further explored during their interview. During a meeting held with staff involved in admissions the inspection team explored how different types of experience were considered as relevant. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

27. The inspection team were able to review a range of documentary evidence which illustrated the ways in which relevant stakeholders were involved in the admissions processes. Applications were reviewed by a social worker from a partner local authority and the activities delivered at the assessment centres were co-facilitated by the course leader and Essex County Council as the lead local authority within the East Region Partnership. Social workers from the 6 other partner local authorities were also involved in the assessment centres and took part in decision making about the suitability of candidates. People with lived experience of social work formed part of the interviewing panel, practice scenario and group discussion. During the meeting held with the SUCI group the inspection team heard about their work within admissions and aspirations for future development of the admissions process. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

28. In relation to this standard the inspection team reviewed the application form and the Senate Code of Practice Admissions document. Candidates were required to declare any convictions or pending prosecutions within their application form as well as disciplinary findings or investigations by an organisation or professional body. Essex County Council as the partner lead local authority completed enhanced DBS checks prior to enrolment on the course and students were required to subscribe to the update service for the duration of the course. The university then maintained oversight of these checks as part of the admissions process. In cases where applicants had declared issues or they had been raised through the DBS process, they were required to complete a written statement to provide further detail and context. The process which the university followed in collaboration with their employer partners was outlined and evidence highlighted that it was robust and safe. As part of the application, health issues for applicants were reviewed. Opportunity was provided for them to ask questions and understand the support which could be available to them if they chose to take up an offer on the course. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

29. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with evidence which included information about the equality, diversity and inclusion policies and principles which govern the university. This also included evidence to show how these policies were implemented as part of the admissions processes. The inspection team reviewed information provided by Capita on behalf of the Department for Education which encouraged applications from underrepresented groups, and advertisement about the course was provided in a variety of

different locations with the aim of attracting a diverse range of applicants. Applicants were provided with a range of methods and points at which they were supported to share information about protected characteristics during application and applications were anonymised to mitigate the impact of unconscious bias. Support and adjustments were made for candidates at the assessment centre, whether this was requested prior to attendance or on the day. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

30. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed a number of sources of information which enabled applicants to make an informed decision about whether to accept an offer on the course. Information in relation to the professional standards, research interests of the course team and placement opportunities were provided through the course webpage, the Capita applicant page and a series of information sessions facilitated by the university and co-delivered with employer partners. Additional information available to applicants included the reality of the challenges of the course, support which could be offered throughout students' study, curriculum content and methods of assessment. Alumni of the course supported the delivery of the information sessions the course team gave which provided especially valuable insight into the nature of the course. During the meeting held with students the inspection team heard how well informed students had been and how this enabled them to make confident decisions about whether to accept their offers. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

31. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were able to review a range of evidence which illustrated the learning and skill development students undertook in practice settings. Students completed an initial placement of 70 days and a second placement of 100, both of which were usually within statutory settings. 30 skills days were embedded throughout the duration of the course, with the content being carefully considered to enable students to develop the necessary skills and be ready to undertake their first placement. The Practice Placement Initial Audit was used to quality assure each placement before every placement started and enabled identification of appropriate learning experiences placement providers were able to offer. During the various meetings held with the course team and local authority placement providers, the inspection team were provided with further evidence which outlined how students were provided with contrasting placements and sufficient

experience of statutory learning opportunities. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 2.2

32. The inspection team reviewed a number of sources of evidence which highlighted the ways in which the course team were able to ensure students were provided with relevant and necessary learning opportunities. All placements were audited prior to every placement starting and careful planning was undertaken if students required supplementary or alternative learning experiences. Placements were sensitively matched using information captured within the Student Placement Profile which considered students' skills and experiences and, where possible, their preferences. During the inspection the inspection team explored practice learning with the course team, employer partners, students and practice educators. They heard how each person was responsible for ensuring high quality practice learning experiences and how the Learning Agreement meeting, Midway Review and Learning Opportunity Summary were used to support this process. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

33. The inspection team were able to review evidence used to support all of those involved in the placement and to ensure relevant elements were included. The course provider held Placement Preparation Sessions which were designed to enable practice educators, on site supervisors, employer partners, personal tutors and students to learn about the expectations of the course and plan in advance of the placement starting. These sessions included information about student's workload, inductions, supervision, support and access to resources. Prior to each placement starting practice educators were provided with the Practice Placement Guide which detailed various aspects of the placement which could then be discussed and agreed at the Learning Agreement meeting at the start of the placement. The inspection team heard from students who confirmed that they felt the processes in place provided them with a high level of preparedness and sufficient monitoring of their placements. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

34. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed evidence which outlined the processes in place to establish and monitor the ways in which students' responsibilities were appropriate for their stage of training. The Placement Preparation Session supported the expectations of working hours, workload and the nature of the tasks students should

experience. The Practice Placement Guide provided guidance on how responsibilities given to students were required to be managed and it was made clear what the remit was of students' responsibilities. Monitoring of the tasks students undertook was carried out by personal tutors through the Learning Agreement and Midway meetings and students were able to reflect on and discuss the nature of the work they were undertaking each month in peer sessions at university. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

35. The inspection team reviewed evidence which described how students were assessed to ensure they were safe and prepared to carry out their practice learning on placement, which predominantly took place within the Preparation Skills for Practice module. The components to the assessment included a reflective portfolio which was marked by the module tutor, a simulated interview involving actors with lived experience of social work and members of the SUCI group, a recording activity and reflective viva. The inspection team heard how both the design and implementation of the assessments involved employer partners, who were also responsible for providing feedback to students. As part of the Placement Agreement students were also required to complete and sign a declaration to further ensure they were safe and prepared to work with people in receipt of services during their placement. In addition to this, students were also requested to provide consent for their information to be shared with the placement provider. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

36. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed evidence which illustrated the oversight maintained by the university and managed in collaboration with the local authority partners of the practice educators they worked with. All students were supported by a qualified practice educator and if they were in training they were mentored and supervised by a PEPS 2 qualified colleague. As part of the audit carried out prior to a placement commencing, the qualification, experience and registration of practice educators was recorded by the local authority and checked by the university. The inspection team were able to review documentary evidence of training events, conferences and workshops and triangulated this within meetings held with employer partners, the course team and practice educators. The inspection team heard examples from practice educators of feeling well supported and prepared, including being provided with books and theory teaching resources. Through the provision of access to the university's Centre of Excellence in Practice Learning, the Practice Placement Guide and support from the Active Learning Hubs

provided by the local authorities, the inspection team were satisfied that practice educators were sufficiently supported. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

37. During the meeting held with practice educators the inspection team explored the ways in which they were supported to maintain their knowledge, skills and experience. The inspection team heard an enthusiasm and aspiration from them to be provided with further information in relation to the students' course content so they could further align their teaching to university based learning. This informed a further conversation held with the course team about the potential of facilitating access for all practice educators to online resources and the university's library.

38. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to 2.6. The detail of the recommendation can be found [here](#).

Standard 2.7

39. In relation to this standard the inspection team reviewed the Practice Placement Initial Audit and the Practice Placement Guide. In addition, further evidence exemplified the communication on, and the monitoring of, procedures and practice and an Anti-Racist Practice Questionnaire. Through the audit process the course provider gained assurances that relevant policies were in place, which was further discussed and understood at the Learning Agreement meeting. Within the documentary evidence and during the meetings held at inspection the inspection team gained further insight into how students were taught about and supported to use policies around unsafe behaviour. The course team described how an additional point of contact was identified at all placements, extending the range of people students could approach if they had concerns. During the meeting held with students they highlighted how clear relevant documentation was, how early on in the course they had been introduced to it, where they could access support and the importance of the process. Some students described a culture within the course which imbued students with high expectations and confidence to know how to act if they were concerned. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

40. A range of evidence was reviewed by the inspection team which illustrated the management and governance plan for the course. This included the CVs for the staff involved in delivering the course and the management structure which included lines of accountability and individual roles. Governing groups which supported the delivery of the course included the Student Representative meetings, the Student Staff Liaison Committee

and the Milestone Quarterly Reports. Course reviews were completed at the end of each course cohort. The course was commissioned by the East Region Partnership which involved 7 local authority partners who co-designed and delivered the course in partnership with the university. During the inspection the inspection team met with a number of representatives from all the local authority partners and were able to gain clear insight into how the partnership operated. This included evidence of efficient and clear quality management processes and sufficient levels of resourcing. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

41. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with evidence which highlighted the agreement the university has with their placement providers to provide students with placements. The contract between the university and the East Regional Partnership contained a commitment from the local authority to provide placements for students and included agreement from 7 local authorities in the region. Through the placement audit process and learning agreement meetings, further assurances were secured by the course provider that the placement provider's training offered to students met the professional standards. The Practice Placement Guide included the procedure followed in instances where there were concerns about the placement and early identification of issues was encouraged. The Facilitative Procedures outlined were shared with students and practice educators and strengthened by the clear channels of communication between the Personal Tutors and local authorities. During the meeting held with staff involved in practice learning, the inspection team explored acquisition of consent. Students were supported to understand the importance of consent and were taught about it through the use of role play which developed their skills and encouraged them to consider how they might request consent from a range of different people with differing needs. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

42. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed evidence which conveyed and ensured expectations of placement providers in relation to policies and procedures in place for students. The audit completed at the start of each placement, the Placement Preparation sessions and the Practice Placement Guide stipulated the requirements which were necessary at placements. Details included working hours, working alone and risk for the students and were discussed at the start of the placement and monitored throughout at supervision and the Midway Review. During the Learning Agreement meeting at the start of placements, discussions focused on the practical applications of policies which ensured

students and practice educators were clear about how they would be working. During the meetings held with local authority placement staff and the course team it was clear that the university had a comprehensive oversight of the local services, and the local authority held a good understanding of the expectations the course team held. Support for students was provided whilst on placement and concerns were addressed in a timely manner. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

43. The inspection team reviewed a range of evidence which illustrated the ways in which employer partners were involved in the course. These included the course team's involvement with the Social Work Area Network (SWAN) and development board with Essex County Council, Southend Council and Thurrock Council. Both groups facilitated development in the areas of workforce planning and social work education. The inspection team were provided with meeting minutes from the development board and Step Up Partnership meeting and the Milestone Quarterly Report from the partnership. During multiple meetings with representatives from all 7 local authorities, the inspection team were provided with evidence of a collaborative and strong working partnership. Decisions concerning curriculum content, involvement of guest speakers, course documentation, course design and the placement audit process were examples of work carried out in partnership with employer partners. Practice Assessment Panels were delivered alongside employer partners and emerging themes were strategically shared to inform future planning. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

44. In relation to this standard the inspection team reviewed documentary evidence prior to the inspection which included details about feedback gained from students and local authority partners, the placement audit and the Quality Assurance in Practice Learning (QAPL) processes. The Annual Monitoring Report and course review involved contributions from students, local authority partners and people with lived experience of social work. Following sessions delivered by people with lived experience of social work debriefs were offered, with feedback from them and student groups informing change during the course. During the inspection the inspection team were able to triangulate the evidence they had reviewed which was supplemented by a range of examples of how the monitoring and evaluation systems were active, responsive and involved relevant stakeholders. The current course review was due to conclude in September 2023 which included information on the Anti-Racist Practice Questionnaire, Module Evaluation Survey, student feedback and people with lived experience of social work feedback. The inspection team heard that work with the

SUCI group and employer partners would assist them in the development of new course materials for the next cohort of students. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

45. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed comprehensive evidence which illustrated the strategy followed by the course team to align student numbers with placement capacity. Evidence included the meeting minutes from the regional development board and the Letter of Compliance from October 2022. The SWAN meetings and partnership meetings held every 2 months were forums used for the course team to discuss student numbers, resourcing implications and future plans for the course. The local authority identified the number of students they were able to offer placements to which included consideration of the availability of practice educators. The course provider aligned the student numbers with resourcing within the team and the funding provided by the Department for Education. Over previous years the cohort numbers had increased from 25 to 39 and as a partnership they had agreed they would not exceed 40 students for each cohort. During the inspection the inspection team gained further assurances from the course team, employer partners and senior managers and accordingly concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

46. In relation to this standard the inspection team reviewed evidence which outlined that the Deputy Head of School held the position of the lead manager for the course. The inspection team reviewed the CV for this individual who was appropriately qualified, experienced and registered. Evidence in relation to the Course Leader also illustrated qualification, experience and registration. During the inspection the inspection team met with both senior members of staff with overall responsibility for the course and gained further assurances of their responsibilities for development and delivery of the curriculum. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

47. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the CVs for the course team, the Course Management Structure and the Step Up Team Role Description. Staff were appropriately qualified and experienced and represented a range of specialist subject knowledge. The teaching plan for the last cohort and the Milestone Quarterly Report was also assessed by the inspection team in relation to this standard. During meetings with all

stakeholder groups, partners and staff, the inspection team were able to gather further evidence of the delivery of an effective course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

