



Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Bolton

Course approval: BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship

Inspection dates: 30th April – 3rd May 2024

Report date:	17.6.2024
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	25.7.24
Date conditions met and approved:	24.03.25

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Introduction

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

What we do

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

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

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

Summary of Inspection

15. The University of Bolton's BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship was inspected as part of the Social Work England reapproval cycle; whereby all course providers with qualifying social work courses will be inspected against the new Education and Training Standards 2021.

Inspection ID	UBOR2
Course provider	University of Bolton
Validating body (if different)	N/A
Course inspected	BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	20
Date of inspection	30 th April – 3 rd May 2024
Inspection team	Daisy Bragadini - Education Quality Assurance Officer Sarah McNulty - Lay Inspector Louise Hernon - Registrant Inspector

Language

16. In this document we describe the University of Bolton as 'the education provider' or 'the university' and we describe the BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship as 'the course'.

Inspection

17. An onsite inspection took place from 30th April until 3rd May 2024 at the Queen's Specialist Building in Farnworth, one of the universities campuses, where the social work team is based.

18. A separate inspection team were also part of the inspection, looking at the BA Social Work and MA Social Work courses. Some of the meetings were held jointly with this team and the recommendations of their team will be reflected in a separate report. 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.

19. 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

20. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

21. The inspection team met with 4 students from the BA social work course from various stages in their study and included student representatives. Discussions included student support, learning experiences on their placements, feedback they received on their progress and their curriculum.

Meetings with course staff

22. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from the teaching team, senior management team, the admissions team, academic and wellbeing support services, the practice based learning team, and the university central apprenticeship team.

23. During the inspection the inspection team were able to learn about and explore the Social Work Centre, which had been established by the course team as part of the university. The centre, based in 3 rooms at the university, received self referrals and referrals made by the local authority and third sector organisations to provide advice and support to members of the public. Approximately 10 students from the BA and MA courses completed their non statutory 70 day placements there, overseen by an off site practice educator and with supervision provided by a tutor on the course team.

24. Services provided by the centre included benefits and housing advice, advocacy and support work, such as support for a parent attending a meeting at a school, and supporting the work of a local food bank. The inspectors requested and received policies governing the work of the centre. They received the Lone Worker Checklist, the Safer Working for Students on Placement at the Social Work Centre, and the University of Bolton Social Work Centre Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. The inspection team heard how the course team were considering offering an apprenticeship position from the centre itself in the future.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

25. The inspection team met with 1 person with lived experience of social work who has been involved in working with the social work team. Discussions included their and the wider group's involvement with interviewing at admissions, designing questions for interviews, teaching and assessment.

Meetings with external stakeholders

26. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including a representative from Bolton local authority and the private, voluntary and independent sector. The inspection team also met with a small group of off site practice educators.

Findings

27. 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

28. During meetings and through evidence provided, it was clear that applicants were required to undertake an initial assessment for English and maths, where equivalent qualifications were not held. The results of these assessments would inform whether applicants could be accepted on to the course or a recommendation would be given for them to undertake relevant studies and delay their application.

29. Both the course webpage and course specification stipulated relevant English language requirements where an applicants' first language was not English.

30. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed the current course specification and subsequently, an updated draft course specification, received during the inspection. In addition to meetings held as part of the inspection they concluded that there was a lack of clarity in relation to the exact requirements of the interview process, and they were unable to identify each stage of the applicant journey. For example, the course specification stated that applicants would be required to attend an interview, and then went on to state they may be required to attend an interview. Therefore, the inspectors were not able to see evidence of a clear process illustrating how the applicant would be assessed. This prevented them from understanding both how the admissions process assessed an applicants' potential to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards or their capability to meet academic standards. The inspection team were also unable to identify the role and responsibilities of the employer within the admissions journey, and as a result are recommending that a condition be applied to this standard.

31. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 1.1 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard 1.2

32. The inspection team reviewed the admissions policy and the course specification which highlighted the role of the course leader in assessing the suitability of applicants in relation to prior relevant experience. The course specification also outlined that a personal statement would be used to assess prior experience held by an applicant. In addition, there was a clear requirement for apprenticeship applicants to be employed for a minimum of 30 hours a week within a relevant role. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 1.3

33. Preceding the inspection, the inspection team were provided with the Service User Involvement Initiative Guidance Document which set out the opportunities for people with lived experience of social work to be involved in the interviews at admissions as well as other aspects of recruitment. During the meeting held with people with lived experience of

social work, the inspection team heard confirmation that they were involved in interviews and designing questions.

34. In addition, employer partners were able to confirm their colleague's involvement in interviews held for the BA social work course. The course specification stipulated that employers would conduct interviews with staff from the university, although the inspection team were unable to clearly identify what their role would be and precisely when they would be involved in the applicant's journey for the apprenticeship course. As a result, the inspection team are recommending that a condition is attached to this standard.

35. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 1.3 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 1.4

36. Prior to the inspection the inspection team requested additional evidence in relation to this standard. They were provided with a documented process for checking DBS and occupational health checks for apprentice nurses. During the inspection the inspection team heard how these checks are managed and monitored for applicants to the BA and MA social work courses. The inspection team were unable to identify a clear and documented process which applied to the apprenticeship course, including the roles and responsibilities of the course staff team, the central apprenticeship team and the employers. They are therefore recommending that a condition is applied to this standard.

37. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 1.4 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 1.5

38. In relation to this standard, and prior to the inspection, the inspection team were provided with the link to the university's equality and diversity policy. During a meeting held with admissions staff, the inspection team heard that admissions staff undergo training in equality, diversity and inclusion. During the meeting held with people with lived experience of social work they were also informed that they undergo training in this area. When meeting with staff involved in delivering wellbeing and support services, the inspection team heard that they are able to offer guidance to the staff team when they receive requests for reasonable adjustments during the admissions process. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

39. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed slides from an open day presentation, the course website, and the course specification. During discussions within the inspection, the staff team were able to ensure some updates were made to information contained on the course webpage in relation to the internal validation for the course. However, the inspection team were unable to identify sources of information available to prospective apprenticeship applicants which outlined, for example, the requirement to complete 170 days of assessed practice placement learning, the role of Social Work England and the professional standards, and the nature and detail of the apprenticeship course, its requirements, and its structure. They are recommending that a condition be attached to this standard.

40. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 1.6 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 two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

41. As part of a request for additional evidence prior to the inspection, the inspection team were provided with evidence of the provision of 30 skills days. Within the course specification this requirement was clearly stipulated. During the inspection the course team provided the Programme Guide which outlined the requirement of 2 placements to be completed, of 70 and 100 days. During discussions with staff responsible for practice based

learning the inspection team explored how they would ensure apprentices would have the opportunity to complete contrasting placement experiences. They heard that through placement planning with employers, link tutors and an employment based educator, the learning needs of the apprentices would be assessed and placements offered to ensure a contrast of learning experiences were provided. During the meeting held with students on the BA course, the inspection team heard that students were completing 170 days of practice learning, with at least one placement covering statutory requirements, and that placements were contrasting.

42. The inspection team heard of a clear process which will be followed for recording 200 days of practice based learning. This included registering of 30 skills days, with contingency plans for days which may be missed, and the APTM system (online apprenticeship platform for recording all aspects of required learning and progression) where each completed placement day would be recorded and monitored. The apprentices would also be required to maintain a record of attendance of placement days within their practice learning agreement documentation which would be checked by the practice educator and work based educator. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.2

43. As part of a request for additional evidence prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with the quality assurance document, QAPL Stage 2: New Placement Review. This would be used to ensure practice learning opportunities would enable facilitation of learning to meet the requirements of the professional standards. Narrative evidence outlined how organisations providing practice learning experiences would undergo an audit process to ensure learning environments were appropriate and aligned to the professional standards. The inspection team heard that through the practice learning agreement meeting at the start of the placement, the interim and tripartite meetings, the learning opportunities would be identified, planned and reviewed in alignment with the learning needs of the apprentice. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

44. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were referred to the practice learning agreement documentation which outlined how the induction, supervision and workload would be planned for apprentices. Supervision, workload, support and provision of a realistic workload would be reviewed at the interim meeting and through the tripartite meetings. During the meetings held with practice educators the inspection team heard confirmation of these processes which were laid out in placement documentation. They outlined how learning objectives for each student were able to be cross referenced in

supervision sessions to support learning and development. The inspection team heard how the practice learning agreement and interim meetings were used to identify support needs and monitor them as the apprentice progressed. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

45. Preceding the inspection the inspection team reviewed the practice learning handbook for the BA and MA courses. This outlined a range of examples of types of work apprentices would not be expected to undertake. Key responsibilities were also outlined within the handbook, and the practice learning agreement meeting, tripartite meetings and interim meetings would also be used to monitor how appropriate apprentice's responsibilities were. Students with whom the inspection team met explained that overall, their responsibilities were appropriate for their stage of training. The self conducted skills scan at the start of the apprenticeship would also provide further guidance to the apprentice and educators supporting them to identify learning needs, skills and areas for development. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

46. The inspection team were referred to the module Readiness for Practice which must be completed before apprentices proceed on to their first placement. The assessment contained within the module included a coursework portfolio comprising of a record of practical assessment, a written record of the feedback from the assessment panel, a 1000 word reflection on the assessment and feedback, evidence of at least 3 reflective accounts and a 1000 word reflective essay.

47. During the meeting held with practice educators the inspection team heard that some felt that students had started their placement unprepared in relation to necessary practice placement documentation, and had required prompting to print and have ready all they needed for the start of their placement.

48. During the meeting held with students, the inspection team heard that they found the Readiness for Direct Practice module helpful, and they explained they felt able to apply skills they had learnt at university, including learning reflective skills. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

49. Prior to the inspection the course provider submitted evidence highlighting the training courses provided through the Greater Manchester Social Work Academy (GMSWA). These supported practice educators' Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and included masterclasses delivered in collaboration with teaching staff from the social work team.

50. As part of additional evidence requested, and during meetings held as part of the inspection, the inspection team heard that the registration number and qualification of practice educators was recorded on the practice learning agreement paperwork at the start of each placement. The inspection team were told that the link tutor should check this. However, the inspection team were not clear about the oversight processes in place to manage this, how the registration numbers were checked, or how the information was recorded or monitored.

51. During the meeting held with practice educators the inspection team heard that there were few opportunities for them to find out about updates on course content, and they were not required to provide updated information about training.

52. As part of the evidence submission the course provider outlined how information was shared between the workforce leads within the local authorities and the university. This included information on training needs of practice educators, but this did not include off site practice educators.

