

HCPC approval process report

Education provider	City College Norwich
Validating body	University of East Anglia
Name of programme(s)	BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship, Full time
Approval visit date	23-24 May 2019
Case reference	CAS-14394-X9V5D6

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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:

Luke Tibbits	Social worker
Christine Stogdon	Social worker
Joanne Watchman	Lay
John Archibald	HCPC executive
Temilolu Odunaike	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.

Neil Cooper	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	University of East Anglia
Hannah Jackson	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of East Anglia
Mel Hughes	External panel member	Bournemouth University
Penny Black	Internal panel member	University of East Anglia

Sharon Davies	Internal panel member	University of East Anglia
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Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Social worker in England
Proposed first intake	01 January 2020
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 20
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP02071

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
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

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

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Yes	The programme is not approved and has not run, so we met with learners from the CMI Operations / Departmental Manager Higher Apprenticeship programme, and the BA (Hons) Applied Social Work programmes, which was approved by HCPC and is now closed.
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 12 July 2019.

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 clarify who will pay for the additional costs associated with the programme, and how this will be communicated to applicants.

Reason: The visitors were made aware from the documentation that applicants would have to provide proof of their DBS check. During the meeting with the senior team, the visitors were informed that the responsibility to carry out criminal conviction checks would lie with the employer. However, the visitors could not see any information about who was responsible for paying for the criminal conviction check. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure that applicants to this programme have all the information they require to make an informed choice about taking up a place on this programme. As such, the education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate how they let applicants know about the costs associated with the programme, in particular the additional cost associated with criminal convictions checks.

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 information to ensure applicants are aware that part of the admissions process would be a role play scenario, and about obtaining consent from applicants to participate in the role play.

Reason: The visitors were made aware that as part of the admissions process, those applicants shortlisted for a place on the programme had to participate in an observed role play scenario. The visitors considered the role play might act as a trigger of negative emotions for applicants. During the meeting with the senior team, the visitors were informed there was the intention of gaining consent from applicants to participate in the role play. However, the visitors could not see any information about this in the information for applicants. The visitors therefore require the education provider to ensure that applicants have all the information they require about the admissions process. As such, the education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate how they let applicants know that a role play scenario is part of the admissions process, and obtaining consent to participate in the role play.

2.7 The education provider must ensure that there are equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and that they are implemented and monitored.

Condition: The education provider must provide information to demonstrate that the admissions procedures offer equality of opportunity to all applicants, especially those who may be in a protected category.

Reason: From the documentation provided, the visitors were made aware the education provider has an equality and diversity policy in place. During the senior team meeting, the visitors were informed that the education provider would want to facilitate those employed on a part time basis because of protected characteristics joining the programme. However, the visitors could not see how the education provider intended to achieve this, or any information related to this in the equality and diversity policy. The visitors therefore require the education provider to demonstrate that the admissions procedures offer equality of opportunity to all applicants, especially those who may be in a protected category.

3.1 The programme must be sustainable and fit for purpose.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate their commitment to current and future staffing plans, to ensure the programme is sustainable.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors were made aware of the tender document which sets out the agreement between the education provider and Norfolk County Council (NCC), who will be providing the learners for the programme. The visitors noted the tender document between NCC and the education provider, which required the programme to be adequately resourced, with an appropriate number of suitably qualified and registered teaching staff, who are knowledgeable and skills in the areas they will be teaching. The education provider noted that by signing the contract, they had committed to the staffing and management of the programme. The visitors also heard the education provider was confident in providing the amount of staff resources according to the programme needs. However, the visitors were unable to see how the education provider would ensure that there would be appropriate staffing for the programme as it progresses and recruits each cohort of learners. The visitors were also not sure how the education provider would review and if required increase staff resources to deliver the programme, to ensure that the programme has enough resources for delivery. As such, the education provider must provide evidence on current and future arrangements that the education provider would be committed in regards to staffing that the programme is sustainable and fit for purpose.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must clarify the lines of responsibility for the programme to ensure there is effective management.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors were made aware areas of the governance of the programme will include representatives from both Norfolk County Council (NCC) and University of East Anglia (UEA). From discussions at the visit, the visitors were informed that the education provider and NCC had held a number of meetings around programme management. However, from these conversations and from the documentation, the visitors were unsure who was responsible for the co-ordination of the programme and were not able to see that the education provider had clear oversight of the management systems and structures within NCC to ensure the programme will be effectively managed. The visitors therefore require clarification as to who is responsible for the coordination of the programme within the partnership to ensure there is effective management and clear responsibility for the programme.