48. Evidence supplied in relation to this standard described how the course team evaluated information about student outcomes and used it to inform development. Data was collected in relation to admissions, assessment results and progression. All academic staff had access to a central data dashboard which allowed analysis and filtering for each course, campus and cohort, and also categories relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. Included as part of the evidence was an overview of the data for the course in relation to various aspects relevant to this standard and included equality, diversity and inclusion. Annual monitoring meetings and reports were held and compiled, involving scrutiny from senior leaders for the course. The data presented in these reports was analysed and reflected upon and used to inform an action plan for the following year. Examples presented to the inspection team highlighted the range of ways the data had been used by the course team. These included anonymisation of applications until shortlisting had completed, added time for thinking within group activities before students were expected to respond and the simplification of assessment descriptions. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

49. During the initial documentary evidence review and the meetings held during the inspection, the inspection team were able to assess how educators were supported to maintain their professional currency. Teaching staff at the university were required to complete a PGCert in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and enrol for doctorate study and research. Evidence submitted included details of continuous professional development, an anti racist session attended by staff and the requirement for personal tutors to maintain regular contact with professionals during students' placements. Some staff had either recently left professional practice or were still engaged in professional services. A practice educator symposium was delivered for practice educators, staff were engaged in a range of different areas of research and were actively encouraged to take part in sabbatical leave. During the meeting held with the course team the inspection team heard a description of a 2 way process of integrating knowledge from the course into their own professional growth. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

50. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed evidence which illustrated how all intended learning outcomes were mapped to the professional standards. In addition, the inspection team viewed evidence which showed how the learning outcomes were also mapped to the Professional Capabilities Framework and the Knowledge and Skills Statements. The evidence highlighted the teaching approach taken by the course team which included an early introduction to each framework and an overt and consistent teaching and application of them so that students were learning how to be professional practitioners throughout the duration of the course. Students were supported to continuously link the frameworks to their learning, with a focus on post qualifying standards and requirements later on in the course. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

51. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed various examples of meeting minutes which involved employer partners from the partnership. They also viewed evidence of teaching plans and sessions designed alongside employers and people with lived experience of social work and guidance on how service user and carer feedback was utilised. Due to the nature of the course, views and input from employer partners was an integral part of all aspects of the course. During meetings held with representatives from the lead and partner local authorities, the inspection team heard examples of their involvement from admissions, delivery, design, assessment and review of the course. The inspection team met with the SUCI group who were involved in various aspects of the course and included admissions, design of teaching sessions, assessment of students and designing and delivering equality, diversity and inclusion training. During this meeting the inspection team heard about the aspiration for the course team and SUCI team to be involved in admissions process design at a national level for the course. The inspection team heard how members of the SUCI team felt well supported to develop their work and input, and included a specific named lead for the course, and plans to enhance and develop their input in the programme. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

52. As part of the documentary review preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the university's policy and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and examples of anti racist and reflective teaching sessions. The course timetable highlighted

the course team's approach which facilitated flexibility for students to observe religious practices. During a range of meetings with the course staff the inspection team heard examples of the application of equality, diversity and inclusion principles which were embedded throughout the course. Some examples were found in the language adopted by staff when discussing related topics and issues, the design and layout of the teaching rooms, detailed consideration of students' health and wellbeing and the provision of teaching and learning materials which considered differing learning needs for all students. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

53. In relation to this standard, the inspection team reviewed evidence of the approach taken by the course team, which was one of continuous improvement. Evidence included examples of planning and development of the course, collaboration with wider university colleagues and departments, such as the library to ensure resources were contemporary and relevant, and up to date legal teaching materials. In addition, course reviews and the inclusion of experts teaching on the course ensured best practice and contemporary models were integrated into the course. During the meetings held with employer partners, the inspection team heard how the course team were proactive in their approach to ongoing improvement. For example, at the start of each course the teaching team ensured students were taught about the practice models implemented within each local authority. The team's approach was further enhanced through the numerous contacts and work carried out by staff still in professional practice. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

54. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the course timetable, teaching plans, teaching sessions and exercises, the use of critical reflection within the course and evidence of students' engagement and understanding of theories. The course team described their approach to teaching which involved morning sessions which focused on the acquisition of knowledge and the afternoon which involved application. Case studies were utilised and students were required to apply a range of theories to the same case to develop their skills. During the meetings held with students and practice educators, the inspection team heard how teaching and learning whilst on placement offered students the opportunity to apply their learning in practice and practice educators were well supported by the course team and were provided with books and theory cards. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