53. The inspection team concluded that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate a systematic and comprehensive system in place to ensure that all practice educators were appropriately knowledgeable, skilled and experienced, and on the register. They are recommending that a condition be attached to this standard.

54. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 2.6 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 2.7

55. As part of the initial documentary evidence submission and additional evidence request, the inspection team reviewed the practice learning agreement, the Student and Practice Educator's Guide to Raising Concerns and the Code of Practice for Work Based and Practice Learning. The practice learning agreement clearly referred to the whistleblowing policy used on placement and the role of the link tutor to ensure that this was provided and explained

to each apprentice. During the meeting with students the inspection team heard that students were aware of how to raise concerns. They described being aware that they could report concerns to their on site supervisor, their work place manager, link tutor or practice educator. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

56. As part of the evidence submission the inspectors reviewed the Annual Monitoring Guidelines document which outlined the process requirements for performance review of the courses. Narrative evidence provided described the responsibilities held within the course teaching and governance teams.

57. During the inspection the inspection team were provided with a Social Work Team Structure Diagram which outlined the roles and lines of accountability covering placements, teaching and learning and quality assurance within the faculty. During the meeting held with senior leaders, the inspection team explored the management and governance structures, processes and groups. They described how the programme plan was informed by key course metrics, feedback from the external examiner and module evaluations. The plan was managed and monitored through the Quality Portal and by a panel of programme leaders who met monthly for programme meetings to reflect and share good practice.

58. In addition, the inspection team heard about the role of the senate in relation to quality assurance of the course and the role of the standards and enhancement team. The degree apprenticeship course, in addition to a programme plan, would complete a Self Assessment Plan which would be submitted to the degree apprenticeship compliance team for monitoring.

59. Currently the course does not have apprentices recruited to it, although the inspection team heard from senior leaders that there were plans to recruit a programme leader to manage the programme.

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

Standard 3.2

61. Preceding the inspection the inspection team was provided with evidence which included clear guidance for apprentices and practice educators for raising concerns and placement breakdown management processes. During the meeting with students and

practice educators the inspection team heard examples of where contingency placements had been organised and placement breakdowns managed on the BA and MA courses.

62. During the inspection the inspection team were provided with the Degree Apprenticeship Training Provider and Employer Agreement template which outlined the conditions of the contractual agreement between the university and the employer partner. However, currently the course provider does not have agreements with placement providers to provide training that meets the professional standards, and consequently the inspection team concluded that this standard was not met.

63. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 3.2 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 3.3

64. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with narrative and documentary evidence which outlined how the practice learning agreement meeting would facilitate the monitoring of relevant placement provider policies. Narrative evidence outlined that the induction process on placement would provide opportunity for apprentices to be introduced to relevant policies on placement. Placement providers would also be provided with the practice learning handbook, and the inspection team were provided with the handbook used on the BA and MA course, but not the apprenticeship version.

65. The inspection team concluded that without evidence of agreements with employers and placement providers, as outlined in standard 3.2 above, it was not possible to be satisfied that placement providers had the necessary policies in place. Consequently, they agreed that this standard was not met. In line with the guidance attached to this standard, relevant policies and procedures related to health, wellbeing and risk should be identified within agreements with placement providers, required in standard 3.2.

66. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 3.3 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 3.4

67. Evidence provided in relation to this standard related to the membership of the GMSWA, who worked closely with the course team to manage allocation of practice placements and practice educators for the BA and MA courses. The inspection team also heard that quarterly meetings were held with principal social workers and the workforce lead at Bolton local authority.

68. Meeting minutes provided to the inspection team demonstrated evidence of shared updates and partnership working. Topics discussed within these meetings included placement preparation, staff involvement at the practice educator conference and skills day delivery.

69. However, the inspection team concluded that there was insufficient evidence in relation to how employer partners would be involved in various aspects of the management and monitoring of the course, including practice education. As outlined in standard 3.2 and 3.3 above, currently the course does not have agreements with employer partners. As a result, the inspection team were unclear about how new employers would be provided with the opportunity to be involved in the management and monitoring of various aspects of the course.

70. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 3.4 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 3.5

71. As part of a request for additional evidence prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed a sample of the Staff Student Liaison Committee meeting minutes. These demonstrated a regular monitoring system which included and responded to feedback from student representatives. Students were also invited to complete a module evaluation, the results of which were reviewed by module leads.

72. The inspection team heard that people with lived experience of social work were invited to these meetings and were encouraged to submit statements of feedback on the course if they were unable to attend themselves. In addition, the inspection team heard an example from one member of the people with lived experience group working with the courses that they were invited to review module changes, suggest improvements and input into some aspects of module design.

73. Although the inspection team acknowledged some evidence of feedback from employer partners for the BA and MA courses, they noted an absence of formal mechanisms in place to involve them systematically in the evaluation and improvement for the course. Consequently, they agreed that this standard was not met.

74. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 3.5 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard 3.6

75. Through its membership of the GMSWA, including the 10 connected local authorities, placement planning and allocation was organised for the BA and MA courses. The first bid for learners on the course was made initially for 13 apprentices with the 10 local authorities working with the GMSWA. Subsequently, a second and third bid was made for 6 and 12 apprentices respectively with local authorities in the region. During the inspection the course team attributed their unsuccessful bids to lower point scores in their bid applications and not having had a completed BA student cohort until September 2023, which was when the first cohort graduated.

