



Inspection Report

Course provider: Keele University

Course approval: PG Dip social work degree apprenticeship

Inspection dates: 22nd to 24th October 2024

Report date:	29 th November 2024
Inspector recommendation:	Approved
Regulator decision:	Approved
Date of Regulator decision:	16 th January 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: Keele University wish to run a two year postgraduate diploma social work degree apprenticeship.

Inspection ID	KU_CPP472
Course provider	Keele University
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	PG Dip social work degree apprenticeship
Mode of Study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	40
Proposed first intake	March 2025, then January intake following this
Date of inspection	22 nd to 24 th October 2024
Inspection team	Laura Gordon (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Monica Murphy (Lay Inspector) Louise Hernon (Registrant Inspector)

Language

16. In this document we describe Keele University as ‘the education provider’ or ‘the university’ and we describe the PG Dip social work degree apprenticeship as ‘the course’.

Inspection

17. An onsite inspection took place from 22nd to 24th October 2024 at the university campus in Keele. 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 4 graduates from recent cohorts of the MA social work course, as the university does not currently run any social work apprenticeship programmes. Discussions included placements, course content, feedback, support and information.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the course team, senior leadership, placement provision and 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 service user and carer group. Discussions included admissions, feedback, readiness for practice, teaching and assessment, management and monitoring, design of the new course, and training and support.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including Cheshire East adults' services, Stoke children's services, Staffordshire children's services, Shropshire adults' services, and the West Midlands teaching partnership.

Findings

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

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

25. The documentary evidence from the university confirmed the clear requirements for English language including the expectations around the international English language testing system (IELTS).

26. They indicated that there would be three options for employers to choose from in relation to the admissions process. The first option would involve an interview, written task and a group task. Options two and three would be employer led by employers, arranging their own recruitment process and selection days with oversight from the university.

27. Further additional information was requested prior to and during the inspection about options two and three. The university confirmed that currently all employer partners had opted for option one. They advised that they would not be offering option three and provided further information about option two.

28. The inspection team were satisfied that option two would mirror the same process and tasks as option one and therefore provide equity to all applicants with adequate oversight from the university.

29. During the inspection, the admissions team provided further information about the admissions process including details of how ICT skills will be assessed. The inspection team were therefore satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.2

30. The university confirmed via the documentary evidence that they consider prior work experience and lived experience as part of the admissions process and that two years' social care experience is required.

31. During the inspection, the inspection team met with members of the admissions team who confirmed that recognition of prior learning would not be permitted, and all elements of the course must be completed. They also confirmed that after completing

their application a skills scan will be undertaken to identify where the learning needs are for each applicant.

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

Standard 1.3

33. The proposed admissions processes indicate that employers are involved in the initial shortlisting of applicants and also in the selection events.

34. Further information received during the inspection also confirmed that for both options people with lived experience will be involved in the selection events. It also confirmed that there will be briefing events for both options.

35. During the inspection, the inspection team met with both employer partners and people with lived experience who confirmed their involvement in the admissions of the current social work courses on offer at the university.

36. The people with lived experience confirmed that they are involved in interview panels, the review of the admissions policy and in previous years, writing interview questions. They confirmed that they feel supported by the university in their involvement.

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

Standard 1.4

38. The university provided copies of the admissions policy and programme handbook. This contained details of the criminal records check process, declaration process and the Health and Conduct Committee. There was clear information to applicants about the process and that a disclosure would not necessarily be an automatic bar to joining the course.

39. The admissions team members that met with the inspection team confirmed that they will check the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and if applicants are not online, a new DBS check will be completed. They also confirmed that the declaration of suitability covers health and if necessary, they can make a referral to the university occupational health service. An example of a health concern was provided with details of the process followed.

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

Standard 1.5

41. Documentary evidence was provided of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policies in place at the university and that EDI training is mandatory for all staff involved in admissions, including people with lived experience.

42. During the inspection, the admissions team confirmed that EDI data will be pulled from the course and considered in the same way as the current courses. They gave examples of holding pre-application webinars to support people considering career changes.

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

Standard 1.6

44. Documentary evidence confirmed that the university hold a pre-application event that provides information about careers, placements and assessment. The programme handbook also contains information about Social Work England, additional costs and is clear about completion of the course leading to eligibility to apply to the register.