55. In relation to this standard the inspection team were provided with examples of interprofessional seminars and learning events held, staff CVs, and placement documentation which supported identification of interprofessional learning opportunities. Other professionals involved in these events included nurses, midwives, paramedics, teachers and occupational therapists. During the meeting held with students the inspection team heard how enriching the opportunities had been to work with and learn from other professionals during the course. Colleagues from child nursing delivered a teaching session on child development, a solicitor or advocate lead on the teaching of court skills, mental health nurses taught on the adult mental health care and a clinical psychologist taught students about trauma informed practice. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

56. In relation to this standard the inspection team reviewed evidence which included the course specification, the module definition forms, the course timetable, attendance policy and guidance for students on absences. During university blocks students attended university for teaching and learning and additional activities included a weekly film club and study skills sessions. During placement learning students returned to university once a month to complete reflection days. These responded to students' learning needs and interests or areas of learning the teaching team identified as requiring additional focus. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

57. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with evidence which illustrated the range of different assessments used to ensure students could demonstrate their ability to meet the professional standards. These included the use of essays, reflective journals, case studies, group presentations and simulated practice. The inspection team were provided with the external examiners report which noted that assessment tasks were balanced and appropriate. During the meeting held with students the inspection team heard that their assessments were appropriate and manageable, submission deadlines had been modified to suit their needs and that some assessments had been adapted to accommodate learning differences. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

58. In relation to this standard, the inspection team reviewed evidence which highlighted how each assessment was aligned to module learning outcomes which was included in the Module Definition Forms. Students were required to pass all learning outcomes for each module to progress to the next stage of the course and all learning outcomes were appropriately aligned to post graduate study level. Students were able to comment on how they found the level of assessment and articulated how they were well supported to manage the expectations and demand within the assessments. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

59. In relation to this standard the inspection team were able to review evidence of both summative and formative assessments provided to students, and the feedback they were supplied with from both. Students received feedback within their placements at the mid and final points and was provided by practice educators and tutors. The inspection team reviewed the Practice Placement Guide, examples of formative and summative assessment and evidence of peer review. Students were provided with developmental feedback on their assignments and the opportunity to submit excerpts of draft submissions to further improve their work. During the inspection, the inspection team experienced a demonstration of the virtual online learning platform, Canvas, which was used to provide feedback and met with students who expressed a confidence in the feedback they received and how it enabled them to develop their learning. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

60. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the course management structure, staff CVs, academic regulations on assessment, assessment marking criteria, regulations in relation to the work of external examiners and the external examiner's annual report. This evidence assured the inspection team that staff were suitably qualified to undertake assessments of work and that strategies to standardise and moderate assessments were in place. Students were also provided with assessment marking criteria which enabled them to self assess their work. The external examiner was appropriately qualified, experienced and on the register. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

61. Evidence for this standard highlighted the ways in which systems and a range of people were involved in managing students' progression. At university, students were provided

with feedback from module and personal tutors, people with lived experience of social work, guest speakers and practitioners. The course team described how the feedback on students' progression informed personalised work with students or the development of additional activities. Whilst on placement, students received feedback from practice educators and service users, and had direct observations approximately 10 times during their placements, with feedback being provided to facilitate skill development. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

62. The evidence in relation to this standard highlighted to the inspection team that students were supported to develop an evidence informed approach to practice even before the course started. This learning started during the admission process through the activities which were set. Critical thinking and risk assessment were combined with the implementation of evidence throughout the course to support students' abilities to understand research and develop skills of evaluation. During the inspection the inspection team heard about the broad range of research and literature which students were encouraged to engage with and apply to practice scenarios and learning on placements. This included peer reviewed material, self published work and research led by people with lived experience of social work and practitioners. Students studying on other postgraduate routes presented their research to students on the course along with members of the staff team involved in research projects. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

63. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed evidence which illustrated the support services available to students to support their health and wellbeing. This included information on the university website detailing the range of services available to students and included counselling services. Students were also able to gain support from the Students' Union and Student Advisors who were able to guide and advise students on the range of services available. Occupational health services were provided and available to students who could access support or assessment throughout their study. During the meeting with students, the inspection team heard that students felt very well supported and that the services available to them were accessible and effective.

