



Inspection Report

Course provider: Kingston University

Course approval: Approval PG Dip Social Work
Degree Apprenticeship

Inspection dates: 19 – 21 November 2024

Report date:	16 January 2025
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	27 January 2025
Date conditions met and approved:	12 August 2025

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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

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

officer if they have any queries that may be able to be addressed in advance of the inspection.

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: Kingston University wish to run a two-year PG Dip Social Work Degree Apprenticeship.

Inspection ID	KIUCPP480
Course provider	Kingston University
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	PG Dip Social Work Degree Apprenticeship
Mode of Study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	20
Proposed first intake	September 2026
Date of inspection	19 – 21 November 2024
Inspection team	Sam Jameson (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Sophie Kane (Lay Inspector) Erika Natale (Registrant Inspector)

Language

16. In this document we describe Kingston University as ‘the education provider’ or ‘the university’ and we describe the PG Dip Social Work Degree Apprenticeship as ‘the course’ or ‘the programme’. We use the term for both students and apprentices within this report, both referring to the students/apprentices in their respective course.

Inspection

17. An onsite inspection took place from 19 to 21 November 2024 across the Kingston Hill 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

19. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

20. The inspection team met with nine students, all from social work apprenticeship courses at different levels, including student representatives. Discussions included their experiences of the application and admissions process, placements, skills days, social work theory to practice, people with lived experience of social work, teaching and learning, equality, diversity and inclusion, feedback, attendance, student and academic support and the Social Work England Professional Standards.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the course team, senior management team, staff involved in placement-based learning, staff involved in selection and admissions, and student support services, library, careers and academic 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 course. Discussions included what areas of the course they were involved with, how much input and feedback they had and were able to provide to the university, the course and what training they received in this role.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with practice educators and representatives from placement partners including Hounslow, Southwark, Islington and Tower Hamlets councils.

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 inspectors were able to review documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard. This included the Course Handbook and the Social Work Degree Apprenticeship Admissions Guide, that confirmed the entry requirements to the course.

26. As a result of the documentary evidence review and discussions with staff involved in selection and admissions, and employer partners, the inspectors were assured that entry to the course is via a holistic/multi-dimensional assessment process. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

27. As a result of their discussions with staff involved in selection and admissions and review of documentary evidence, including Interview Questions and Written Test examples, the inspectors were able to confirm that applicants' prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions processes.

28. The inspectors learnt that the employer partners have guidance for what level of prior relevant experience is required for entry to the course, which is contained within the Programme Specification. Examples of the Interview Questions and Initial Needs Assessment, including discussions with apprentices, highlighted how prior relevant experience is drawn out and discussed further within the interviews, admissions and selection process. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

29. Prior to the inspection the inspectors were able to review the Principles of Admissions Social Work Degree Apprenticeship guide 2024 and 2024 Interview Schedule. As a result of this documentary evidence review and discussions with employer partners and university staff involved in selection and admissions the inspectors were provided with a range of examples and assurance that employers, and people with lived experience of social work are involved in admissions processes. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

30. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included Kingston University Student Suitability Process and Declaration of Suitability for Social Work documents. The information detailed the course's processes for assessing applicants' conduct, character and health.

31. During the inspection week the inspectors heard from staff involved in selection and admissions that if there are any declarations or flags the university has a clear process to review suitability on an individual basis. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

32. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives and Commitments for Kingston University. The inspection team heard from students of how supportive their selection and admissions process were, providing examples of reasonable adjustments that were put in place for them through the proactive work from the university staff.

33. The inspection team was assured from their discussions with the course team, staff involved in selection and admissions and employer partners that all staff involved in admissions process have appropriate training, and the self-declaration form helps to identify individual requirements and starts this process from an early stage. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

34. Documentary evidence highlighted that the university offers a variety of information in differing formats to ensure candidates have sufficient information to make an informed choice. This includes signposting and guidance from the University Central Admissions Team, as well as the Individual Need Assessment meetings, where the apprentice, employer and university will discuss and work through the expectations and requirements of the course.

