Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Bournemouth University
Programme name	MA Advanced Mental Health Practice (AMHP)
Mode of delivery	Part time
Type of programme	Approved mental health professional
Date of visit	11 – 12 February 2014

Contents

Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. We are a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. We currently regulate 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using a protected title must be registered with us. The HCPC keep a register of health and care professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

As well as approving educational programmes for people who want to join the Register or have an annotation on their Registration record, the HCPC also approve a small number of programmes which are not linked to HCPC Registration. These programmes are for the profession of approved mental health practitioners (AMHPs) (for social workers, mental health and learning disabilities nurses, occupational therapists and practitioner psychologists).

The HCPC criteria for approving AMHP programmes set out the systems and processes an education provider is expected to have in place to deliver an AMHP programme, as well as the competencies professionals must achieve on completing the programme.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the approval of the programme. The education provider has until 25 March 2014 to provide observations on this report. This is independent of meeting any conditions. The report and any observations received will be considered by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 15 May 2014. At this meeting, the Committee will accept the visitors' recommended outcome, including the conditions. If necessary, the Committee may decide to vary the conditions.

The education provider is due to redraft and resubmit documentary evidence in response to the conditions outlined in this report by 29 May 2014. The visitors will consider this response and make a separate recommendation to the Committee on the approval of the programme. It is anticipated that this recommendation will be made to the Committee on 2 July 2014.

Introduction

When the regulation of social workers in England transferred from the General Social Care Council (GSCC) to ourselves, we took responsibility for approving AMHP programmes in England. The Health and Social Care Act (2012) gives us powers to set criteria for approving AMHP programmes. A decision was made by the Education and Training Committee to visit all existing AMHP programmes. This visit is to assess the programmes against the criteria for approving AMHP programmes and professionals who complete it will be able to achieve the criteria for approved mental health professionals.

This visit was part of a joint event. The education provider reviewed the programme. The visit also considered a Postgraduate Diploma Advanced Mental Health Practice (AMHP). The education provider and the HCPC formed a joint panel, with an independent chair and secretary, supplied by the education provider. Whilst the joint panel participated in collaborative scrutiny of all the programmes and dialogue throughout the visit, this report covers the HCPC's recommendations on this programme only. A separate report exists for the other programme. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the criteria for approving approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes. A separate report, produced by the education provider, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and visitor role	Graham Noyce (Approved mental health professional)
	Christine Stogdon (Approved mental health professional)
	Joanna Jackson (Physiotherapist)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Nicola Baker
Proposed student numbers	Fifteen per cohort; six cohorts a year inclusive of students from the Postgraduate Diploma Advanced Mental Health Practice (AMHP)
First approved intake	October 2008
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2014
Chair	Xavier Velay (Bournemouth University)
Secretary	Lianne Hutchings (Bournemouth University)
Members of the joint panel	Sue Wallace (Internal Panel Member)
	Julie Stroud (External Panel Member)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	☒	☐	☐
Descriptions of the modules	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the criteria for approving AMHP programmes	☒	☐	☐
Practice placement handbook	☒	☐	☐
Student handbook	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐	☐
External examiners' reports from the last two years	☒	☐	☐

During the visit the HCPC saw the following groups or facilities:

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme	☒	☐	☐
Programme team	☒	☐	☐
Placements providers and educators/mentors	☒	☐	☐
Students	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☒	☐	☐

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for approval, the visitors must be assured that the programme meets all of the criteria for approving AMHP programmes and professionals who complete it will be able to achieve the criteria for approved mental health professionals

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that a number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 42 of the criteria have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining eight criteria.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for approval. Conditions are set when certain criteria have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the criteria being met.

The visitors have also made a number of recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme is recommended for approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set when it is felt that the particular criterion has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

A.1 The admissions procedures 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 an programme

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the admissions process ensures that students entering the programme are fully informed as to the specific contractual arrangements that will apply to them, particularly regarding funding and progression.

Reason: The application form and information sheet provided to potential applicants and employers outline that a place on the programme is subject to ongoing agreement by the student's employer that they will fund the place on the programme and provide a suitable placement. In discussion with the students, the visitors noted that some of them have the requirement to become an AMHP written into their contracts with their employer, and many were unsure as to what would happen if they were not able to pass the programme or elements within it. The programme team confirmed the education provider's policy for resits, repeats and progression through the programme. However, the visitors noted that the employers had varying approaches as to whether they will continue to fund students through the full number of resits available or any breaks in study. This inconsistency between the employers may cause confusion for students. Any contractual arrangements which apply to the student's progression, such as whether students not successfully completing the programme can return to their previous role, should be made clear to students as they enter the programme. The visitors acknowledged that these decisions sit with the employers, but this criterion requires the education provider to ensure that applicants have all of the information they require in order to make an informed choice on entry to the programme. The visitors were unable to determine that the funding and contractual arrangements for students on the programme were made clear in the admissions process, whether from the employer or the education provider. They therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider ensures that students are aware of the financial and employment implications that will apply to them as they progress through the programme.

C.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the criteria in section 2

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the module learning outcomes ensure students who complete the programme meet the following criterion in section 2 of the approval criteria for approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes:

1.8 Understand child and adult protection procedures in relation to AMHP work.

Reason: The documentation provided before the visit included a mapping document to section 2 of the approval criteria for approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes. The mapping for 1.8 referred visitors to module descriptors for Unit B (Mental Health and the Law) and Unit C (The AMHP Role in Practice)'s learning outcomes and indicative content. It also highlighted the practice requirements as delivered in Unit D – Evidencing Professional Learning. Though there was reference in the indicative content, the visitors could not see any direct references to child protection in module descriptor learning outcomes. In discussion at the visit, the

students present were unable to recall any specific taught sessions regarding child protection. The visitors heard from the programme team that child protection was threaded throughout the programme, though this discussion also highlighted a shortage of child protection materials on module reading lists. In light of this, the visitors are unable to determine that criterion C.1 is met, specifically considering criteria 1.8 section 2 of the approval criteria for (AMHP) programmes. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the module learning outcomes will ensure students are able to meet the criteria for 1.8.

D.3 The practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence as to how they ensure that practice placement settings will be a safe and supportive environment.

Reason: At the visit, discussion indicated the practice placement representatives were responsible for managing the placements, including ensuring settings are appropriate, monitoring learning opportunities and managing any difficulties that may arise, with limited involvement from the education provider. The programme team and placement staff highlighted that there were regular workshops and meetings which provide opportunities for placement educators and representatives from all practice placement providers to meet with each other and members of the programme team. They also confirmed that any concerns that arise would be discussed between the programme team and appropriate placement staff if necessary. It was clear that there were reactive processes in place if an issue was identified at a practice placement, however the visitors could not find evidence of any formal mechanisms in place to ensure the quality of practice placements before they are used (see criterion D.4). Regardless of where the processes for approval and monitoring of placements take place, this criterion requires the education provider to hold responsibility for ensuring the placement settings will provide a safe and supportive environment for student learning. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the processes in place to demonstrate that the education provider has responsibility for ensuring practice placements provide safe and supportive environments.

D.4 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements

Condition: The education provider must submit evidence to demonstrate how they maintain a thorough and effective system of approving and monitoring all placements.

Reason: Documentation submitted for this criterion included the programme's management outline (Additional documentation booklet, page 21). At the visit, discussions confirmed the management responsibilities, including that the practice placement representatives were responsible for managing the placements, including ensuring settings are appropriate. As stated for criterion D.3, it was clear that there were opportunities and processes in place for practice placement staff to consult the programme team if an issue was identified at a practice placement. However the visitors were unable to find evidence of a formal system or audit tool for the initial assessment and ongoing, regular monitoring of all placements. Irrespective of where the processes for identifying, assessing and auditing placements take place, this criterion requires the education provider to maintain a thorough and effective system for ensuring the placement settings are appropriate. The visitors therefore require

further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider maintains a thorough and effective system of approving and monitoring all placements.

D.6 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified, experienced and, where required, registered staff at the practice placement setting

Condition: The programme team must ensure that there are an adequate number of appropriately qualified, experienced and, where required, registered staff at the practice placement setting.

Reason: From the documentation provided, the visitors were made aware that the Practice Assessment – Additional Guidance to Agencies / Employers (Additional documentation booklet, page 25) outlines requirements and recommendations for the agency representatives, practice assessors and placements. Through this guidance, the education provider states that the agency must have a representative, who '…will identify a suitable placement and suitable Practice Assessor for each applicant / trainee that has been put forward…'. This, along with discussions at the visit, indicated that the placement provider determines what is deemed as adequate supervision and setting for practice learning. The guidance also recommends that placement educators have a minimum of two years' experience as an AMHP and are currently practicing (and are therefore registered with the relevant profession). However, the documentation did not provide information as to any audit tools or systems the education provider uses to ensure that there is an adequate number of staff, with the relevant qualifications and experience to support the students in placements. The visitors therefore require further evidence that clearly articulates the steps taken by the education provider to ensure that all practice placement settings will have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

D.7 Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence of the processes they use to ensure that practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to supervise and support AMHP students.

Reason: As stated for criterion D.6, the documentation and discussions at the visit indicated that the placement provider must have a representative, who '…will identify a suitable placement and suitable Practice Assessor for each applicant / trainee that has been put forward…'. This, along with discussions at the visit, indicated that the placement provider identifies placement educators and determines their suitability for supporting and assessing students. The guidance given to placement provider representatives recommends that placement educators have a minimum of two years' experience as an AMHP and are currently practicing (and are therefore registered with the relevant profession). However, the visitors could not find detail in the documentation of any formal checks or processes from the education provider as to how they ensure that practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience. To ensure that this standard is met, the visitors require the education provider to articulate clearly the steps taken to ensure that the criteria for placement educators, in terms of the required knowledge, skills and experience, are met.

D.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence as to how they confirm that practice placement educators are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: The evidence provided for this standard was the Practice Assessment – Additional Guidance to Agencies / Employers and information about the practice assessor role as contained in the Practice Assessment Guide. Discussions at the visit indicated that the placement provider will be responsible for identifying placement educators, checking registration details and ensuring they are currently practicing as an AMHP. From the evidence provided, the visitors could not see a system that would be used by the education provider to confirm that practice placement educators are appropriately registered and therefore meet the criteria they set out for practice placement educators. As a result, the visitors require further evidence of the process that will be in place to ensure that this criterion can be met.

E.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the competencies set out in section 2 of the criteria

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the assessment of the module learning outcomes will ensure students who complete the programme meet the following criterion in section 2 of the approval criteria for approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes:

1.8 Understand child and adult protection procedures in relation to AMHP work.

Reason: The documentation provided before the visit included a mapping document to section 2 of the approval criteria for approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes. The mapping for 1.8 referred visitors to module descriptors for Unit B (Mental Health and the Law) and Unit C (The AMHP Role in Practice)'s learning outcomes and indicative content. It also highlighted the practice requirements as delivered in Unit D – Evidencing Professional Learning. Though there was reference in the indicative content, the visitors could not see any direct references to child protection in module descriptor learning outcomes, or how it would be assessed. In light of the above the visitors are unable to determine criterion E.1 is met specifically relating to criteria 1.8 of section 2 of the approval criteria for approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the assessment of the module learning outcomes will ensure students are able to meet the criteria.

Recommendations

A.3 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the programme team clarify accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (APL or AP(E)L) policies for Approved Social Workers (ASWs) as articulated at the visit within programme admissions materials.

Reason: From the documentation submitted, the visitors were confident that the education provider have an appropriate AP(E)L policy in place for implementation in the admissions for this programme. In the presentation slides for placement educators (Practice Assessment Guide, page 50), the visitors noted that it states that the education provider have an APL process in place for applicants who were previously Approved Social Workers (ASWs). The programme team confirmed the details of this at the visit. However, in the advertising materials for the programme that were provided, the visitors were unable to find any information or reference to this specific route. They therefore recommend that the programme team update the information for potential applicants to the programme to ensure it is clear and accessible regarding the various APL and AP(E)L routes onto the programme that are available.

B.15 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme

Recommendation: The programme team are advised to monitor service user and carer contributions to the programme to ensure all parties are supported.

Reason: At the visit, service users outlined the various contributions they make to the programme, including facilitating or co-facilitating debating sessions on ethics and values. The visitors were confident that these sessions act as a very powerful learning tool for the students. The visitors heard the way in which the debates were conducted, where students were given only some of the facts at the beginning of the session, and further aspects of the case were revealed following the debate. The visitors noted that there was the potential for this to cause emotional discomfort for the students or the service users involved, as the students were invited to make judgements about the service user's life without the full context of the service user's disclosed life history. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team continue to monitor the support they give to students and contributors through these sessions, or consider if the session could be delivered differently to avoid any potential for emotional distress. In this way they can be sure that service user and carer contributions are integrated to student learning in the most productive way.

