

Inspection Report

Course provider: University of Huddersfield

Course approval: MSc Social Work & MSci Social Work

Inspection dates: 21 – 24 May 2024

Report date:	12 th July 2024
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	10 September 2024
Date conditions met and approved:	17 November 2024

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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 Huddersfield MSc Social Work and MSci Social work course were 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	CP228, CP229
Course provider	The University of Huddersfield
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	MSc Social Work MSci Social Work
Mode of study	
Maximum student cohort	35
Date of inspection	21 – 24 May 2024
Inspection team	Kate Springett (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Rebecca Khanna (Lay Inspector) Lisa Brett (Registrant Inspector)

Language

16. In this document we describe the university of Huddersfield as ‘the education provider’ or ‘the university’ and we describe the MSc Social Work and MSci Social work as ‘the courses’.

Inspection

17. An onsite inspection took place from 21 – 24 May 2024 in Huddersfield, where the education provider is based. As part of this process the inspection team planned to meet with key stakeholders including students, course staff, employers and people with lived experience of social work.

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

Conflict of interest

19. No parties disclosed a conflict of interest.

Meetings with students

20. The inspection team met with students across both courses and across all year groups, the group included a student representative. Discussions included the admissions process, placements, assessments and support.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members including the head of school, lecturers and tutors.

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work. Discussions included involvement on the course from admissions through to assessments.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement partners including Kirklees and Calderdale Council.

Findings

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

Standard one: Admissions

Standard 1.1

25. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection included information on the admissions process and the admissions criteria for both courses.

26. The inspection team felt that the entry requirements to the courses were clear, and there was a good range of selection activities to enable the education provider to conclude whether applicants had the potential to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards.

27. The evidence provided demonstrated that the education provider considered the capabilities of applicants to meet academic standards, as well as the applicants' command of the English language. The inspection team met with students and concluded there were no concerns in relation to support for students whose first language was not English.

28. The inspection team were satisfied that the selection process enabled the education provider to assess applicants' ICT capabilities as the selection activities included use of ICT.

29. The inspection team met with staff involved in the admissions process. It was made clear that the selection process is carried out online in the majority of instances. The inspection team had queries around how the education provider ensures the written task is completed by the applicant themselves without external assistance. The inspection team were informed that the interview questions were robust enough to identify authenticity on the written task. The inspection team did not feel reassured that the validity of the written task had been considered by the education provider.

30. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met as overall the admissions process did still ensure that applicants can meet the academic standards, however the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to standard 1.1. We recommend that the education provider consider how they can improve oversight of the written task in the admissions process.

Standard 1.2

31. Prior to inspection, the education provider signposted the inspection team to the university's Accreditation of Prior Learning Process. The inspection team felt that there was a clear process on the assessment of prior learning.

32. The inspection team were keen to understand what the education provider viewed as prior relevant experience. The inspection team met with staff involved in admissions and were informed that they did not stipulate prior relevant experience is necessary, however they encouraged applicants to speak about experience during the application process. Further to this, the inspection team were advised that the interview questions are based on motivation to work in social work.

33. It was stated that the education provider aims to be inclusive in their approach, in that prior relevant experience is not a requirement for applicants' entry to the course.

34. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met, however the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to standard 1.2. We recommend the education provider are clear with applicants that they will consider prior relevant experience as part of their application.

Standard 1.3

35. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection included the admissions summary and the programme specifications. The evidence provided demonstrated that people with lived experience of social work (PWLE) and employers were involved in the admissions process for both courses.

36. The inspection team had learned from review of the evidence submitted prior to inspection that PWLE were only involved in one admissions activity, the group activity. The inspection team were keen to understand the rationale behind this decision.

37. The team met with PWLE who explained that they were previously involved in other aspects of admissions, however they felt that this was inappropriate and following feedback from PWLE, this was changed by the education provider. PWLE advised that they were also involved in the design of the admissions process via Public Partnership Group (PPG).