76. The inspection team explored the current strategy for alignment of the number of apprentices and regional placement capacity. They heard an aim which was to enhance the course for smaller numbers and bid for under 5 apprentices with private, voluntary and independent organisations. However, the inspection team identified insufficient detail in relation to placement provision for apprentices and agreements with employer partners including an employer led demand for apprentices. Detail of workforce planning in relation to the apprenticeship course and placement provision was not evident and as a result the inspection team concluded that this standard was not met.

77. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 3.6 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 3.7

78. Preceding the inspection the inspection team reviewed the CV for the lead social worker who held overall professional responsibility for the courses. The evidence reviewed by the inspection team included examples of how the lead provided expert professional advice for the courses currently and engaged with key stakeholders. The register was checked, and registration was confirmed. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

79. The inspection team reviewed evidence in relation to this standard for the current BA and MA course cohorts, as there are currently no apprentices recruited to the apprenticeship course. Staff CVs illustrated appropriately qualified team members, with a range of expertise and subject knowledge.

80. During the meeting held with senior managers, the inspection team heard plans for recruitment for a programme lead when the course has been recruited to. Further plans included recruiting a work based educator and training and upskilling current BA course staff in order for them to deliver the apprenticeship course. The inspection team met with the interim Head of Apprenticeships, the Head of Apprenticeship Quality and Compliance and the Lead for Apprenticeships. Clear plans were articulated in relation to the requirements and training needs for current course staff when the apprenticeship was being delivered. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

81. The inspection team are recommending that approval numbers for this course be revised from 40 to a reduced number based on the evidence which has been reviewed during this inspection process. This new approval number will reflect the evidence the course provider presented during the inspection process in relation to the current development of the course and its ambition to secure small numbers of apprentices.

Standard 3.9

82. In relation to this standard the inspection team were informed that module leaders analysed students' performance and progression rates which was then shared with the university's enhancement office. The data was then used to inform the annual Programme Plan. Within a request for additional evidence the course team submitted the Programme Plan for the BA course. This plan included core metrics for the course, student feedback, a qualitative evaluation and linked action plan. However, the data included in this evaluation did not include evidence of how it was used to inform change or how it included data in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. Consequently, the inspection team determined that this standard was not met and recommend a condition is attached to this standard.

83. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 3.9 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 3.10

84. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed narrative evidence which outlined that staff were provided with individual workload allocations and included time for scholarly activity. The Head of School carried out annual appraisals to monitor training needs and action plans for staff. Further evidence included details of the CPD events delivered through the GMSWA and course staff contributed to the University of Bolton's annual Teaching Intensive Research Informed Conference.

85. During the inspection the inspection team explored further ways in which staff were supported to maintain knowledge and understanding in relation to practice. These included managing the social work centre and working with partner organisations, such as Bolton local authority and a local food bank, completing research with people with lived experience of social work, and staff who had very recent experience of practice. The inspection team heard that a number of staff were supported to gain relevant teaching qualifications, carry out research and work towards PhDs, and new staff received support from a mentor. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

86. Preceding the inspection the inspection team were provided with a mapping document which identified how the learning content of each module would prepare apprentices to meet the professional standards. During the inspection the inspection team were provided with the updated course specification which outlined the aims of the course and how the course would prepare apprentices to meet the professional standards. In addition, the inspection team were also provided with mapping documentation outlining how the course was mapped to the Apprenticeship Standard's knowledge, skills and behaviours.

87. As part of the inspection the inspection team reviewed changes the course team were making to 3 modules. The changes for this course included credit adjustments to remove 60 credits from the end point assessment, and the introduction of a new 20 credit module, the Professional Development Project. They also proposed to include 2 new modules, one in year 1 and one in year 2, the Professional Development Portfolio. The other changes included transferring a learning outcome from the Social Work Law module to the Decision Making module. In addition, they proposed to update learning outcomes in the Social Work Law module and introduce an assessment by exam. Internal validation processes were ongoing at the point of the inspection and confirmation was received just after that, when the final internal validation had been concluded. The Periodic Review and Re-Approval Summary Report was provided after the inspection which confirmed that the proposed changes were agreed internally.

88. The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and professional standards were used within the practice placement assessment to assess the skills and capabilities of apprentices throughout their training. During the meeting held with students on the BA course, the inspection team heard them describe how reference to the PCF and the professional standards supported their learning and was used in their assessments. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

89. Prior to the inspection additional evidence was requested in relation to the involvement of relevant stakeholders in the design, development and review of the curriculum. Meeting minutes were provided which illustrated collaboration within the GMSWA with employer partners on topics such as practice educator workshops and conferences, and students' placement updates.

90. Twice yearly meetings were held with Bolton local authority through the Industrial Advisory Board, and monthly meetings were held with employer partners through the GMSWA. During the inspection the inspection team heard from the principal social worker who was involved in supporting the team to build links with the social work centre for the

BA and MA courses. The inspection team heard that employer partners were involved in the Readiness for Practice module and practice educators are invited to support teaching.