3.3 The education provider must ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the process for identifying and appointing an appropriately qualified and experienced person to hold overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriate.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors were directed to the curriculum vitae of the programme lead, the deputy director of HE and the academic lead for Health and Social Care to evidence this standard. From the information provided, the visitors were aware of the individuals who have overall professional responsibility of the programme. The visitors noted the staff identified were appropriately qualified and experienced. However, the visitors did not receive information to confirm how the education provider identifies a suitable person and, if it becomes necessary, a suitable replacement. As such the visitors require the education provider to demonstrate they have an effective process in place to ensure that the person with overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

3.7 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of how service users and carers will be involved in the programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors were made aware the education provider will explore reforming their service user and carer involvement group. The service users and carers informed the visitors they had met with the programme lead and had discussed the planning of the programme. In the meeting with the programme team, the visitors were informed the programme had plans to use service users and carers in the programme. The education provider supplied further information about the service user and carer involvement on the programme at the visit

but the visitors did not have the opportunity to look at the information. The visitors did not see a defined plan of service users and carers' involvement, or how the involvement will be monitored and evaluated. Therefore, the visitors require the education provider to submit further evidence demonstrating that service users and carers will contribute to the overall quality and effectiveness of the programme to ensure learners completing the programme are fit to practice.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate there will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: From the documents provided, the visitors were made aware the education provider has two qualified and registered social workers who will lead and teach on the programme. In the programme team meeting, the visitors were informed the programme lead would be undertaking teaching on the first year, and the programme would use sessional lecturers if necessary. From the information, the visitors were unclear whether there was an adequate number of staff in place to undertake all requirements of the programme, the number of learners, their needs and the learning outcomes to be achieved. The visitors therefore require more information which demonstrates there is a sufficient number of staff to deliver the programme.

3.10 Subject areas must be delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate educators have the necessary knowledge and expertise to deliver their parts of the programme effectively.

Reason: From the documents provided, the visitors were made aware the education provider has two qualified and registered social workers who will lead and teach on the programme. In the programme team meeting, the visitors were informed three staff are qualified in social work. One of these is a sessional lecturer and another is the programme lead on a separate programme. The visitors were unclear whether educators on the programme are suitable and have the required specialist knowledge and expertise to take part in teaching and to support learning in the subject areas they are involved in. The visitors therefore need further information to demonstrate educators have the necessary knowledge and expertise to deliver their parts of the programme effectively.

3.15 There must be a thorough and effective process in place for receiving and responding to learner complaints.

Condition: The education provider must ensure clear information is provided to learners about the process to raise complaints.

Reason: From a review of the evidence provided the visitors were made aware the education provider have a student complaints procedure. However, due to the nature of this programme being mainly conducted in the workplace, the visitors were unclear as to what complaints process the learners should follow in different settings. In the learner meeting, the visitors were informed a learner complaint would be initially made with the

education provider. In the meeting with the practice educators, the visitors understood that learners would initially raise complaints with the practice educator tutor. From this information, the visitors were unclear which process the learners should be using or how learners, academic staff and practice educators would know what process to follow. Therefore, the visitors were unable to determine whether the process for receiving learner complaints is thorough and effective. As such, the visitors require further evidence that clearly defines which process the learners will use should they need to raise a complaint and how all parties involved are informed of this process so that it is clear to all who could be involved.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that learners meet the standards of proficiency for the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the learning outcomes ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for social workers in England.