38. PWLE explained that they felt their contribution to the admissions process was valued and in addition to this, they were supported in relation to any practical issues relating to commitment to the admissions process.

39. The inspection team met with employer partners and placement providers who stated that they had been involved in the group interview stage of the admissions process. In addition to this they advised they had been involved in designing the interview questions.

40. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.4

41. Evidence submitted prior to inspection demonstrated that the course provider had processes in place to ensure that the suitability of applicants was checked, including in relation to their conduct, health and character. This evidence was provided in the course specifications. The course specifications stated, 'all candidates must declare any physical or mental health condition that could affect their ability to carry out any role in a social care setting safely'.

42. In addition to this, it is made clear to applicants in the course specification that they must disclose any criminal offences. The inspection team were able to triangulate with the course team that all students will undergo an enhanced DBS check and a health check.

43. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were presented with declaration forms for both health issues and criminal convictions, demonstrating what was completed by applicants.

44. The inspection team sought clarification from the course in relation to criminal checks for international students as they were informed that the DBS checks were completed 6 months into the course. The course team advised that it was a requirement that successful applicants must have provided proof from their home country in the form of a letter from the police to confirm there had been no issues in relation to having a criminal record.

45. The inspection team were able to discuss DBS panels with the course team and were advised these are held on an ad hoc basis.

46. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 1.5

47. The inspection team were provided with information from the education provider prior to inspection demonstrating that there were equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies in place at the institution.

48. The inspection team met with the senior leadership team. They confirmed that they looked at EDI data as part of admissions.

49. The inspection team met with the course team and discussed EDI monitoring. The course team explained that they looked at admissions at school level, and based on their findings they were trying to attract more male candidates to the courses.

50. The course team advised that they have provided reasonable adjustments to candidates where needed. An example was provided where an applicant had asked for questions in advance due to anxiety. Whilst this request was not granted, the team said they put the candidate at ease and allowed additional time for responding to the questions, this was triangulated when the inspection team met with students.

51. The inspection team met with PWLE who advised that all PWLE have completed anti-discriminatory training, which is completed every 3 years. It was further explained that a log is kept by the education provider in relation to when a refresher training session is due.

52. The inspection team spoke to the Consultant Practice Educators who confirmed that all of their Social Workers were provided with EDI training, and this was checked by the Local Authority. In addition to this, the inspection team were told that the Teaching Partnership PE Workstream completed checks on all placements, including qualifications and training.

53. The course team advised the inspection team that no records are kept of employer EDI training, however as all university staff involved in admissions receive regular EDI training, the inspection team agreed the standard was met.

Standard 1.6

54. Narrative provided prior to inspection directed the inspection team to the course pages on the education provider's website. The webpages provided detail about both courses. Further narrative stated that 'applicants that attend open days are given detailed information about the course, the role of a social worker, professional standards, research interests and placements'. This is supported by a documented open day presentation.

55. In addition to the above, the education provider provided narrative stating that applicants have the opportunity to ask questions at the applicant visit day.

56. The inspection team met with students during the inspection. The students reported that they felt well informed and prepared. An example was provided that they spoke to lecturers as part of the admissions process for additional information on bursaries, placement locations and travel. Students spoke highly of information provided to them on the open day.

57. The inspection team sought clarity on how information is provided to international students who are unable to attend open days/applicant visit days. The inspection team were informed that information is provided verbally (over the phone) and students are told about the challenges of not only the course, but the practicalities when moving locations to study.

58. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

59. Prior to the inspection, documentary evidence was provided demonstrating that students complete 2 placements. Information was contained within the programme specifications and module specifications.

60. Evidence showed that placements were 70 and 100 days in length and took place at appropriate parts of the courses but varied, depending on the MSc or the MSci course. In

addition to placements, there were 30 skills days students were expected to complete, these were embedded into the modules.

61. The inspection team were satisfied following discussions with the staff involved in placement provision and placement providers that there were no capacity issues in relation to placements, and usually students would complete 2 statutory placements, which were contrasting. This was triangulated in the meeting with students.

