

# Inspection Report

<b>Inspection ID</b>	KIUR1_BCP326
<b>Course provider</b>	Kingston University
<b>Validating body (if different)</b>	
<b>Course inspected</b>	Best Interest Assessor
<b>Mode of study</b>	Part time
<b>Maximum student cohort</b>	25
<b>Date of inspection</b>	14 to 15 October 2025
<b>Inspection team</b>	Joseph Hubbard (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Becky Madey (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Aidan Phillips (Lay Inspector) Kate Lees (BIA Registrant Inspector)
<b>Inspector recommendation</b>	Approved
<b>Regulator decision:</b>	Approved
<b>Date of Regulator decision:</b>	30 December 2025

Contents

Introduction .....3

Summary of Inspection.....3

Inspection Findings .....4

Proposed outcome.....13

**Recommendations .....13**

## 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 approval standards for Best Interests Assessor (BIA) courses. We approve courses against these standards to ensure that students who successfully complete a BIA course can meet the requirements set out in the Mental Capacity Act 2005, Schedule A1 and 1A, the Mental Capacity (Deprivation of Liberty: Standard Authorisations, Assessments and Ordinary Residence) Regulations 2008 and the 6 BIA capabilities as described in Annex 1 to the education and training approval standards for Best Interests Assessor (BIA) courses.
2. During the approval process, we appoint partner inspectors. This will include a registered inspector who will be a qualified BIA, and a lay inspector who is not BIA qualified.
3. These inspectors, along with officers from the education quality assurance team, undertake activity to review documentary information and evidence, and carry out an inspection. This activity could include observing and asking questions about teaching, observations, facilities and learning resources; asking questions based on the evidence submitted; and meeting with staff, people with lived experience and students. The inspectors then make recommendations to us about whether a course should be approved.
4. The process we undertake is described in our legislation: The Children and Social Work Act 2017, [The Social Workers Regulations 2018 - Social Work England](#) , and our [Education and Training Rules 2019](#).
5. In this document we describe Kingston University as ‘the course provider’ and we describe the Best Interest Assessor as ‘the course’.

## Summary of Inspection

6. Kingston University, Best Interest Assessor course was inspected as part of Social Work England’s reapproval cycle, whereby all course providers with BIA courses will be inspected against the new education and training approval standards for BIA courses.
7. A remote inspection took place from 14 to 15 October 2025.
8. As part of this process the inspection team gathered feedback from key stakeholders through meetings during the inspection. This included course staff, members of the senior leadership team, wider university support services, students, employer partners and people with lived experience. Written feedback was also gathered from students in advance of the inspection.

## Inspection Findings

9. In this section we set out the inspectors' findings in relation to whether the course meets the education and training approval standards for BIA courses. We describe the inspection team in this section as 'we'.

<b><u>Standard 1. Admissions</u></b>	<b>Met or not met.</b>
<p>1.1 Confirm that applicants have:</p> <p>i. the potential to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the 6 BIA capabilities set out in Annex 1 of these standards.</p> <p>ii. the potential to meet the eligibility criteria for the role set out in the relevant legislation governing BIA practice.</p> <p>iii. the capability to use information and communication technology (ICT) methods and techniques to achieve course outcomes.</p>	Met
1.2 Confirm that applicants are and remain fully registered with a relevant regulatory body in line with the relevant regulations.	Met
1.3 Confirm that applicants have, and can demonstrate, suitable prior experience of the practical application of appropriate legislation and policy, specifically including but not limited to mental capacity, mental health and human rights legislation, and demonstrable experience of understanding risk in relation to these.	Met
1.4 Confirm that applicants have a robust level of legal literacy in appropriate legislative and policy areas.	Met
1.5 Ensure that employers, providers of observation opportunities, people with lived experience, and carers are involved in admissions processes.	Met
1.6 Ensure that the admissions processes include assessment of the suitability of applicants, including in relation to their conduct, health and character. This includes appropriate criminal conviction checks.	Met
1.7 Ensure that there are equality, diversity and inclusion policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.	Met
1.8 Ensure that the admissions process gives applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up a place. This will include information about the award level and professional qualification, course content, teaching modes, location of study, assessment methods, duration, and observation requirements including the expectations around arranging or securing observation opportunities.	Met
<b><u>Key observations for standard 1</u></b>	
<p>10. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included the course provider website link outlining the BIA course, the module guide and course information for applicants. Supplemented by a meeting with the course team, and written feedback from students, we were assured that</p>	

applicants receive the information necessary to make an informed choice about undertaking the course.