Graham Noyce
Joanna Jackson
Christine Stogdon

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Bournemouth University
Programme name	Postgraduate Diploma Advanced Mental Health Practice (AMHP)
Mode of delivery	Work based learning
Type of programme	Approved mental health professional
Date of visit	11 – 12 February 2014

Contents

Executive summary

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This visit was part of a joint event. The education provider reviewed the programme. The visit also considered a MA Advanced Mental Health Practice (AMHP). The education provider and the HCPC formed a joint panel, with an independent chair and secretary, supplied by the education provider. Whilst the joint panel participated in collaborative scrutiny of all the programmes and dialogue throughout the visit, this report covers the HCPC's recommendations on this programme only. A separate report exists for the other programme. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the criteria for approving approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes. A separate report, produced by the education provider, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and visitor role	Graham Noyce (Approved mental health professional)
	Christine Stogdon (Approved mental health professional)
	Joanna Jackson (Physiotherapist)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Nicola Baker
Proposed student numbers	Fifteen per cohort; six cohorts a year inclusive of students from the MA Advanced Mental Health Practice (AMHP)
First approved intake	October 2008
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	September 2014
Chair	Xavier Velay (Bournemouth University)
Secretary	Lianne Hutchings (Bournemouth University)
Members of the joint panel	Sue Wallace (Internal Panel Member)
	Julie Stroud (External Panel Member)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

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Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐	☐
External examiners' reports from the last two years	☒	☐	☐

During the visit the HCPC saw the following groups or facilities:

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme	☒	☐	☐
Programme team	☒	☐	☐
Placements providers and educators/mentors	☒	☐	☐
Students	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☒	☐	☐

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for approval, the visitors must be assured that the programme meets all of the criteria for approving AMHP programmes and professionals who complete it will be able to achieve the criteria for approved mental health professionals

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that a number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 42 of the criteria have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining eight criteria.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for approval. Conditions are set when certain criteria have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the criteria being met.

The visitors have also made a number of recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme is recommended for approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set when it is felt that the particular criterion has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

A.1 The admissions procedures 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 an programme

Condition: The education provider must ensure that the admissions process ensures that students entering the programme are fully informed as to the specific contractual arrangements that will apply to them, particularly regarding funding and progression.

Reason: The application form and information sheet provided to potential applicants and employers outline that a place on the programme is subject to ongoing agreement by the student's employer that they will fund the place on the programme and provide a suitable placement. In discussion with the students, the visitors noted that some of them have the requirement to become an AMHP written into their contracts with their employer, and many were unsure as to what would happen if they were not able to pass the programme or elements within it. The programme team confirmed the education provider's policy for resits, repeats and progression through the programme. However, the visitors noted that the employers had varying approaches as to whether they will continue to fund students through the full number of resits available or any breaks in study. This inconsistency between the employers may cause confusion for students. Any contractual arrangements which apply to the student's progression, such as whether students not successfully completing the programme can return to their previous role, should be made clear to students as they enter the programme. The visitors acknowledged that these decisions sit with the employers, but this criterion requires the education provider to ensure that applicants have all of the information they require in order to make an informed choice on entry to the programme. The visitors were unable to determine that the funding and contractual arrangements for students on the programme were made clear in the admissions process, whether from the employer or the education provider. They therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider ensures that students are aware of the financial and employment implications that will apply to them as they progress through the programme.

C.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the criteria in section 2

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the module learning outcomes ensure students who complete the programme meet the following criterion in section 2 of the approval criteria for approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes:

1.8 Understand child and adult protection procedures in relation to AMHP work.

Reason: The documentation provided before the visit included a mapping document to section 2 of the approval criteria for approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes. The mapping for 1.8 referred visitors to module descriptors for Unit B (Mental Health and the Law) and Unit C (The AMHP Role in Practice)'s learning outcomes and indicative content. It also highlighted the practice requirements as delivered in Unit D – Evidencing Professional Learning. Though there was reference in the indicative content, the visitors could not see any direct references to child protection in module descriptor learning outcomes. In discussion at the visit, the

students present were unable to recall any specific taught sessions regarding child protection. The visitors heard from the programme team that child protection was threaded throughout the programme, though this discussion also highlighted a shortage of child protection materials on module reading lists. In light of this, the visitors are unable to determine that criterion C.1 is met, specifically considering criteria 1.8 section 2 of the approval criteria for (AMHP) programmes. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the module learning outcomes will ensure students are able to meet the criteria for 1.8.

D.3 The practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence as to how they ensure that practice placement settings will be a safe and supportive environment.

Reason: At the visit, discussion indicated the practice placement representatives were responsible for managing the placements, including ensuring settings are appropriate, monitoring learning opportunities and managing any difficulties that may arise, with limited involvement from the education provider. The programme team and placement staff highlighted that there were regular workshops and meetings which provide opportunities for placement educators and representatives from all practice placement providers to meet with each other and members of the programme team. They also confirmed that any concerns that arise would be discussed between the programme team and appropriate placement staff if necessary. It was clear that there were reactive processes in place if an issue was identified at a practice placement, however the visitors could not find evidence of any formal mechanisms in place to ensure the quality of practice placements before they are used (see criterion D.4). Regardless of where the processes for approval and monitoring of placements take place, this criterion requires the education provider to hold responsibility for ensuring the placement settings will provide a safe and supportive environment for student learning. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the processes in place to demonstrate that the education provider has responsibility for ensuring practice placements provide safe and supportive environments.

D.4 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements

Condition: The education provider must submit evidence to demonstrate how they maintain a thorough and effective system of approving and monitoring all placements.

Reason: Documentation submitted for this criterion included the programme's management outline (Additional documentation booklet, page 21). At the visit, discussions confirmed the management responsibilities, including that the practice placement representatives were responsible for managing the placements, including ensuring settings are appropriate. As stated for criterion D.3, it was clear that there were opportunities and processes in place for practice placement staff to consult the programme team if an issue was identified at a practice placement. However the visitors were unable to find evidence of a formal system or audit tool for the initial assessment and ongoing, regular monitoring of all placements. Irrespective of where the processes for identifying, assessing and auditing placements take place, this criterion requires the education provider to maintain a thorough and effective system for ensuring the placement settings are appropriate. The visitors therefore require

further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider maintains a thorough and effective system of approving and monitoring all placements.

D.6 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified, experienced and, where required, registered staff at the practice placement setting

Condition: The programme team must ensure that there are an adequate number of appropriately qualified, experienced and, where required, registered staff at the practice placement setting.

Reason: From the documentation provided, the visitors were made aware that the Practice Assessment – Additional Guidance to Agencies / Employers (Additional documentation booklet, page 25) outlines requirements and recommendations for the agency representatives, practice assessors and placements. Through this guidance, the education provider states that the agency must have a representative, who '…will identify a suitable placement and suitable Practice Assessor for each applicant / trainee that has been put forward…'. This, along with discussions at the visit, indicated that the placement provider determines what is deemed as adequate supervision and setting for practice learning. The guidance also recommends that placement educators have a minimum of two years' experience as an AMHP and are currently practicing (and are therefore registered with the relevant profession). However, the documentation did not provide information as to any audit tools or systems the education provider uses to ensure that there is an adequate number of staff, with the relevant qualifications and experience to support the students in placements. The visitors therefore require further evidence that clearly articulates the steps taken by the education provider to ensure that all practice placement settings will have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

D.7 Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence of the processes they use to ensure that practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to supervise and support AMHP students.

Reason: As stated for criterion D.6, the documentation and discussions at the visit indicated that the placement provider must have a representative, who '…will identify a suitable placement and suitable Practice Assessor for each applicant / trainee that has been put forward…'. This, along with discussions at the visit, indicated that the placement provider identifies placement educators and determines their suitability for supporting and assessing students. The guidance given to placement provider representatives recommends that placement educators have a minimum of two years' experience as an AMHP and are currently practicing (and are therefore registered with the relevant profession). However, the visitors could not find detail in the documentation of any formal checks or processes from the education provider as to how they ensure that practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience. To ensure that this standard is met, the visitors require the education provider to articulate clearly the steps taken to ensure that the criteria for placement educators, in terms of the required knowledge, skills and experience, are met.

D.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence as to how they confirm that practice placement educators are appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: The evidence provided for this standard was the Practice Assessment – Additional Guidance to Agencies / Employers and information about the practice assessor role as contained in the Practice Assessment Guide. Discussions at the visit indicated that the placement provider will be responsible for identifying placement educators, checking registration details and ensuring they are currently practicing as an AMHP. From the evidence provided, the visitors could not see a system that would be used by the education provider to confirm that practice placement educators are appropriately registered and therefore meet the criteria they set out for practice placement educators. As a result, the visitors require further evidence of the process that will be in place to ensure that this criterion can be met.

E.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the competencies set out in section 2 of the criteria

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the assessment of the module learning outcomes will ensure students who complete the programme meet the following criterion in section 2 of the approval criteria for approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes:

1.8 Understand child and adult protection procedures in relation to AMHP work.

Reason: The documentation provided before the visit included a mapping document to section 2 of the approval criteria for approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes. The mapping for 1.8 referred visitors to module descriptors for Unit B (Mental Health and the Law) and Unit C (The AMHP Role in Practice)'s learning outcomes and indicative content. It also highlighted the practice requirements as delivered in Unit D – Evidencing Professional Learning. Though there was reference in the indicative content, the visitors could not see any direct references to child protection in module descriptor learning outcomes, or how it would be assessed. In light of the above the visitors are unable to determine criterion E.1 is met specifically relating to criteria 1.8 of section 2 of the approval criteria for approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the assessment of the module learning outcomes will ensure students are able to meet the criteria.

Recommendations

A.3 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the programme team clarify accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (APL or AP(E)L) policies for Approved Social Workers (ASWs) as articulated at the visit within programme admissions materials.

Reason: From the documentation submitted, the visitors were confident that the education provider have an appropriate AP(E)L policy in place for implementation in the admissions for this programme. In the presentation slides for placement educators (Practice Assessment Guide, page 50), the visitors noted that it states that the education provider have an APL process in place for applicants who were previously Approved Social Workers (ASWs). The programme team confirmed the details of this at the visit. However, in the advertising materials for the programme that were provided, the visitors were unable to find any information or reference to this specific route. They therefore recommend that the programme team update the information for potential applicants to the programme to ensure it is clear and accessible regarding the various APL and AP(E)L routes onto the programme that are available.

B.15 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme

Recommendation: The programme team are advised to monitor service user and carer contributions to the programme to ensure all parties are supported.

Reason: At the visit, service users outlined the various contributions they make to the programme, including facilitating or co-facilitating debating sessions on ethics and values. The visitors were confident that these sessions act as a very powerful learning tool for the students. The visitors heard the way in which the debates were conducted, where students were given only some of the facts at the beginning of the session, and further aspects of the case were revealed following the debate. The visitors noted that there was the potential for this to cause emotional discomfort for the students or the service users involved, as the students were invited to make judgements about the service user's life without the full context of the service user's disclosed life history. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team continue to monitor the support they give to students and contributors through these sessions, or consider if the session could be delivered differently to avoid any potential for emotional distress. In this way they can be sure that service user and carer contributions are integrated to student learning in the most productive way.

Graham Noyce
Joanna Jackson
Christine Stogdon

Bournemouth University AMHP Programme (PG Diploma and MA Advanced Mental Health Practice).

Observations in response to receiving the draft of the visitors report summarising the visitors recommended outcome following the approval visit.

Recommendation

B.15 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme

The programme team are advised to monitor service user and carer contributions to the programme to ensure all parties are supported.

Area of challenge and reason

The reasons provided within the visitors draft report for the above general recommendation are all centred around one session where there is service user involvement and the reason provided raises questions about the understanding that the visitors have about this session and how it was conducted. The comments made about this one session follow a discussion with one of the service users; however there was no follow up questions within the tutors meeting the following day where further information could have been provided on this.

The programme team provided a large amount of information for the approval visit demonstrating how service users and carers are involved in the programme and how we monitor their involvement at all stages including at management meetings, using student feedback, using feedback from the service users and carers themselves, at tutors meetings etc. The programme team are incredibly proud of the approach and commitment to service user and carer involvement and work very hard to ensure that this is meaningful, fully integrated into the programme, enhances student learning and doesn't just take a generalised approach. As stated in all of our documentation we do not have one service user / carer and one approach to their involvement, we work with a team of contributors and their contribution to the programme differs depending on their own experiences, skills and knowledge. It is a shame that the visitors only met two of our service user contributors, however we did provide detailed information about the different ways that they are involved and how they contribute, we provided emails from some of the service users who could not attend outlining their varying involvement and we provided copies of the text produced by some of our contributors. We were therefore surprised that the above general recommendation has been made and that this was centred around just one session where there is a service user involved.

Had the team been asked about this session in the subsequent tutors meeting the following day further information could have been provided to demonstrate that the needs of all parties involved are always monitored as with all sessions. To clarify in relation to this one particular example of service user involvement – this session was not about the individual service user and is certainly not about 'making judgements about the service users life without the full context of the service users disclosed life history' as stated in the reasons. This session was about the broader issue of suicide and intervening in an individual's life, debating their professional role and responsibilities, limitations of their involvement, the legal framework and professional and personal values that underpin decision-making. They were not being asked to make judgements about any service user's life and they were not facing anything

that they would not be required to face in practice. They needed to explore the conflicts in their personal and professional value base and this also gave them the opportunity to explore theoretical perspectives and an evidence base to support them in complex decision-making.

