

Inspection Report

Course provider: Liverpool John Moores University

Course approval: BA (Honours) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship

Inspection dates: 22 – 24 November 2023

Report date:	26 November 2023
Inspector recommendation:	Approved with conditions
Regulator decision:	Approved with conditions
Date of Regulator decision:	2 April 2024
Date conditions met and approved:	18 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. Liverpool John Moores University BA (Honours) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship was inspected as part of the Social Work England reapproval cycle; whereby all course providers with qualifying social work courses will be inspected against the new Education and Training Standards 2021.

Inspection ID	LJMUR2_CP83
Course provider	Liverpool John Moores University
Validating body (if different)	
Course inspected	BA (Honours) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship
Mode of study	Full time
Maximum student cohort	28
Date of inspection	22 – 24 November 2023
Inspection team	Sam Jameson (Education Quality Assurance Officer) Sally Gosling (Lay Inspector) Lisa Brett (Registrant Inspector)

Language

16. In this document we describe Liverpool John Moores University as ‘the education provider’ or ‘the university’ and we describe the BA (Honours) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship as ‘the course’ and the ‘programme’.

Inspection

17. An onsite inspection took place from 22 – 24 November 2023 at Tithebarn Building where Liverpool John Moores University 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 ten students from all levels of the course, four of them were student reps. Discussions included their experiences of the teaching and learning within the course, their access to support services of the university, admissions process, placements and how ready they felt for practice.

Meetings with course staff

21. Over the course of the inspection, the inspection team met with university staff members from; the social work course team, senior leadership team, admissions team, staff involved in practice and placement learning, library and academic support services, disability support services and student support. Within the course team meeting, the inspection team were given a demonstration and overview of CANVAS, the course providers Virtual Library Environment (VLE).

Meeting with people with lived experience of social work

22. The inspection team met with people with lived experience of social work who have been involved in the course from Focus on Involvement and Changes Plus service user groups. Discussions included what area(s) of the course they were involved with, how much input and feedback they had from the university and what training they received in this role.

Meetings with external stakeholders

23. The inspection team met with representatives from placement and employer partners for the apprenticeship course. This included PE's, representatives from Liverpool Adults and Childrens Social Work teams, including Principal Social Workers, Sefton Learning and Programme Coordinator, Wirral Senior Performance and Improvement Officer, St Helens Principal Social Worker, Liverpool Development Manager, St Helens Quality Assurance, and Improvement Team. All of whom are members of the Cheshire and Merseyside Social Work Teaching Partnership (CMSWTP).

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 submitted in support of this standard included LIMU DA SW January 2024, a brochure for employers and apprenticeship candidates, which is distributed to employers for their own, as well as potential candidates' information, outlining the job specific and academic entry requirements, in line with the requirements set by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IATE). The courses' education and training standards mapping document outlined that the online application process to the course evidences ICT skills, and the supplied DA Interview Form Template highlighted to the inspectors of how applicants' capability to meet academic standards is assessed during the interview. The inspection team considered how an applicant's entry to the course is assessed in a multi-dimensionally manner, hearing from staff involved in admissions and selection and employer partners of the varying approaches in which they manage this process for their organisation's applicants to the course. The inspection team concluded that the course providers oversight and admissions procedure could be more holistic in its assessment of applicants to the course, including to provide assurance of consistency and fairness for applicants across different employers.

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

Standard 1.2

27. Prior to the inspection the inspection team were able to review documentary evidence, that included Revised Interview Form C4 January 2024, Apprenticeship Policy, and Skills Scan Old Template, in support of this standard. As identified in standard 1.1, the discussions with staff involved in selection and admissions and employer partners highlighted that each organisation had its own individual and different approach to, and processes for, recruitment of applicants for the course. The inspection team also spoke to the course team

regarding the use of the Skills Scan, seeking clarity whether this was a tool to assess an applicant's relevant prior experience, was it used as part of the application process or used when an applicant has been successful and offered a place on the course. The inspection team considered that if done at the later stage, it would not serve as a means of assessing an applicant's prior relevant experience as they would have already been accepted onto the course.

28. Following the review of documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard and discussions with the course team, staff involved in selection and admissions, and employer partners, the inspection team remained unclear of how the course provider checks and assures itself of an applicant's prior relevant experience. The inspectors noted the questions identified within the Revised Interview Form C4 January 2024 to seek to draw this information out within the interview panel setting and queried whether a more robust admissions procedure from the course provider could provide greater insight into an applicant's prior relevant experience.

29. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 1.2 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [conditions table](#).

Standard 1.3

30. The inspection team were able to meet with people with lived experience and employer partners throughout the course of the inspection week. This enabled the inspectors to triangulate documentary evidence, LJMU DA SW January 2024 and Being Part of the Interview Process, that outlined and evidenced that both key stakeholders were directly involved in the admission and selection processes for the course. The inclusion of members of the people with lived experience group being involved in the review of the wording of certain questions used in the admissions interview, was one example given.

31. Attendees within the meeting with people with lived experience spoke about their work with the course team regarding the admissions panel process. They identified that they asked for clarification about providing prompts within the interview, and whether all, some or none of the academics will prompt during this stage. They identified that the course team had listen to this and acted on by talking to course team and agreeing a standardised approach.

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

Standard 1.4

33. The university was able to demonstrate its process for the assessment of suitability of applicants' health, conduct and character through the supplied documentary evidence, including Amended Advisory Note DBS and Health Clearance for Apprentices Nov 23. The inspection team learnt that this procedure and document had been updated and received the newly amended copy during the inspection week. This confirmed that applicant's suitability is assessed by employers during their recruitment process, confirming the applicants DBS status, which is input to the amended document above.

34. The inspection team were able to discuss this within meetings with the course team and staff involved in selection and admission, highlighting that there is a requirement for all students to declare any police investigations and criminal convictions to the university prior to and throughout the duration of their course, as identified within the university Criminal Convictions Policy and BA SW Programme Specification. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

35. Following a review of the evidence, including the newly updated Amended Advisory Note DBS and Health Clearance for Apprentices Nov 23 document, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 1.4. We [recommend](#) that consideration is given to there being a review date established to ensure that this updated process achieves its intended purpose.

Standard 1.5

36. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to the inspection included the university Admissions Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy and Equality and Diversity Policy. These documents were discussed within meetings with the course team, staff involved with selection and admissions and employer partners, to provide the inspection team with an overview of how they applied to the course and its admissions and selection process. The inspection team learnt of the equality, diversity, and inclusion training that all staff, including people with lived experience, must have, completed, and renewed before they are part of the admissions process and interviews. The inspectors were able to triangulate this within their meeting with people with lived experience.