45. During the inspection, the admissions team confirmed that the information available in the programme handbook is available to applicants before they accept an offer on the course.

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

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

47. The university provided a copy of the placement handbook which confirmed that apprentices will undertake a 90 day first placement, 100 day second placement and complete 10 skills days. It also provided information about ensuring different experiences and the completion of statutory tasks.

48. During the course team's initial presentation, they provided a copy of the timetable for the course which allowed time for making up any missed placement days and also additional "mop-up" skills days.

49. The placement team confirmed how they will ensure a contrast in placements with the first placement usually being outside of an apprentice's usual team. The placement team advised that some second placements may take place within an apprentice's own team and detailed how they will manage these placements to ensure apprentices are treated as students whilst on placement.

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

51. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to 2.1. The inspection team noted that the guidance for this standard includes making sure consent is obtained from any service users to ensure that there is agreement for a student to be present.

52. The inspection team acknowledged that the placement portfolio includes consent to include service user information within the document but could not see any reference to consent to the presence of students. Both the university and employer partners confirmed during the inspection that it will be made clear to any service user that the apprentice is a student.

53. It was not as clear how consent will be obtained when students are working with any service users. The inspection team recommend that clear information is provided to students and employer partners around obtaining consent when working with service users. [Full details of the recommendation can be found in the proposed outcomes section of this report.](#)

Standard 2.2

54. The practice learning agreement will be used to identify learning opportunities, and the mid-point review and tripartite meetings will be used to check that these learning opportunities are being provided.

55. During the inspection, members of the placement team confirmed that apprentices will complete an application form for placement matching purposes that will consider the apprentices needs and experience. They also ensure the quality of placements through the use of the Quality Assurance Practice Learning (QAPL) process and there will be drop ins held for students whilst on placement.

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

Standard 2.3

57. Documentary evidence was provided in the form of the practice learning agreement and the placement handbook. The university confirmed that a practice educator is appointed for placement and a work-based mentor will be in place throughout the course.

58. The inspection team met with graduates from the recent cohort of the MA social work course at the university. They confirmed that they had an induction and were given all of the relevant information prior to starting their placements. They also confirmed that they received support from the university with any placement issues.

59. The practice educators that met with the inspection team confirmed that they ensure supervision takes place and that this is recorded in the supervision log in the

placement portfolio. They confirmed that there were good lines of communication with the university during placement. They were also clear about the workload expectations of students on placement and considered the experiences of individuals to consider appropriate stretch in their learning.

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

Standard 2.4

61. The inspection team met with employer partners and practice educators who confirmed that they will ensure that apprentices on the course build upon their current experience but that there will be a clear focus on their role as a social work student.

62. The placement handbook and practice learning agreement confirm the expectations of responsibilities during placement. The mid-point review, tripartite reviews and post-placement QAPL forms will be used to ensure the quality of learning during the placement.

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

Standard 2.5

64. The readiness for practice module includes a portfolio evidencing an apprentice's readiness to undertake direct practice and a short assignment on use of technology in practice and communication. The portfolio contains information about DBS check completion, feedback from a service user about the role play task, with apprentice reflections on this task and a written case note. The apprentices will also complete reflections on the shadowing and skills days that they have completed on the course.

65. The course team confirmed that this module must be passed before apprentices can start their first placement.

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

Standard 2.6

67. The placement team confirmed that every independent practice educator will complete an application form upon recruitment and that every practice educator's registration is checked prior to each placement.

68. They confirmed that where practice educators are employed by the local authority the employer will check that the relevant documentation and training has been completed.

69. The placement portfolio is used to confirm the training that the practice educator has completed. The university keeps a record of practice educators that they use to see

if the practice educator has recently taken a student. The placement team confirmed that workforce development leads will allocate a practice educator and confirm if the person is experienced.

70. The practice educators that met with the inspection team confirmed that there are ongoing webinars available from the university and the West Midlands teaching partnership. There are also regular briefings for practice educators and an annual conference.

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

72. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 2.6. The inspection team noted that currency and training is checked but felt that this process could be strengthened to ensure consistency. [Full details of the recommendation can be found in the proposed outcomes section of this report.](#)

Standard 2.7

73. The documentary evidence provided by the university confirmed that there are policies and processes in place to ensure that students can report and challenge unsafe practices and wrongdoing, including whistleblowing.

