HCPC approval process report

Education provider	Sheffield Hallam University
Name of programme(s)	BA (Hons) Social Work Practice, PT (Part time)
Approval visit date	10 October 2018
Case reference	CAS-13064-C0N2M7

Contents

Executive Summary

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

The following is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that programme(s) detailed in this report meet our standards of education and training (referred to through this report as 'our standards'). The report details the process itself, the evidence considered, and recommendations made regarding programme approval.

Section 1: Our regulatory approach

Our standards
We approve programmes that meet our education standards, which ensure individuals that complete the programmes meet proficiency standards. The proficiency standards set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Programmes are normally approved on an open-ended basis, subject to satisfactory engagement with our monitoring processes. Programmes we have approved are listed on our website.

How we make our decisions
We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint partner visitors to undertake assessment of evidence presented through our processes. The visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation of the visitors, inclusive of conditions and recommendations. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee meets in public on a regular basis and their decisions are available to view on our website.

HCPC panel
We always appoint at least one partner visitor from the profession (inclusive of modality and / or entitlement, where applicable) with which the assessment is concerned. We also ensure that visitors are supported in their assessment by a member of the HCPC executive team. Details of the HCPC panel for this assessment are as follows:

Manoj Mistry	Lay
Beverley Blythe	Social worker
Robert Goemans	Social worker
Ismini Tsikaderi	HCPC executive
Jamie Hunt	HCPC executive (observer)

Other groups involved in the approval visit
There were other groups in attendance at the approval visit as follows. Although we engage in collaborative scrutiny of programmes, we come to our decisions independently.

Lisa Reidy	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Sheffield Hallam University
Linda Hall	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	Sheffield Hallam University
Colette Fegan	Internal panel member	Sheffield Hallam University
Jean Harris-Evans	Internal panel member	Sheffield Hallam University

Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BA (Hons) Social Work Practice
Mode of study	PT (Part time)
Profession	Social worker in England
First intake	01 March 2019
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 30
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01899

We undertook this assessment of a new programme proposed by the education provider via the approval process. This involves consideration of documentary evidence and an onsite approval visit, to consider whether the programme meet our standards for the first time.

Section 3: Requirements to commence assessment

In order for us to progress with approval and monitoring assessments, we require certain evidence and information from education providers. The following is a list of evidence that we asked for through this process, and whether that evidence was provided. Education providers are also given the opportunity to include any further supporting evidence as part of their submission. Without a sufficient level of evidence, we need to consider whether we can proceed with the assessment. In this case, we decided that we were able to undertake our assessment with the evidence provided.

Required documentation	Submitted	Reason(s) for non-submission
Programme specification	Yes	
Module descriptor(s)	Yes	
Handbook for learners	Yes	
Handbook for practice based learning	Yes	
Completed education standards mapping document	Yes	
Completed proficiency standards mapping document	Yes	
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	Yes	
External examiners' reports for the last two years, if applicable	Yes	As the assessed programme is new, these reports related to –the existing HCPC approved programme BA (Hons) Social Work (Full time)

We also expect to meet the following groups at approval visits:

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Yes	As the assessed programme is new, we met learners from the existing HCPC approved programme BA (Hons) Social Work (Full time)
Senior staff	Yes	

Practice education providers	Yes	
Service users and carers (and / or their representatives)	Yes	
Programme team	Yes	
Facilities and resources	Yes	

Section 4: Outcome from first review

Recommendation of the visitors
In considering the evidence provided by the education provider as part of the initial submission and at the approval visit, the visitors' recommend that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that our standards are met at this time, but that the programme(s) should be approved subject to the conditions noted below being met.

Conditions
Conditions are requirements that must be met before programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is insufficient evidence that standards are met. The visitors were satisfied that a number of the standards are met at this stage. However, the visitors were not satisfied that there is evidence that demonstrates that the following standards are met, for the reasons detailed below.

We expect education providers to review the issues identified in this report, decide on any changes that they wish to make to programmes, and then provide any further evidence to demonstrate how they meet the conditions. We set a deadline for responding to the conditions of 14 December 2018.

2.1   The admissions process must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must provide clarity around how the admissions process is managed, specifically considering the roles of the education provider and employers in making selection decisions.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and the discussions held, the visitors noted that the admissions process will be a three-stage process with both the education provider and employers inputting. At the visit, the discussion around how the admissions process will be run explained the role of the education provider during the process by involving service users and carers in an initial activity with the applicant, followed by an interview, with the final decision made by the programme leader and recruitment lead. However, from this discussion, the visitors were unclear how the employers are involved with the recruitment stage of the admissions process. The visitors were also unclear how information about the admissions process would be communicated to potential applicants, as this information has not yet been produced. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence which clearly documents how the admission process is managed in partnership with the employers and their involvement in the recruitment stage, and how admissions information will be communicated to potential applicants.