In planning this session the service user herself felt that providing a case scenario which mirrored the information that would be presented to them as AMHPs would be useful as an introduction to the wider issue and debate around suicide. She wrote this herself and did base it on her own situation, which was her choice to bring the situation and issues to life. It was not about keeping facts from the students and revealing other facts at the end. The students were asked in small groups to debate their role and responsibilities in intervening in such situations and to use some reading materials / theory and research evidence which they were provided with around responses to suicide and decision-making around suicide to help them consider their role and limitations to their role.

In terms of potential for this session to cause emotional discomfort for the service users and students involved, the team feel strongly that this has been monitored and considered as it would in every other session. The service user involved in this session actually developed the session jointly alongside the tutor and therefore had control over what was included and her ability to be involved. She herself has provided some responses in relation to your recommendation which I have included at the end.

 In terms of the students and their needs, the programme team recognise the importance of managing some of the emotions that may be experienced within all sessions, however also recognise the importance of dealing with the complex issues which they will face in practice as AMHPs. The taught sessions are a safe and supportive environment in which to unpick and debate complex decision-making and the values and ethics that underpin the decision-making. The students were actually responding as a group to this exercise as well, rather than as an individual. They were provided with the topic, the scenario and theoretical evidence earlier in the day and there was always a tutor present to discuss any concerns if they had any. The students were asked to present as a group their thoughts around the broader issue of intervening / their professional role / conflicts in their professional and personal value base. The student's feedback on this session has been excellent and was used to review the session and its contribution to student learning. The service user decided to give the students more information at the end of the session about her own situation and her own experiences and open up the discussion to her. This was not a planned requirement of the session, this was her story to share if she decided to, but this was never about withholding information, but about allowing an open discussion with the service user herself.

We feel as a programme team that it is important to provide further information about this session as this was not asked for during the tutors meeting and the reasons for the general recommendation is all focused on this session. We also wish to highlight that as stated in all of the documentation and evidence provided for the approval visit, we have an established history of service user and carer involvement throughout the programme design, delivery and review and we ensure that all contributions are meaningful and benefits student learning. We have worked hard to move away from having a traditional approach of one service user who is brought in to give their experience and we work alongside our service users and carers to look at their expertise and abilities and the different ways that they can

contribute to all aspects of the programme. We review our provision at all levels and take seriously the needs of all parties.

Comments from the service user involved in this session following further discussion with her after receiving the draft report:-

I am surprised and disappointed to hear that the recent HCPC validation event resulted in a condition related to the potential during the ethics session for distress to the service user or to students.

I am concerned that some of my comments appear to have been misunderstood by the panel. The course team wanted a session on ethics & values and discussed this with me at some length. I proposed the debate subject which was about suicide because I felt I had a lot to contribute due to personal experience. Of course this is a difficult subject to address however I feel it is important for these students to openly engage with this sensitive area. I welcomed the opportunity to have suicide included as part of the AMHP programme because my experience had been that practitioners shied away from this difficult area.

Just because I had gone through a vulnerable period of my life in the past does not make me forever fragile into the future. If I had been feeling vulnerable, I would not have participated in this activity. Perhaps if a service user had been a panel member, this aspect would have become apparent.

I have done this work with Bournemouth for the last 4 years without any problems. The feedback from students has always been fantastic. I have also felt respected and my contribution has been used in a meaningful way – I never felt it was a token 'tick box' exercise in contrast to some other universities where I have done similar work.

I am really looking forward to repeat the session during the coming year and would be very disappointed if it can't take place due to misplaced concerns about causing distress to me.

Bournemouth University - Postgraduate Diploma Advanced Mental Health Practice (AMHP) - Work Based Learning & MA Advanced Mental Health Practice (AMHP) - Part Time

Visitors' response to education provider's observations requesting that the recommendation against criterion B.15 be removed:

Graham Noyce: "Given the depth of the response from the HEI and the service user about this recommendation, it is clear that there is a perception on behalf of the HEI that the HCPC may have misinterpreted the comments of the service user. The HEI have also tried to make clear that the opinions of one service user might be non-representative of the service user involvement in the programme as a whole.

"With regards the concerns of the service user about whether this exercise should continue: I don't think the HCPC is suggesting that this specific exercise should stop. The contributions from this service user and other contributors to the programme form an important learning opportunity for trainee AMHP's; these valuable sessions should continue. The recommendation is only advising that service users and students should be supported in this process."

Christine Stogdon: "I have read the response carefully and looked back at my notes in which the service user said to us that she 'felt really upset' after the session in question. It is concerning to me that the service user in question has been approached to explain her position as her comments were given freely to the visitors in an objective and in my view genuine way. I do accept that they have systems in place to support service users and inevitably service users will be emotional when retelling their stories. However I do think that the comment on the day should be taken in the context it was said by the service user in that she was speaking to us in an open and honest way about how she felt after the session. Any system in place to support service users is open to review and monitoring to ensure it is effective and in my view this comment provided the vehicle for the course team to respond in a thoughtful way and an opportunity to review the system of support given to this service user on the next occasion she teaches the session for them.

"For these reasons I think that the recommendation should stay and be put forward to the committee for consideration and the final say."

Joanna Jackson: "I would agree with Chris. This is a recommendation based upon the evidence we gathered at the approval event. Although it is not my area of expertise the response of the provider and the decision to contact the service user to contribute to the response provides further evidence that they do need to reflect upon their support systems."

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Frontline (ARK) and Tilda Goldberg Centre
Validating body / Awarding body	University of Bedfordshire
Programme name	The Frontline Academy (PG Dip Social Work)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	25 – 26 February 2014

Contents

Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. We are a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. We currently regulate 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'social worker' in England must be registered with us. The HCPC keep a register of health and care professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors' report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the approval of the programme. The education provider has until 14 April 2014 to provide observations on this report. This is independent of meeting any conditions.

The report and any observations received will be considered by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 27 March 2014. At that meeting, the Committee may accept, reject or vary the visitors' recommended outcomes, including the recommended conditions or recommendations.

If the visitors' recommended outcomes are accepted by the Committee, the visitors have made a recommendation that a further visit is required to enable appropriate scrutiny of the response to the conditions to be undertaken. The visitors consider that the nature of the proposed conditions mean that a further visit would be the most appropriate method of scrutinising any further evidence provided, enabling further discussions to be conducted with key stakeholders of the programme. If the Committee makes the decision to require a further visit, the education provider will need to redraft and resubmit documentation at an appropriate time before the date of the visit. The visit, if required, will be considered the education provider's first attempt to meet any conditions imposed. If, after the further visit, there are any conditions, the education provider will be given a further opportunity to submit documentation in response to those outstanding conditions.

Introduction

The HCPC visited the programme at the education provider as it was a new programme which was seeking HCPC approval for the first time. This visit assessed the programme against the standards of education and training (SETs) and considered whether those who complete the programme would meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for the relevant part of the Register.

This visit was part of a joint event as the education provider was conducting its own validation of the programme at the same time. The education provider and the HCPC formed a joint panel, with an independent chair and secretary, supplied by the education provider. Whilst the joint panel participated in collaborative scrutiny of the programme and dialogue throughout the visit; this report only relates to the HCPC visitors' recommended outcomes in respect of the programme. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC visitors' recommended outcomes are based solely on the HCPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the education provider, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Beverley Blythe (Social worker) Christine Stogdon (Social worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Benjamin Potter
Proposed student numbers	112 per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	27 July 2014
Chair	Juliet Fern (University of Bedfordshire)
Secretary	Calista Strange (University of Bedfordshire)
Members of the joint panel	Liz Grant (Internal Panel Member) Tim Gregory (Internal Panel Member) Simon Prakoonwit (Internal Panel Member) David Shemmings (External Panel Member) Jana Kaminski (External Panel Member)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	☒	☐	☐
Descriptions of the modules	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	☒	☐	☐
Practice placement handbook	☐	☒	☐
Student handbook	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐	☐
External examiners' reports from the last two years	☒	☐	☐

The HCPC did not review a practice placement handbook prior to the visit as this had not been produced.

During the visit the HCPC saw the following groups or facilities:

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme	☒	☐	☐
Programme team	☒	☐	☐
Placements providers and educators / mentors	☒	☐	☐
Students	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☐	☐	☒

The HCPC met with students from the Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Social Work Practice programme at the University of Bedfordshire as well as a student enrolled at the Institute for Family Therapy and a prospective student as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

The HCPC did not see the specialist teaching accommodation as the education provider highlighted that due to the nature of this programme no specialist laboratories or teaching rooms are required.

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for approval, the visitors must be satisfied that the programme meets all of the standards of education and training (SETs) and that those who complete the programme meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for the relevant part of the Register.

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:

1. a number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the programme can be approved; and

2. that a further visit is required to make an appropriate assessment of the response to the conditions.

Any further visit would need to focus on the SETs on which conditions have been set. This would include meetings with the programme team and the senior team but there would be no need for any explicit requirement to meet students, practice placement providers or practice placement educators. The Committee is also asked to make a decision on the timescale for any further visit.

The visitors agreed that 26 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 31 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be approved. Conditions are set when certain standards of education and training have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the standard being met.

The visitors did not make any recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme is approved. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

2.1 The admissions procedures 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: Further evidence must be provided to further articulate how the education provider receives the information they require in order make an informed choice about making offers to applicants who wish to take up a place on the programme.

Reason: As part of this process the visitors were made aware of the partnership arrangements in place to deliver the programme with the Tilda Goldberg Centre at the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) acting as the education provider. From the documentation provided for this approval visit the visitors noted the comprehensive admissions process (annex 18 – Frontline admissions and recruitment policy), including assessment days, which applicants are subject to before they are made an offer to take up a place on the programme. They also noted that the admissions process for this programme is managed by Frontline, and that decisions about applicants' suitability to take up a place on the programme are made by Frontline staff and placement provider staff (page 6). From further reading of the documentation (Programme handbook, page 31) and in discussion with the programme team (based at UoB) the visitors were made aware that members of the programme team had been present at the most recent assessment days and that that they would be included at assessment days for future cohorts. However, the visitors were unclear how members of the programme team were included in the assessment of applicants and where the team members were not included, how the information about applicants' suitability was passed to the education provider. As such the visitors were unclear how the arrangements in place to manage the admissions process ensures the education provider (UoB) has the information required to make informed choices when making offers of places on the programme to applicants. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the admissions process is managed to ensure the collaborative arrangements in place provide the education provider with the information they require about applicants. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme will ensure that the education provider can make informed decisions about making offers of places on the programme to applicants.

2.1 The admissions procedures 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: Further evidence must be provided to articulate when and how occupational health information about applicants will be provided to the education provider, to enable informed decisions to be made about offering places on the programme.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted the comprehensive admissions process (annex 18 – Frontline admissions and recruitment policy) which applicants are subject to before they are made an offer to take up a place on the programme. They also noted that the admissions process for this programme is managed by Frontline which includes obtaining health declarations from applicants and undertaking occupational health checks (page 3). In discussion with the programme team it was highlighted that these checks will conform to the policies in place at the education provider and that all steps will be taken in accordance with these policies.

However the visitors could not determine, from the evidence provided, when the relevant information about these checks will be provided to the education provider (University of Bedfordshire (UoB)) and any relevant placement provider. As such the visitors could not determine how this information will be used to ensure the education providers' policies are being followed and to ensure that reasonable adjustments can be made for any students that will require them. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how and when information about the status of applicants' health will be provided to the education provider to ensure that any reasonable adjustments can be made for students who wish to take up a place on the programme. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme will ensure that the education provider can make informed decisions about making offers of places on the programme to applicants.

2.1 The admissions procedures 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 further evidence of how and when applicants to the programme are made aware of the obligations they will be required to fulfil as part of the bursary contract they are required to sign.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors were aware that students who are accepted onto the programme are required to sign bursary contracts prior to commencing their placement experience in the relevant local authority. The visitors also noted that applicants were made aware of the likely remuneration for students undertaking the programme as well as the financial liabilities, such as paying for travel and accommodation while undertaking their placement experience. However, in discussion with the programme team it was highlighted that the bursary contracts would only be signed once students reached their placement provider as they would only be entered into once the student had passed a required readiness for direct practice assessment. The visitors were therefore unclear as to when students or applicants would be informed of any other obligations and / or liabilities they would be subject to when entering into these contracts. As such the visitors could not determine how applicants could make an informed choice about their ability to fulfil any contractual obligations, and therefore complete the programme, prior to taking up any place on the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence as to how applicants are informed of any contractual obligations prior to taking up a place on the programme or how the programme team will manage any issues which may arise should students feel they are unable to meet their contractual obligations.

2.5 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and / or professional entry standards.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how the assessment centre element of the admissions procedures ensures that applicants can meet appropriate academic and professional standards.