35. As a result of their meetings with student representatives the inspectors were provided with verbal evidence that students felt they had all the information they

required to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on their course.

36. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

37. Documentary evidence and information contained within the education and training standards mapping forms outlined that students will have placements in practice settings that provide contrasting experiences, including a minimum of one placement taking place within a statutory setting. The inspectors were assured, following their meetings with employer partners and staff involved in placement-based learning, that placements provide experience and sufficient numbers of statutory social work tasks involving high risk decision making and legal interventions.

38. Practice learning days were clearly articulated in the evidence base with placements of 70 days, 100 days and 30 skills days, spread across the programme. There is a structured approach to ensuring all placement days, and skills days, are attended and this is monitored, with processes for making these days up as/when required. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.2

39. Information contained within the education and training standards mapping form identified that learning opportunities are negotiated and described in detail prior to the start (or at an early point) of each placement in the Mentoring Agreement. This is negotiated between the sub regional assessor, apprentice, mentor (and line manager and on-site supervisor as appropriate).

40. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard highlighted how the course ensures that placements provide suitable learning opportunities that allow students to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to develop and meet the professional standards.

41. The inspection team were able to triangulate the documentary evidence within their meetings with student representatives and employer partners. The course has a range of mechanisms in place to ensure that administrative and practical information regarding placements is shared and accessible for students.

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

Standard 2.3

43. The inspectors were able to triangulate documentary evidence in their meetings with staff involved in placement-based learning, including sub-regional assessors, and student representatives. Students identified that they felt that they had access to a range of information regarding their placement induction, including guidance and procedures for supervision, support, resources and workload. All this information is checked and signed off that it has been received and complete within the practice learning agreement meeting, regular supervisions and placement reviews.

44. Students that the inspection team met with identified the robust level of support and access to reflective supervision and resources that they can access both through the university and their employer. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

45. Documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection provided an overview of the process and procedures in place from the course provider of how they ensure that whilst on placements, students' responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of education and training.

46. The inspection team were assured that the audit process of placements and the pre-placement, practice learning agreement meeting, and tripartite review are all in place to ensure that student's responsibilities should gradually increase, under appropriate supervision, as their knowledge and skills develop. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

47. Information contained within the education and training standards mapping form, and documentary evidence submission, outlined the assessed preparation for direct practice that students must undertake to make sure they are safe to carry out practice learning in a service delivery setting. The inspection team were able to triangulate this information within meetings with the course team and staff involved in practice-based learning.

48. Within their meeting with people with lived experience of social work, the inspectors were provided with examples of their coproduction and role within these assessments. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

49. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included Staff CVs and Practice Educator Monitoring document. Information contained within the education and training standards mapping form identified that the sub-regional assessors (members of the course team) act as practice educators and are responsible

for the final assessment of on the job learning for every apprentice in each year of study, with the practice education responsibilities divided between the workplace mentor and the sub regional assessor. The inspection team were able to speak to the sub-regional assessors, and external practice educators, during the inspection and triangulate how their registration and currency is checked and recorded by the course provider.

50. The inspection team were provided with documentary and narrative evidence of the on-going training and continuous professional development opportunities that can be accessed through the course provider. These services include practice educator forums, conferences, and mentoring support for new practice educators.

Standard 2.7

51. The inspection team concluded that the discussions with employer partners and staff involved in placement-based learning, alongside documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection, including but not limited to the University Whistleblowing Policy, Student Health and Disability document and the Apprenticeship On the Job Learning Handbook, was able to demonstrate that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

52. During the inspection week the inspectors met with members of the senior management team. This enabled the inspection team to triangulate documentary evidence submitted by the course provider that detailed the structure and the governance of the programme, including the links between the course, committees and boards within the university.

53. As a result of these discussions the inspection team were assured of the close working relationships and clear lines of communication and accountability across individuals and governing groups involved in the course management and governance. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

54. Information submitted prior to the inspection identified that placement agreements are signed off between the staff team and employer partners via the Single Point of Contact meetings. The inspection team met with members from the employer partners, who spoke about the agreements in place with the university, including contingences to manage a placement at risk of breakdown.