62. The inspection team met with the course team and queried how attendance of the mandatory 200 days was monitored. It was confirmed that placement attendance was monitored by an attendance grid, however as skills days were embedded into teaching this was more challenging to monitor.

63. The inspection team heard there was a university wide process in place to monitor student attendance, via an electronic swipe card method for each in-person teaching session. However, as the Skills Days were embedded into the modules, the inspection team were not assured how attendance at Skills Days was specifically monitored.

64. The inspection team were told that 100% attendance is expected and attendance to skills days is mandatory, however as there are only 30 skills days so no opportunity to repeat a session, resources were provided to students following the sessions in order for them to cover the learning missed.

65. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 2.1 in relation to the approval of these courses. 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 2.2

66. The education provider provided evidence prior to the inspection which demonstrated they had systems in place to ensure the quality of placements. Evidence provided included a placement offering form which placement providers completed, showing what they could offer in terms of learning opportunities for students. This information was triangulated during the inspection when the inspection team met with the course team.

67. The inspection team met with students who informed them that they had student groups lead by the practice education coordinators (PECs) in the local authority, which was a good source of understanding what was required of them.

68. Students reported that they felt the pre-placement meetings with employers were helpful and it was a good opportunity to find out more about the range of placements available.

69. The inspection team met with both employers and practice educators (PEs) and it was advised that students' knowledge and skills were checked in placement. The inspection team heard that there was a learning agreement meeting which provided a focus about what was expected in relation to knowledge and skills to meet the standards.

70. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 2.3

71. Narrative provided prior to inspection demonstrated that the education provider took into consideration the needs of students on an individual basis. They stated that before each placement began there was a learning agreement meeting attended by the student, practice educator and workplace supervisor. In addition to this, documentary evidence was provided in the Placement Handbook which included detailed information on induction, supervision and assessment of learning.

72. During the inspection, the inspection team met with PEs who verified that each local authority had an internal checklist, which identified relevant policies ensuring quality of the placement. Further to this, it was heard that the requirement of supervision was weekly in the first half of placement and this frequency could be reduced if appropriate.

73. The inspection team also met with employer partners and placement providers and heard evidence that the Practice Assessment Panel (PAP) completed quality assurance of placements. This activity included supporting the moderation of portfolios and sharing feedback with PEs. The inspection team heard that Consultant Practice Educator provided onsite monitoring of practice based learning, including provision of supervision and the consistency of assessment and direct observations. The inspection team felt this enhanced the university quality assurance of practice based learning.

74. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 2.4

75. In the education provider's evidence submission, a first and final placement handbook was included, which outlined expectations of students whilst on placement. In addition to this, it was demonstrated that the placement learning agreement outlined responsibilities of students on placement.

76. The inspection team understood that A placement request form was completed by the employer and sent to the education provider, this, linked to learning objectives and PCF and what range of learning will be available.

77. The education provider provided training to PEs which enabled them to understand the appropriate level of expectations of students. During the meeting with PEs, it was heard that there is a mindfulness towards students' wellbeing.

78. The inspection team met with students as part of the inspection, and students voiced that they were satisfied with their placements, however if they had any concerns they would seek support from the PE, PEC or their personal tutor.

79. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

80. Narrative provided prior to inspection advises that all students undertook an assessment of readiness for direct practice (RDP). This happened on both courses in the first year, however on different modules. The relevant module specifications were provided in the evidence submission.

81. The education provider stated that the assessment took the form of an interview with a service user, and a written commentary that provides a critical analysis of how they managed the task. The inspection team met with PWLE and triangulated the information provided in the evidence submission.

82. PWLE explained their role in the assessment and advised that if they had any concerns about the student, they felt they would be listened to, and they also felt students valued the activity.

83. The inspection team met with PEs who voiced that they felt students were well prepared for practice and this was also confirmed in the student meeting.

84. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

85. During the inspection, the inspection team met with staff involved in placement provision and it was explained that the majority of PEs were from local authorities. The inspection team explored how the education provider ensured PEs were on the register. The inspection team were informed that the local authorities would not allow a PE to practice without registration, however there was no system in place for the University to have oversight and take assurance PEs were on the register.