Reason: From their reading of the documentation provided and from the meetings with the programme team and the students the visitors noted that applicants are assessed in a number of ways as part of the admissions process. The visitors were also made aware that applicants are assessed at the assessment centre stage of the admissions process against Frontline competencies which have been mapped to elements of The

College of Social Work's Professional Capabilities Framework. These competencies are how applicants are assessed and measured against one another in order for decisions to be made about which applicants should be offered places on the programme. However, the visitors could not determine where information about the Frontline competencies was included in the programme documentation and how these competencies had been mapped to the relevant academic or professional entry standards. The visitors could therefore not determine how the methods of assessment, such as written activities, role plays, group activities and interaction with young people, enabled the relevant academic or professional standards to be applied to the applicants. The visitors therefore require further evidence to be provided of the Frontline competencies, how these have been mapped to the relevant academic or professional entry standards, and how the assessment of applicants ensures that these competencies can be met. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme can meet this standard.

2.7 The admissions procedures must ensure that the education provider has equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to further articulate how the education provider receives the information they require in order to appropriately implement their equality and diversity policy.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted the admissions process for this programme and that the process is managed by Frontline. The visitors also noted that it is Frontline who gather the relevant equality and diversity monitoring data from the applicants as part of this admissions process and that Frontline has in place its own equality and diversity policy (appendix 15). In the meeting with the senior team it was articulated that any relevant equality and diversity data would feed back into the University of Bedfordshire's (UoB) equality and diversity policy as well as that of Frontline and that if any issues were raised as a result of monitoring this data they would be addressed. However the visitors could not determine, from the evidence provided, how the two equality and diversity policies would work in tandem to ensure that the data was being monitored and that any potential changes, if required, would be implemented. Therefore the visitors require further information about how the equality and diversity monitoring data, gathered by Frontline through the application process, will be monitored by the education provider and how any potential changes, that may be required, will be implemented. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how this standard can be met by the programme.

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence as to the status of the contractual relationships between the education provider and partners delivering the programme including when these contracts are likely to be finalised and signed.

Reason: The visitors noted, in the documentation provided, the contractual agreements between each of the partner institutions which articulated the responsibilities each has in the effective delivery of the programme. The visitors also noted that these agreements identified the financial relationship between the partners and how this would be governed. The visitors were able to identify how the proposed collaborative

agreements between the partner institutions could ensure that the programme has a secure position in the education providers' business plan. However, from the documentation provided the visitors were unclear if these contracts had been agreed by the relevant partner institutions and signed. In the senior team meeting it was articulated that the majority of the contractual arrangements had been agreed and that while some were still in negotiation they were close to being agreed and signed. As such the visitors were unsure which contracts had been agreed and signed and which were still in the process of being negotiated. The visitors therefore require further information to determine which contractual arrangements have been signed by the collaborative partners and which contracts are still in negotiation, to determine how the programme has a secure place in the education providers' business plan. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme can meet this standard.

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence as to the obligations of each partner institution, in regards to their responsibilities to any students undertaking the programme, should funding for the programme change or be withdrawn.

Reason: The visitors noted, in the documentation provided, the contractual agreements between each of the collaborative partners which articulated the responsibilities each has in the effective delivery of the programme. In particular the visitors noted in the "Collaborative agreement between Frontline and The University of Bedfordshire" paragraph 10.3 (page 11) that Frontline has the right to terminate the agreement governing the management of the programme immediately should the grant funding from the Department for Education (DfE) be withdrawn. The visitors also noted in paragraph 10.12 (page 12) that the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) has no responsibility to "…teach out Participants the remainder of the Programme and shall have no liability to Frontline (ARK) in respect of the decision not to teach out save that prior to the decision not to teach out, the HEI shall give Frontline (ARK) reasonable notice and consult with Frontline (ARK)." However, in the meeting with the senior team the visitors were informed that UoB would ensure that students would be transferred to suitable alternative programmes at the university should this situation occur and that students would receive suitable awards based on their achievement. The visitors were also informed that the arrangements in place between Frontline and the DfE would ensure that any cohort on the programme would be funded until the programme could be completed. As such, while the visitors acknowledged the undertaking of the collaborative partners, they were unsure how these arrangements would be agreed and how they would be enacted should any issues with the grant funding of the programme occur. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the arrangements would be agreed and enacted should the grant funding for the programme be affected in any way, to ensure that students undertaking the programme at that time would be able to complete it.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence as to the obligations of the different partner institutions in regards to the effective management of the programme, and how the fulfilment of these roles and responsibilities will be governed.

Reason: The visitors noted, in the documentation provided, the contractual agreements between each of the collaborative partners which articulated the responsibilities each has in respect of the effective delivery of the programme. The visitors also noted in the programme documentation the organisational diagrams which provided information about the programme team, based at the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) and Frontline team, such as line management responsibilities. In the senior team meeting it was clarified that there would be an academy board in place which would have overall responsibility for the management of the programme and that, as such, UoB would have overall responsibility for the programme. It was also highlighted that the programme team at UoB would meet regularly to discuss the programme, although the frequency of these meetings had yet to be determined formally. However, from the evidence provided the visitors were unclear what management systems or governance arrangements were in place to ensure that the collaborative partners could exchange information and work together to effectively deliver the programme. In particular the visitors were unclear as to how the management or governance arrangements in place for the programme would allow regular scrutiny of the work of the partner institutions, in relation to the fulfilment of their obligations as described in the collaborative agreements. As such the visitors were unclear, from the evidence provided, how the arrangements in place allow UoB to manage the programme effectively and to take overall responsibility for the delivery of the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the management or governance structures that are in place to ensure the effective management of the programme.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence as to how the collaborative arrangements in place between the different partner institutions will work in practice.

Reason: The visitors noted, in the documentation provided, the contractual agreements between each of the collaborative partners which articulated the responsibilities each has in respect of the effective delivery of the programme. In particular the visitors also noted the interrelationships that have been put in place to ensure that there is representation and input from each of the collaborative partners at each stage of the programme to ensure that all parties are represented. This was particularly in evidence in the placement setting where representatives of the placement provider, Frontline and the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) will be involved in ensuring students receive the experience they require. In the senior team meeting the visitors were informed that while there were different representatives involved at all stages of the programme it would be the education provider who had overall responsibility for the programme. As such the visitors were made aware that if an issue arose about any aspect of the programme the education provider would have ultimate responsibility to make sure that issue was resolved. However, from the evidence provided, the visitors were unsure of how the management or governance structures in place to manage the programme provide the education provider with the information required to ensure the programme is being delivered effectively. In particular the visitors were unsure how issues flagged by staff at partner institutions would be fed back into the management or governance structures to ensure that all aspects of the programme were being delivered effectively. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how the different partner institutions will gather the relevant information about their areas of responsibility and how this information will be fed back into the management or governance structures of the programme and acted upon.

3.3 The programme must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to further articulate how, and how frequently, the collaborative arrangements in place will feed into the established quality assurance procedures at the University of Bedfordshire.

Reason: The visitors noted, in the documentation provided, the contractual agreements between each of the collaborative partners which articulated the responsibilities each has in respect of the effective delivery of the programme. In particular the visitors were aware that the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) has overall responsibility for quality assuring the programme through the application of their established quality assurance (QA) procedures. In discussion with the programme team, and from the additional documentation provided, it was highlighted that governance arrangements would be put in place to manage the flow of information from the programme into the UoB's QA procedures. In particular the visitors were made aware that assessment boards, a portfolio executive committee, portfolio executive group and evaluation committees would be instituted to receive and collate relevant information and feed this into the QA processes of UoB. However, the visitors were unsure of the mechanisms that are in place to ensure that the information required, such as any relevant student feedback or information gathered by Frontline specialists about practice placements, would be fed back into these mechanisms and then back into the QA procedures. They were also unclear as to how frequent this feedback would be, and how this would ensure the programme could meet UoB's QA requirements. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the regular monitoring and evaluation systems that are in place for this programme, including the role of the partner organisation staff and Frontline specialists, in feeding relevant information into the QA procedures of UoB. They also require further evidence of how frequent this feedback will be and how this will ensure it satisfies the established QA procedures of UoB.

3.3 The programme must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of how external examiners will be involved in the programme to fulfil their responsibilities as required of them in the established University of Bedfordshire quality assurance procedures.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted that external examiners will be involved as part of the regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place for the programme. In particular the visitors noted that the external examiners were required to be in place as part of the quality assurance (QA) procedures of the University of Bedfordshire (UoB). In the meeting with the programme team, the visitors were informed that the role of the external examiner for this programme may include greater involvement in the moderation of practice placement assessments. This involvement would be designed to provide greater assurance of the parity in the assessment of students across all practice placement areas, and may involve scrutinising recordings of student performance while on placement. The visitors also noted that external examiners may be asked to comment on the professional suitability of students through the problems arising in practice learning policy (appendix 7). Whilst the visitors were aware these may be the roles fulfilled by the external examiners on this programme they could not determine, from the evidence provided, how these additional roles may

impact on the external examiners' ability to undertake the role as defined by the education provider. In particular the visitors could not determine how the programme team would ensure that if they had any duties over and above what was expected of them by the UoB how the external examiner would maintain their independence from the programme. Therefore the visitors were unable to determine, from the evidence provided, how the external examiner role will work in practice and how any expanded role, over and above that usually expected, will ensure that the programme can fulfil the requirements of the education providers' quality assurance procedures. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the defined role of the external examiners on this programme and how this role will ensure that the requirements of the education providers' QA procedures will be fulfilled.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the number of staff that will be in place to deliver the programme to ensure the programme is delivered effectively.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors were made aware of the number of staff that were initially designed to be in place in order to deliver the programme effectively, including staff from partner organisations. During the senior team meeting, and from additional documentation provided at the visit, the visitors were made aware that the recruitment to these positions was still on-going, as at the time two principle lecturers and at least one lecturer had been recruited as academic co-ordinators and academic tutors for the programme. However, in this meeting the visitors were also made aware that the final number of staff to be recruited to the team would be finalised once the number of practice placement educators was known, which in turn would dictate the size of the cohort for the programme. As a result, the visitors were unclear from the information provided, as to the likely final number of staff that will be recruited to the programme in order for it to be delivered effectively, and what the timeline for recruitment will be. As such the visitors require further evidence of the plans in place to ensure that a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff will be recruited to the programme team in advance of the programme starting.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the roles and responsibilities of each member of staff employed to deliver the programme.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors were made aware of the number of staff that were initially designed to be in place in order to deliver the programme effectively, including staff from partner organisations (Frontline programme handbook, page 8). The visitors were also provided with the high level information about roles that will be required to be undertaken in order for the programme to be delivered effectively. The visitors were therefore aware that principal lecturers, senior lecturers and lecturers were being recruited to the programme team and would be expected to undertake general roles in delivery of the programme as well as providing academic and pastoral support as academic tutors. The visitors were also aware that placement educators (consultant social workers) and frontline specialists, along with guest lecturers from partner institutions would be employed to deliver aspects of the programme and ensure

that students were supported in undertaking and completing the programme. However, from the evidence provided, while the visitors were aware of the job specifications in relation to person recruitment, they were unclear as to what specific roles and responsibilities each person was expected to fulfil in order to deliver the programme effectively. In particular the visitors were unclear how the different roles specified in the programme documentation are designed to work together and how the responsibilities of each role, and the fulfilment of these responsibilities, ensure that the programme was delivered effectively. As such the visitors require further evidence of the specific roles and responsibilities that people delivering the programme will be tasked with in order to ensure that students get the experience they require. In this way the visitors will be able to consider if an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff will be in place to deliver this programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the planning that has taken place to ensure the roles and responsibilities of the programme team can be fulfilled by each member of the team based on the resources available.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors were made aware of the number of staff that were initially designed to be in place in order to deliver the programme effectively, including staff from partner organisations. The visitors were also provided with the high level information about roles that will be required to be undertaken in order for the programme to be delivered effectively. The visitors were therefore aware that principal lecturers, senior lecturers and lecturers were being recruited to the programme team and would be expected to undertake general roles in delivery of the programme at the summer institute as well as providing academic and pastoral support as academic tutors. In discussions with the programme team the visitors were made aware that members of the programme team would also be expected to regularly liaise with placement providers, placement educators and students, assess students and resolve issues at placements if required. It was also highlighted that members of the programme team will also be required to moderate assessments from practice, meet regularly as part of the management arrangements for the programme and deliver teaching at the regular recall days. In discussions with the senior team the visitors noted that the education provider had a workload planning model to ensure the workload of staff was manageable in the time provided, but that this had not yet been modelled for staff delivering this programme. The visitors were therefore unclear how the workload for members of staff had been planned to ensure that the programme team could undertake the work that was expected of them in order to effectively deliver the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the defined roles and responsibilities of the programme team and when these roles and responsibilities will be expected to be undertaken. In this way the visitors will be able to consider what work individual members of the programme team will be required to undertake, and determine if an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff will be in place to deliver this programme.