91. People with lived experience of social work were invited to participate in the Staff Student Liaison Committee meeting, and the inspection team heard examples of work involving the group. These included design of interview questions, interviewing, teaching and assessing students, reviewing module content, assessing role plays and skills days content. Currently the group is relatively small, and the inspection team heard about the coordinator's recent work with the South Asian Women's Network and their plans with an emphasis on expanding and diversifying the group. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

92. During the meeting held with student support services the inspection team heard that audits of the physical environment were completed by Access Able to ensure students were learning in an accessible building, and accessibility guides were published online. A free minibus linked the city campus and the Farnworth site, and the inspection team heard examples of support provided to students to support them in their learning, such as adapted office equipment.

93. The course team referred to the content of the module Anti-Discriminatory Practice as an example of course design which was aligned to equality, diversity and inclusion principles. Teaching staff were required both through their induction and then annually, to complete training in equality, diversity and inclusion. During the meeting with students the inspection team heard that they were provided with clear information about how to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

94. In relation to this standard and prior to the inspection the course provider laid out the expectations for learning resources and reading lists to be updated annually. In addition to this the inspection team were informed that through the Industrial Board, as part of the GMSWA, employers were able to influence various aspects of the content of the BA and MA courses. Detail relating to the university's annual monitoring guidelines was also submitted and reviewed by the inspection team.

95. However, the inspection team reviewed the module content and associated reading lists and noted that learning resources did not demonstrate a reflection of contemporary research and policy. For example, the module descriptors for Introduction to Social Work

and Anti-Discriminatory Practice included references to the previous regulator and associated standards, and dated texts. Consequently, the inspection team, although able to identify a mechanism for review, were unable to identify evidence which supported this standard and are recommending that a condition be attached to this standard.

96. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 4.4 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 4.5

97. In relation to this standard, the inspection team were directed to module content delivered in the first part of the course, and particularly to Introduction to Social Work, Anti-discriminatory Practice and Human Growth and Development. Within these modules apprentices would be introduced to key theories and start to learn how they could be applied in practice. During the meeting with students and practice educators the inspection team heard about the use of specialist theory resources and how students were encouraged and supported to integrate theory and practice. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

98. Evidence provided in relation to this standard included details of the use of a mock law court supported by teaching from the legal profession, workshops held with health students including health visitor and district nursing students and a mock hospital ward. Students described learning opportunities delivered through skills days, working with nurses, social workers from a range of teams, and colleagues from youth justice teams. Evidence provided also illustrated how learning opportunities during practice placements were identified and managed in line with relevant sections of the PCF.

99. The course provider submitted a link to the Integrated Learning Workshop sessions which were delivered online. However, it was noted that the quiz used as part of the learning required updating as it referred to the previous regulator.

100. During the inspection the course team heard about the team's plans to expand and develop the interprofessional learning opportunities provided to apprentices. These

included working with other course leaders to enhance the offer for apprentices and students. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

101. In relation to this standard the inspection team reviewed the module descriptors which outlined the detail of teaching and independent study hours required to be completed by the apprentices. These stipulated hours that would enable the apprentices to meet the required learning outcomes and meet the professional standards by the time they complete their course. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.8

102. Prior to the inspection the course provider submitted module specifications and the university's Annual Monitoring Guidelines, in addition to the programme specification. These examples of evidence outlined the range of assessments used on the course and how they related to assessing apprentice's skills and knowledge in alignment to the professional standards. One of the changes proposed by the course team included the introduction of an exam based assessment within the Law for Social Work Practice module. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

103. Evidence received during the inspection included the course coherence map, which illustrated how modules within the course were linked to each other and built on previous learning, through academic and theoretical content and practice based skills. Apprenticeship knowledge, skills and behaviours were mapped to the course modules and demonstrated progression through the course. During the meeting held with students the inspection team heard from some that they felt sufficiently challenged by the assessments they were given and that complexity in their work increased each year. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

104. Within module specifications the inspection team were able to review when apprentices would expect to receive feedback to support their ongoing development. Apprentices would receive feedback from practice educators, their link tutors and personal tutors, work based educator and managers. Students described receiving feedback, which

was helpful and supported them in their development, with additional support available to further understand their feedback and how to improve. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

105. Prior to the inspection the inspection team reviewed the course team CVs and university processes governing the recruitment of an external examiner. The inspection team were satisfied that the CVs exemplified appropriate expertise within the course team. However, currently the course does not have an external examiner recruited, and consequently this standard is not met.

106. 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

107. Documentary evidence submitted in relation to this standard included the interim and placement report documents which would assess the progress of apprentices on placement. A total of 5 assessments resulting from direct observations would be required to be linked to the PCF and the professional standards. These included practice educator and service user feedback, with an action plan for areas for development. Tripartite reviews completed every 3 months alongside the work based educators would contribute to the assessment of the apprentices, and people with lived experience would be involved in assessing apprentices' readiness for practice through role plays.

108. Apprentices would be assessed through formal written assignments within modules by personal academic tutors. Exam boards and progression boards, chaired by the head of the School of Health and Society, would manage progression of apprentices, which would also include input from external examiners. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

109. Within documentary evidence the inspection team reviewed the Research Methods for Social Work Professionals module, taught in year 2. This focused on the development of research skills and knowledge to underpin the use of research to inform practice. The Dissertation module in year 3 would require apprentices to apply these skills and evaluate research and evidence.