Reason: From the documentation provided, the visitors were made aware of some topics within modules which were described as 'enhancement / extra-curricular topics'. These topics were:

- Induction;
- The social worker;
- Digital skills;
- Ethics and values;
- Embracing diversity;
- Anti-oppressive practice;
- Cultural competence;
- Domestic violence;
- Substance misuse;
- Professional resilience;
- Learning disabilities / autism;
- Poverty and social justice;
- Contemporary issues in social work;
- Preparation for the EPA gateway; and
- EPA preparation and support

The visitors considered these topics to be among core topics in the professional experience of a social worker and if they were not studied learners would not be able meet the SOPs for social workers in England. For example, the visitors considered if a learner chose not to undertake the topic of digital skills in the Higher Learning Skills and / or Introduction to Social Work Practice modules, they would not meet SOP 14.8, that Registrant social workers in England must:

- be able to demonstrate a level of skill in the use of information technology appropriate to their practice.

Therefore, the visitors were unable to determine how the learning outcomes ensure that learners will meet the standards of proficiency for social workers in England. The visitors therefore require further information to ensure the SOPs are covered by the learning outcomes in the programme so learners meet the SOPs.

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 articulate what interprofessional learning there will be on the programmes, and how they will ensure that learners learn with and from professionals and learners in other relevant professions.

Reason: For this standard, the visitors were made aware staff from other degree apprenticeship programmes will be involved in teaching on the programme. In the meeting with the programme team, the visitors were informed the education provider proposed to group learners from different programmes to learn together if appropriate for them to do so. However, with this limited amount of detail, the visitors were unable to see definite plans for interprofessional learning on the programme and were unsure whether interprofessional learning on the programme was relevant as possible for learners and for the most benefit for their future professional practice. The visitors therefore require further information about what types of interprofessional learning will take place on the programme, and the professions and the length of time involved, to ensure learners are prepared to work with other professionals and across professions.

4.10 The programme must include effective processes for obtaining appropriate consent from service users and learners.

Condition: The education provider must ensure there is an effective process for obtaining consent from service users in all settings on the programme.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors were made aware the programme has an effective process for obtaining consent from service users within practice-based learning. In the programme team meeting, the visitors were informed an addendum about gaining consent from service users in the teaching setting had been submitted internally for approval. However, the visitors had not had sight of this document in its approved and final form. Therefore, the visitors could not be sure there was a system in place for obtaining consent from service users who interact with learners in circumstances outside of practice-based learning. The visitors therefore require further information to ensure service users who interact with learners give appropriate consent in all settings on the programme.

4.11 The education provider must identify and communicate to learners the parts of the programme where attendance is mandatory, and must have associated monitoring processes in place.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that their attendance policy is clear and consistent in programme documentation, along with how these requirements are communicated to learners.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted learners have to attend a minimum of 90 per cent of the taught modules, and 100 per cent of the assessed practice placement days. In the programme team meeting, the visitors understood there were two separate policies in regards to attendance, one owned by the education provider and one by Norfolk County Council (NCC). Although the education provider supplied information of the attendance policies of both bodies at the visit, the visitors did not have the opportunity to review them. The visitors could not be sure that the systems in place to monitor attendance (and to take appropriate action if learners fail to attend the compulsory parts of the programme) are appropriate and clear to the programme's stakeholders. The visitors therefore need to review the attendance policies, and consider how these policies would work in practice, to ensure stakeholders are aware of

the requirements on the programme and any consequences of missing compulsory parts of the programme.

5.6 Practice educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to support safe and effective learning and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, must be on the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the practice educators have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience.

Reason: From the documentation provided, the visitors were made aware Norfolk County Council (NCC) holds a list of those individuals who are registered as practice educators and has responsibility for identifying suitable practice educators. In the meeting with practice educators, the visitors understood practice educators undertake initial and ongoing training through UEA. However, the visitors were not clear whether the education provider has access to this information, to ensure practice educators have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to be able to support safe and effective practice-based learning. The visitors therefore require further information to show the education provider has processes in place to check that practice educators have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience and are appropriately registered.