55. These key stakeholders detailed the shared understanding and processes for ensuring that placements provide education and training opportunities so that

apprentices have the opportunity to meet the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards. During the inspection week the inspectors heard of the process in place for managing consents and a placement at risk of breakdown, including the support mechanisms for apprentices. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

56. Discussions with staff involved in practice-based learning, and information within the education and training standards mapping form, outlined the work done by the university with their employer partners to ensure that all placements have appropriate policies and procedures to support students. The inspection team were assured that the audit process of placements and the pre-placement, practice learning agreement meeting, and tripartite review are all in place to ensure that employer partners have the necessary policies and procedures in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk.

57. Student representatives that the inspection team met with spoke of their experiences of the support and responsive approach from both their employer partner and the course team in relation to their health and well-being. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

58. Documentary and narrative evidence received by the inspection team highlighted the significance of employer partnership and collaboration throughout this apprenticeship course. Members of employer partners that the inspection team met with spoke of being involved in the inception of the course and the work and coproduction that has carried on since then. Employer partners spoke of their involvement and active role in the Single Point of Contact meetings, various task and finish groups, Strategic Board Meetings and Practice Assessment Panels.

59. Information contained within the education and training standards mapping form identified that employer partners are directly involved in the allocation, organisation and management of practice learning opportunities. This was triangulated within the inspection team's discussion with staff involved in practice-based learning. The representatives from employer partners that the inspection team met with spoke of the robust working relationship they have with the university and course team. They spoke in support of the formal mechanisms, as well as identifying their regular and informal discussions and communication with the course team that supports the collaborative approach between the course and employer partners.

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

Standard 3.5

61. As identified within standard 3.4 the inspectors were assured that employer partners are clearly involved in the monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the programme.

62. As a result of their meeting with representatives from the senior management team the inspectors were able to triangulate information identified within the education and training standards mapping form. Documentary and narrative evidence outlined the range of monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems in place for the course at strategic and operational levels.

63. Representatives from the people with lived experience of social work and students that the inspection team met with all spoke of feeling valued and involved in the monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems for the course.

64. Students provided examples of being involved as student representatives, as voted for by their peers, taking part in the National Student Survey and Staff Student Liaison Committee, including their feedback and input gathered through module and placement feedback methods and evaluation. People with lived experience of social work that the inspectors met with echoed these experiences of feeling valued, identifying a respectful approach that was based upon coproduction throughout their involvement in the Single Point of Contact meetings, Practice Assessment Panels and reviews and development of the curriculum and course materials. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

65. The inspectors were assured that, following their review of documentary evidence and discussions with the course team and senior leadership team, the number of students admitted to the programme is identified from a clear strategy. The inspection team were satisfied that this included consideration of local and regional placement capacity and ensuring that students can complete quality placements in appropriate settings.

66. As a result of the nature of the course employer partners identified their robust involvement in discussions and planning through both formal and informal mechanisms. The inspectors were satisfied that students would have learning opportunities that will help them develop the knowledge, skills, and behaviours to meet the professional standards by the time they complete the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.7

67. Documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection included detailed information of the lead social worker for the course and the head of department. The

evidence identified their role, confirming their registration with Social Work England, appropriate qualifications, and experience.

68. The inspectors were able to check and verify this information. The inspection team concluded that the documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection was able to demonstrate that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

69. The inspectors were assured from information submitted prior to the inspection, including Staff CVs, and discussions with the course team and senior management team that there were an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff, who are registered with Social Work England, with relevant specialist subject knowledge and expertise to deliver an effective course.

70. During the inspection the inspectors discussed the course team's wide range of expertise in relation to social work, covering many areas of active research and links to current social work practice. Members of the team spoke about their active social work research, including the contribution to the development of new knowledge particularly around systemic practice, and professional practice (a practice learning book written and edited by members of the course team).

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

Standard 3.9

72. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the Course Governance Evidence Resources document. Information contained within the education and training standards mapping document and discussions with the senior management team enabled the inspection team to explore how the course meets the requirements of this standard.