2.2 The selection and entry criteria must include appropriate academic and professional entry standards.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the eligible relevant experience and the required standard criteria which are communicated with the applicant.

Reason: From a review of the documentation the visitors noted that, amongst the standard entry requirements the education provider requires relevant experience in a social care setting. However, from reviewing this information, and from discussions at the visit, the visitors were unclear what constitutes as relevant experience as an entry criteria for this programme. The visitors noted that clarity about what would constitute as relevant experience would be important for potential applicants when applying for the programme, so they were clear whether their experience could meet this entry criteria, and for the education provider, to ensure they are making consistent judgements against this criteria. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence which clearly shows what the education provider will consider as 'relevant' experience for an applicant to be admitted to the programme.

2.5 The admissions process must ensure that applicants are aware of and comply with any health requirements.

Condition: The education provider must update their admissions information so health requirements for applicants are clearly communicated.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that "Places are offered subject to successful clearance through… Occupational Health (OH) and the SHU Pre-admission declaration for health and social care courses." From their review of the documentation, the visitors were unclear what the requirements for the health checks are, how applicants are made aware of these requirements, and what would happen if a declaration was made, or something discovered through the health check. Therefore, the visitors require that the education provider provide further information around what the health requirements are, and demonstrate that these requirements are appropriate to the programme.

3.6 There must be an effective process in place to ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that the programme has sufficient capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

Reason: From a review of the documentation and from discussions at the visit, the visitors noted that the education provider and the employers have not agreed the availability of practice-based learning for all learners on this programme. Whilst the visitors noted that the education provider is seeking to support up to 20 apprentices per cohort, the education provider expects that many of the apprentices will come from the Social Work Teaching Partnership (SWTP). The SWTP will then support each apprentice with appropriate practice-based learning experience. However, the SWTP has not yet begun the tender process for its social work degree apprenticeship scheme, and therefore the education provider does not know whether places on the programme (and associated practice based learning) will be filled by the SWTP. Additionally, from the practice based learning meeting, the visitors noted that a representative from the

SWTP who was responsible for sourcing practice-based learning was unclear of the proposed learner cohort for this programme, and noted that another programme in the region is also planning to take 20 apprentice learners.

Given the competitive environment within which degree apprenticeships operate, the visitors require further evidence to ensure the standard is met. In particular, the visitors require further documentary evidence which demonstrates that the education provider is able to ensure availability and capacity of practice-based learning for learners on this programme. Evidence for this might include showing that partner organisations are committed to providing sufficient numbers of practice-based learning opportunities to support the planned cohort size. Any evidence provided should also clarify how any such capacity for this programme has been considered in the context of practice-based learning already in operation throughout the region.

3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that online resources are in place before the programme starts, and they are accessible for learners at different sites.

Reason: From the discussions, the visitors understood that the education provider has several existing online resources to support learning for this programme, and is currently developing an additional online tool (Pebble Pad). In the resources presentation, the visitors were introduced to some of the features of Pebble Pad, to support learning in the academic and the practice-based learning environments. Pebble pad will be a portfolio tool for learners to use, and will be accessible to learners at different locations. In the programme team meeting the visitors noted that the education provider is still developing Pebble Pad to support the programme, and that other online resources have yet to be finalised for the programme. In the resources meeting, it was confirmed that the programme team would work with support staff to finalise these resources over the coming months. Therefore, to ensure this standard is met, the visitors require further evidence that demonstrates the online resources will be ready for the start of this programme, and will be accessible from all sites.

4.9 The programme must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that learners are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Reason: From the discussions at the visit, the education provider noted that there will be inter-professional learning (IPL) at practice-based learning settings. They noted that in these environments, learners would work with those from other professions. In their mapping to evidence how they meet this standard, the education provider referenced module descriptors, the mapping of learning outcomes to various standards (including HCPC standards of proficiency (SOPs)), "Skills development sessions and course handbook" and "Service user engagement". The visitors were unclear how this information supports how the standard is met. From the information provided, and from the discussions, the visitors were unclear how the education provider would ensure learners on the programme would be able to learn with and from professionals and learners in other relevant professions. It seemed from the conversations, that learners

will likely work with other professions while undertaking practice-based learning, but the visitors noted that this would not occur in a structured way consistently across the cohort with the current approach. Therefore, there is a risk that learners will not learn with, and from, professionals and learners in other relevant professions. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence which demonstrates how they will ensure learners on this programme are able to learn with, and from, professionals and learners of other relevant professions.