37. The inspection team heard from student representatives that they met with during the inspection week that their admissions experience had all been a supportive process, with none having had any concerns about disclosing any additional learning or support needs, and that reasonable adjustments were made in a timely and supportive manner. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

Standard 1.6

38. Within their meeting with student representatives, the inspection team were told that they all felt that they were given appropriate levels of information and guidance throughout the selection and admissions process. This enabled the inspection team to triangulate the

information they reviewed within the documentary evidence prior to the inspection, that included the Apprenticeship Journey Overview and Quick Guide for LJMU DA Social Work 2023. Students confirmed that they had opportunities to access this university information alongside internal support briefings and discussions which included, understanding the role and responsibilities of a social worker, the structure and assessment of the programme, and the role of Social Work England, registration requirements and professional standards. This ensured that they were able to make an informed decision regarding whether to take up an offer on the course.

39. The inspection team noted the social work research webpage that is available for students to discover further information regarding the social work research carried out at the university. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard two: Learning environment

Standard 2.1

40. The inspection team were satisfied with the documentary evidence provided, BA SW Programme Specification, that demonstrated that students must complete 200 days of learning in a practice setting, confirming that the course being an apprenticeship provides statutory placements for all its students, meeting the minimum length and statutory requirements.

41. The inspection team learnt that students' placements include practice learning in two separate periods of time, with placement 1 consisting of 70 days and placement 2 of 130 days. Within the meeting with the course team and staff involved in placement-based learning, the inspection team learnt that students could remain in their substantive team during placement learning. A work-based learning audit, New WBL in Substantive Team Audit Document, is undertaken prior to placement start that seeks to ensure that new learning opportunities are provided to the student when this occurs. The inspection team heard from employer partners and members of the CMSWTP of the collaborative work between its services and the course team to ensure that students have placement settings in which they experience and work through appropriate decision-making and legal interventions in relation to the stage of their learning and development. That includes support and reviews to ensure that students are working towards meeting the PCF, professional standards and that all people with lived experience of social work are aware they are students.

42. The inspection team heard from some students they met with that they had differing experiences regarding contrasting placements; some students could not change from their substantive role and others could move around and were supported and encouraged to do so. The inspection team queried this variation in student experience with the course team, considering whether there could be greater direction from the course team, and CMSWTP,

to ensure all students have the same experience and access to contrasting placements and learning experiences.

43. 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 this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [conditions table](#).

Standard 2.2

44. The BA SW DA Programme Guide 2023 outlines and contains information regarding the administrative and practical information regarding placements, what they should expect and learn during the placement, including dates and targets that the student will be responsible for. The inspection team heard from the course team and staff involved with placement-based learning that students are provided with this information before they start on the course, during their admissions and welcome week, and touched on again within teaching sessions. This was triangulated within a meeting with the students, that identified they were made aware and provided with information regarding assessment criteria, deadlines, and what learning outcomes they were working towards in each placement. The pre and placement learning agreement meetings involve the students, PE, and personal tutor to establish the learning opportunities for the student. These are recorded in the WBL Assessment Report, then reviewed, and discussed within supervisions, mid-way, and tripartite reviews.

45. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included, CMSWTP Placements, that identified how all employer partners involved in the apprenticeship course are part of the CMSWTP. The partnership has agreed auditing processes for placements, that assesses whether they can provide appropriate practice learning opportunities to students to seek to enable them to gain the skills and knowledge to develop and meet the professional standards.

46. From the information regarding the CMSWTP the inspection team learnt of the pre-qualifying workstream that members of the course team work in and the link between the university and employer partners. This enabled the inspectors to learn of two priorities of the teaching partnership. Firstly, to review and enhance the training, development, and utilisation of PEs to build and sustain sufficient quality placements. Secondly, ensure that there is a commitment that all social work students have access to timely and quality placements in their preferred area of learning and receive appropriate support to enable them to achieve their learning outcomes. The inspection team heard from staff involved in placement-based learning of the evaluation of placements by the PE and student at the end

of each placement within the Quality Assurance in Practice Learning (QAPL), that is reviewed by the placement co-ordinators, including any issues regarding the provided learning outcomes, and feedback to employer partners if actions required. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

47. The inspection team learnt from discussions with the course team, staff involved in placement-based learning and review of documentary evidence that some students may remain in their substantive teams during placements, with new learning outcomes and skills identified by the employer to ensure development and contrasting learning experiences were in place. However, within the meeting with the students the inspectors heard of an example where a student had not been able to move placement setting from their substantive role and felt they had missed potential learning opportunities, when compared to other students. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 2.2. We [recommend](#) that consideration is given to whether there is scope through the teaching partnership both for employer partners to coordinate exchange arrangements and for a broader range of employers to provide placements, so that all students have the opportunity to learn and develop outside their employment setting.

Standard 2.3

48. The inspection team heard from students that their induction, supervision, and access to resources was of a high standard, covering all aspects identified within this standard to provide them with a supportive environment in which they could learn and develop. Employer partners identified that their responsibilities for the induction of students is made clear and implemented from the CMSWTP Placements documentation. The inspection team learnt from their meeting with the course team and documentary evidence, that students are allocated a PE, personal tutor and workplace mentor to ensure that the demands of placements are monitored and supported. Appropriate inductions, supervision, support and access to resources are set out and agreed upon within the pre and practice learning agreement meeting, recorded in the WBL Assessment Report and checked within supervisions, mid-way, tripartite, and end-point reviews. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

49. The inspection heard from students that some felt the workload was difficult to manage in relation to the demands of being an apprenticeship course, balancing their substantive roles, placement, and academic responsibilities, taking annual leave to ensure they could meet deadlines. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 2.3. We [recommend](#) that consideration is given to further consultation and work with students to ensure that their workload is manageable.

Standard 2.4

50. The inspectors agreed that based on the documentary evidence provided, placement provider agreement CMSWTP Placements 23-24, and from discussions with the course team and staff involved in placement-based learning, they were able to identify how the course team ensures that whilst in placement students' responsibilities are appropriate for their stage of education and training. That is underpinned by the work across all services and organisations within the CMSWTP to ensure consistency for ensuring students role and responsibilities are agreed by all placement providers.

51. The WBL Assessment Reports provided prior to the inspection set out that students' responsibilities in their placements have a gradient approach, tailored to both the placement setting and learning needs of the student. As identified in standard 2.2, the pre-placement learning agreement meeting includes the student, tutor, mentor, PE, and on-site supervisor, establishes the learning tasks and responsibilities for the student at that placement, linking to specific PCFs and professional standards, PCF (WBL1 and 2) and SWE PS Mapping, at the appropriate level of complexity for the student's current level of learning and development.