73. The inspection team learnt that academic achievement in each module is recorded on the student record system (SITS), such as a pass/fail and percentage mark and grade for every assessment attempt, which feeds into the exam board three times per year. This data, including equality, diversity and inclusion, informs the support plans, and there is a clear process and mechanisms for any students who may require additional support or adjustments.

74. During the inspection week the inspectors were provided examples of these procedures in action. One student spoke of the personalised approach and action plan that was put in place to support them through the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

75. As identified in standard 3.8, the inspection team were assured that research activity is evident in the information contained within the staff CVs and the inspection team heard examples of this being brought into course delivery.

76. Documentary evidence and discussions with the senior management team and course team identified that staff are supported in a range of activities to enhance their learning, development and teaching. Staff are supported through an appraisal system, including time allocated to attend training courses and participate in personal development activities. There is an arrangement with the local Teaching Partnership where members of the course team are supported to shadow social work practitioners as part of their development and maintain links with current social work practice.

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

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

78. Meetings with employer partners identified that students were able to meet the expected level of knowledge and competency for their stage of learning and development. The inspectors were satisfied that the documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection was able to demonstrate that the content, structure, and delivery of the course is in accordance with relevant standards, guidance and frameworks.

79. The inspection team were assured that the course is designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards upon completion of the programme. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

80. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the Programme Specification, Module Directory and Single Point of Contact Meeting Minutes.

81. Discussions with key stakeholders triangulated the above documentary evidence and examples were provided of coproduction, teaching and reviewing of course materials from both people with lived experience and employer partner representatives that the inspection team met.

82. As identified in standard 3.5 of this report the inspection team were assured that people with lived experience of social work, social work practitioners and employers are involved in key areas of course design, development and reviews of the curriculum. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

83. Documentary evidence submitted by the course provider identified the formal mechanisms and frameworks that ensure that the course meets the requirements of this standard. The inspection team heard from students of accessing support and reasonable adjustments as and when they were required, both from the university and their employers.

84. University student support services explained how they link in with the course team to uphold these needs from as soon as admissions and throughout the course. Employers spoke of the supportive, and timely, work and services put in place for apprentices during all placements. Members of the university support services, and course team provided examples of how their approach incorporates a broad equality, diversity and inclusion approach, where students can access support and adjustments in relation to supporting their needs in relation to faith, mental health, disability and learning needs.

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

Standard 4.4

86. Information submitted by the course provider prior to the inspection included but was not limited to Curriculum and Assessment Evidence Module Specifications, Staff CVs and Single Point of Contact Meeting Minutes.

87. The inspectors were able to hear from the course team of how the curriculum stays relevant and that it is updated regularly in line with research and developments or changes in legislation, government policy and current best practice. Mechanisms that uphold this process include the staff's own research activity, their robust working relationships with their employer partners, the university specialist social work, library and academic services, and staff attending social work research events.

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

Standard 4.5

89. The inspection team were satisfied that the documentary evidence provided, including Programme and Module Specifications, demonstrated that the integration of theory and practice is central to the course, and threads throughout its modules and teaching. Documentary evidence and discussions with student representatives and the course team identified the links and integration of theory into practice, including both practice-based learning and practical learning within an academic setting.

90. The inspection team learnt of the work done academically through course modules, learning outcomes and reflective practice, which is reinforced through the sub-regional assessors, supervisions and wider placement-based team. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

91. Information reviewed by the inspection team in the lead up to the inspection included the specification for the module Inter-Professional Work and Developing Your Professional Identity. Teaching for this module plans to include delivery from other professions, people with lived experience of social work and relevant health and social care organisations.

92. The inspectors heard from the course team, apprentices and employer partners of the wide range of placement-based learning and opportunities that apprentices have to work with and learn from other relevant professions. As a result of their review of documentary evidence and discussions with the above key stakeholders the inspectors were assured that apprentices on the course are given the opportunity to work with, and learn from, other professions in order to support multidisciplinary working including in integrated settings.