3.6 Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of which members of the programme team will be responsible for the delivery of the different aspects of the programme and how their relevant specialist expertise and knowledge will be utilised.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors were made aware of the number of staff that were initially designed to be in place in order to deliver the programme effectively, including staff from partner organisations. In particular the visitors also noted that there was an overview of the staff who are identified as contributing to the course units in the Strategic Overview and Rationale for Frontline Programme documents (appendix four, page 31). This was accompanied by an overview of the curriculum areas that would be addressed in the summer institute part of the programme. The visitors, in the meeting with the programme team, noted that this overview was being developed further to provide greater clarity around which members of the programme team, and guest lecturers, would be responsible for delivering which aspects of the curriculum and when in the programme timetable (either at the summer institute or at one of the recall days) this would be happening. They also noted that this development would go hand in hand with the further development of the programme timetable to provide greater detail and clarity of how the learning outcomes from the programme would be covered by the teaching and learning provided. As such, due to the stage of development of the curriculum delivery schedule the visitors were unable to determine which members of staff would be responsible for which aspects of programme delivery and when in the timetable they would be required to do this. As such the visitors require further evidence of the detailed programme of delivery for the programme to identify which members of staff, and guest lecturers, will be responsible for delivering which areas of the programme. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the specialist expertise and knowledge of the programme team, and guest lectures, will be utilised to deliver the programme effectively.

3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of how they will ensure and maintain parity of access to resources between students in all areas of the country.

Reason: From the documentation provided and the meetings at the approval visit, the visitors were made aware of the resources that are available to all students on the programme. In particular the visitors were made aware of the online resources that would be made available to students as well as some of the physical resources that will be available to students at the education provider. In discussion with the programme team the visitors were made aware that the programme team recognise that due to the different areas of the country in which students would be undertaking their placement experience this could potentially lead to a disparity in access to these resources. The visitors were made aware that it would be a priority of the academic co-ordinators to ensure that the resources provided, particularly on practice placement, would allow students to gain the experience they require in order to successfully complete the programme. However the visitors could not determine, from the evidence provided, how the policies and processes in place would allow the academic co-ordinators to ensure parity of access to resources for students in all areas of the country. In particular the

visitors were unclear as to what processes would be enacted to identify if students in the one area of the country lacked access to any resources compared to students in another area and what the team would do to address an issue such as this. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the programme team ensures that all students have access to the resources they require in order to successfully complete the programme. They also require further evidence of the policies and processes in place that will enable the academic co-ordinators to ensure that students in all areas of the country will have parity of access to these resources throughout the duration of the programme.

3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to ensure the terminology used is accurate and reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HCPC.

Reason: The visitors noted that the programme documentation submitted by the education provider included instances of incorrect terminology and occasional errors. This was highlighted by the programme team at the visit and a list of updates and corrections that were to be made to the documentation were provided to the visitors. However, in addition to these changes there were some errors when referencing the HCPC. In particular there were references to the HCPC as the "…professional body", (Programme handbook, page ten; Course and unit information forms, page 13) and a suggestion that students will qualify as a social worker after 13 months of the programme (Course and unit information forms, page 8). The HCPC is not the professional body for social workers. It is the statutory regulator which protects the professional title of social worker, in England. As such any students who successfully complete the first 13 months programme, before progressing onto a masters programme, will not automatically "qualify" to be a social worker. Instead they will be required to apply to the HCPC in order to access the Register before they can be called a social worker, in England. The visitors considered that the errors in the use of this terminology could be misleading to students and therefore required the programme documentation to be reviewed to remove any instance of incorrect terminology throughout.

3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of any changes to the programme documentation following validation of the programme by the education provider.

Reason: In the meeting with the senior team, the visitors noted that the programme had not yet gone through the full validation process with the education provider. The visitors recognised that as a result of this validation process it is possible that documentation that will be used to deliver the programme could change as a result of any requirements of the education providers' validation process. The visitors therefore require evidence of any changes to the programme documentation following validation of the programme to ensure that the resources to support student learning in all settings are being effectively used.

3.9 The resources to support student learning in all settings must effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of how they will ensure that there are sufficient resources available and accessible to students in order for them to gain the experience they require during the practice placement.

Reason: The visitors noted, from the documentation provided, that Frontline are the collaborative partner with responsibility for sourcing practice placements, and as part of this process ensure that placement providers have the resources required to support student learning. The visitors noted that to fulfil this responsibility Frontline enter into contractual arrangements with the practice placement providers as well as requiring them to fill in a self-evaluation form which articulates the resources that will be available to students. In discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that while Frontline source placements, the education provider has overall responsibility for ensuring that practice placements have the resources required to support students. As such the education provider has put in place a quality assurance in practice learning (QAPL) audit which they will require to be completed by placement providers to ensure that the resources in place at the practice placement. However, the visitors were unclear, from the evidence provided, when the QAPL audit would need to be completed by practice placement providers, how the audit information would be verified and how the provision of resources in placement settings will be monitored. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of when the QAPL audits will be required to be completed by the placement providers, how the information to complete the audit would be verified, and how the processes in place will continue to monitor the provision of resources at practice placements. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the resources in all settings will effectively support the learning and teaching activities of the programme.

3.10 The learning resources, including IT facilities, must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of how they will ensure that appropriate numbers of accessible IT resources will be available to students in order for them to gain the experience they require during the practice placement.

Reason: The visitors noted from the documentation provided, and in discussion at the visit, that due to the nature of the programme a great deal of programme information and resources to support student learning will be available online. The visitors also noted that the programme team were looking to use the education providers' virtual learning environment to provide students with updated course information, learning opportunities and chances to interact with other students on the programme. The programme team also articulated that they were exploring the opportunity for students to use an online portfolio tool to enable students to reflect and collate evidence of their practice experience as well as potentially submit their portfolios for assessment electronically. However, the visitors were unclear, from the evidence provided, how the QAPL audit mechanism in place will ensure that IT facilities in the placement are appropriate for the delivery of the curriculum and readily available to students. In particular the visitors were unclear how the education provider will ensure that students will be able to access the online resources of the programme while on placement, to enable them to complete any required teaching and learning activities or assessments. Therefore the visitors require further evidence as to how the education provider will

ensure that the IT facilities in the placement setting will be appropriate and available to students in order that they can access all of the relevant online resources of the programme. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme can meet this standard.

3.11 There must be adequate and accessible facilities to support the welfare and wellbeing of students in all settings.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided of how students in all settings will be provided with appropriate access to the support services provided by the education provider to support their welfare and wellbeing.

Reason: From their reading of the documentation provided, and from discussions at the visit, the visitors were aware of the range and breadth of support services that are in place at the education provider to support the welfare and wellbeing of students. The visitors were also aware of the academic and pastoral support mechanisms that are in place for students as they progress through the programme and in particular as they undertake their practice placement. This was particularly the case with the provision of counselling services that would be provided to students via telephone as it was recognised that not all students would be able to attend sessions at the education provider's campus in Luton. However the visitors were unclear from the evidence provided how students, if they require additional support such as the need to access learning support services to help with dyslexia or the need for face to face counselling sessions, would be supported by the education provider in accessing these services. In particular the visitors were unclear as to how the education provider would ensure that all students, when they are on practice placement, would be able to access relevant support services, should they need them. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider will ensure that students will be able to access the facilities to support their welfare and wellbeing while they are on practice placement, regardless of where they are based. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme can meet this standard.

3.14 Where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the processes that will be put in place to obtain students' consent to participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, particularly the role-play aspects of the programme.

Reason: Through discussion with the programme team, the visitors noted that consent will be obtained from students at the start of the programme to cover all sessions in which they will be required to participate in role play or act as service users in practical teaching. The programme team also clarified that they will emphasise to students in each session that they should only share whatever they are comfortable with, and that if students felt uncomfortable at any stage this would be dealt with on a case by case basis. However, as part of the evidence provided the visitors were not presented with clear protocols to demonstrate the formal system that will be put in place for explicitly gaining students' informed consent before they participate as service users in practical teaching. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide evidence of the formal protocols that will be put in place for obtaining consent from students and for managing situations where students decline from participating in practical teaching and role-play sessions.

3.15 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the processes that will be put in place to monitor students' attendance, and the process that will be applied if attendance impacts on a student's ability to meet the requirements of the programme.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the documentation prior to the visit, and were made aware that student attendance is mandatory for all practice and academic elements of the programme modules. The visitors were also aware that students' attendance would be monitored in both the academic and placement setting and that if any students' attendance dropped below 80 per cent action would be taken. However, from the evidence provided the visitors were unclear as to the processes that the programme team will put in place to monitor the attendance of students. The visitors were also unable to determine in the evidence provided what action would be taken should a student's attendance drop below an acceptable level and if this action would include any referral to the professional suitability process**.** Therefore the visitors require further evidence of the attendance monitoring mechanisms, the attendance policy, what will constitute low attendance in each setting, and what action will be taken in such cases. The visitors also require further evidence of how any attendance policy will be communicated to students on the programme to ensure they are aware of their attendance obligations. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme team identify which aspects of the programme are mandatory, how the programme team monitors attendance and what the outcomes of low attendance will be for students.

3.16 There must be a process in place throughout the programme for dealing with concerns about students' profession-related conduct.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to highlight the processes that are in place to ensure that if concerns about a students' profession related conduct arise in placement these feed back into the education providers' professional suitability procedure where appropriate.

Reason: From the discussions at the visit the visitors were made aware that the education provider has an established professional suitability process in place. As such the visitors are aware of the consequences students will face if they are in breach of the professional suitability requirements for the programme. However, from their reading of the programme documentation, the visitors noted that if issues arose in the practice placement setting this would trigger a practice preview panel (Appendix 7). If an outcome of this panel would be to remove a student from the placement, the student would then be referred to the education providers' professional suitability procedure (paragraph 6.a) by the academic co-ordinator. However, the visitors were unclear about how this process would be enacted to ensure that any issues regarding a student's fitness to practice was scrutinised by the appropriate education provider process before they were removed from the programme. The visitors therefore could not determine if a student could be removed from the programme as a result of professional conduct issues before being subject to the education providers' professional suitability process and possibly have recourse to the education provider's appeals process. As such the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how any concerns about a students'

profession-related conduct would be dealt with to ensure that any student will be subject to the relevant policies and procedures to minimise any risk that they could be re-admitted to the programme as a result of an appeal. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how this standard can be met by the programme.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how the programme ensures that those who successfully complete the programme will be able to meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers, in England.

Reason: The SOPs mapping document submitted with the documentation ensured that each standard of proficiency was referenced to one of the academic units that make up this programme. The units highlighted were detailed utilising a proforma (unit information form) and as such included two high level learning outcomes for each unit with threshold criteria as to how those learning outcomes would be met providing contextual information. Due to the pattern of delivery, over 13 months, and the requirement to meet the education provider's academic credit requirements students are only expected to study and pass three academic units to successfully complete the programme. As such each unit covers a large proportion of the curriculum and is formed of a number of teaching and learning opportunities and assessments. However, due to the number and type of references given, the visitors were unable to determine where and how the curriculum would explicitly teach or address each SOP. In discussion at the visit the programme team articulated that the detailed curriculum delivery plan had yet to be finalised and was currently in the later stages of development. As such the visitors could not determine where in the curriculum each standard of proficiency would be specifically addressed and how the delivery of the programme would ensure that this is the case. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide further evidence to demonstrate how and where the curriculum will ensure that students will be able to meet the SOPs for social workers on successful completion of the programme.

4.2 The programme must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how the programme team have considered and addressed the knowledge base included in relevant curriculum guidance, particularly from the professional body.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted that there is a focus on children and families in the curriculum content and that the practice placement settings are in child and family social work settings. In discussions with the programme team it was highlighted that the curriculum content delivered at the summer institute and recall days would include aspects of social work practice outside the sphere of child and family social work. It was also highlighted that students would experience other areas of social work practice during three required "contrasting placements" that would be provided by their placement provider as part of their overall placement experience. The visitors also noted that there is an expectation that students will become immersed in an area of social work outside of child and family settings. As a result of this, students will be able to lead and develop the learning of other students in these areas (Programme handbook, page 16). However, from the evidence provided the visitors could not determine how the programme will set and assess relevant learning outcomes to

ensure that students will gain the knowledge of the adult perspective and orientation in social work, as articulated in the relevant curriculum guidance from the professional body. In particular the visitors could not determine how the learning outcomes of the programme ensure that students develop an understanding of service users who are experiencing issues such as mental health, learning disabilities, or physical disabilities. The visitors could also not determine how students develop an understanding of issues faced by older people. Therefore the visitors require the programme team to provide further evidence of how the programme's curriculum will ensure that students develop an understanding of the adult perspective and orientation in social work as articulated in relevant curriculum guidance from the professional body. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme reflects the philosophy, core values and knowledge base of the relevant curriculum guidance from the professional body for the social work profession.

4.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to articulate how the collaborative arrangements in place to manage the programme will inform the curriculum and ensure that it reflects current practice.

Reason: From the evidence provided, the visitors noted that there are a number of collaborative partners tasked with the creation and delivery of the programme curriculum. The visitors also noted that there are collaborative arrangements in place to delineate the roles and responsibilities of the collaborative partners particularly for Frontline, University of Bedfordshire, Institute of Family Therapy and King's College London. In discussion with the programme team at the visit the visitors were made aware that all partners had had some input into the creation of the curriculum and would have a role in delivering the teaching and learning related to this curriculum. However, from the evidence provided the visitors were unclear as to how feedback from colleagues in practice, and from students would be fed back to the programme team to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant to current practice. In particular the visitors could not determine what arrangements are in place and what mechanisms would allow this feedback to influence the development of the curriculum. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of the mechanisms that are in place to gather relevant feedback from practice colleagues and students to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant to current practice. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme can meet this standard.