86. The education provider submitted a form during the inspection for when off site PEs apply to take up the role. The form contained an entry for their Social Work England registration number, however there was no evidence to show this is checked on a yearly basis which is how often social workers must renew their registration. The education provider explained that the 'off site' PE form was also used for 'on site' PE applications.

87. The inspection team were satisfied that PEs had the relevant currency and knowledge to support students on placement.

88. 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 these courses. 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

89. Documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection demonstrated that there were procedures in place for students to raise concerns, and this was provided in the placement handbook alongside the whistleblowing policy.

90. The inspection team triangulated with the course team, PEs and PECs who were all aware that the policies could be located in the placement handbook.

91. The inspection team met with students who explained that they would feel comfortable to discuss a concern with a PEC or their personal tutor if the need arose, and follow the relevant policy.

92. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management and quality

Standard 3.1

93. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrated that there was a clear structure and lines of accountability for both courses.

94. During the inspection, the inspection team heard in various meetings that the education provider had strong links with the teaching partnership (TP) which added to the overall quality of the courses.

95. The senior leadership team advised the inspection team that there was an annual evaluation process in place which produced plans for the courses.

96. During the inspection week, the course team were able to confirm the amount of FTE posts and the staff to student ratios. The inspection team were satisfied these were sufficient.

97. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 3.2

98. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection included the placement handbooks, which outlined clear information on the roles and remits of placements and the education provider.

99. The placement offer form, which was used by the education provider was positive in ensuring placements were to an adequate standard. It was also documented that there was a policy, and procedures for placement breakdown and support.

100. It was evidenced that each student had a placement learning agreement which contributed to meeting the professional and education and training standards.

101. During the inspection the inspection team heard from PEs that there were a range of further policies in place, including GDPR, health and safety and lone working.

102. The inspection team also heard from the PECs about their involvement and role in placement breakdown. Examples were provided of the procedure followed if a placement had broken down.

103. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

104. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection included the placement handbook and placement offer form, which demonstrated there were clear expectations and placement support and a range of policies.

105. During the inspection, the team heard from the PECs and PEs about the range of policies which were in place to manage risk. These included lone working, remote working and fire safety.

106. The inspection team heard that placement providers support students in their needs when there is a health concern. Examples extended to specific laptops being purchased for students with dyslexia to use, and the placement provider implementing the policy in place for pregnant students.

107. During the meeting with PEs, wellbeing of students was discussed. Examples were provided of how the wellbeing of students was managed. One example was the local authority having a WhatsApp network so staff and students could check in with each other.

108. The inspection team met with students who advised they felt supported in placement. Examples were given of students suffering with anxiety, however they felt supported and advised that their placements could not have been better.

109. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

110. Documentary evidence provided outlined that employers were involved in various aspects of the courses, including attending course committee meetings and the practice assessment panel. During the inspection, this was triangulated in the meeting with employer partners.

111. The inspection team were given further examples of employer involvement, including the teaching of skills days, involvement in the admissions process and the co-marking of portfolios.

112. The inspection team were informed that feedback provided by employers was acted on, with examples including suggesting more legal literacy, and more emphasis on adult social work.

113. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 3.5

114. Documentary evidence demonstrated the education provider had a range of evaluation methods in place.

115. The inspection team met with employers who advised they were involved in the annual review of the course, and this fed into the development plan.

116. PWLE advised the inspection team that the education provider had a clear strategy for service user involvement which was supported by a strategic lead and a coordinator. PWLE reported feeling that their views were listened to by the education provider in annual review meetings and course consultative meetings. Examples of improvements made to the courses included but were not limited to course topics being implemented in modules, and teaching being provided by PWLE following their suggestions.

117. The inspection team also met with students. The inspection team were keen to discuss the student panel meetings, following review of minutes. Students advised they felt listened to in student panel meetings, and provided examples where issues presented were resolved.