64. Due to the nature of the course and the partnership with the local authorities, students demonstrated a 100% employment rate after completion of the course, but CV, interview and future career pathway support was offered by the university. As part of the admissions

process students were provided with opportunities to meet students who had completed the course and were working as social workers, which provided a useful perspective about their professional paths. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

65. The evidence provided in relation to this standard illustrated that the relationship between student and personal tutor began before the course starts. The course team outlined the timeline for application and explained that students were introduced to their tutors when they accepted their place on the course, before starting. This enabled tutors to understand and get to know learners before they became students on the course, and allowed tutors to support students to prepare for their course and arrange reasonable adjustments, for example. During the meeting held with students the inspection team heard examples of support provided by tutors at the weekends and ongoing support was available even after students had completed the course. Students were provided with opportunities to have a learning peer partner and bespoke study skills sessions were provided for the first 5 weeks of the course to aid confidence in academic abilities. The Disability and Dyslexia support services and the university's Student Services provided learning and IT support for students. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

66. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team reviewed a range of formal and informal processes for ensuring students' ongoing suitability throughout the course. As has been noted in relation to standard 5.2, personal tutors developed strong working relationships with students which enabled conversations to be held about ethics and personal circumstances, for example. The course team convened regularly which facilitated open communication about areas students required support in, such as reflection on the power of language used when working with different groups. Through the induction, expectations around conduct and professionalism were established which was then reinforced through the Student Charter and the Rules, Regulations and Procedures for Students. Fitness to Practise procedures were laid out within these regulations and students were supported when concerns were raised. The Placement Agreement required students to complete a formal agreement before each placement, and students were required to register with the DBS update service at the start of the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

67. In relation to this standard the inspection team were provided with a range of evidence which illustrated robust and effective support processes in place to help students progress through the course. This included the Reasonable Adjustment and Support Policy, examples of support which had been provided to students, a placement support plan, information about study skills on offer and details of the mechanisms students used to gain the support they needed. During meetings held with specialist support staff and the course team, the inspection team gained a clear understanding of the approach taken by the university and the wide range of support on offer. Reasonable adjustments were organised and implemented in a sensitive, timely and personalised manner. In addition, the inspection team heard how all students were provided with a baseline approach to accessible teaching underpinned by a knowledge that students may have had undiagnosed learning needs, English as a second language, and multiple responsibilities. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

68. The inspection team reviewed evidence which showed various ways in which students were provided with information about their course including information about their curriculum, practice placements and assessments. Through application information events, induction sessions, personal tutor meetings and their online learning platform, Canvas, students could gain the relevant information required. During the meeting held with students the inspection team explored how they learnt about requirements for becoming a registered professional. They were able to describe having been provided with clear information about professional registration during their course and having the information they required. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 5.6

69. Information sessions prior to the course starting provided information to students about parts of the course which required mandatory attendance. The Course Guide, timetable, attendance policy and Practice Placement Guide provided ongoing information about the importance of attendance, implications if learning days were missed and support available for students. Students were required to attend catch up tutorials or complete alternative learning activities if days were missed, and all absences were reported to the Regional Partnership to facilitate support for students who needed it. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

70. Students were provided with information in relation to timeframes for receiving feedback at the start of each module. During the meeting held with students, the inspection team heard that students were often provided with their feedback earlier than expected and described it supporting them to know what they'd done well and what they could do to improve their work. Students described the feedback they received as detailed, clear and helpful, which could be followed up with personal tutors if necessary. Students also explained that they were aware of the progress they were making which they could attribute to the quality of the feedback they provided. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

71. Evidence in relation to this standard included detail from the student dashboard which contained information about the appeal process, the Academic Regulations for academic appeals and the Request for a Hearing of the Appeals Panel Form. The inspection team were also supplied with a clear narrative which outlined the processes required to be followed when students wanted to make an appeal. The Students' Union and Personal Tutors offered support for students who were engaged in the process. The students were able to corroborate this information and were aware of where they could access this information. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

72. As the qualifying course is a PGDip Social Work Step Up course, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

The inspection team recommend that the course be approved.

Recommendations

The inspectors identified the following recommendation for the education provider. This recommendation highlights an area that the education provider may wish to consider. The recommendation does not affect any decision relating to course approval.

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	2.6	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider ways in which they can enhance and extend the information they provide to practice educators about curriculum content and learning resources. This may include providing practice educators with access to the library to enable independent access to learning resources to support learning and development.	Paragraph 36

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

Approval.