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

Standard 4.7

94. Documentary evidence submitted by the course provider prior to the inspection assured the inspectors that students spend enough time in structured academic learning for them to meet the required learning outcomes and meet the professional standards by the time they complete the course.

95. The inspection team were able to triangulate this information within their discussions with student representatives, employer partners and the course team. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

96. Information contained within the education and training standards mapping form demonstrated the processes in place to ensure assessments are robust, fair, and equitable. The university submitted documentary evidence, the Assessment Calendar and Curriculum and Assessment Module Directory, which satisfied the inspectors that this is achieved through the quality assurance processes of monitoring, reviewing and enhancement.

97. The inspection team were able to triangulate this information regarding the mechanisms in place, including internal marking and moderation processes, to ensure that assessments are robust, fair, reliable and valid. As a result of their documentary evidence review and discussions with the course team and employer partners, the inspectors were assured that all assessments are mapped to the module learning outcomes and the professional standards, and that those who successfully complete

the course will have developed the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards.

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

Standard 4.9

99. Information submitted by the course provider prior to the inspection included the university Assessment Regulations, Module and Programme Specifications and Assessment Mapping. The documentary evidence highlighted that there are varied assessments, and these are all mapped to the learning outcomes and scaffolded to increase incrementally throughout the programme.

100. The inspection team heard from student representatives that they felt the assessments undertaken on their respective courses were carried out at appropriate stages during their course and matched their level of learning and development. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

101. Documentary evidence highlighted that all modules offer formative feedback opportunities through the submission of drafts and draft plans. During the inspection week the inspectors learnt how additional one to one sessions with module leaders and drop-in group sessions provide timely and meaningful feedback to students on their progression and performance in assessments.

102. The inspection team heard from student representatives that the feedback they received had all been within the 20-day university timeframe. They expressed that it was timely, helpful, and informed them of their progression and areas of development.

103. Students spoke about the feedback they receive from people with lived experience, their sub-regional assessor and personal tutors, who they expressed are available and responsive to their learning and development needs. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

104. In the lead up to the inspection the inspectors reviewed the course team CVs and the university External Examiner Policy. The inspection team were satisfied that the CVs illustrated appropriate social work experience and expertise within the course team. However, at the time of inspection the course did not have an external examiner recruited. Therefore, this standard is not met.

105. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 4.11 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the

course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard 4.12

106. Within the documentary evidence the requirements for direct observation of practice were outlined, with a range of key stakeholders involved in the assessment of the students, including academic staff, employer partners and people with lived experience of social work. The inspection team agreed that, following their discussions with members of the senior management team, course team and review of documentary evidence, the university has robust governance mechanisms to oversee and inform decisions regarding students' progression and attainment. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

107. Narrative evidence gained during the inspection reinforced how students are encouraged to apply research to practice within their supervision and reflection work within their placements and university, with library support services available to apprentices to further develop their learning and ability to research and analyse appropriate information.

108. As identified under standards 3.8 and 3.10, research activity was evident in the information contained within the staff CVs and the inspection team heard a wide range of active research topics within the course team, including examples of this being brought in to inform course delivery.

109. Within their discussions with the course team the inspectors heard how research activity is drawn upon in their teaching and students' ability to gather, use, analyse and evaluate evidence to inform decision making and enable effective practice is thread within the programmes content. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

110. The inspectors were able to meet with university student support services during the inspection week. This enabled them to triangulate the documentary evidence submitted by the course provider, which highlighted the comprehensive range of resources and services that students have access to, to support their health and wellbeing. This included, but was not limited to, occupational health services, careers

advice and support and counselling services. Student representatives that the inspection team met with provided examples of student support services they had accessed, explaining that these had been of a high standard and timely in response to their individual needs.

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

Standard 5.2

112. The inspection team were satisfied with the evidence provided prior to the inspection that outlined the access to resources that students on the course have to support their academic development. Student representatives that the inspection team met with spoke positively about the support and engagement that they had with their personal tutor and sub-regional assessor, identifying the link between academic and pastoral support they provided.