52. The inspectors were able to triangulate the above documentary and narrative evidence within meeting with students, who highlighted the use of supervision, tripartite and pre, mid and end-point placement meetings to ensure that responsibilities and expectations for them was appropriate. They felt clear of these before each placement that helped prepare them for their placement working and learning. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 2.5

53. The inspection team were able to review documentary evidence prior to the inspection, that confirmed that all students will only be allocated placement settings and work once they have completed the safety and readiness for practice process, alongside confirmation of satisfactory DBS check, occupational health declaration and clearance, as outlined in the DA Work Based Learning Handbook. The inspectors were able to hear from students, the course team and PWLE, that highlighted students' skills in communicating and readiness for practice are developed and assessed prior to their first placement within the communication module. Students spoke of a robust process that included an assessed recorded role play interview with a PWLE, that they had to complete an initial assessment document from this, which was then marked by the PWLE and academic, as evidenced from 4010SWA Initial Assessment Form and Feedback Template.

54. The inspection team heard from some members within the PWLE meeting of their co-production and recent involvement with this exercises redesign. The employer representatives that the inspection spoke with expressed their experiences of students from the course being ready for their placement settings and work, identifying professionalism,

knowledge and awareness of their role and expectations from the students they had worked with. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 2.6

55. The inspectors agreed that based on documentary evidence provided and their discussions with PEs and employer partners, that the CMSWTP has a Practice Education Strategy that ensures that all employers involved in the apprenticeship course are signed up to this. That includes all the HEIs involved in the apprenticeship course provide PE training each year, stages 1 and 1, and runs CPD and refresher courses. The inspectors learnt that the CWSWTP gathers information from individual placement providers regarding PE registration and CPD, holds and updates a data sheet with all PEs information recorded, that is formally reviewed with the employer placement co-ordinators.

56. The inspection team heard from staff involved in placement-based learning, and review of the WBL1 and WBL2 Assessment Reports, that PE must confirm their qualifications, CPD, social work England registration prior to commencement of their role in supporting a student at the pre-placement meeting. PEs were clear that they are asked for this information from their employer, that they accessed PE forums and CMSWTP CPD training sessions, with refresher training put in place for a PE who has not had a student for two years. Student feedback is gathered from the QAPL that includes the role and experiences of the student working and being supported by their PE, which is shared with the appropriate employer partner. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

57. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a [recommendation](#) in relation to standard 2.6. We recommend that the course providers procedure for checking and recording PE registration and CPD requirements is made clear to all PE, to ensure that the university's arrangements are clear and robust.

Standard 2.7

58. Documentary evidence, DA Work Based Learning Handbook, included the framework for the whistleblowing and complaints process, indicating the policies and processes in place for making students aware of how to raise concerns, including in the workplace and while they're on placement. As part of this, it is highlighted that students' regular tripartite review meetings as apprentices cover this aspect, while they are also made aware of who to contact outside these arrangements in case this is needed. In their meeting with students the inspection team heard of examples of where to find this process and their experience of using it and being supported by the course team throughout. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard three: Course governance, management, and quality

Standard 3.1

59. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team were able to review documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard, including but not limited to, PSRB Oversight Panel

Terms of Reference, Programme and Module Amendment Panel Terms of Reference, University Framework for Academic Quality and Standards 2023/24, Social Work Reflection and Action Plan and NSS Action Plan 2023. From their review of the documentary evidence the inspection team discussed with the senior leadership team about how the course is supported by a management and governance plan that sets out lines of responsibility and accountability and provides due oversight of its delivery, resourcing, and quality assurance. The inspectors sought to understand more clearly the course specific plan and structure that draws together the overarching documentary and narrative evidence provided to the inspection team, but the inspectors concluded that they did not receive this clarity during the inspection week.

60. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 3.1 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [conditions table](#).

Standard 3.2

61. As identified in standard 2.2, the inspection team were satisfied that the course has agreements in place with employer partners to provide education and training that meets the professional standards and the education and training qualifying standards, as outlined in the Memorandum of Association CMSWTP and ToR for Pre-Qualifying Work Stream documentary evidence. The inspection team heard from staff involved in placement-based learning of an example of the support systems and actions taken to support a student whose placement was at risk of breaking down. The staff team explained to the inspectors of an issue being flagged within a tripartite meeting by a student that was having a negative impact upon their mental health and well-being, leading to an action planning meeting and supporting the student to have time away from the course and return at a later date to complete the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 3.3

62. The inspectors agreed that based on the documentary evidence provided, including DA Work Based Learning Handbook and Anonymised Placement Provider Agreement, and from discussions with employer partners that placements had the necessary policies and procedures in relation to students' health, wellbeing and risk, and the support systems in place to underpin these. The inspection team were able to triangulate this information within meeting with the students, who provided narrative evidence and confirmed that they had all the required information they required for safe practice whilst they were on placement, including where to, and how they would be supported, raise a concern about

their health, wellbeing, and risk whilst on placement. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard 3.4

63. The inspection team were assured that the course's status as a degree apprenticeship means that it is employer-led, with students being based in the workplace as a condition of their enrolment on the course. Documentary and narrative evidence received from the course team and employer partners explained that arrangements for the course's design, delivery and review involve employer partners, including how placements are allocated to students and managed. It was explained to the inspection team how changes to the course's delivery, example given of the change to the endpoint assessment within Consultation Event Notes 4.5.23, involved employers in the management, shaping and monitoring of the course.

64. The inspection team noted how LJMU, together with the CMSWTP, actively supports social workers to develop their learning and teaching capability and to make an active contribution to the course's delivery, enabling practitioners to bring their knowledge and currency into the course. Achieved through the development of a teacher training CPD offer, for social workers who wish to become involved in teaching and leads to an associate fellowship of advance higher education and a supporting learning award from the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA). The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

65. As identified above the inspection team heard from key stakeholders and the course team of the collaborative working within the consultation event. The inspectors were informed from this positive experience that there is a planned annual joint consultation to be implemented in the format of that consultation event, that will include employer representatives. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 3.4. We [recommend](#) that the education provider considers how it can formalise its processes and structures for regularly liaising with employers on the management and monitoring of the course

Standard 3.5

66. The inspection team were able to triangulate information from documentary evidence, BoS BA MA SW-23-03-2023, within their meetings with PWLE, students and employer partners. The inspectors heard how these key stakeholders are involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the course, they all participate and contribute to the board of study meetings, which two nominated student representatives attend. Attendees within the employer partner meeting identified that they were invited but could not always attend due to work commitments, and PWLE spoke of attending this and the schools service user and

carer steering group meetings, that provided all in attendance with the opportunity to review and evaluate the courses quality and effectiveness.