74. The course team provided examples of the processes being used by students, and the graduates that met with the inspection team confirmed that they felt confident to raise any concerns.

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

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

76. The university provided documentary evidence of the leadership structure and job descriptions for key roles. There is a programme board that also includes people with lived experience and discusses student feedback.

77. The university has a 5 year internal quality cycle and an annual course review process. Module reviews go to the education committee and there is involvement in discussions about the course at the West Midlands teaching partnership meetings.

78. The inspection team met with members of the senior leadership team who provided further information about the oversight and management of the course.

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

Standard 3.2

80. The documentary evidence included a draft template agreement for placement providers and the practice learning agreement also confirmed roles and responsibilities during placements.

81. During the inspection, the course team provided examples of placement breakdown and how these were managed and resolved.

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

Standard 3.3

83. The university confirmed that they use the QAPL process and the practice learning agreement to ensure that placement providers have the necessary policies and procedures in place for students on placement.

84. The inspection team met with placement providers from the current courses who confirmed that they work collaboratively with the university to ensure that support systems are in place for students.

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

Standard 3.4

86. The documentary evidence received prior to the inspection confirmed that employer partners have been consulted on the development of the new course and had input into the curriculum. The university confirmed that employer partners will be invited to attend the programme board meetings and a bi-monthly apprenticeship sub-group committee of the West Midlands teaching partnership.

87. During the inspection, employer partners that met with the inspection team confirmed that their workforce development teams worked in collaboration with the university. They confirmed attendance at open days, involvement in the practice assessment panels, and the allocation of placements. A representative from the West Midlands teaching partnership also confirmed that involvement with the new course will be ongoing.

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

Standard 3.5

89. Documentary evidence confirmed that the university have a number of review mechanisms in place for the course, including annual reviews, module reviews and the use of the QAPL process for placements.

90. As stated under standard 3.4, employer partners are involved in a range of monitoring and review activities.

91. The people with lived experience that met with the inspection team confirmed that they are members of the programme board and have been consulted on the new course.

92. The inspection team met with graduates from the MA course who confirmed that they had opportunities to provide feedback on the course and confirmed that issues raised had led to changes. Students complete module evaluations, post-placement QAPL forms and there is a student staff voice committee once a semester.

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

Standard 3.6

94. The course team confirmed that the initial cohort for the course will be limited to 15 apprentices. There is a 5 year plan to grow course numbers up to a maximum of 40 apprentices per cohort in line with their ethos to remain “consciously concise”.

95. The inspection team met with members of the senior leadership team who confirmed the support available in terms of resourcing and staff needs. The university confirmed that when the cohort exceeds 15 apprentices, they will look to employ additional staff.

96. The inspection team were aware that the MA course is not currently running and that numbers on the BA course had recently increased. The course team confirmed that they would not exceed a combined 50 students across both the MA and BA social work courses.

97. The West Midlands teaching partnership and employer partners have been involved in discussions about the proposal for the new course and confirmed that there was a need for the course. The course team confirmed that they are building relations with new employer partners to ensure placement capacity.

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

Standard 3.7

99. Documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection confirmed the current social work lead who holds overall responsibility for the programme. The inspection team were satisfied that this individual is a registered social worker and appropriately qualified and experienced.

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

Standard 3.8

101. Documentary evidence provided CVs for members of the course team which indicated a range of experience and expertise across the team. All members of the teaching staff are registered with Social Work England.

102. During the inspection, the course team confirmed that they work with other practitioners across the school who come and deliver teaching sessions. They also have 6 consultant practitioners through the West Midlands teaching partnership who are allocated 6 days per year to work with the university.

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

Standard 3.9

104. The university provided a copy of an external examiner report and annual programme review report. The results of learner evaluations from all modules are reported to module leaders and reviewed by the programme committee as part of the annual programme review.

105. During the inspection, the inspection team heard more from the course team about how EDI data will be used, how engagement and attendance is monitored, and that there is a student engagement and retention lead for each school in place to consider any additional student needs.

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

Standard 3.10

107. The university provided documentary evidence of the staff annual appraisal and the academic development team who provide a teaching and learning conference and a portfolio of programmes.