11. Through reviewing the partnership agreement and discussions with the admissions team, we learnt that the course provider confirmed applicants' registration status. We heard how the course and admissions teams assessed the suitability of applicants. The partnership agreement confirms that employers will ensure a DBS declaration is in place for sponsored students. Documentary evidence showed processes for independent students, with the course provider completing DBS checks.

12. We heard from partner agencies, who confirmed their involvement in the admissions process, which was supported by the submission of the third-party testimony and partnership agreement. Partner agencies select their applicants internally through written applications or interviews, prior to the screening process undertaken by the course provider.

13. People with lived experience confirmed their involvement in the admissions process, through reviewing admissions criteria and documentation. This was supported by feedback submitted prior to inspection. The course team outlined their regular meetings with members of the people with lived experience group regarding their feedback and continued involvement in the admissions process.

14. The course team and partner agencies explained how the third-party testimony is used to create a consistent approach to assessing an applicant's capability and potential to meet the BIA capabilities. We were satisfied that an applicant's third-party testimony is scrutinised by the course provider to ensure that they have suitable prior experience to meet course requirements. However, it was noted that the wording within the third-party testimony guidance does not explicitly reference requirements related to an applicant's experience of mental health and human rights legislation, understanding of risk, and legal literacy. It was determined that including these requirements within the guidance would aid consistency and clarity when assessing applicants.

15. The inspectors made a recommendation in relation to standards 1.3 and 1.4. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcome section](#).

16. We were informed by the course team how EDI data is gathered at admissions and examples were provided by the course team and partner agencies related to providing reasonable adjustments. This was also supported by documentary evidence submitted prior to inspection. It was confirmed that EDI data is not currently analysed and monitored for applicants. The inspectors made a recommendation in relation to standards 1.7. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcome section](#).

<b>Standard 2. Course governance, management and quality.</b>	<b>Met or not met</b>
<b>2.1 Ensure courses are supported by a management and governance plan that includes the roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability of individuals and</b>	<b>Met</b>

governing groups in the delivering, resourcing and managing the quality of the course.	
2.2 Ensure that effective monitoring, evaluation and improvement systems are in place, and that these involve employers, people with relevant lived experience including carers, and students.	Met
2.3 Ensure that admissions are aligned to a clear strategy, which includes consideration of: i. wherever appropriate, local and regional capacity for observation opportunities; and ii. the availability of part-time or other flexible course arrangements to widen access wherever possible.	Met
2.4 Ensure that the person with overall professional responsibility for the course is a relevant qualified professional (social worker, occupational therapist, psychologist or nurse) with appropriate experience of BIA practice.	Met
2.5 Ensure that there is adequate provision of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.	Met
2.6 Ensure that educators are supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to mental capacity, mental health and human rights legislation and policy, including recent developments, and the practical application of this via the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, including giving support to undertake continuing professional development relevant to their role.	Met
2.7 Ensure that students have the opportunity to provide feedback about the course and that this feedback is analysed, shared with employers and others involved in commissioning places on the course, and used to inform the management and development of the course.	Met
<p><b><u>Key observations for standard 2.</u></b></p> <p>17. We heard that partner agencies attended quarterly meetings with the course provider to discuss course changes, collect feedback from students and receive feedback and reporting trends from the course team. The course team submitted their Module Enhancement Plan to demonstrate how they used this feedback to update the course. We reviewed the partnership agreement prior to inspection and were assured that the partner agencies have strategies to secure two observation opportunities for their students.</p> <p>18. We heard how the course team used their varied expertise to keep the course up to date with relevant and current experience of BIA practice. The course team are supported by senior leadership to undertake CPD and offered examples of how staff research areas and expertise are embedded into the course. We reviewed CVs provided prior to inspection, which demonstrated that</p>	

the course team are appropriately qualified and experienced staff. We were informed that the student support and welfare services for the course were suitably resourced.

19. We heard examples of feedback from people with lived experience being implemented into the course, such as the review of assessment materials. We were assured that systems were in place for the course provider to continue gathering information on the quality of the course from people with lived experience.

20. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included Module Evaluation Questionnaires from students, which are scrutinised by the course team and senior leadership. Students offered examples of feedback opportunities, which were then implemented into the course, such as creating a formative assessment.