110. During the inspection the inspection team heard about research being carried out with people with lived experience of social work and students having access to research published by members of the course team. The university provided access for all students to an online academic and personal development platform, LEAP Online. This programme would offer support for apprentices to gain guidance and support in accessing and integrating evidence and research. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

111. In relation to this standard the inspection team were provided with website links for the student support services provided at the university. These included counselling, careers advice and disability services. Apprentices would be required to undergo an occupational health check as part of their application process and then, where appropriate, would be able to undergo an assessment with the Bolton Royal NHS Foundation Trust Hospital. Additionally, the inspection team were provided with the Student Occupational Health Assessment Policy.

112. During the meeting held with staff responsible for delivering student services the inspection team heard how students were supported through online and in person contact sessions and evening appointments. A Student Assistant Programme for wellbeing and mental health support was about to be launched and would deliver comprehensive support services suitable for apprentices who would only be studying at university one day a week. Students explained that wellbeing services were advertised throughout the campus and in addition they received regular emails about wellbeing services available for them to access. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

113. Support services available for apprentices to enhance their academic development were evidenced through services provided by the university's library. Student Liaison Officers would meet with apprentices during their induction and provide information on

how to access study skills support, specific learning disability assessments and help support the establishment of reasonable adjustments. The LEAP Online virtual learning platform provided literacy support and digital referencing guides.

114. Apprentices would be supported by a personal tutor and the inspection team were provided with the student's guide to personal academic tutoring. The inspection team heard from students that regular one to one tutorials were on offer to them, and they were able to request additional meetings when they were needed. In addition, students explained that tutors had time for them, to meet online or in person. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

115. Preceding the inspection the course provider submitted the Fitness to Practise Procedure used for apprentices on the course. Narrative evidence outlined that apprentice's suitability would be monitored through academic modules and practice based parts of the course. Additional evidence in relation to this standard was requested and the Code of Practice for Work-Based and Placement Learning was submitted which was a guide for academic teams involved in overseeing placement learning.

116. During a meeting with senior leaders, the central apprenticeship manager and professional lead for social work courses, the inspection team explored how ongoing suitability of apprentices would be ensured. The inspection team heard that the apprenticeship performance board would monitor perceived risk associated with an apprentice through monthly meetings. Apprentices would undertake a skills scan every 12 months, and every 3 months, during their tripartite meetings, behaviours and practice would be reviewed. The inspection team heard that a self declaration form would be completed each year as part of re-enrolment which would require apprentices to highlight any updates in relating to their health, conduct or character. Following this meeting the inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

117. Health or support needs for apprentices would be identified through the health screening as part of their admissions process, and the practice learning agreement meeting where learning needs would be planned for. The inspection team reviewed evidence which highlighted a range of examples of reasonable adjustments which were provided for students. They included extra time for assessments, support for note taking, quiet rooms, use of a computer and increased font size in exam papers. During the meeting with staff delivering support services the inspection team heard about provision of specialist furniture

provided at a practice placement, parking for students and learning support resources for students with dyslexia. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

118. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were provided with the module specification for Introduction to Social Work through which apprentices would learn about the requirements of the regulatory body and the professional standards.

119. The inspection team noted that the course webpage and course specification provided information on the provision of 30 skills days. However, these sources of information did not include detail about the requirement to complete 170 days of assessed practice based learning. In addition, the course specification linked through the website was not current.

120. During the inspection the course team provided the programme guide which outlined the requirement for two 70 day practice placements, which did not reflect the required 170 days outlined within other documentation. The inspection team reviewed various sources of information provided to students, including the practice learning agreement documentation. In numerous places, including reading lists in module specifications, the previous regulator was referenced.

121. Preceding the inspection the inspection team were provided with the Practice Learning Handbook for the BA and MA courses. Although these contained some relevant information related to the apprenticeship course, apprentices require a placement handbook designed specifically for their course. This needs to accurately reflect the outline of their practice placement learning requirements, details of support offered to them, assessment guides and course design and composition.

122. As a result of the review of evidence in relation to this standard, the inspection team concluded that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate how apprentices would be provided with information about their curriculum, practice placements and the requirements for professional CPD.

123. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 5.5 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [proposed outcome](#) section.

Standard 5.6

124. Prior to the inspection the course provider submitted evidence which outlined that attendance requirements for taught modules were set at 80% and 100% for practice placement days. In cases where an apprentice's attendance at their taught modules fell below the threshold, contact would be made by the personal tutor to explore the context. During meetings held with course and practice based learning staff the inspection team heard that apprentices would be required to record each day at placement on the Social Work Placement Attendance Sheet, which would then be checked and signed by the practice educator. Apprentices would also use the online assessment and progression platform, APTM, to record each placement day, which would be reviewed through the tripartite meetings by the work based educator.