67. The inspection team learnt that the National Student Survey (NSS) and LJMU undergraduate experience survey provide further formal mechanisms for student's feedback to be collected and analysed, as well as module evaluation reports, as highlighted in documentary evidence 5020 Module Report.

68. As identified in standard 2.1, the inspection team were satisfied that there were systems in place for carrying out quality audits of placements, through a work-based learning audit, New WBL in Substantive Team Audit Document, and the collaborative working between the course team and CMSWTP to meet this standard. The inspection team determined that this standard was met.

69. Within the meeting with PWLE, the inspection team heard from the two groups in attendance at the meeting of apparent differences between their involvement in the course and their understanding for this. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 3.5. We [recommend](#) that there is further consultation and work done with all PWLE groups and individuals involved in the course to provide greater transparency and understanding of how they are involved in the course.

Standard 3.6

70. The documentary evidence submitted prior to the inspection indicated that the course provider engages with employer partners via the CMSWTP to ensure that the number of students admitted to the course is aligned with their placement capacity and to meet their workforce demand needs. The inspection team learnt that employers are partners in the CMSWTP, and all entered a Memorandum of Association, that includes planning and consideration to local and regional placement capacity and the training, development and deployment of PE that sustain quality placements for the course's students.

71. Within the meeting with the senior leadership team, the inspection team was asked about the courses student numbers and being 'capped' by social work England. It was clarified by the inspection team that student numbers are not capped but social work England inspection and annual monitoring processes do include a focus on whether a course is appropriately resourced, staffed and managed to ensure quality teaching, learning and development opportunities for its students, including if student numbers were or had increased since its last inspection. The inspection team asked for further information or planning regarding increasing student numbers on the course, however, at that time there was no further information regarding this proposal.

72. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 3.6 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be

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

Standard 3.7

73. The inspection team concluded that the documentary evidence provided in advance of the inspection was able to demonstrate that this standard was met. The head of professional standards in the faculty of health has overall professional responsibility for the programme. The head of professional standards and the course programme lead were registered with social work England at the time of the inspection, and the inspection team were satisfied that they were appropriately qualified and experienced social workers to lead and hold overall responsibility for the course.

Standard 3.8

74. The university was able to demonstrate, through documentary evidence reviewed by the inspection team and within meetings, that the course team were appropriately resourced and supported by the senior management team to deliver an effective course. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence that included the course teams Curriculum Vitae's (CV), that provided evidence of professional and academic experience, including specialist subject areas and knowledge. Documentary evidence reviewed prior to the inspection confirmed that nine of the course team were qualified and experienced social workers, and six were registered with social work England, with others experienced and registered in nursing, doctor of philosophy and working towards doctorate of education. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

75. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 3.8. We [recommend](#) that there is consideration, planning, and consultation with key stakeholders regarding the education providers intention to increase the course cohort size, including how this will be resourced and staffed to ensure standards of delivery, skilled teaching and quality are maintained.

Standard 3.9

76. The inspectors were informed that the course team monitor and evaluate students' performance, progression and outcomes through the university marking verification and moderation process. A Continuous Monitoring and Enhancement (CME) system was the university's approach for reviewing its taught provision. As identified in standard 3.5, the NSS annual results provide the university with the opportunity to collect further information from students, alongside the board of studies that occurs twice a year that student reps attend. Prior to the inspection the inspectors were able to review documentary evidence, Moderation and Board Analysis and Social Work NSS CME Response, providing data from a

programme level. The academic board reports include a numerical analysis of student performance and outcomes that are discussed at the academic board, with further monitoring and review of student attainment at validation panel reviews and the board of examiners.

77. The inspection team were able to review documentary evidence that highlighted how EDI data in relation to students was held centrally at the university, Apprentice Dem 36090-Social Work and CME Information Demographics. During a meeting with the senior leadership team, the inspectors learnt that in early 2024 the course will have a new data management system, Aptem, for its students, that will seek to provide a streamlined approach to how students EDI and attainment data is gathered, recorded, and analysed. The inspection team heard of the students running a session on neurodiversity following a need for this being identified within the cohorts and then supported and acted upon by the course team. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

78. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 3.9. We [recommend](#) that following its implementation of the Aptem system, the education provider considers how it can use more detailed data to understand and address issues and trends in student performance, progression, and outcomes, including from equality and diversity perspectives.

Standard 3.10

79. As identified in standard 3.8, the inspection team were assured that educators were supported to maintain currency in their knowledge and understanding in relation to professional practice. Through discussions with the student representatives, employer partners and PWLE, the inspectors were satisfied that that the course team were appropriately resourced and supported by the senior management team to deliver an effective course. Documentary evidence in support of this standard, My Team Data, and discussions with the senior leadership team identified that the course team have an annual appraisal to review their workload and progression, including staff being eligible for 'research remission' of 25 hours to undertake scholarly activity.

80. The inspection team were provided with documentary evidence, course teams CVs, and narrative evidence that provided a robust overview of the course teams professional and academic experience, including specialist subject areas and knowledge. That also highlighted their involvement in current social work and relevant professional practices, services, and panels to support staff development and retaining currency in the profession. Some examples given included attending training facilitated within CMSWTP, studying for doctorates, research projects undertaken by the course team and role as an Approved Mental Health Practitioner (AMHP). The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard four: Curriculum assessment

Standard 4.1

81. Documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection identified how the course curriculum and its delivery, including at a modular level, was mapped to the professional standards, PCF, the national academic and apprenticeship requirements, and incorporate the university frameworks in support of all students' learning and development. Both employer partners and PE's spoke of their experiences of students on the course being able to demonstrate working towards meeting the professional standards by the end of their training, being familiar with appropriate professional conduct and decision making.

82. During the inspection the inspectors sought to triangulate documentary evidence from both prior to the inspection and during it from the course team regarding the changes to the course made following the consultation event. The course lead provided further information and narrative evidence during the inspection week of these changes and how they changed for the student cohorts.

83. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 4.1 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [conditions table](#).