4.8 The range of learning and teaching approaches used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to demonstrate how the education provider will ensure that the use of intensive summer institutes and practice elements of the programme will be appropriate to the delivery of the programme's curriculum.

Reason: From their reading of the documentation provided, and from discussions at the visit, the visitors were aware that this programme will be formed of an intensive summer institute, lasting five weeks, and then subsequent placement experience. During the placement experience teaching and learning will be delivered via recall days, run by the programme team, and through relevant learning based on practice experience, delivered by practice placement educators (consultant social workers). This was articulated in an overview of the curriculum and the programme delivery timetable which

were included in the Strategic Overview and Rationale for Frontline Programme document. However, the visitors, in the meeting with the programme team, noted that the curriculum overview was being developed further to provide greater clarity around which members of the programme team, and guest lecturers, would be responsible for delivering which aspects of the curriculum and when in the programme timetable (either at the summer institute or at one of the recall days) this would be happening. They also noted that this development would go hand in hand with the further development of the programme timetable to provide greater detail and clarity of how the learning outcomes from the programme would be covered by the teaching and learning provided. As such, due to the stage of development of the curriculum delivery schedule the visitors were unable to determine how the range of teaching and learning approaches, as articulated, will be appropriate to the delivery of the curriculum. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the education provider will ensure that the range of teaching and learning approaches used will provided students with the learning and teaching required to meet the relevant learning outcomes. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the learning and teaching approaches used by this programme, will be appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum and ensure that students can meet all of the relevant learning outcomes.

4.8 The range of learning and teaching approaches used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to demonstrate how the education provider will ensure that the use of contrasting placements to deliver elements of the curriculum will provide all students with the experience they need to meet the relevant learning outcomes.

Reason: From their reading of the documentation provided and from discussions at the visit, the visitors were aware that elements of the programme will be dependent on students gaining the required experience in practice settings. In particular the visitors noted that each student will be required to experience three settings which contrast with the child and family focus of the main practice experience provided. Through the provision of these contrasting placements the programme will provide students with the opportunity to learn about the role of a social worker outside their work with children and families and allow them to specialise in another area of practice. However, in discussion with the placement providers and placement educators, the visitors noted that the three contrasting placements would be sourced by the placement educators (consultant social workers). Because of this, the length and type of placements may be dependent on the ability of the placement educators to source the contrasting placement experience for the students they were responsible for. As such the visitors were unclear as to how the education provider will ensure that the type and length of any experience provided in a contrasting setting will be sufficient for students to meet any relevant learning outcomes. The visitors were also unclear as to how the education provider would ensure parity of experience in these contrasting settings to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to meet the learning outcomes, regardless of their placement experience. In addition, the visitors were unclear how the experience gained in these contrasting settings would be assessed. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme team will ensure that the experience provided to students in the contrast settings will be of sufficient quality and length to allow each student to meet any associated learning outcomes. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the learning and teaching approach, of using contrasting placements,

will be appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum and ensure that students can meet all of the relevant learning outcomes.

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to demonstrate how the education provider will ensure that the duration and range of the practice experience will provide all students with the experience required to meet all of the relevant learning outcomes.

Reason: The visitors noted, from the documentation provided, that Frontline are the collaborative partner with responsibility for sourcing practice placements. As part of this responsibility, Frontline ensure that placement providers are able to provide students with the experience required to meet the relevant learning outcomes. The visitors noted that to fulfil this responsibility, Frontline enter into contractual arrangements with the practice placement providers as well as requiring them to fill in a self-evaluation form which articulates how the placement provider (local authority) will provide students with the experience they require. In discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that while Frontline source placements, the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) has overall responsibility for ensuring that practice placements provide students with the experience they need to meet the learning outcomes associated with the practice experience. As such the education provider has put in place a UoB quality assurance in practice learning (QAPL) audit which they will require to be completed by placement providers to ensure that the resources are in place at the practice placement. However, in discussion with the placement providers and placement educators, the visitors noted that the range of students' experience would be dependent on the case load of the placement educators (consultant social workers). Because of this, the length and type of placement experience may be dependent on the casework coming through the placement provider. As such the visitors were unclear as to how the education provider will ensure that the type and length of any experience provided in the child and family service will be sufficient for students to meet any relevant learning outcomes. The visitors were also unclear as to how the education provider would ensure parity of experience in these settings to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to meet the learning outcomes, regardless of their placement experience. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme team will ensure that the experience provided to students in the placement settings will be of sufficient quality and length to allow each student to meet any associated learning outcomes.

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to demonstrate how the education provider will ensure that the duration and range of the practice experience in the contrast settings will provide all students with the experience required to meet all of the relevant learning outcomes.

Reason: The visitors noted, from the documentation provided, that Frontline are the collaborative partner with responsibility for sourcing practice placements. As part of this responsibility, Frontline ensure that placement providers are able to provide students with the experience required to meet the relevant learning outcomes. The visitors noted

that to fulfil this responsibility, Frontline enter into contractual arrangements with the practice placement providers as well as requiring them to fill in a self-evaluation form which articulates how the placement provider (local authority) will provide students with the experience they require. In discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that while Frontline source placements, the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) has overall responsibility for ensuring that practice placements provide students with the experience they need to meet the learning outcomes associated with the practice experience. As such the education provider has put in place a UoB quality assurance in practice learning (QAPL) audit which they will require to be completed by placement providers to ensure that the resources are in place at the practice placement. However, in discussion with the placement providers and placement educators, the visitors noted that placement educators (consultant social workers) would be responsible for sourcing the required contrast placements for students. Because of this, the length and type of placement experience may be dependent on the ability of the placement educators to source the contrasting placement experience for the students they are responsible for. As such the visitors were unclear as to how the education provider will ensure that the type and length of any experience provided in the contrasting settings will be sufficient for students to meet any relevant learning outcomes. The visitors were also unclear as to how the education provider would ensure parity of experience in these settings to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to meet the learning outcomes, regardless of their placement experience. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme team will ensure that the experience provided to students in the contrast placement settings will be of sufficient quality and length to allow each student to meet any associated learning outcomes.

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to demonstrate how the education provider will ensure that the duration and range of the practice experience, particularly in the contrast placement settings, will provide all students with the experience required to demonstrate progression throughout the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted from the programme documentation, and from discussion at the visit, the two audit tools that the education provider has in place to quality assure the placement experience for students. In discussion with the placement providers and placement educators, the visitors noted that the experience that students would receive would be dependent on the case load provided to the placement educators (consultant social workers). As such, the length and type of placement experience may be dependent on the casework coming through the placement provider. Because of this at the start of a placement a student would be required to agree a practice development plan with their placement educator to identify how the student will develop over the course of the placement experience. This practice development plan will then form the basis of the subsequent reviews of a student's performance over the course of the placement experience. However, from the evidence provided, the visitors were unclear how these placement development plans would link to relevant learning outcomes and allow students to be assessed at the appropriate level to demonstrate their progression through their placement experience. As such the visitors were unclear as to how the education provider will use the practice development plans, or other mechanisms, to ensure that the type of experience provided by the placement will be sufficient for students to develop and demonstrate how they can meet any relevant learning

outcomes. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme team will ensure that the experience provided to students in the placement settings will be of sufficient quality and length to allow each student to develop throughout their placement and meet any relevant learning outcomes.

5.4 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to demonstrate how the collaborative arrangements in place to manage the programme, ensure that the education provider's system for approving and monitoring all placements is thorough and effective.

Reason: The visitors noted, from the documentation provided, that Frontline are the collaborative partner with responsibility for sourcing practice placements. As part of this responsibility, Frontline ensure that placement providers are able to provide students with the experience required to meet the relevant learning outcomes. The visitors noted that to fulfil this responsibility Frontline enter into contractual arrangements with the practice placement providers as well as requiring them to fill in a self-evaluation form, which articulates how the placement provider (local authority) will provide students with the experience they require. In discussion with the programme team the visitors noted that while Frontline source placements, the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) has overall responsibility for ensuring that practice placements provide students with the experience they need to meet the learning outcomes associated with the practice experience. As such the education provider has put in place a UoB quality assurance in practice learning (QAPL) audit which they will require to be completed by placement providers to ensure that the resources in place at the practice placement. However, from the information provided, the visitors were unsure how the evidence to satisfy the requirements of both the Frontline and UoB placement audit mechanisms would be gathered and validated. They were also unclear as to how the evidence, once collected, would be collated and assessed to approve a placement and then allow the education provider to monitor the performance of the placement in delivering appropriate opportunities for student learning. Therefore the visitors require further information about how the different tools, used to quality assure practice placement opportunities for students, are utilised to provide the education provider with the information it requires to approve and monitor all placements. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme assures the quality of the placement experience for students and how it can meet this standard.

5.5 The placement providers must have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to demonstrate how the approval and monitoring processes in place ensure that placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place and that any issues which arise as a result of these policies are fed back effectively to the education provider.

Reason: The visitors noted, from the documentation provided, that Frontline are the collaborative partner with responsibility for sourcing practice placements. As part of this responsibility Frontline ensure that placement providers (local authorities) have relevant equality and diversity policies in place in relation to students. In discussion with the programme team the visitors also noted that while Frontline source placements, the

University of Bedfordshire (UoB) has overall responsibility for ensuring that practice placements have relevant equality and diversity policies in place in relation to students. As such the education provider has put in place a UoB quality assurance in practice learning (QAPL) audit which they will require to be completed by placement providers to ensure that the resources in place at the practice placement. The visitors were also informed that UoB has an equality and diversity policy in place in relation to students who undertake the programme. However the visitors could not determine, from the evidence provided, how the equality and diversity policies, both at the UoB and the placement setting, would work in tandem to ensure that any relevant equality and diversity data was being monitored. They were also unsure how any issues, if they arose, would be flagged and who would be responsible for resolving these issues. Therefore the visitors require further information about how any issues which are flagged by monitoring of equality and diversity data at the practice placement are fed back to the education provider and dealt with appropriately. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how this standard can be met by the programme.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:
- **the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
- **the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
- **expectations of professional conduct;**
- **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how students will be prepared for placement through the clear articulation of the learning outcomes they will be required to meet as well as when, and where, in the placement experience these learning outcomes are expected to be met.

Reason: In discussions with the programme team, the visitors were made aware that assessment of students' performance while undertaking practice placement experience would be made through the scrutiny of students' portfolios at regular review meetings. The visitors also noted, from documentation provided at the visit, that the programme team would utilise a matrix to grade students' performance based on these review meetings along with direct observations of students' practice. In further discussions with the programme team the visitors were made aware that the overview of the curriculum, and associated documentation, was being developed further. In particular this development would provide greater clarity as to where aspects of the curriculum would be delivered in the programme timetable (either as part of classroom teaching or as part of the practice placement). They also noted that this development would provide greater detail and clarity as to how the learning outcomes from the programme would be covered through the delivery of the curriculum. As such, due to the stage of development of the programme timetable the visitors were unable to determine which learning outcomes would be associated with the practice placement experience and how students would be informed of this. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of the detailed programme of curriculum delivery, to identify which learning outcomes will need to be met by students while they are on placement along with evidence of how students will be informed of the learning outcomes to be achieved.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:
- **the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
- **the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
- **expectations of professional conduct;**
- **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how students will be prepared for placement through the clear articulation of who is responsible for which aspects of their placement, and what lines of communication they can utilise to communicate with the people responsible for their placement experience.

Reason: From their scrutiny of the documentation provided, and from their discussion with the practice placement providers and practice placement educators at the visit, the visitors were aware of the people who will support students while they are undertaking their practical experience. This included, but is not limited to, placement educators (consultant social workers), Frontline specialists, academic tutors and other staff at the practice placement. The visitors noted that each person had roles and responsibilities in relation to ensuring that students receive the experience they require while they are on placement. However, from the evidence provided, the visitors were unclear as to how students are made aware of who they should communicate with if they are experiencing issues on placement, and the lines of responsibility that exist for the different aspects of the placement experience. Furthermore, the visitors were unclear if there were scheduled meetings between students and those involved in the placement experience (eg meetings with their academic tutor and placement educator (consultant social workers) and the frequency and format of such meetings. As such the visitors were unsure how the programme team fully prepare students for the placement experience by informing them of who best to communicate with, should different issues arise and which person would be responsible for the different aspects of the placement experience. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how the programme team inform students of the methods of communicating issues that arise, and what the lines of responsibility are in relation to the different aspects of the placement experience.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:
- **the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
- **the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
- **expectations of professional conduct;**
- **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how students will be prepared for placement, through the clear articulation of the placement documentation used to record and support the achievement of placement learning outcomes.

Reason: In discussions with the programme team, the visitors were made aware that assessment of students' performance while undertaking practice placement experience would be made through the scrutiny of students' portfolios at regular review meetings. In further discussions with the programme team the visitors were made aware that the overview of the curriculum, and associated documentation, was being developed further. As such, due to the stage of development of the programme documentation, the visitors were unable to determine how the placement portfolio and any other associated placement documentation would be used to support the practice placement experience and how students would be informed of this. Furthermore, the visitors were unclear if the portfolio would be used in the same way in relation to contrasting placements. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how the programme team inform students of how the placement portfolio will be used to record and support the achievement of learning outcomes and overall student progression whilst on placement.