113. The inspectors met with library, academic and study skills support services during the inspection week. Throughout these discussions the inspectors learnt of the robust and varied support services that students on the course can access to support their academic development.

114. The inspection team were assured from the discussions with key stakeholders and review of documentary evidence that the support services and processes included support for students who may require additional help or guidance. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

115. The inspection team concluded that the documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection was able to demonstrate that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character, and health. During the inspection week the inspectors were able to triangulate this information within their meetings with the course team and student representatives, The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

116. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included the university website link and information for the Disability and Mental Health Support at Kingston University. Information provided to the inspection team highlighted that if apprentices declare a health condition or impairment, they are asked if they would like to be referred to the student Disability and Mental Health advisors who can advise on their entitlement to reasonable adjustments. If appropriate they will create a statement of support needs which identifies the steps to be taken to support the apprentice.

117. The inspection team met with employer partners and staff members from the dedicated university support services and were provided with examples of how these teams work with students to put in place support plans to uphold their individual needs, both at university and placement settings. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

118. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to the inspection identified that information and guidance for students regarding Social Work England registration and continuous professional development requirements are addressed within course materials. As a result of their discussions with the course team and student representatives the inspection team were able to triangulate that students receive timely access to all required programme-level material, including detailed information on the curriculum, practice placements, and assessments.

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

Standard 5.6

119. Information submitted in support of this standard include the On-the-Job Handbook. The inspection team were able to triangulate this evidence with the course team and student representatives that they met with, confirming that all attendance is mandatory. This is because of the requirement to complete off-the-job hours and record these in the apprentices' learning logs. This information is shared with the apprentices during a discussion with their employer and recorded on the Aptem system.

120. The inspection team learnt that attendance at the 30 skills days, 70-day and 100-day placements are also mandatory, which is stated in the On-the-Job Handbook. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

121. As identified within standard 4.10, the inspection team was provided with and reviewed documentary evidence regarding students receiving feedback throughout the course to support their ongoing learning and development. As already identified within this report this evidence outlined the mechanisms that the university has in place for formative, summative, direct observations, and placement activity feedback to the students.

122. The inspection team heard from the library and academic support services of the range of support and services that is on offer to support students' ongoing development needs. The inspection team was satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

123. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard by the course provider included the university Academic Framework and Regulations, confirming that there is a formal appeals procedure for students.

124. This information was triangulated within meetings with the course teams and student representatives. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

125. As the qualifying course is PG Dip Social Work Degree Apprenticeship, 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 4.11	The course provider will provide evidence that there is an appropriately qualified and experienced external examiner for the course, who is registered with Social Work England.	Monday 28 July 2025.	Paragraph 104

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	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
take up an offer of a place on a course. This will include 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	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
current knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning.			
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.	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
3.5 Ensure that regular and effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems are in place, and that these involve 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	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendati on given
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, 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	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendati on given
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.	☒	☐	☐
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	☒	☐	☐

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendati on given
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.	☒	☐	☐
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			

Standard	Met	Not Met – condition applied	Recommendation given
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	Standard 4.11: Ensure	The course provider will provide evidence that there is an	Met.

	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.	appropriately qualified and experienced external examiner for the course, who is registered with Social Work England.	
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Findings

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

127. The course provider submitted the conditions monitoring mapping form, and supporting evidence, within the timescale identified by the inspectors. The mapping form contained narrative evidence and supporting documentary evidence that was reviewed by the inspectors.

128. In relation to the condition set for standard 4.11, the course provider submitted documentary evidence in the form of the external examiners CV, name and Social Work England registration number. The inspectors were assured from this information and narrative provided within the conditions mapping form from the course provider that there is an appropriately qualified and experienced external examiner for the course, who is registered with Social Work England.

129. The inspection team were satisfied that the evidence met the condition, and the standard is now met.

130. Following the review of the documentary evidence submitted, the inspection team are satisfied that the condition set against the approval of the PG Dip Social Work Degree Apprenticeship is met.

Regulator Decision

Condition met.