Standard 4.2

84. The inspection team learnt from their discussions with the course team that PWLE, employers and practitioners were involved in the initial consultation and design of the course, with ongoing involvement through the board of studies, regarding the ongoing review and development of the curriculum. Within the meeting with PWLE, the inspectors heard examples of their role in co-designing and co-teaching of areas in the curriculum, including concept of recovery in mental health, social or state harms, models of disability and patient and service user involvement in healthcare, with members speaking of how they feel valued, respected and equity in their role with the course team. The inspection team heard from PEs of feedback they provided to the course team regarding the previous length of placement days being pressured to fit everything into the available time, how this was feedback via the QAPL, spoken about within the PE forum, placement co-ordinator and the collaborative work done with the course team to support the design of the course. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

85. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 4.2. We [recommend](#) that there is a formal mechanism put in place,

such as a forum, established to bring together the informal communication and planning that is occurring between the course team and key stakeholders to record and evidence how they are involved in the design, ongoing development, and review of the curriculum.

Standard 4.3

86. Documentary evidence submitted in support of this standard included, LJMU Diversity and Inclusion website, that identified the programme related procedures and teaching must meet LJMU's EDI objectives, in line with systems and processes, including but not limited to, the Equality Act 2010, Accessibility around LJMU, Diversity Calendar and Race Equality Charter. The inspection team were satisfied that the documentary evidence, and discussions with the Disability Coordinator during the inspection week highlighted how EDI issues are thread within the design, delivery, and content of the course and wider university student support services. That included to be inclusive of all students and to meet their individual learning needs, to develop students' understanding of EDI issues as an integral part of their professional practice preparation, and to engage with the decolonising the curriculum. The students spoke of how the course team and wider support services at the university were proactive and supportive to meet their individual learning needs or any reasonable adjustments that they required, including whilst they were on placement. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

87. During their meeting with the students the inspection team heard that some students had used annual leave to take time off to be able to complete and keep up to date with the course academic requirements and deadlines. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 4.3. We [recommend](#) that the education provider explores with employers how students, as apprentices, have sufficient designated study time to engage with the course's academic requirements.

Standard 4.4

88. Prior to the inspection documentary evidence, 6060SWA Timetable and CMSWTP Research Projects, highlighted that module content was reviewed and updated on an annual basis to seek to ensure that the course is continually updated and maintains its currency. From discussions with the course team, employer partners and PWLE the inspectors were able to learn that the university runs stakeholder consultation events to seek input to how the course should be updated, involving social work practitioners through its links within the CMSWTP and local authorities. As referenced in standard 3.8 and 3.10, members of the course team are strongly involved in local initiatives and engage in collaborative research activities, that add to the collective approach of the course team in meeting this standard and ensuring that the course reflects changes in practice or services, developments in research, legislation, government policy and social work best practice.

89. The inspection team heard from student representatives during the inspection week of how the course team actively welcome their learning and development from their practice settings into the course and how this learning can be included in the course and curriculum. The inspection team advised that this standard was met.

Standard 4.5

90. The inspection team were able to review documentary evidence prior to the inspection, Social Work Theory and Methods Handbook and WB1 and 2 Assessment Reports, that indicated that the course is structured and delivered to support students to achieve the integration of theory and practice as they progress through the course. Students expressed to the inspectors that they felt they had the opportunity to learn about social work theories and understand why it is important to their practice, including to reflect on their learning and how to apply theoretical frameworks in their practice placements. The inspection team were satisfied that this was supported through arrangements to maintain the course team's practice links and for employer and practitioner input to the course's delivery. Both employer partners and PEs identified that students were well prepared by the courses teaching and development strategies for applying theory to practice in their placement settings. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.6

91. Meeting with employer partners enabled the inspection team to hear that the nature of the apprenticeship course ensured that students had placements within social care settings that provided multi-disciplinary working and learning opportunities throughout each service for the students. The inspection team learnt from students and the course team of further learning and working opportunities alongside other professions, such as the police and nurses, that developed their knowledge and skills from the interprofessional working in health and social care module. Documentary evidence highlighted that the course sits within the faculty of health at the university, highlighting that interprofessional is integral to the programme, with students having the opportunity to attend an interprofessional conference by Liverpool Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the university, and attend an international social work week in Germany. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

Standard 4.7

92. Documentary evidence, 2022/23 Academic Framework Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes and each module proforma for the course, clearly demonstrated to the inspection team that students spend sufficient and structured time in academic learning under the direction of an educator to meet the required levels of competence. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

93. The inspection team received some feedback within their meeting with student representatives that queried the amount of teaching time spent on certain areas, such as poverty, and whether this could have been more evenly shared out on other areas, such as mental capacity act, assessments, and law. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 4.7. We [recommend](#) that the education provider reviews and engages with stakeholders on the time allocation within the curriculum across different subject areas to ensure an appropriate balance of focus.

Standard 4.8

94. The inspectors learnt from their review of the Assessment and Feedback Policy, Apprenticeship Journey Overview and Professional Standards Mapping LJMU BA Social Work, that the course utilises a range of assessment methods to test students' learning and development. The documentary evidence and module proformas provided confirmation that these methods are fully mapped to the professional standards to ensure that students have been assessed and demonstrated that they have met the standards on their successful completion of the course.

95. The inspection team sought clarity regarding the portfolio reading days and direct observations of practice within their meetings with the course team and staff involved in placement-based learning. The inspectors were unclear how these individual aspects of the assessment strategy and design contributed to the overall judgements regarding students' performance and progression within the course.

96. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 4.8 and 4.12 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [conditions table](#).

Standard 4.9

97. Documentary evidence, LJMU Grade Descriptors, 2022/23 Academic Framework Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes and each module proforma for the course, demonstrated that the range of assessments are planned and sequenced within the course to support students' learning progression as they advance through the academic levels. The inspection team heard from students that they felt that assessments were carried out at appropriate stages during the course to match their learning and development, and they spoke of their experiences of accessing university academic support services to assist them

in their development and progression through the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 4.10

98. The inspectors were able to review the BA SW DA Programme Guide 2023 2024 and Assessment Feedback Policy, that identified the students are informed of the courses approach to assessment, including feedback procedures, when they start the programme and as they progress through the course. The inspection team was able to triangulate this within their meeting with student representatives, who spoke of their awareness and teaching that covers the learning outcomes, what is expected of them in their assessments and that the feedback they have received had supported them in their learning and development. The inspection team learnt of the role that personal tutors provide to student development on the course, incorporating both academic advice and direction, and pastoral oversight. The inspection team concluded that this standard was met.

99. Within their meeting with student representatives the inspection team heard of differing experiences and styles in relation to feedback they had received from the course team. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 4.10 and 5.7. We [recommend](#) that student feedback is provided under a set proforma for all students so that there are consistent levels of information provided to the student.