108. During the inspection, the course team confirmed that a workload model is in development and that staff are encouraged to undertake their PhD. They provided examples of research and practice opportunities that have been undertaken to maintain currency and then fed back into the curriculum of the courses.

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

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

110. The course content is mapped to the Social Work England professional standards and the apprenticeship standards knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs). There are clear learning outcomes, and the course covers aspects of children's social work,

adults social work and mental health. All modules are compulsory and also cover professional conduct, behaviours and expectations of practice.

111. The graduates that met with the inspection team confirmed that they were made aware of Social Work England's professional standards during the course and advised that they felt prepared for practice upon graduation.

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

Standard 4.2

113. Documentary evidence received prior to the inspection indicated that consultations about the proposed course had been held with students, people with lived experience and employer partners.

114. During the inspection, all of the stakeholders listed above confirmed that they had been consulted on the new course. As stated under standard 3.5, these stakeholders will be involved in various mechanisms of review of the new course.

115. Consultants from the West Midlands teaching partnership will be involved in teaching on the course and the people with lived experience confirmed that they will be involved in role plays, teaching sessions and assessment.

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

Standard 4.3

117. Prior to the inspection, the university provided a copy of their EDI strategy and plans to decolonise the curriculum.

118. During the inspection, the course team confirmed that they are rolling out an inclusive education framework. They also confirmed that there is a dedicated disability and support officer for social work and provided examples of reasonable adjustments that are available for apprentices.

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

Standard 4.4

120. The university confirmed that there are two committees that consider and approve course and module changes. The curriculum and assessment methods are continually reviewed by module evaluations, annual programme reviews and the programme board.

121. During the inspection, the course team confirmed that they submit reading lists annually to ensure they are current. They also provided examples of bringing currency from their learning back into the curriculum and teaching.

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

Standard 4.5

123. The programme handbook specifies that the course aims to apply theory to practice. The course includes a specific module that links theory with practice, and links are also drawn in the placement modules which apprentices will record in their placement portfolio.

124. The graduates that met with the inspection team confirmed that the course enabled them to draw links between theory and practice. The practice educators also confirmed how they use supervision to link theory and practice.

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

Standard 4.6

126. Documentary evidence indicated that the course would involve working with learners from other disciplines such as nursing, paramedics, the police and law, as part of the skills curriculum for the course.

127. During the inspection, the inspection team heard more about the multidisciplinary working and learning opportunities from the course team, graduates of the current course and from people with lived experience. These included role play, simulations and a moot legal court.

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

Standard 4.7

129. The documentary evidence confirmed the details of the taught elements of the course with the module specifications. The course team also provided a copy of the timetable for the course during the inspection.

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

Standard 4.8

131. Documentation provided prior to the inspection indicated that a range of assessment methods will be used in the course, including case studies, portfolios, simulated home visits, professional discussions and reflections.

132. There are timetabled formative assessments to prepare apprentices for summative assessment and assessments are designed in a spiral curriculum around the core skills of social work practice.

133. There is a process of internal moderation, marking criteria, an assessment strategy, and an external examiner report was provided as documentary evidence.

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

Standard 4.9

135. As stated under standard 4.8, the course is designed in a spiral curriculum that is sequential. The module specifications detail how assessments are mapped to learning outcomes.

136. During the inspection, the course team provided a copy of the course timetable which indicated consideration of the timing of assessments. The graduates that met with the inspection team confirmed that they had provided feedback around the timing of an assessment and that this had been acted upon and changed to reduce their workload.

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

Standard 4.10

138. The university provided a copy of their assessment and feedback code of practice which indicated a timescale of 15 days for summative assessment feedback to be provided.

139. During the inspection, the inspection team met with recent graduates from the MA course who confirmed that feedback was useful and timely and provided them with guidance on their development and improvement. They also confirmed that they were able to follow up on feedback if needed.

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

Standard 4.11

141. Documentary evidence provided CVs for course staff indicating their qualifications and experience. Practice educator qualifications are also confirmed and documented within the placement portfolio.

142. During the inspection, the senior management team and course team confirmed that an external examiner had not yet been appointed for the new course but that they would be looking to do so following the approval process.