5.7 Practice educators must undertake regular training which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure practice educators undertake initial and regular training, which is appropriate to their role, learners' needs and the delivery of the learning outcomes of the programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, and from discussions, the visitors noted that the practice educators who will be supervising learners at the degree apprenticeship programme, will likely also support learners from other social work programmes at the education provider. The education provider therefore noted that they would be experienced practice educators, and have been trained through education provider policies as part of their existing roles. However, the visitors noted that the type of learners that will be admitted to this programme will likely be different to those on other social work programmes at the education provider. Specifically, they will likely have been out of education for some time, and will also be experienced in the workplace. Therefore, the visitors noted that the learners on this programme may have different learning needs than other social work learners from the education provider. They also noted that the requirements of this programme, including the structure and outcomes, are different to existing social work provision at the education provider. On this basis, the visitors were unclear how the practice educators (ie those that are involved with the supervising and assessing learners, which may include mentors, supervisors, and possibly apprentices' line managers) will be trained to be prepared to support learners on the programme, specific to this programme and their learning needs. To ensure this standard is met, the visitors require further evidence on training for the practice educators which is specific to this programme and the learning needs of the learners.

5.8 Learners and practice educators must have the information they need in a timely manner in order to be prepared for practice‑based learning.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will provide information to learners and practice educators, to prepare them for practice-based learning.

Reason: From the discussions at the visit, the visitors understood that the education provider currently expects apprentices to come from the local Social Work Teaching Partnership (SWTP). Linked to the condition for SET 5.7, the visitors noted that the learners will be undertaking learning in their own work place, but also in different locations. From the information provided, the visitors were unclear how the education provider will prepare learners and practice educators (ie those that are involved with the supervising and assessing learners, which may include mentors, supervisors, and possibly apprentices' line managers) with the information they need for practice-based learning. This is partly due to the practice partners for the programme not yet having

been formally confirmed. To ensure this standard is met, the visitors require further evidence that shows related to practice-based learning, including when it will be delivered to learners and practice educators, and that shows how the information will be appropriate to prepare all parties for practice-based learning.

Recommendations
We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. Recommendations do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

3.9 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Recommendation: The education provider should reconsider the application of their workload model to continue to assure themselves that there is an adequate number of staff to deliver the social work provision, once this programme is running.

Reason: From a review of the submission documentation and through discussions at the visit, the visitors noted that the education provider has a workload model in place to ensure an appropriate number of academic staff are in place to support the delivery of the degree apprenticeship programme, and the social work provision more broadly. Whilst the visitors are satisfied this standard is met, they recommend that the education provider reconsider the application of their workload model once the degree apprentice programme is running. In particular, the visitors recommend that the education provider reassess the workload of the staff team on an ongoing basis once the degree apprenticeship programme starts running, and make changes to staffing as appropriate. This will ensure that the programme remains sufficiently staffed and suitable to effectively support apprentice learning.

3.12 The resources to support learning in all settings must be effective and appropriate to the delivery of the programme, and must be accessible to all learners and educators.

Recommendation: The education provider should review information in the programme documentation, including online resources, to ensure accuracy and consistency in relation to the role of the HCPC, including terminology.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted inconsistencies in the submitted documents. For example, the visitors noted an inconsistency in regards to duration of placements in days. The submission document states that there are two blocks of 100 days of placement (page 21) but page 74 notes practice of 70 days in duration. There is also incorrect and inconsistent information throughout about the HCPC's role, remit and requirements. During the programme team meeting, the education provider clarified that the errors present in the documents submitted were due to typing errors. The visitors noted that the submission document was created for the purpose of this event, and therefore do not need to be amended by the education provider. However, the visitors recommend that the education provider checks to ensure these, and any other errors are not replicated elsewhere, for example in the documentation for learners, or on their website.

5.2 The structure, duration and range of practice-based learning must support the achievement of the learning outcomes and the standards of proficiency.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider broadening the availability of practice-based learning opportunities in the adult area.

Reason: From discussions, the visitors noted that there will be practice-based learning available in the children and family setting, assuming that the programme is able to meet the condition for SET 3.6. Whilst, they were satisfied that SET 5.2 is met, the education provider noted that there is currently a pressure point around practice based-learning in the adult area. As social work is regulated generically across roles and experience, the visitors noted that learners should experience a range of practice-based learning, in order to meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers in England, and to be fit to practice in any setting at the point of completing a programme. The visitors noted that with this programme, there will be additional burden on these settings, and therefore the visitors recommend that the education provider broadens the availability of practice-based learning in the adult setting.