Standard 4.11

100. Prior to the inspection, the inspection team reviewed the course team CVs that clearly demonstrated that they have a breadth of appropriate expertise to undertake student assessments, with the external examiner appropriately qualified, registered with social work England, and experienced to oversee the course assessment and marking methods. From their discussions with PWLE and employer partners, the inspection team were assured that staff carrying out assessments on the course were appropriately trained to meet this standard. The inspection team were assured that this standard was met.

Standard 4.12

101. As identified within standard 4.8, the inspection team sought clarity regarding the portfolio reading days and direct observations of practice within their meetings with the course team and staff involved in placement-based learning. The inspectors were unclear how these individual aspects of the assessment strategy and design contributed to the overall judgements regarding students' performance and progression within the course. The inspection team were assured that there was an appropriate range of people, PWLE, PEs and academics, involved in the assessment and decision-making system regarding students' progression through the course. The inspection team noted that the external examiner has

access to the e-learning portal, Canvas, to support the monitoring and review of the assessment and graduation of individual students.

102. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is recommending that a condition is set against standard 4.8 and 4.12 in relation to the approval of this course. Consideration was given as to whether the finding identified would mean that the course would not be suitable for approval. However, it is deemed that a condition is appropriate to ensure that the course would be able to meet the relevant standard, and we are confident that once this standard is met, a further inspection of the course would not be required. Full details of the condition, its monitoring and approval can be found in the [conditions table](#).

Standard 4.13

103. The inspection team were assured from their review of documentary evidence and discussions with the course team that the course was designed with a robust evidenced informed approach to practice, embedded in the course through the inclusion of two research focused modules and research active members of the course team. That is thread throughout the curriculum to support students learning and development of how to use evidence from research and appropriate sources to inform and systemically evaluate their practice. The inspectors were provided with an example from their meeting with student representatives, who spoke of their practice placement setting in which they were able to draw upon research and evidence to support a discussion with a social work colleague regarding their assessment and decision-making process. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

Standard five: Supporting students

Standard 5.1

104. During the inspection week, the inspectors were able to meet with university student support services, that included disability co-ordinator, academic achievement, library liaison officer, student futures and student wellbeing team. This allowed the inspection team to learn of the wealth of resources, including confidential counselling services, careers advice and support and occupational health services, that students can access to support them to manage their health and emotional wellbeing, including whilst they were on placement. The inspection team heard from both the support services and students that these resources were well promoted within the course and wider university, including how accessible they were, that promoted an individualised approach to supporting a student based on their needs and requirements. The inspection team agreed this standard was met.

Standard 5.2

105. The inspection team learnt from their meeting with student support services and review of documentary evidence, BA SW DA Programme Guide 2023 2024, and Personal

Tutoring Policy, that students have access to personal tutors, library resources including academic skills and careers advice that had dedicated information for apprenticeship students, to support their academic development. The course has a dedicated academic engagement librarian who meets with students during induction and supports students to ensure they can access the library, using databases and searching for literature and referencing skills. The course team identified that the allocated librarian supports module leaders to prepare students for assignments.

106. Documentary evidence highlighted the Library Resources for Social Work that students have access to, and the MyLJMU app that students can use remotely to speak to library staff without an appointment being required. The inspection team heard within their meeting with student support services of the library academic workshops, webinars, and resources that students have access to through the library academic achievement team that support all students, including those may be returning to studying after time away, or have additional responsibilities or requirements, that result in further support and guidance required to support their academic learning and development. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

107. During their meeting with student representatives the inspection team heard of how some students were uncertain of how often or what support they were entitled to from their personal tutor. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 5.2. We [recommend](#) that students are given further guidance and information regarding what support they can expect from their personal tutor.

Standard 5.3

108. Documentary evidence, BA SW DA Programme Guide 2023 2024, and university Fitness to Practice Policy, reviewed prior to the inspection outlined that students are made aware that following their declarations made in the admissions process to the course, there is an annual system of ensuring the ongoing suitability of students conduct, health and character, and procedure to follow regarding any fitness to practice issues. Students complete The Declaration of Good Health and Character, that is checked by the course team before the student stating the subsequent year of the course. The students that the inspection met with identified they were made aware of the need to complete this declaration, which they received reminders about and must complete on an annual basis. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.4

109. The inspection team concluded that from their review of documentary evidence, Disability Policy, information and links from university website Support for Students with a Disability, and discussions with students, student support services and course team, that the course makes supportive and pragmatic adjustments for students in how the course is

delivered. The inspection team were assured that there were support mechanisms and systems in place to make supportive and reasonable adjustments for students with health conditions or impairments to enable them to progress through the course and meet the professional standards. Students identified that they felt supported and reassured with any support need or adjustments that they required, including whilst on placement.

Documentary evidence outlined any learning support needs that are identified by an Individual Apprentice Learning Plan (ISLP), which is completed with the student and the university disability advice team, are shared in an appropriate format with the placement provider agency, PE, and personal tutor. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.5

110. The inspection team were able to identify from documentary evidence, DA Induction Programme, that students are presented with information regarding all aspects of the curriculum when they first start the programme, with the Canvas site available to them as soon as they enrol which provides them with course information and guide to the course. The BA SW Programme Specification and SW DA Programme Guide 2023 2024, provides students with information about the curriculum, assessment, and placements, which is built on throughout the course, including progression through the modules that are designed to support their engagement with preparing for their transition to a registered social worker.

111. The student representatives that the inspection team met with identified that they were familiar with Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and what the New Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) role would involve for them. The students spoke of learning from the course team, visiting social work practitioners, and a visit from a regional engagement lead from social work England, about the expectations and requirements for Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and their eligibility on applying to register with social work England on the successful completion of the course. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

Standard 5.6

112. The inspectors learnt that the course team currently monitors and records students' attendance manually, with attendance data recorded on a spreadsheet, monitored by personal tutors and the course lead. Where attendance declines, it is picked up on and support offered to that student.

113. The inspection team were informed that the course also records and monitors digital engagement by bringing together data from digital systems including Canvas, log-ons to IT and library loans, that is available to the students personal tutor, course lead, director of school, and student wellbeing advisors, with authorised staff receiving a weekly email to notify them if any of their students engagement or attendance has dropped. Students have

direct access to their own engagement data via the MyLJMU app, with expectations of student attendance outlined in the Student Attendance Policy and reviewed within tripartite reviews. The inspection team advised that this standard was met.

114. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 5.6. We [recommend](#) that students are given clear information regarding where attendance on specific days or modules is mandatory, or if it is expected that students must achieve a set level of attendance over the course of the programme, and how this information is shared with employers.

Standard 5.7

115. As identified under standard 4.10, the inspection team were satisfied that students were provided with feedback throughout the course to support their ongoing development. The inspection team learnt from information within education and training standard mapping documentation that students produce a development plan, a reflection on their personal and professional development that provides a foundation for students' entry into the NQSW stage of their social work career. The inspection team were satisfied that this standard was met.

116. Within their meeting with student representatives the inspection team heard of differing experiences and styles in relation to feedback they had received from the course team. Following a review of the evidence, the inspection team is making a recommendation in relation to standard 4.10 and 5.7. We [recommend](#) that student feedback is provided under a set proforma for all students so that there are consistent levels of information provided to the student.

Standard 5.8

117. Documentary evidence provided prior to the inspection, Appeals Information and Guidance for Students and Staff, identified that the course has an appeals and complaints process and that students receive information and support on how to access and use this process. The inspection team were able to triangulate this information within meeting with student representatives who identified their awareness of this process, their experience of making an academic appeal and how they felt supported during this process. The inspection team agreed that this standard was met.

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

Standard 6.1

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

Proposed outcome

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

Conditions

Conditions for approval are set if there are areas of a course that do not currently meet our standards. Conditions 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	Standard 1.1	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates it has a robust, holistic, and multidimensional process for the assessment of applicants, ensuring that the university has oversight of the whole admissions process to uphold and maintain consistency and fairness for all applicants.	2 July 2024	Paragraph 25
2	Standard 1.2	The education provider will provide evidence of how it assesses, records, and assured itself of an applicant's prior relevant experience.	2 July 2024	Paragraph 27
3	Standard 2.1	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates it has a robust process in place to ensure that all students have access to contrasting placements and learning experiences.	2 October 2024	Paragraph 40
4	Standard 3.1	The education provider will provide a management and governance strategy, or plan, which sets out clear roles and responsibilities for both individuals and groups for the apprenticeship course, including its	2 July 2024	Paragraph 59

		quality assurance, and links to the CWSWTP.		
5	Standard 3.6, link to recommendation under standard 3.8.	The education provider will provide a clear strategy for its approach and plan for the growth of the course, including how this will be resourced and staffed to ensure standards of delivery, skilled teaching and quality are maintained.	2 October 2024	Paragraph 70 Paragraph 74
6	Standard 4.1	The education provider will provide a breakdown of the course structure, including the changes made in response to the national change to the apprenticeship's endpoint assessment, the changes' impact on individual modules' credit value and the changes' application to individual student cohorts.	2 July 2024	Paragraph 81
7	Standard 4.8 and 4.12	The education provider will provide evidence of how the portfolio reading days and direct observations of practice contribute to the overall judgements regarding students' performance and progression within the courses assessment strategy.	2 October 2024	Paragraph 94 Paragraph 101

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	Standard 1.4	The inspectors are recommending that the university consider, given to the implementation of the newly updated Amended Advisory Note DBS and Health Clearance for Apprentices Nov 23 document, that consideration is given to there being a review date established to ensure that this updated process achieves its intended purpose.	Paragraph 40

2	Standard 2.2, links to condition under 2.1.	The inspectors recommend that consideration is given to whether there is scope through the teaching partnership both for employer partners to coordinate exchange arrangements and for a broader range of employers to provide placements, so that all students have the opportunity to learn and develop outside their employment setting.	Paragraph 44 Paragraph 40
3	Standard 2.3	The inspectors recommend that consideration is given to further consultation and work with students to ensure that their workload is manageable.	Paragraph 48
4	Standard 2.6	The inspectors recommend that the course providers procedure for checking and recording PE registration and CPD requirements is made clear to all PE, to ensure that the university's arrangements are clear and robust.	Paragraph 55
5	Standard 3.4	The inspectors recommend that the education provider considers how it can formalise its processes and structures for regularly liaising with employers on the management and monitoring of the course.	Paragraph 63
6	Standard 3.5	The inspectors recommend that there is further consultation and work done with all PWLE groups and individuals involved in the course to provide greater transparency and understanding of how they are involved in the course.	Paragraph 66
7	Standard 3.8, links to condition under standard 3.6.	The inspectors recommend that there is consideration, planning, and consultation with key stakeholders regarding the education providers intention to increase the course cohort size, including how this will be resourced and staffed to ensure standards of delivery, skilled teaching and quality are maintained.	Paragraph 74 Paragraph 70
8	Standard 3.9	The inspectors recommend that following its implementation of the Aptem system, the education provider considers how it can use more detailed data to understand and address issues and trends in student performance, progression, and outcomes, including from equality and diversity perspectives.	Paragraph 76
9	Standard 4.2	The inspectors recommend that there is a formal mechanism put in place, such as a forum, established to bring together the informal communication and planning that is occurring	Paragraph 84

		between the course team and key stakeholders to record and evidence how they are involved in the design, ongoing development, and review of the curriculum.	
10	Standard 4.3	The inspectors recommend that the education provider explores with employers how students, as apprentices, have sufficient designated study time to engage with the course's academic requirements.	Paragraph 86
11	Standard 4.7	The inspectors recommend that the education provider reviews and engages with stakeholders on the time allocation within the curriculum across different subject areas to ensure an appropriate balance of focus.	Paragraph 92
12	Standard 4.10 and 5.7	The inspectors recommend that student feedback is provided under a set proforma for all students so that there are consistent levels of information provided to the student.	Paragraph 98 Paragraph 115
13	Standard 5.2	The inspectors recommend that students are given further guidance and information regarding what support they can expect from their personal tutor.	Paragraph 105
14	Standard 5.6	The inspectors recommend that students are given clear information regarding where attendance on specific days or modules is mandatory, or if it is expected that students must achieve a set level of attendance over the course of the programme, and how this information is shared with employers.	Paragraph 112

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	1.1: Confirm on entry to the course, via a holistic/multi-dimensional assessment process.	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates it has a robust, holistic, and multidimensional process for the assessment of applicants, ensuring that the university has oversight of the whole admissions process to uphold and maintain consistency and fairness for all applicants.	Met.
2	1.2: Ensure that applicants' prior relevant experience is considered as part of the admissions processes	The education provider will provide evidence of how it assesses, records, and assured itself of an applicant's prior relevant experience.	Met.
3	2.1: Ensure that students spend at least 200 days (including up to 30 skills days) gaining different experiences and learning in practice settings	The education provider will provide evidence that demonstrates it has a robust process in place to ensure that all students have access to contrasting placements and learning experiences.	Met.
4	3.1: Ensure courses are supported by	The education provider will provide a management and governance strategy, or plan, which sets out clear	Met.