5.13 A range of learning and teaching methods that respect the rights and needs of service users and colleagues must be in place throughout practice placements.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how they will ensure that service users and carers' rights and needs will be respected, particularly in the gaining of consent to have their sessions recorded, and what will happen if this consent is not gained.

Reason: In discussion with the programme team the visitors were made aware that the programme team would be instituting a rigorous process for obtaining consent from all service users that would be recorded to aid the assessment of students' performance. This included a two stage consent process by which the student would obtain verbal consent from a service user, carer or responsible adult, before a practice educator would clarify their understanding of granting consent and gain written agreement before recording started. However, the visitors could not determine, in the documentation provided, where this process was reflected and how the education provider would ensure that it was adhered to by all participants involved in the practice placement. The visitors were also unclear, from the evidence provided, how any refusal to grant consent may be mitigated to ensure that students could still be assessed adequately. Therefore the visitors require further evidence as to how the education provider will articulate this process for gaining consent to all participants involved in the practice placement and ensure that it is being adhered to. They also require further evidence of how any refusal to grant consent would be managed to mitigate any issues which may arise and ensure that students can still be assessed appropriately. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme can meet this standard.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how the programme ensures that those who successfully complete the programme will be able to meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers, in England.

Reason: The SOPs mapping document submitted with the documentation ensured that each standard of proficiency was referenced to one of the academic units that make up this programme. The units highlighted were detailed utilising a proforma (unit

information form) and as such included two high level learning outcomes for each unit with threshold criteria as to how those learning outcomes would be met providing contextual information. Due to the pattern of delivery, over 13 months, and the requirement to meet the education provider's academic credit requirements students are only expected to study and pass three academic units to successfully complete the programme. As such each unit covers a large proportion of the curriculum and is formed of a number of teaching and learning opportunities and assessments. However, due to the number and type of references given, the visitors were unable to determine where and how the assessment strategy of the programme will ensure that students have met each relevant SOP. In discussion at the visit the programme team articulated that the detailed curriculum delivery plan had yet to be finalised and was currently in the later stages of development. As such the visitors could not determine how the assessment strategy of the programme ensures that students will be assessed against each standard of proficiency. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide further evidence to demonstrate how and where the assessment strategy of the programme will ensure that students have met the SOPs for social workers on successful completion of the programme.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the assessment strategy and design for the placement experience to ensure that students who successfully complete the programme can meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers, in England.

Reason: In discussions with the programme team, the visitors were made aware that assessment of students' performance while undertaking practice placement experience would be done through the scrutiny of students' portfolios at regular review meetings. The visitors also noted, from documentation provided at the visit, that the programme team would utilise a matrix to grade students' performance based on these review meetings, along with direct observations of students' practice. In further discussions with the programme team the visitors were made aware that the overview of the curriculum, and associated documentation, was being developed further. In particular this development would provide greater clarity as to which aspects of the curriculum would be delivered as part of the placement experience and how these aspects will be assessed. They also noted that this development would provide greater detail and clarity as to how the learning outcomes associated with the practice placement, how these relate to the relevant SOPs, and how student achievement of these outcomes will be assessed. As such, due to the stage of development of the programme timetable the visitors were unable to determine which learning outcomes and SOPs would be associated with the practice placement experience and how students would be assessed against these. Furthermore, the visitors could not determine if the arrangements for assessment would differ in relation to any contrasting placements students were required to complete. As such the visitors require further evidence of the detailed assessment strategy for the programme to identify which learning outcomes will need to be met by students while they are on placement. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how students will be assessed on placement to ensure they are meeting the relevant learning outcomes and the associated SOPs.

6.2 All assessments must provide a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external-reference frameworks can be measured.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to demonstrate how the collaborative arrangements in place will ensure that the programme will meet the education provider's quality assurance procedures in relation to the assessment of students.

Reason: From their reading of the documentation provided prior to the approval visit the visitors noted that the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) has overall responsibility for quality assuring that the standards of assessment on the programme. To ensure that this is the case the programme is expected to adhere to all of the established UoB quality assurance procedures such as providing submissions to the relevant assessment committees and reporting to the relevant academic boards. The visitors were made aware at the visit that there are a number of mechanisms in place to ensure that the programme can comply with all of these requirements. These include the institution of an increased number of assessment panels, at programme team level, to consider students' work and an application to UoB to vary the number of examination boards associated with the programme to better mirror students' progress. However, from the information provided, the visitors could not determine how the required information about the assessment of student progress and achievement would be fed back to the education provider. In particular, the visitors were unclear, due to the collaborative nature of the programme, how the education provider ensures the information provided to them regarding student assessment and progression is of the quality and consistency required. As such the visitors could not determine how this information would be collated and provided to UoB in order to satisfy all of the quality assurance requirements of the university. The visitors therefore require further information about the mechanisms that are in place to gather data on the assessment of students' progress and achievement and how these mechanisms feed this information into education provider in order to satisfy UoB's quality assurance requirements. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme's assessments provide a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with the UoB quality assurance framework can be measured.

6.4 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the assessment strategy and design for the placement experience to ensure that students who successfully complete the programme can meet the relevant standards of proficiency.

Reason: In discussions with the programme team, the visitors were made aware that assessment of students' performance while undertaking practice placement experience would be undertaken through the scrutiny of students' portfolios at regular review meetings. The visitors also noted, from documentation provided at the visit, that the programme team would utilise a matrix to grade students' performance based on these review meetings, along with direct observations of students' practice. In further discussions with the programme team the visitors were made aware that the overview of the curriculum, and associated documentation, was being developed further. In particular this development would provide greater clarity as to which aspects of the curriculum would be delivered as part of the placement experience and how these aspects will be assessed. They also noted that this development would provide greater detail and clarity as to how the assessment methods used to assess students' performance in the practice placement setting would measure students' ability to meet

the relevant learning outcomes. As such, due to the stage of development of the programme delivery timetable the visitors were unable to determine what assessment methods would be employed to measure students' performance in meeting the relevant learning outcomes. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence of the detailed assessment strategy for the programme to identify which assessment methods will be employed to measure students' achievement of relevant learning outcomes while they are on placement. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme team will ensure that the assessment of students will be assessed on placement will measure how students are meeting the relevant learning outcomes.

6.6 There must be effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to demonstrate how any moderation processes and procedures in place will ensure parity of assessment for all students in all settings.

Reason: Through discussion at the visit, the visitors were made aware that assessment of students' performance while undertaking practice placement experience would be undertaken through the scrutiny of students' portfolios at regular review meetings. The visitors also noted, from documentation provided at the visit, that the programme team would utilise a grading matrix to grade students' performance based on these review meetings and direct observations of students' practice. Further discussion highlighted that several mechanisms would be put in place to ensure that all assessment of students while they are on practice placement would be marked by more than one person to ensure parity in assessment between students in any one placement provider. This included the involvement of external examiners at several stages of the programme to moderate assessments as well as more than one person scrutinising the recordings of students' sessions with service users. The visitors were also made aware that the academic co-ordinators for each region would be present to ensure there was parity in the assessment of students across each region. However, from the information provided, the visitors were unclear as to what mechanisms would ensure that information regarding marking moderation and how parity of assessment had been assured in the regions would be fed back to the education provider. As such the visitors were unclear as to how the education provider would ensure parity in assessment for students in all placement settings and in all regions of the country. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of the mechanisms that the education provider has in place to collate and scrutinise the information gathered about the assessment of students in practice. This evidence should also identify how the mechanisms in place enable the programme team to ensure parity in assessment for all students on the programme and how, if any issues about assessment are raised, they can be dealt with. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place ensure appropriate standards in assessing students are maintained across all placement areas.

6.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to demonstrate how any assessment and moderation processes and procedures, required for the programme to comply with the education providers' quality assurance procedures will affect student progression and achievement through the programme.

Reason: From their reading of the documentation provided prior to the approval visit the visitors noted that the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) has overall responsibility for quality assuring that the standards of assessment on the programme. To ensure that this is the case the programme is expected to adhere to all of the established UoB quality assurance procedures such as providing submissions to the relevant assessment committees and reporting to the relevant academic boards. The visitors were made aware at the visit that there are a number of mechanisms in place to ensure that the programme can comply with all of these requirements. These include the institution of an increased number of assessment panels, at programme team level, to consider and an application to UoB to vary the number of examination boards associated with the programme to better mirror students' progress. This is to provide additional opportunities for assessments on the programme to be scrutinised and allow students to progress quickly due to the timescales involved in the delivery of this programme. However, from the information provided, the visitors could not determine how the examination boards for this programme are arranged to ensure that any decisions made at these boards will not unduly affect students' progress through the programme. In particular the visitors were unsure how students' progress would be affected if they had to wait until the outcome of an examination board meeting before progressing which may jeopardise their place on the programme based on the timescales involved in the programme's delivery. The visitors therefore require further information about how the education provider will manage any obligations they have to submit students work to examination boards alongside the requirements for students progression through the programme. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the assessment regulations of the programme will clearly specify the requirements for student progression through the programme.

6.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly state that aegrotat awards do not confer eligibility to apply to the Register.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could not determine where there was a clear statement regarding aegrotat awards. The visitors could therefore not determine how the programme team ensured that students understood that any aegrotat awards conferred would not provide them eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register. The visitors therefore require further evidence to ensure that there is a clear statement included in the programme documentation regarding aegrotat awards to ensure that students are aware of the consequences of having and award of this type conferred.

6.11 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to make it clear that external examiners appointed to the programme must be HCPC registered unless alternate arrangements have previously been agreed with the HCPC.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail concerning the recruitment of external examiners to the programme. This standard requires the assessment regulations of the programme to state that any external examiner appointed to the programme needs to be appropriately registered or that suitable alternative arrangements should be agreed. Therefore the visitors require evidence that HCPC requirements regarding the appointment of external examiner to the programme have been included in the relevant documentation to ensure that this standard is met.

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Christine Stogdon
Beverley Blythe

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Tilda Goldberg Centre
Room C421, Park Square Campus
University of Bedfordshire
Park Square
Luton LU1 3JU

19th March 2014

Dear Mr. Potter,

Observations on the Visitor Report from Frontline

Thank you for your detailed feedback and guidance on how we can demonstrate that the Frontline Academy (PG Dip Social Work) meets HCPC standards. We have attached observations relating to the report and restate our commitment to meeting the required professional standards for approval.

Further to these observations we will be sharing a plan with you for how we intend to evidence the standards. We hope that this will be informative ahead of the Education and Training Committee on the 27th of March and that it will provide an opportunity for the visiting team to share any additional guidance on the nature of the evidence that they require.

Frontline is an innovative social work programme that is being developed over a relatively short time period. In this context, there was considerable development in the articulation of the details of the programme policies and procedures between the submission of the documentation for the HCPC visit (January) and the visit itself (at the end of February). The more detailed and developed proposals for delivery of the programme identified at a number of points by the Visitors in relation to the verbal feedback is an indication of this. Furthermore, our increasingly thorough documentation of the details of the course has continued since the visit. We therefore look forward to the opportunity to send you a full set of revised documents that address the points raised by the Visitors for consideration at the recommended visit.

As you know, we are keen to move quickly in turning around further visits or requests for documentation. The Frontline Academy team are intending to send a full set of revised documentation to you on Friday the 4th of April. Given this, we would like to explore the possibility of provisionally planning for a visit on the week commencing the 21st of April subject to a final decision being made by the ETC on the 27th of March. Hopefully, this would allow the visiting team to have two weeks in which to review the documentation before the visit and it would allow HCPC visitors and the programme team to make time available in advance.

Regarding the recommended further visit, we would like to work closely with the HCPC visiting team to ensure that the agenda provides full opportunities for visitors to explore areas where conditions are set in detail. We would welcome suggestions from you for how

we might create an agenda the best creates these opportunities. The Frontline Academy would welcome any feedback or questions from the visiting team once the documentation is shared with you on the 4th of April within the fortnight before the visit so that we can make best use of the visit. We would like to confirm whether this is possible.

Once again, thank you for your feedback and we look forward to providing further evidence in the weeks ahead to satisfy your standards.

Yours sincerely,

Donald Forrester   **Josh MacAlister**
Professor of Social Work Research   Chief Executive
University of Bedfordshire   Frontline

OBSERVATIONS

1. **Sources of evidence:** Absence of a Practice Placement Handbook.

Observation:

We note that while a separate Practice Placement Handbook was not submitted, this was because Practice Placement information was integrated into the student Programme Handbook. This was because learning on the Frontline programme is integrated into practice across the whole course and we therefore chose to submit a single integrated Handbook. However, for clarity we will now provide a separate Practice Placement Handbook.

2. **Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence of how and when applicants to the programme are made aware of the obligations they will be required to fulfil as part of the bursary contract they are required to sign.

Observation:

The Visitors commented that they were: "unclear as to when students or applicants would be informed of any other obligations and / or liabilities they would be subject to when entering into these contracts".