<b>Standard 3. Observation opportunities.</b>	<b>Met or not met</b>
<p><b>3.1 Ensure that each student has the opportunity to undertake a minimum of 2 practice observation opportunities which:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. enables the student to shadow a BIA or community DoLS assessment.</li> <li>ii. provide practice experience that can be applied to a variety of settings and types of supervisory body.</li> <li>iii. enables the student to observe a suitably qualified and experienced relevant qualified professional who has relevant and current knowledge, skills and experience to demonstrate safe and effective practice.</li> <li>iv. enables the student to produce a detailed analysis of relevant practice issues which forms part of the student's overall assessment.</li> </ul>	Met
<b>3.2 Ensure that the number, duration and range of observation opportunities is appropriate to support the delivery of the course and the achievement of the learning outcomes.</b>	Met
<b>3.3 Maintain clear collaborative arrangements for planning and communication with providers including a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all observation opportunities.</b>	Met
<p><b>Key observations for standard 3.</b></p> <p>21. The course provider demonstrated through documentary evidence submitted prior to inspection that the first observation must be undertaken within 12 months of commencing the course. The observation is confirmed through a third-party testimony. The second observation is completed as part of the summative assessment. We were assured that the partnership agreement offers a process to ensure students observe a suitably qualified professional. Contrasting observation opportunities were implemented where possible, within the limitations of employer capacity.</p>	

Students confirmed that the observation opportunities provided practice experience that could be applied to a variety of settings.

22. We heard from the course team how summative assessment enables students to draw on their observation opportunities. It was noted that the assessment guidance does not explicitly cover all of the knowledge areas covered in the guidance about how students should draw on their practice experience. The inspectors made a recommendation in relation to standard 3.1. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcome section](#).

23. We heard from the course team that a consent form for the second observation had been developed, which is reviewed as part of the assessment. The module guide had not been modified to reflect this update, which we deemed would be beneficial to offer consistent information to students. The inspectors made a recommendation in relation to standard 3.3. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcome section](#).

<b>Standard 4. Curriculum and assessment</b>	<b>Met or not met</b>
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 requirements of the role as set out in the 6 BIA capabilities set out at Annex 1, as well as a sound understanding of cross-national border issues in relation to practice in Wales, where this is appropriate.	Met
4.2 Ensure that the views of employers, practitioners, people with lived experience of social work and carers are incorporated into the design, ongoing development and review of the curriculum.	Met
4.3 Ensure that the course is designed in accordance with equality, diversity and inclusion principles, and, human rights and legislative frameworks.	Met
4.4 Ensure that the course is continually updated as a result of developments in research, legislation, government policy, best practice, and case law.	Met
4.5 Ensure that the integration of policy, legal literacy and practice is central to the course.	Met
4.6 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.	Met
4.7 Provide staff involved in leading and delivering the training with sufficient protected training time to keep their own practice and knowledge up to date in line with statutory and regulatory requirements.	Met

4.8 Ensure that assessments are robust, fair, reliable and valid, and that those who successfully complete the course have developed the knowledge and skills necessary to make robust, independent and well-evidenced assessments in the best interests of the person. This should include regular monitoring and evaluation of assessment standards to ensure that they remain robust and reliable.	Met
4.9 Ensure students are provided with feedback throughout the course to support their ongoing development.	Met
4.10 Ensure that the course is designed to enable students to develop an evidence-informed approach to assessment and evaluation, underpinned by skills, knowledge and an ability to interpret and respond appropriately to legislative and policy change and case law.	Met
4.11 Ensure that the course equips students with knowledge and skills in relation to identifying and anticipating areas of conflict arising from DoLS processes and outcomes, and supporting individuals, families, carers and agencies to understand the checks and balances of the DoLS system, to support a robust, independent and well-evidenced determination in the best interests of the person.	Met
4.12 Clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the course.	Met
4.13 Clearly specify that any equivalent award which may be made will not lead to eligibility to be approved as a BIA.	Met
4.14 Clearly specify a process for the appointment of at least 1 external examiner who must be an appropriately experienced and relevant qualified professional.	Met

#### **Key observations for standard 4.**

24. The course provider demonstrated how the curriculum content and the learning outcomes are mapped to the 6 BIA capabilities. We were assured that the module guide evidenced how policy, legal literacy and practice is embedded throughout the course. Evidence demonstrated that the course enables students to develop an evidence-informed approach to assessment and evaluation. The course provider evidenced, through the submission of teaching materials and case studies, how the course content covers the necessary areas to equip students with knowledge and skills in relation to conflict arising from DoLS processes and outcomes.

25. Documentary evidence reviewed included both formative and summative assessments, as well as marking criteria and confirmation of an appropriately experienced external examiner. We heard from the course team how their consistency of marking and clear moderation processes ensures

the robustness and reliability of assessments. Students agreed that the feedback provided for their assessments was timely and informed their approach to the summative assessment. We read the module guide, which clearly stated the requirements to pass all summative assessments to complete the course.

26. The course team are supported by the senior leadership team to undertake CPD. We were informed how the course team keeps their practice and knowledge up to date, particularly through engagement with research. The course team provided examples of how the course content was updated in relation to developments in research, legislation, government policy, best practice and case law.

27. We were assured regarding stakeholder involvement in the design, review and development of the course. Partner agencies and course team confirmed that quarterly meetings are held to share feedback and review the course.