125. As part of a request for additional evidence the inspection team received evidence demonstrating a comprehensive recording and oversight process for monitoring the completion of skills days. This system would be used for apprentices and the completion of 30 skills days across their course. The inspection team received the updated programme guide during the inspection which outlined the parts of the course specified to be mandatory. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

126. The inspection team was provided with module specifications prior to the inspection which outlined the range of assessments which apprentices would complete. Apprentices would also be provided with module guides which would outline the feedback they could expect. The views expressed by students assured the inspection team that they were receiving timely and meaningful feedback which would support their development. These included through both formative and summative assessments for academic work, and also practice placement activities. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

127. As part of the documentary evidence submission the inspection team were provided with the link to the university's Academic Appeals Regulations and Procedures, accessible to apprentices through the university's website. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

128. As the qualifying course is BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

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

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

	Standard not currently met	Condition	Date for submission of evidence	Link
1	Standard 1.1, 1.3	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates a clear and documented process for the admissions journey undertaken by apprentices. This needs to include the following details: • Each stage of application from start to finish • The interview process and content, for example questions asked at interview • The role of the employer at each stage, including their decision making roles • The role of people with lived experience of social work • For these processes to be accurately reflected within the course specification.	26 August 2024	Paragraph 28 Paragraph 33

2	Standard 1.4	The education provider will provide evidence of a clear and documented process which is followed to assess the suitability of applicants, including in relation to conduct, health, character and enhanced DBS checks. This documented process will need to include the following: • Each of the stages of the processes followed • The roles and responsibilities of university staff, the central apprenticeship team, applicants and their employers • Decision making roles and processes applying to these checks.	26 August 2024	Paragraph 36
3	Standard 1.6	The education provider will provide evidence of information provided to prospective apprenticeship applicants during the admissions process. This information should include relevant information outlined within the guidance accompanying this standard.	26 August 2024	Paragraph 39
4	Standard 2.6	The education provider will provide evidence of a robust system of oversight and checking that all practice educators have relevant and current knowledge, skills and experience and are registered.	25 November 2024	Paragraph 49
5	Standard 3.2	The education provider will provide evidence of agreements with placement providers to provide education that meet the professional standards and the	25 November 2024	Paragraph 61

		education and training qualifying standards.		
6	Standard 3.3	The education provider will provide evidence that placement providers have the necessary policies in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk. These may be outlined within placement provider agreements.	25 November 2024	Paragraph 64
7	Standard 3.4	The education provider will provide evidence of how they will work collaboratively with employers to ensure they are involved in the management and monitoring of the course.	25 November 2024	Paragraph 67
8	Standard 3.5	The course provider will provide evidence that there are regular and effective evaluation and improvement systems in place and that these involve employers for the course.	25 November 2024	Paragraph 71
9	Standard 3.6	The course provider will provide evidence that apprentice numbers are aligned to a clear strategy which includes consideration of local/regional placement capacity.	25 November 2024	Paragraph 75
10	Standard 3.9	The course provider will provide evidence to demonstrate how it will evaluate information on apprentice attainment through the collection, analysis and use of data including on equality, diversity, and inclusion.	25 November 2024	Paragraph 82
11	Standard 4.4	The course provider will provide evidence that there is an effective process in place which facilitates	25 November 2024	Paragraph 94

		the continual development and updating of the course. This will include evidence of accurate and current learning resources for the modules.		
12	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.	25 November 2024	Paragraph 105
13	Standard 5.5	The course provider will provide evidence that apprentices are supplied with information about their curriculum, practice placements, assessments and requirements for professional CPD. This includes evidence that all course material, both accessible online and in documentary form accurately reflect the current regulator, the professional standards and requirements to undertake 170 days of assessed practice placement days, including details about placements.	25 November 2024	Paragraph 118

Annex 1: Education and training standards summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Regulator decision

132. Approved with conditions.

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

133. 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](#).

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

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

	Standard not met	Condition	Recommendation
1	Standard 1.1, 1.3	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates a clear and documented process for the admissions journey undertaken by apprentices. This needs to include the following details: • Each stage of application from start to finish • The interview process and content, for example questions asked at interview • The role of the employer at each stage, including their decision making roles • The role of people with lived experience of social work • For these processes to be accurately reflected within the course specification.	Met
2	Standard 1.4	The education provider will provide evidence of a clear and documented process which is followed to assess the suitability of applicants, including in relation to conduct, health, character and enhanced DBS checks. This documented process will need to include the following:	Met

		• Each of the stages of the processes followed • The roles and responsibilities of university staff, the central apprenticeship team, applicants and their employers • Decision making roles and processes applying to these checks.	
3	Standard 1.6	The education provider will provide evidence of information provided to prospective apprenticeship applicants during the admissions process. This information should include relevant information outlined within the guidance accompanying this standard.	Met
4	Standard 2.6	The education provider will provide evidence of a robust system of oversight and checking that all practice educators have relevant and current knowledge, skills and experience and are registered.	Met
5	Standard 3.2	The education provider will provide evidence of agreements with placement providers to provide education that meet the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards.	Met
6	Standard 3.3	The education provider will provide evidence that placement providers have the necessary policies in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk. These may be outlined within placement provider agreements.	Met
7	Standard 3.4	The education provider will provide evidence of how they will work collaboratively with employers to ensure they are involved in the management and monitoring of the course.	Met
8	Standard 3.5	The course provider will provide evidence that there are regular and	Met

		effective evaluation and improvement systems in place and that these involve employers for the course.	
9	Standard 3.6	The course provider will provide evidence that apprentice numbers are aligned to a clear strategy which includes consideration of local/regional placement capacity.	Met
10	Standard 3.9	The course provider will provide evidence to demonstrate how it will evaluate information on apprentice attainment through the collection, analysis and use of data including on equality, diversity, and inclusion.	Met
11	Standard 4.4	The course provider will provide evidence that there is an effective process in place which facilitates the continual development and updating of the course. This will include evidence of accurate and current learning resources for the modules.	Met
12	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.	Met
13	Standard 5.5	The course provider will provide evidence that apprentices are supplied with information about their curriculum, practice placements, assessments and requirements for professional CPD. This includes evidence that all course material, both accessible online and in documentary form accurately reflect the current regulator, the professional standards and requirements to undertake 170 days of assessed practice placement days, including details about placements.	Met

Findings

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

Standard 1.1 and 1.3

137. The inspectors reviewed the additional documentary evidence which included an admissions flowchart, example interview questions and the course specification. This documentation showed the roles of employers and people with lived experience of social work in the admissions processes, including the decision making. The evidence demonstrated a clear and documented process of the admissions journey undertaken by apprentices.