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 provide further evidence to demonstrate how they ensure practice educators undertake regular training appropriate to the programme.

Reason: From the documentation provided, the visitors noted Norfolk County Council (NCC) holds a list of those individuals who are registered as practice educators and have responsibility for identifying suitable practice educators. In the meeting with practice educators, the visitors were informed practice educators undertake initial and ongoing training through UEA. However, the visitors were not clear whether the education provider has access to information regarding who is trained and who has undertaken ongoing training. The visitors therefore require further information, which demonstrates how the education provider ensures practice educators are appropriately prepared to be able to support learning and assess learners effectively.

Section 5: Outcome from second review

Second response to conditions required

The education provider responded to the conditions set out in section 4. Following their consideration of this response, the visitors were satisfied that the conditions for several of the standards were met. However, they were not satisfied that the following conditions were met, for the reasons detailed below. Therefore, in order for the visitors to be satisfied that the following conditions are met, they require further evidence.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must clarify the lines of responsibility for the programme to ensure there is effective management.

Reason condition not met at this time: In response to this condition, the visitors were made aware of meetings between Norfolk County Council (NCC) and City College Norwich at different levels within the organisations. However, the visitors remained unclear about the overall lines of responsibility for the programme between the education provider and the employer. The visitors were also not able to see that the education provider had clear oversight of the management systems and structures within NCC to ensure the programme will be effectively managed. The visitors therefore require clarification as to who is responsible for the coordination of the programme within the partnership, to ensure there is effective management and clear responsibility for the programme.

Suggested documentation: The education provider should provide further evidence, such as a management plan, of the lines of responsibility between themselves and NCC, for the coordination of the programme to ensure there is effective management and clear responsibility for the programme.

3.3 The education provider must ensure that the person holding overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the process for identifying and appointing an appropriately qualified and experienced person to hold overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriate.

Reason condition not met at this time: In response to the condition for this standard, the visitors noted the education provider had supplied a narrative about the appointment process. The narrative stated that requirements for the role will be made clear in the job description and person specification. These requirements would be explained in the advertising of the vacancy. The narrative also explained that appointments will take place following an interview and selection process. The visitors, however, had not seen evidence of the job description and person specification for the role, nor details about the selection process. The visitors were therefore unclear about how the education provider identifies a suitable person and, if it becomes necessary, a suitable replacement. As such the visitors require the education provider to demonstrate they have an effective process in place to ensure that the person with overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are appropriate, on the relevant part of the Register.

Suggested documentation: The education provider should provide evidence of how they ensure the person in this role is suitable, for example, a role profile, job description, person specification, recruitment process, expression of interest process, or any other information which demonstrates how they ensure the individual is appropriate.

3.15 There must be a thorough and effective process in place for receiving and responding to learner complaints.

Condition: The education provider must ensure clear information is provided to learners about the process to raise complaints.

Reason condition not met at this time: In response to this condition, the visitors were made aware that the education provider's process for raising learner complaints in the practice-based learning setting, while Norfolk County Council, who will be providing the learners for the programme, have a grievance policy. However, the visitors remained unclear as to what complaints process learners should follow in the academic setting. Therefore, the visitors were unable to determine whether the process for receiving learner complaints is thorough and effective. As such, the visitors require further evidence that clearly defines which process learners will use in all settings of the programme, and how all parties involved are told of this process so they are clearly informed.

Suggested documentation: The education provider should provide further evidence of how learners are to make a complaint in all settings of the programme.

Section 6: Visitors' recommendation

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, and the request for further evidence set out in section 5, the visitors are satisfied that the conditions are met and recommend that the programme(s) are approved.

This report, including the recommendation of the visitors, will be considered at the 26 September 2019 meeting of the ETC. Following this meeting, this report should be read alongside the ETC's decision notice, which are available [on our website](#).