143. The inspection team noted that the university had an academic registry process for appointing an external examiner and were sufficiently confident that an appropriate external examiner will be appointed for the new course.

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

Standard 4.12

145. The placement portfolio and handbook confirm that apprentices will have 3 direct observations of practice on each placement and confirms the expectations around these.

146. During the course, apprentices will receive feedback from a range of people including practice educators, service users and people with lived experience, academic mentors and work-based supervisors.

147. The course team confirmed that the readiness for practice module must be completed and passed prior to first placement. There are examination boards twice yearly and there is internal monitoring of progression both as a cohort and for individuals. Apprentices will receive feedback on their progress through their tripartite meetings.

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

Standard 4.13

149. The documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection indicated that research is covered across the modules and included as part of the learning outcomes. There is a monthly research paper reading meeting that is open to students and the course team includes a research development officer.

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

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

151. Documentary evidence provided links to wellbeing and support services available to students including counselling, mental health support, careers and occupational health services.

152. During the inspection, the inspection team met with staff from support services who confirmed that apprentices will be able to access the same support services. They confirmed the availability of 24 hour services, details of their triage system, and that there is a clear point of contact for apprentices through a dedicated student and experience support officer within each school.

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

Standard 5.2

154. Each apprentice will have an academic mentor for the entirety of the course to support their academic learning and signpost to support services.

155. The graduates that met with the inspection team confirmed that the academic mentors were supportive and that there were good lines of communication.

156. The support services staff confirmed that there are academic resources available to support apprentices with study skills such as 1-2-1 support, online tutorials, writing sessions, and support plans. There are also specific targeted services for care leavers, students with disabilities and mature students.

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

Standard 5.3

158. The documentary evidence and the course team confirmed that a declaration of suitability is completed by apprentices annually. The social work health and conduct committee is convened each month to consider referrals made about students for whom there may be concerns about conduct, practice or health and wellbeing.

159. The course team provided examples of declarations regarding both health and conduct and the processes that were followed to manage these.

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

Standard 5.4

161. Prior to the inspection, the university provided details of the disability support services that are available to students. The practice learning agreement can be used to consider any additional needs or reasonable adjustments, and the programme handbook confirms the policy for arrangements in exceptional circumstances and leave of absence.

162. During the inspection, the inspection team heard various examples of reasonable adjustments for students. There is a dedicated disability and support officer within the faculty and an inclusive education framework is being introduced.

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

Standard 5.5

164. The programme handbook provides information to apprentices about placements, assessments, the curriculum, attendance requirements, support, Social Work England and the assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE). There is also a placement handbook and details about the specific requirements of the apprenticeship can be accessed via a system called Aptem.

165. The graduates that met with the inspection team confirmed that they had been provided with adequate information about the course and future practice.

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

Standard 5.6

167. The attendance requirements for the course are set out clearly in the programme handbook. Placement attendance is recorded in the placement portfolio and skills day attendance is also recorded.

168. During the inspection, the course team provided further details about how they monitor attendance and engagement.

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

Standard 5.7

170. As stated under standard 4.10, there is a timescale of 15 days for summative assessment feedback to be provided.

171. The programme handbook confirmed that people with lived experience will provide feedback to students during the course, and that both service users and practice educators will provide placement feedback.

172. During the inspection, the inspection team met with recent graduates from the MA course who confirmed that feedback was useful and timely and provided them with guidance on their development and improvement. They also confirmed that they were able to follow up on feedback if needed.

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

Standard 5.8

174. The process for academic appeals is detailed within the programme handbook and there is an independent advice service available to students that can provide advice on complaints and appeals.

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

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

Standard 6.1

176. As the qualifying course is a Postgraduate Diploma social work degree apprenticeship the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

177. The inspection team recommend that the course be approved.

Recommendations

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

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	Standard 2.1	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider providing clear information to students and employer partners around obtaining consent when working with service users.	Paragraph 47
2	Standard 2.6	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider reviewing their processes for ensuring that practice educators have current knowledge, skills and experience to ensure that this is checked consistently.	Paragraph 67

179. 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	Recommendati on 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	Recommendati on given
6.1 The threshold entry route to the register will normally be a bachelor's degree with honours in social work.	☒	☐	☐

Regulator decision

180. Approved.