

## HCPC approval process report

Education provider	University of Gloucestershire
Name of programme(s)	BSc (Hons) Social Work (Yeovil), Full time
Approval visit date	30 - 31 October 2018
Case reference	CAS-13515-X1G2P7

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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:

Christine Stogdon	Social worker
Dorothy Smith	Social worker
Ian Hughes	Lay
John Archibald	HCPC executive

### 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.

Pat Denham	Independent chair (supplied by the education provider)	Self-employed
Yvonne Metcalfe	Secretary (supplied by the education provider)	University of Gloucestershire

## Section 2: Programme details

Programme name	BSc (Hons) Social Work (Yeovil)
Mode of study	FT (Full time)
Profession	Social worker in England
Proposed First intake	01 January 2019
Maximum learner cohort	Up to 30
Intakes per year	1
Assessment reference	APP01997

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. We were told of the establishment of this new programme through our major change process. This programme was established out of existing social work provision at the education provider which is delivered at a different site.

## 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	Not Required

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

Group	Met	Comments
Learners	Yes	This is a new programme, so the panel met with learners from the BA (Hons) Childhood Studies, Care and Education programme, who study at the same site as the proposed programme.
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 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 ensure that appropriate, clear and consistent information is available to applicants and which enables them to make an informed choice about whether to take up a place on the programme.

**Reason:** From their review of the programme documentation, the visitors considered that some of the information available to applicants was not clear or not correct. For example, reference was made to the programmes giving "eligibility to register as a qualified social worker" rather than graduates being "eligible to apply for registration". The documentation referred to the Health and Social Care Professions Council rather than the Health and Care Professions Council, and there was a reference to the 2012 version of the HCPC Standards of Proficiency (SOPs) for social workers in England, rather than to the most recent revised version from 2017. There was also reference to the HCPC having specified all social work degree programmes must ensure all learners spend 170 days in practice-based learning. The HCPC does not stipulate such a requirement. The visitors require the education provider to review the programme documentation, including advertising materials to ensure that the terminology used is accurate, reflects the language associated with statutory regulation and avoids any potential confusion for applicants.

In addition, on the tour of resources, the visitors were told there was compulsory teaching at the education provider's Cheltenham campus for eight days, which was not reflected in the information to applicants. Therefore, the visitors were not able to determine whether the information provided was sufficient to enable applicants to make an informed choice about taking up a place on the programme. They therefore require

the education provider to review all relevant materials to ensure accurate and complete information about the programme is provided to applicants.

### **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 there is sufficient practice-based learning available for all learners.

**Reason:** From a review of the documentation, the visitors saw a memorandum of understanding between the education provider and Somerset County Council for practice-based learning for all learners for the final year. However, the visitors did not see a process in place to ensure practice-based learning would be available to all learners in the second year of the programme. At the visit, the programme team explained to the visitors that there was no process in place at the moment and gave assurance that one was being developed. The visitors were also informed that the placement co-ordinator was identifying more agencies to work with. The education provider said they were confident they have the provision for the number of learners proposed for the programme. However, the visitors were not able to see whether there will be adequate practice-based learning opportunities in the second year and therefore need to see evidence to demonstrate there is an effective process in place that will ensure the availability and capacity of practice-based learning for all learners.

### **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 throughout the programme.

**Reason:** To demonstrate how they meet this standard, the education provider provided the terms of reference for its programme management committee, which included information about service user involvement on this committee. At the visit, the visitors met two service users who, although they had been involved in the programme delivered at Cheltenham, had not been involved with the programme to be delivered at Yeovil. The programme team said they were at the discussion stage on how service users and carers would be involved in the programme, and how they would support service users and carers to be involved. The programme team said they were looking to work with local groups at Yeovil District Hospital and Somerset County Council, but added that they needed to formalise the involvement of service users and carers. The visitors were therefore unable to determine whether service users and carers contributed to the programme. The visitors require the education provider to provide information as to the areas of the programme service users and carers are involved, and how will they be supported in their involvement. The education provider should also demonstrate how the involvement is appropriate to the programme and how it will contribute to the governance and continuous improvement the programme.

### **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 demonstrate how they will ensure that all educators have access to resources to support learning in all settings.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors were made aware of the library resources learners and educators on the programme will have access to. However, at the meeting with the practice educators, the visitors were informed that practice educators did not have access to the academic resources available to learners through the library, in particular key texts used for teaching on the programme. The programme team assured the visitors that practice educators would be made associate members of the library and that this could be easily established. However, because the visitors were provided with verbal reassurances / plans, and have not seen this in documentation, the visitors could not determine that this standard would be met. As such, the visitors require evidence that the practice educators will be given access to all resources appropriate to their role in the delivery of the programme.

#### **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 clearly define what interprofessional learning there will be on the programme, and how they will ensure learners will learn with and from professionals and learners in other relevant professions

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors were directed to the course handbook which states “a variety of teaching methods designed to embrace students’ different learning styles are central to the programme”. The visitors were also made aware of different types of learning and teaching opportunities. At the visit, the programme team explained their intentions for learners to work together with registered paramedics, nurses and police to come up with a multi-agency approach to situations. Although the visitors were provided with verbal reassurances and plans, they have not seen evidence of how the programme will ensure learners learn with and from other relevant professionals and learners, and across professions. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence that demonstrates this is included in the programme in way that will ensure this standard is met.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate how they obtain appropriate consent from learners to participate in experiential learning on the programme.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided, the visitors were directed to the placement approval document which said consent from service users and carers must be gained before observation takes place. The visitors also saw the student contract, which set out the terms and conditions for learners to study on the programme. In the programme team meeting the education provider informed the visitors they expected learners to agree to engage with experiential learning through the signing of the student contract. The visitors saw that consent was implicit in the signing of the student contract, however, they were not able to see the information clearly in the documentation. The student contract did not explicitly gather consent from learners. The visitors therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence which shows how they clearly obtain appropriate consent from learners in situations where they take part as participants in experiential learning.

### **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 ensure learners and practice educators have the necessary information for them to be prepared for practice-based learning in non-statutory settings.

**Reason:** At the visit, practice educators from statutory practice education providers informed the visitors they received information about practice-based learning three months in advance. However, the visitors were not able to see evidence of how learners and practice educators were informed of any non-statutory practice-based learning opportunities. Therefore the visitors were unable to determine whether those learners and practice educators understand their roles and expectations for the practice-based learning in order for it to be safe and effective. As such, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider ensures learners and practice educators in non-statutory practice-based learning settings receive the information they need in a timely manner.

#### **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.

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

**Recommendation:** The education provider should consider keeping their staff planning under review to ensure educators have the necessary knowledge and expertise to deliver their parts of the programme effectively.

**Reason:** From the documentation provided, the visitors were directed to the curriculum vitae of staff contributing to the programme. At the visit, the visitors were informed the education provider planned to recruit new staff to the programme. They also heard that staff based at the education provider's Cheltenham campus were going to be in attendance at Yeovil on a routine basis in order to support the staff based at Yeovil. As such, the visitors were satisfied this standard was met at threshold. However, the current levels of staffing provides only one qualified social worker based at the Yeovil campus, and that staff member has child care experience only. The visitors therefore consider the range of experience of staff based in Yeovil to be vulnerable if staff move away from Yeovil. They therefore suggest the education provider consider how best to ensure subject areas are delivered by educators with relevant specialist knowledge and expertise.

## **Section 5: Visitors' recommendation**

Considering the education provider's response to the conditions set out in section 4, 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 30 January 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](#).