28. We learnt about the contributions of people with lived experience to teaching, followed by the opportunity to reflect on this experience with the course team. The course provider has a dedicated people with lived experience group who meet on a regular basis and offer feedback. We were assured that people with lived experience were able to offer their views on assessment.

29. We found that the course was taught in alignment with equality, diversity and inclusion principles. The course team offered examples of referring students to support services and supporting the implementation of reasonable adjustments. We were satisfied that attainment data is scrutinised as part of the module evaluation plan.

30. We heard mixed feedback from students, who acknowledged that due to differing learning styles, some students may have benefitted from an extra learning day. The course team acknowledged this feedback during the inspection and confirmed that they would review this with partner agencies. We were satisfied that the number of hours spent in structured academic learning was sufficient to meet the required learning outcomes and BIA capabilities.

<b>Standard 5. Supporting students.</b>	<b>Met or not met</b>
5.1 Ensure that students have access to resources to support their health and wellbeing including confidential counselling services. The course must also equip students to understand the potential impact of BIA practice on their own emotional and mental wellbeing, and the importance of identifying ways to handle this impact.	Met
5.2 Ensure that students have access to a system of academic and pastoral support for their progression, development and welfare.	Met

5.3 Ensure that there is a thorough and effective process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health.	Met
5.4 Make reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments to enable them to progress through their course and meet the specialist, capabilities in accordance with relevant legislation.	Met
5.5 Provide timely information to students about their curriculum, observation requirements, assessments, and implications for their continuing practice, including arrangements for annotation of the register and requirements for periodic refresher training.	Met
5.6 Ensure that students are able to draw links between the completion of their BIA course and ongoing refresher training, and the ongoing requirements of their professional registration such as continuing professional development.	Met
5.7 Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students on their progression and performance in assessments.	Met
5.8 Ensure there is an effective process in place for students to make academic appeals.	Met
5.9 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.	Met
<p><b><u>Key observations for standard 5.</u></b></p> <p>31. Through discussions with students, we were assured that services such as academic and library support were available. The students offered the example of receiving formative feedback as support on their academic progress. We learnt from the course team that there are opportunities to disclose additional needs at employer and course provider level. We were satisfied that this was supported by course provider policies and the partnership agreement submitted prior to inspection.</p> <p>32. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection, including the module guide and partnership agreement, assured us that the course provider has a process for ensuring the ongoing suitability of students' conduct, character and health. The course team outlined the requirement to update the course provider regarding any change in circumstances was made clear to students at the start of the course.</p> <p>33. We concluded that the documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection was able to demonstrate that the course provider had policies and processes in place regarding academic appeals, whistleblowing and reporting concerns.</p>	

34. The course provider shared with us their module guide, teaching materials and the students' reflective learning diary. This evidence demonstrated that students receive information about their curriculum, observation requirements, and implications for their continuing practice, such as ongoing refresher training and continuing professional development. The course provider confirmed that students' work must be graded and returned within 20 working days. Students' grades are published on Canvas. Students offered examples of course provider systems preventing access to timely feedback. The inspectors made a recommendation in relation to standard 5.5. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcome section](#).

35. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to inspection included the module guide, which signposts to the course provider support services available. Students confirmed that they were aware of these services, but some feedback noted that the offer seemed tailored to undergraduate students. Following the meeting with students, the inspectors made a recommendation in relation to standard 5.1. Full details of the recommendation can be found in the [proposed outcome section](#).

## Outcome

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

37. The regulator decision maker [agreed with this recommendation](#).

## Recommendations

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

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	1.3 and 1.4	The inspectors are recommending that the course provider consider reviewing the third party testimony guidance to make explicit the requirement to confirm an applicant's experience of mental health and human rights legislation, understanding of risk, and legal literacy, in alignment with the wording of the relevant standards.	<a href="#">1.3 and 1.4</a>
2	1.7	The inspectors are recommending that the course provider consider how their admissions EDI data is analysed and monitored.	<a href="#">1.7</a>
3	3.1	The inspectors are recommending that the course provider offers guidance to students to draw from their observation to apply social perspective on mental disorder and mental health needs within their summative assessment.	<a href="#">3.1</a>

4	3.3	The inspectors are recommending that the course provider updates their module guide to make more explicit the requirement to complete a consent form during the second observation.	<a href="#">3.3</a>
5	5.1	The inspectors are recommending that the course provider reviews how they signpost their student support services, to tailor this communication more specifically to the needs of BIA students.	<a href="#">5.1</a>
6	5.5	The inspectors are recommending that the course provider ensure available support to resolve technical issues for students when receiving online feedback.	<a href="#">5.5</a>