118. It was explained that student representatives also had a chance to meet with the module leads to provide feedback, and students were given time in the classroom to get feedback to the representative in advance of this meeting.

119. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 3.6

120. Prior to the inspection, the education provider evidenced mechanisms for partnership with employers and other universities.

121. The inspection team met with the senior leadership team, who confirmed that student numbers are informed by the local market and placements available, and the education provider was able to comfortably provide placements to all students. The education provider explained that they had a strong relationship with the teaching partnership, and as a result, there were no placement capacity issues presented to the inspection team.

122. The inspection team were informed by the senior leadership team of their decision to temporarily suspend the intake of international students on the MSc programme. The Inspectors were informed that the education provider had taken the decision to think further about the support required for international students. It was explained that there were plans to resume applications when a strategy to support international students for entry to the MSc was clearer.

123. The inspection team felt that the education provider had a clear student number target, but Inspectors found the strategy for the entry and managing the transition of international students on to the MSc course was unclear.

124. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met, however the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to standard 3.6. We recommend that the education provider has a clear strategy to support international students in progression and achievement.

Standard 3.7

125. Prior to inspection, the inspection team reviewed the lead social workers' CV and confirmed they were appropriately qualified and experienced, and a registered social worker.

126. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 3.8

127. Documentary evidence provided through staff CVs demonstrated that the staff are experienced and appropriately qualified to teach on the courses.

128. During the inspection, the course team provided additional evidence, showing a breakdown of the staffing by role, and also confirmed the amount of FTE staff, and staff to student ratios. The inspection team were satisfied the number of staff, and the student ratios were appropriate.

129. The inspection team were assured that this standard is met.

Standard 3.9

130. Documentary evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrated the education provider had systems in place to monitor student performance, progression and outcomes. This was evidenced by the annual evaluation report and external examiner reports. The

inspection team had been provided with demographic data of student cohorts on both programmes.

131. The senior leadership team informed the inspectors that the institution had oversight of student characteristics on admissions to address areas such as attainment gaps. The inspection team also heard there was a programme and subject assessment board and systems which oversaw the progression and outcomes of students.

132. It was further explained by the senior leadership team that a project was undertaken where consideration was given to which primary factors impacted attainment, and the education provider tailored different approaches in attempts to increase attainment. The senior leadership team advised that the project was successful and continued.

133. The inspection team heard that consideration was also given to the attainment of international students and there is a graduate teaching assistant to support international students specifically.

134. In addition to the above, the inspection team were informed that the department was awarded the Athena Swan Bronze Award for gender equality.

135. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 3.10

136. Narrative provided prior to inspection and staff CVs evidenced that most staff have a PhD or are studying towards one. It was also demonstrated that there were a range of ways to enable lecturers to maintain their knowledge, and some members of the team were completing a PGCE.

137. The inspection team were able to meet with the course team and triangulate evidence provided which showed they were supported to maintain their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice.

138. The course team explained that they had 300 hours per year to focus on development, and examples of scholarly activity undertaken included research and further education.

139. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

140. Prior to inspection, the education provider provided evidence which demonstrated that the courses provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards as the professional standards were mapped to both courses, and this was supported by the external examiner in their report of 2022-2023.

141. Narrative provided advises that students are made aware of their professional obligations through lectures and in addition to this, students are informed about the requirement to apply to register with Social Work England following completion of their qualification.

142. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.2

143. Narrative provided by the education provider stated that employers, practitioners and PWLE are embedded throughout the delivery of the courses. This was supported by the Course Committee Terms of Reference and the Course Committee Agenda. Additional evidence during the inspection was provided from the Public Partnership Group for SWE re-validation reporting on the range of activities contributed by PWLE.

144. The inspection team met with employers and were informed that PECs attended the annual review meeting for the programmes and were able to give their input. Examples were provided where suggestions made were taken on board and implemented, such as how much focus should be on adult's and children's social work.