	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	roles and responsibilities for both individuals and groups for the apprenticeship course, including its quality assurance, and links to the CWSWTP.	
5	3.6: Ensure that the number of students admitted is aligned to a clear strategy, which includes consideration of local/regional placement capacity	The education provider will provide a clear strategy for its approach and plan for the growth of the course, including how this will be resourced and staffed to ensure standards of delivery, skilled teaching and quality are maintained.	Met.
6	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	The education provider will provide a breakdown of the course structure, including the changes made in response to the national change to the apprenticeship's endpoint assessment, the changes' impact on individual modules' credit value and the changes' application to individual student cohorts.	Met.

	that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the professional standards		
7	4.8: Ensure that the assessment strategy and design demonstrate that the assessments are robust, reliable and valid, and that those who successfully complete the course have developed the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the professional standards. Links to: 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	The education provider will provide evidence of how the portfolio reading days and direct observations of practice contribute to the overall judgements regarding students' performance and progression within the courses assessment strategy.	Met.

	observation of practice		
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Findings

The conditions review was undertaken as a result of the conditions set during the course approval as outlined in the original inspection report above. The course provider submitted the conditions monitoring mapping form within the timescale identified by the inspectors. The mapping form contained narrative evidence and supporting documentary evidence that was reviewed by the inspectors.

In relation to the condition set for standard 1.1 the inspectors reviewed documentary evidence and information contained within the conditions mapping form submitted by the course provider. The course team's response explains how the university has oversight of the admissions process across all employers putting forward prospective apprentices to undertake the course. It also indicates that the team has undertaken an audit of individual employers' selection processes. This has enabled the team to appraise similarities and differences between these processes and to identify the risk of any duplication with the university's own second-stage process that it runs itself. The inspection team were satisfied that the evidence met the condition, and the standard is now met.

In relation to the condition set for standard 1.2 the inspectors reviewed documentary evidence and information contained within the conditions mapping form submitted by the course provider. Information submitted by the course provider explains that the course team has introduced a written component to its own stage of the admissions process, with this taking effect for recruitment of the January 2025 intake. The interview form is supplied in the documentary evidence. This sets out the requirements of a 500-word written assignment and how it will be scored. Both elements of the rubric indicate the exercise's focus on candidates explaining their understanding, prior experience and insights of what social work involves and their reflection on these and their own potential to become a social worker. The inspection team were satisfied that the evidence met the condition, and the standard is now met.

In relation to the condition set for standard 2.1 the inspectors reviewed documentary evidence and information contained within the conditions mapping form submitted by the course provider. The education provider was able to identify that they have produced new guidance for employers, that has been shared with employers and sets out the requirements for ensuring that all apprentices are both enabled to engage in two placements that provide them with contrasting learning experiences, and that gives them exposure to working in a statutory setting and undertaking statutory tasks. The inspectors noted that the new document and its implementation should provide stronger clarity on placement allocation requirements and increase the oversight the education provider has of

the process, with robust links to Social Work England requirements relating to standard 2.1. The inspection team were satisfied that the evidence met the condition, and the standard is now met.

In relation to the condition set for standard 3.1 the inspectors reviewed documentary evidence and information contained within the conditions mapping form submitted by the course provider. The inspectors were assured that the course providers response provides a detailed explanation of the university's different structures and processes to which the course is subject, including as a degree apprenticeship. This includes at different levels within the university (programme, school, faculty and corporate), across the cycle of the course's delivery (including through the continuous monitoring and enhancement process and review), and to understand trends and issues in student progression and completion. The inspectors were satisfied that the information provides greater clarity on roles and responsibilities and lines of reporting and accountability for the course within the university. The inspection team were satisfied that the evidence met the condition, and the standard is now met.

In relation to the condition set for standard 3.6 the inspectors reviewed documentary evidence and information contained within the conditions mapping form submitted by the course provider. The education provider explained the strategic approach that it would take to growing apprentice numbers, should it decide that this expansion was a logical way forward. However, the course provider confirmed that they have no current plans to increase the numbers. The inspectors were assured that the education provider would take a considered, coordinated approach to increasing the current cohort size, while clarifying that this is not a live or current plan. Therefore, inspection team were satisfied that the evidence met the condition, and the standard is now met.

In relation to the condition set for standard 4.1 the inspectors reviewed documentary evidence and information contained within the conditions mapping form submitted by the course provider. The inspectors identified that the documentary evidence submission provides a clear breakdown and narrative explanation of the current structure of the course. It indicates that the changes have applied from the January 2022 cohort onwards. It further explains how the course structure differs from the previous one, particularly in response to the change at a national level to the apprenticeship's endpoint assessment. The information submitted by the course provider specifically explains the changes made to the level 6 modules. These include in the number of teaching hours and assessment requirements attached to modules 6060SWA and 6070SWA and resulting change in the credit value of each from 30 to 20 credits. It also indicates the expansion of the dissertation requirements, resulting in the increase in this module's credit value from 40 to 60 credits. Documentary evidence explains that neither the module learning outcomes/assessment criteria nor the overarching programme outcomes have changed as a result of the outlined changes to the

level 6 modules. The inspection team were satisfied that the evidence met the condition, and the standard is now met.

In relation to the condition set against standard 4.8, and links to standard 4.12, the inspectors reviewed documentary evidence and information contained within the conditions mapping form submitted by the course provider. The education provider clarified the role of the portfolio reading days in the course's delivery, and how direct observations of students' performance in practice contribute to the overall diet of assessment. Documentary evidence and information within the mapping form explained that the reading days are part of the quality assurance process, rather than part of student assessment. The course provider confirmed that students' portfolios are moderated before they are reviewed during the reading days. The moderation stage is undertaken by students' personal tutors, who flag up any issues to the placement coordinator. In turn, the coordinator liaises with students' practice educator and placement provider to resolve the issues. It is explained that a range of stakeholders are involved in the reading days (including social work practitioners and people with lived experience), with the days providing assurance that standards within the course are upheld. Supporting information and documentary evidence identified how both formal and informal direct observations of students' practice occur within placements. It is indicated that students are formally observed three times while on each placement, with these recorded in their portfolio. The different ways in which students receive feedback on their performance while on placement, and from whom, are also outlined. The inspection team were satisfied that the evidence met the condition, and the standard is now met.

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

Regulator decision

Conditions met.