138. The inspectors agreed that sufficient evidence was provided and both standards were met.

Standard 1.4

139. Narrative evidence setting out the process to assess the suitability of applicants, including who has the responsibility for DBS checks, occupational health checks, and qualification checks was reviewed by the inspectors. This showed that the course provider has a clear and documented process in place. The inspectors concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

140. The inspectors reviewed information on the university's website together with the open day presentation slides provided by the course provider. This evidenced the information provided to prospective apprenticeship applicants. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

141. The course provider shared a copy of the Social Work PE Self Declaration form which forms part of the university's quality assurance processes. This form, which is completed annually by practice educators, shows their registration number, qualifications, currency and when they last had a student. Comments received from the practice educators during the inspection which was held on 30th April to 3rd May 2024, triangulated that the course team carry out practice educator checks. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

142. The inspectors reviewed documentary evidence from the course provider which included a Practice Learning Handbook which outlined the roles and responsibilities of the university, placement providers and students for the placement element of apprenticeships. The inspectors also reviewed the Social Work Learning Agreement outlining the tripartite agreement between the student, the university and the placement, together with the Apprenticeship Induction Handbook from the Greater Manchester Partnership. This provided an example of an information sharing agreement used for a different apprenticeship, and one which the university would be amending for this course.

143. Whilst the inspectors recognised that given that the university does not have placement providers in place yet for this apprenticeship, the course provider has demonstrated the types of agreements that they do have in place for other apprenticeships. The inspectors were assured that agreements would be put in place.

144. The inspectors concluded that sufficient evidence had been provided and agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

145. The inspectors reviewed the Social Work Learning Agreement which included information about the specific needs of the student and the necessary policies that must be provided at the start of the placement, including health and wellbeing, hazards and risks. This agreement is signed off by the practice link tutor. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

146. The inspectors were informed that the Industry Advisory Board will be used to work with employers in the management and monitoring of this course. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for this board were reviewed, this confirmed the employer membership, and the ToR stated that the role of the board is to help develop high quality programmes using industry expertise to inform the curriculum.

147. Together with the review of the Curriculum SAR template which specifically states the engagement with employers, the inspectors were satisfied that the education provider works collaboratively with employers to ensure they are involved in management and monitoring. The inspectors therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

148. The course provider supplied evidence which demonstrated that there are regular and effective evaluation and improvement systems in place and these involve employers. The inspectors reviewed the Apprenticeship Quality and Compliance Calendar 2024-25 which includes the monthly performance boards, the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) meetings,

and the employer and learner surveys. The Industry Advisory Board meets twice yearly and curriculum development forms part of the ToR for the board.

149. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

150. Additional evidence showed that the course provider considers local and regional placement capacity, and this was also referenced within the 3-5 year plan for the School of Health and Society. The inspectors noted that there was a recent Strategic Apprenticeship Meeting (minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2024 were provided) and OfS funding has been granted, and this will be focussed on widening participation with care leavers and carers. The university is part of a wider teaching partnership and consideration to capacity is considered; this was evidenced in meeting minutes.

151. The inspectors were satisfied that the course provider links with the wider teaching partnership, and strategic meetings are in place where consideration of placement capacity is discussed. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.9

152. The course provider evidenced how they evaluate information on apprentice attainment through the collection, analysis and use of data including data on equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). The 2024-25 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Review Form: Social Work Programmes was reviewed by the inspectors. This sets out the review process and the timeframes for evaluating the data. The inspectors were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

153. Further evidence submitted by the course provider included the Module Guide Approval Form which contains a specific section for how contemporaneous a module is and how up to date theories and resources are incorporated. The inspectors also reviewed the full list of modules provided by the course provider, and the Moderation Proforma for Assessment Briefs 2024-25 which is completed by the assessment author.

154. The inspectors were satisfied that there is an effective process in place which facilitates the continual development and updating of the course and therefore agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

155. The inspectors reviewed the CV for the external examiner for the course, and they agreed that she is appropriately qualified, experienced and is registered. The inspectors agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

156. The course provider shared evidence to demonstrate that apprentices are supplied with information about the curriculum, practice placements, assessments and the requirements for professional CPD. The inspectors reviewed information about the Aptem system which has relevant information about the course.

157. The university stated that they are committed to a student centred/flexible approach to blended learning, and all course materials will be available to learners via the university's VLE moodle. The inspectors reviewed information on the university's website which highlighted the 30 skills days, placements, the professional standards, assessment methods and modules. The inspectors agreed that sufficient evidence had been provided and therefore agreed that this standard was therefore met.

158. Following the review of the documentary evidence submitted, the inspection team are satisfied that the conditions set against the approval of the BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship are met.

Regulator decision

Conditions met and approved.