145. Practitioners and PEs were able to inform the inspection team how they were involved in the design, development, and review of the courses, which included completing a feedback form at the end of placements. PEs also attended student support groups and identified themes which were fed back to the course team. Themes included broader details such as time management of students.

146. The inspection team also met with PLWE who advised that they had been involved in teaching on the courses and inputted into what topics were delivered as part of the curriculum. PWLE were involved in the RDP module, and advised the inspection team that if they had any concerns about a student's readiness to practice, they were able to feed this back to the course team and felt listened to.

147. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.3

148. The education provider provided a university wide institutional EDI policy prior to the inspection. There was also evidence of there being oversight of implementation of the policies and the effectiveness of them.

149. During the inspection, students identified specific modules where they were asked to apply their knowledge of EDI within case studies and how this was applied to legislation.

150. On placement, students were able to attend sessions to discuss any questions around inclusion, and they advised they were exposed to lots of opportunities beyond the classroom, such as working with asylum seekers.

151. The inspection team were satisfied that the course was designed in accordance with EDI principles and statutory instruments were in place.

152. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.4

153. Prior to inspection, the education provider advised of a range of activities which the course team undertook to ensure the courses remained relevant, up to date and research informed. This included teaching staff having dedicated time for research and scholarly activity.

154. Information provided prior to inspection stated that the education provider also worked with the teaching partnership to showcase current research and areas of concern in practice, this was done via masterclasses.

155. The inspection team were able to triangulate the information on teaching partnership masterclasses with employer partners and placement providers. Examples of topics covered included poverty and anti-racist practice.

156. Narrative provided stated that the law modules were updated and revised every year to ensure any changes in legislation and statutory guidance were embedded.

157. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

158. The education provider evidenced that the course content included theory, and this was demonstrated in the programme specifications prior to inspection.

159. It was explained in the evidence submission narrative that integration of theory and practice was embedded throughout the courses, and the inspection team were satisfied that the documentary evidence provided demonstrated theory could be applied in assessments.

160. The inspection team were able to triangulate during the meeting with PEs as it was stated students had an awareness of adopted models. They also heard that placements had a 'theory of the week' every week, and additionally they felt students understood theories taught in the classroom, as they entered the placement with the relevant knowledge.

161. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

162. Prior to the inspection, evidence provided demonstrated that interprofessional learning days had been developed with related courses including disability nursing, speech

and language therapy and pharmacy students. Narrative provided also stated that the courses had shared modules with a related course.

163. Documents provided in the evidence submission included feedback from speech and language students and social work students following a session on Dementia, evidencing interprofessional learning.

164. Interprofessional learning was triangulated during the meeting with the course team and students, where examples of shared learning were provided including learning alongside pharmacy and nursing students. Students reported that the shared learning was beneficial, and they learnt from other students.

165. The course team advised that following interprofessional learning activities, the impact of these sessions was shown in the students' assignments and evaluations.

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

Standard 4.7

167. Evidence provided in the form of module descriptors provided details of hours and time spent on the courses.

168. The education provider stated in the evidence submission narrative that all modules had been validated in line with university expectations for contact and study time, and students are made aware of these for each module.

169. The inspection team agreed that the hours spent in structured academic learning was sufficient to meet the standard and agreed the standard was met.

Standard 4.8

170. The inspection team reviewed the Program Specification and Module Guides which demonstrated there was a range of assessments used.

171. The external examiner report confirmed that there was robust internal moderation, however noted that feedback lacked consistency across markers. This was addressed at the inspection during the meeting with the course team, where it was advised the assistant dean looked at the team's marking to improve consistency. The team gave examples of approaches followed in their marking strategies and explained to improve this they peer reviewed each other's marking.

172. The inspection team met with students who felt that marking was consistent and there was support provided by the course team in relation to assessments. Examples included but were not limited to giving students thorough assessment guidance, coursework briefings and mock marking exemplar papers.

173. Students provided an example of when they felt an assessment was unfair, however once raised, this was corrected by the education provider.

174. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.9

175. Prior to inspection, the inspection team reviewed Module Specifications which outlined the module outcomes and sequence. The external examiner report was also provided which was positive about the assessment of students and that the programmes adhered to the professional standards.

176. The inspection team met with students who advised they felt that the sequence of assessment was fair and achievable.

177. The inspection team also met with support services where academic skills staff explained how they worked to the rhythm of the course, they knew the sequence of the course and when to provide additional support to students.

178. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

179. The inspection team were able to see from narrative provided prior to inspection that students were given formative and summative feedback on assignments through Turnitin.

180. The inspection team met with students and were able to triangulate evidence. Students reported that they felt that feedback received was good quality, relevant and purposeful. Students also informed the team that they were able to improve throughout the course as a result of the feedback provided. In addition to formal feedback, students advised they were also able to ask their personal academic tutor for additional feedback.

181. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.11

182. Prior to inspection, staff CVs were provided which demonstrated they had the appropriate expertise. The inspection team also reviewed external examiner CVs and were satisfied they were appropriately qualified, and on the register.

183. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

184. Prior to inspection, the education provider provided narrative which stated all module assessment marks go to a course assessment board at the end of the academic year. In addition to this, the inspection team were satisfied that the programme specification clearly set out oversight of student progression on the programmes.

185. Evidence demonstrated that where there were concerns about a student's progression, a progress review meeting would be held.

186. During the inspection, students informed the inspection team that they felt assessment criteria was clear and they knew what criteria they were being assessed against. The course team explained to the inspection team that students can access results on the VLE, and it was also made clear which modules had to be passed for the student to progress.

187. The inspection team heard that there was input from a range of stakeholders with regards to progression, as PWLE were involved in assessment of the readiness for direct practice module, as well as a member of the practice assessment panel (which included employers) reviewing student portfolios at the end of placement.

188. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.13

189. Evidence presented to the inspection team demonstrated that the education provider had enabled students to develop an evidence-based approach, and this was shown in the various modules studied throughout the programmes.

190. The course team informed the inspection team that during the programme it was necessary for students to undertake research to enable them to complete case studies. The inspection team were informed that students had academic study support to support them to research effectively.

191. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

192. Prior to inspection, the course provider demonstrated through documentary evidence that they had a range of services which promoted student wellbeing. Services included counselling, occupational health, and careers services. It was evidenced that students were signposted to services via the handbook, as well as online.

193. The inspection team met with support services during the inspection where evidence was triangulated. The inspection team felt that wait time for occupational and careers services were reasonable.

194. It was heard that although there was a waiting list for counselling services, whilst students waited, they had access to wellbeing and mental health advisors, and there were resources available to help students in crisis.

195. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

196. Evidence provided prior to inspection demonstrated that students had access to personal academic tutors, and these were available to provide a mixture of academic and pastoral support. In addition to tutoring, library services were available, and these were signposted to students in the course handbook.

197. The inspection team met with support services and heard that library services could be provided on a one-to-one basis as well as in groups. It was advised that support services were aware of the flow of assignments so knew when they were required to provide additional support to students.

198. The inspection team met with students who felt they were well supported by personal tutors and that they had enough contact with them throughout the programme. Students reported that they received early feedback from tutors which informed their development of academic skills.

199. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.3

200. The inspection team reviewed evidence prior to the inspection which demonstrated that there was a thorough and effective process to ensure the ongoing suitability of students. The education provider was able to provide evidence of a student self-declaration, fitness to practice procedure, and DBS procedure. During the inspection it was confirmed that DBS is completed at enhanced level.

201. The inspection team were keen to hear about who attended fitness to practice panels and were informed that employers attend as well as university staff.

202. Students reported that they were provided an overview of fitness to practice during their induction, and they would know where to seek support if they were to be subject to fitness to practice procedures.

203. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

204. Evidence provided prior to the inspection demonstrated that the education provider had services in place to provide reasonable adjustments when necessary. Services offered included wellbeing, disability and academic support.

205. The inspection team heard during the inspection that the education provider considers students' needs and put personal support plans in place if required. Examples were provided of reasonable adjustments made.

206. Evidence presented prior to inspection showed that students had learning agreements for placements, so that PEs were aware of any additional needs and reasonable adjustments could be made if necessary.

207. The inspection team queried support provided to international students, and it was advised that international students were offered weekly additional support.

208. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

209. The inspection team reviewed a range of evidence across the lifecycle of the courses from pre-enrolment through to the assessed and supported year in employment.

210. Information about course curriculum was shown in the course handbooks and module specifications.

211. A PowerPoint presentation was provided to students entering their final year of study, which included careers information and information on applying to register with Social Work England. The programme specification also mentioned the next steps after qualifying.

212. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met prior to inspection.

Standard 5.6

213. The inspection team reviewed evidence prior to inspection and agreed that clear information was provided to students on requirements for attendance, in the program specification and the course handbook.

214. The inspection team met with students who confirmed they were told the attendance expectation was 100%.

215. The course team advised that they had a swipe card system to monitor attendance, and there were processes in place if attendance dropped below a certain level. The course team also informed the inspection team that they were supportive about students who missed sessions and wanted to ensure they understood reasons for low attendance so they could provide support if required.

216. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.7

217. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed feedback from the education provider's external examiner, who was positive in relation to the feedback provided to students.

218. The inspection team met with students who confirmed that feedback is timely, meaningful and constructive. Students also reported improving throughout the programme as a result of feedback as this was relevant and accurate. Students also reported being aware of assessment criteria which they found useful.

219. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 5.8

220. The inspection team reviewed the academic appeals policy prior to inspection. This was available for students to find through the course handbooks.

221. The inspection team met with the course team who advised students were aware of the appeals process via the VLE.

222. The course team also explained that if a student misconduct case were to be instigated, the appeals process would be provided directly to the student in writing.

223. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

224. As the qualifying courses are an MSc Integrated Social Work and an MSc Social Work, the inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

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

Having considered whether approval with conditions or a refusal of approval was an appropriate course of action, 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	Standards 2.1	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates they have a clear strategy for monitoring attendance on skills days. There must also be process in place to ensure the 200 placement days can be evidenced when skills days are missed.	10/10/2024	Paragraph 59
2	Standard 2.6	The education provider will provide evidence that they have oversight of the registration of the practice educators on an annual basis.	10/11/2024	Paragraph 85

Recommendations

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

	Standard	Detail	Link
1	1.1	The inspectors are recommending that the education provider consider how they can improve oversight of the written task in the admissions process.	Paragraph 25

2	1.2	The inspectors are recommending that the education provider is clear with applicants that they will consider prior relevant experience as part of their application.	Paragraph 31
3.	3.6	The inspectors are recommending that the education provider has a clear strategy to support international students with the transition to the UK.	Paragraph 120

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

Approved with conditions

Annex 2: Meeting of conditions

If conditions are applied to a course approval, Social Work England completes a conditions review to make sure education providers have complied with the conditions and are meeting all of the [education and training standards](#).

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

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

	Standard not met	Condition	Recommendation
1	2.1	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates they have a clear strategy for monitoring attendance on skills days. There must also be process in place to ensure the 200 placement days can be evidenced when skills days are missed.	Condition met
2	2.6	The education provider will provide evidence that they have oversight of the registration of the practice educators on an annual basis.	Condition met

Findings

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

With respect to the condition set against standard 2.1, the education provider submitted documentary evidence demonstrating they have a robust process in place to ensure attendance on skills days is monitored and there are clear lines of accountability monitoring attendance.

Evidence included a tracking spreadsheet which the module leader has responsibility for. Module leaders are also responsible for providing follow-up independent learning material, or specific in-person practical skills sessions where skills hours are lost.

With respect to the condition set against standard 2.6, the education provider has outlined a reasoned method for how they will gain assurance PEs are on the Social Work England register on an annual basis, this happens prior to students beginning placement.

The inspectors' recommendation is that these conditions are now met.

Regulator decision

Conditions met.