We are happy to provide further information to participants about these contracts, however we note that there is further information available on some obligations and liabilities on the Frontline website (http://www.thefrontline.org.uk/faqs under Pay and Employment Terms). The website link was provided in submitted documentation.

3. **Condition:** Further evidence must be provided to further articulate how the education provider receives the information they require in order make an informed choice about making offers to applicants who wish to take up a place on the programme.

Observation

In relation to this it was commented that: "members of the programme team had been present at the most recent assessment days". In fact two academic staff from the University of Bedfordshire were present for all assessment days, save one due to staff illness, they had overview information on all candidates and had veto over any not considered appropriate.

In verbal evidence it was outlined that the academic team from the University of Bedfordshire were involved in the design of the assessment process to ensure that adequate information was collected to enable the university to make an informed decision about admissions.

We accept the need to provide more documentary evidence of the nature of the University control over admissions decisions to support the verbal evidence provided. This observation is solely a correction of fact.

4. **Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence of how external examiners will be involved in the programme to fulfil their responsibilities as required of them in the established University of Bedfordshire quality assurance procedures.

Observation

The Visitors commented that:

> *In the meeting with the programme team, the visitors were informed that the role of the external examiner for this programme may include greater involvement in the moderation of practice placement assessments. This involvement would be designed to provide greater assurance of the parity in the assessment of students across all practice placement areas, and may involve scrutinising recordings of student performance while on placement. The visitors also noted that external examiners may be asked to comment on the professional suitability of students through the problems arising in practice learning policy (appendix 7). Whilst the visitors were aware these may be the roles fulfilled by the external examiners on this programme they could not determine, from the evidence provided, how these additional roles may impact on the external examiners' ability to undertake the role as defined by the education provider. In particular the visitors could not determine how the programme team would ensure that if they had any duties over and above what was expected of them by the UoB how the external examiner would maintain their independence from the programme. Therefore the visitors were unable to determine, from the evidence provided, how the external examiner role will work in practice and how any expanded role, over and above that usually expected, will ensure that the programme can fulfil the requirements of the education providers' quality assurance procedures. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the defined role of the external examiners on this programme and how this role will ensure that the requirements of the education providers' QA procedures will be fulfilled.*

This seems to be a different understanding of the external examiner role. The external examiner role for Frontline is identical to that for other social work programmes at the University of Bedfordshire. The only difference is a practical one: many of the marked assignments on the Frontline course involve recording of direct practice. The role of the External Examiners in relation to these is identical to that for an academic assignment. However, we did comment that this would require Examiners to come in to the University

to listen to a sample of recordings, as confidential recordings cannot be sent out in the same way as written assignments, and that the extra time requirements makes three External Examiners more appropriate. We are sorry if our verbal evidence caused confusion. We do not believe there is any evidence of grounds for this condition.

5. **Condition**: The education provider must provide further evidence as to the obligations of each partner institution, in regards to their responsibilities to any students undertaking the programme, should funding for the programme change or be withdrawn.

Observation

We note the suggested contradiction outlined in the visitors report between what was submitted in documentation and verbal evidence:

> *The visitors also noted in paragraph 10.12 (page 12) that the University of Bedfordshire (UoB) has no responsibility to "...teach out Participants the remainder of the Programme and shall have no liability to Frontline (ARK) in respect of the decision not to teach out save that prior to the decision not to teach out, the HEI shall give Frontline (ARK) reasonable notice and consult with Frontline (ARK)." However, in the meeting with the senior team the visitors were informed that UoB would ensure that students would be transferred to suitable alternative programmes at the university should this situation occur and that students would receive suitable awards based on their achievement. The visitors were also informed that the arrangements in place between Frontline and the DfE would ensure that any cohort on the programme would be funded until the programme could be completed. As such, while the visitors acknowledged the undertaking of the collaborative partners, they were unsure how these arrangements would be agreed and how they would be enacted should any issues with the grant funding of the programme occur.*

We believe our written and verbal evidence to be accurate and congruent. The collaboration agreement between the University and Frontline states (in clause 10.12) that the University is "not obliged" to teach out students. This relates to the University's legal responsibilities to Frontline through our contract with them and not to our ethical responsibilities to students, which are as set out during the HCPC visit. For Frontline as for any other University of Bedfordshire social work students we would support students to complete their studies, either by finishing the Frontline programme or transferring to another social work course as appropriate. We do intend to provide documentary evidence to support and clarify this in our submission.

6. **Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence of how they will ensure and maintain parity of access to resources between students in all areas of the country.

5

Observation

The Visitors commented that:

From the documentation provided and the meetings at the approval visit, the visitors were made aware of the resources that are available to all students on the programme. In particular the visitors were made aware of the online resources that would be made available to students as well as some of the physical resources that will be available to students at the education provider. In discussion with the programme team the visitors were made aware that the programme team recognise that due to the different areas of the country in which students would be undertaking their placement experience this could potentially lead to a disparity in access to these resources. The visitors were made aware that it would be a priority of the academic co-ordinators to ensure that the resources provided, particularly on practice placement, would allow students to gain the experience they require in order to successfully complete the programme. However the visitors could not determine, from the evidence provided, how the policies and processes in place would allow the academic co-ordinators to ensure parity of access to resources for students in all areas of the country. In particular the visitors were unclear as to what processes would be enacted to identify if students in the one area of the country lacked access to any resources compared to students in another area and what the team would do to address an issue such as this. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the programme team ensures that all students have access to the resources they require in order to successfully complete the programme. They also require further evidence of the policies and processes in place that will enable the academic co-ordinators to ensure that students in all areas of the country will have parity of access to these resources throughout the duration of the programme.

We were unclear of the reason for this condition. As set out throughout the documentation, all students will receive the same teaching, delivered by the same academic staff. This will be delivered at the summer institute and in the region in which they are based for recall days. Learning in practice will be supported through academic staff visiting placements with the same pattern for every placement. All students will have equal access to online resources. None of the students are based at or taught in the University. We seek clarification regarding the lack of evidence of parity between regions in relation to teaching and learning resources.

7. **Condition:** Further evidence must be provided to highlight the processes that are in place to ensure that if concerns about a students' profession related conduct arise in placement these feed back into the education providers' professional suitability procedure where appropriate.

Observation

We note the same process, with identical wording, was approved by the HCPC during the approval of the University's Step-Up programme in 2013.

8. **Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how the programme team have considered and addressed the knowledge base included in relevant curriculum guidance, particularly from the professional body.

Observation

We did not recognise the knowledge, skills and values for child and family social work as something distinct and different from "adult" social work as outlined by the Visitors. For instance, the Visitors commented that "In discussions with the programme team it was highlighted that the curriculum content delivered at the summer institute and recall days would include aspects of social work practice outside the sphere of child and family social work." The types of issues referred to, such as adult mental health, learning difficulties and substance use, and working with older people, are all relevant to working with families and integral to effective child and family social work and will therefore be covered by teaching on the programme. We seek a variation in the report to reflect the understanding outlined above.

Given the significance of this issue, we would benefit from more detail in relation to the Visitors' understanding of child and family social work. Our approach to the programme is to teach knowledge, values and skills for working with children, adults and their families. Understanding and working with a variety of "adult" issues is in our opinion an essential and core part of child and family social work and thus integral to the Frontline course. If this is a different understanding of social work in a child and family setting to that of the Visitors, it would be helpful to have clarity on (a) what their understanding of child and family social work is? and (b) what the additional elements of "adult" work that would not be covered by this but required on a social work course are thought to be?

We accept the need to provide more detail about the incorporation of both curriculum guidance and the inclusion of learning across a range of service user groups and will do so when we submit our revised documentation. However, we were not clear what the extent of the Condition was in relation to The College of Social Work curriculum guides. Is it considered necessary to include reference to all of them? If not, which ones specifically do the Visitors feel need to be addressed?

9. **Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how students will be prepared for placement through the clear articulation of the learning outcomes they will be required to meet as well as when, and where, in the placement experience these learning outcomes are expected to be met.

Observation:

Here and in a number of other Conditions the Visitors comment that:

> "the visitors were made aware that assessment of students' performance while undertaking practice placement experience would be made through the scrutiny of students' portfolios at regular review meetings. The visitors also noted, from documentation provided at the visit, that the programme team would utilise a matrix to grade students' performance based on these review meetings along with direct observations of students' practice".

This is inaccurate. As set out in the Programme Handbook, portfolios of evidence are assessed against the PCF and review meetings are part of this process (as with all other social work programmes at the University of Bedfordshire). In addition, direct practice is assessed using a grading matrix. The processes of assessment and moderation for this are as for academic assignments and are not related to the holistic review process. This does not affect the specific condition (which is to provide more evidence on the curriculum) but is a point of accuracy. The comment would be made accurate by deleting "based on these review meetings".

This comment was also found in 5.11 condition 3, and conditions relating to 6.1, 6.4 and 6.6

10. Condition: Further evidence must be provided to demonstrate how the education provider will ensure that the use of contrasting placements to deliver elements of the curriculum will provide all students with the experience they need to meet the relevant learning outcomes.

Observation:

We seek clarification of this condition. The Visitors conclude by stating:

> *The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the programme team will ensure that the experience provided to students in the contrast placement settings will be of sufficient quality and length to allow each student to meet any associated learning outcomes.*

We were not clear whether addressing the guidance, policies, procedures and quality assurance processes around these contrasting practice experiences would potentially be sufficient to satisfy the Visitors or whether they believe that contrasting experiences such as those proposed are not able to be of sufficient "quality and length". We would like guidance from either the Visitors or the HCPC around the requirements for "length" in particular.

Appendix 1 – Mapping of Frontline's observations to the conditions

The following of Frontline's numbered observations are relevant to specific conditions as follows:

- Observation 2 – Condition 3 for SET 2.1
- Observation 3 – Condition 1 for SET 2.1
- Observation 4 – Condition 2 for SET 3.3
- Observation 5 – Condition 2 for SET 3.1
- Observation 6 – Condition 1 for SET 3.8
- Observation 7 – Condition for SET 3.16
- Observation 8 – Condition for SET 4.2
- Observation 9 – Condition 1 for SET 5.11 (also impacts on condition 2 for SET 6.1, and the conditions for SETs 6.4 and 6.6)
- Observation 10 – Condition 2 for SET 4.8

Frontline (ARK) and Tilda Goldberg Centre – Validated by University of Bedfordshire - The Frontline Academy (PG Dip Social Work) – Full time

Visitors' response to the education provider's observations

1. No response required

2. Observation regarding condition 3 for SET 2.1:

Christine Stogdon: I understand the observation and I am happy for the condition to be amended. The condition should still stand.

Beverley Blythe: I agree with Christine and feel that the condition should be amended.

3. Observation regarding Condition 1 for SET 2.1:

Christine Stogdon: I understand the observation and feel the condition should be amended. The condition should still stand.

Beverley Blythe: I agree the condition should still stand but be amended and further evidence provided to demonstrate how the programme may be able to meet this.

4. Observation regarding condition 2 for SET 3.3:

Christine Stogdon: On the visit the team indicated verbally that the external examiner would have an on-going assessment role of the student's work this, in the Visitor's view, could have compromised the externals' objectivity. However, now this has been clarified and we have been assured that the externals have a traditional role, I am happy for the condition to be taken out of the report.

Beverley Blythe: At the visit a member of the programme team indicated that the external role was somewhat different to that traditionally seen. If this now meets a normal objective model I will also agree to it being removed from the report.

5. Observation regarding condition 2 for SET 3.1:

Christine Stogdon: As the education provider will be submitting evidence regarding this condition, the condition should still stand.

Beverley Blythe: This condition should remain, as written, until evidence is provided.

6. Observation regarding condition 1 for SET 3.8:

Christine Stogdon: The condition should still stand with amendments. We were especially concerned about the parity of student's access to other resources in respect of welfare and student support from within the HEI especially in relation to any face to face support that a student may need in going through either a complaint or Fitness to Practice process.

Beverley Blythe: Condition to remain with amendments – this condition was about resources, rather than teaching, and to determine how disparity of access based on regional allocation would be resolved, if it occurred.

7. **Observation regarding the condition placed on SET 3.16:**

Christine Stogdon: The arrangements for Step Up differ in that the programmes are arranged between HEI and Employers without a third stakeholder (Frontline) involved. As such, the Frontline Programme creates a unique complexity and hence the need for clarity in respect of the processes for feeding back to the HEI any concerns about a student's professional practice. As such the condition should stand, with amendments.

Beverley Blythe: I agree with all of the points mentioned, and that the condition should stand with amendments. This is especially as the inference here would be that the cohort based in the North West would still have to be dealt with back at University of Bedfordshire.

8. **Observation regarding the condition placed on SET 4.2:**

Christine Stogdon: The condition should stand, with amendments.

Beverley Blythe: This condition definitely has to stand, with amendments.

9. **Observation regarding condition 1 for SET 5.11:**

Christine Stogdon: The conditions should stand with amendments.

Beverley Blythe: The conditions should stand, subject to amendments.

10. **Observation regarding condition 2 for SET 4.8:**

Christine Stogdon: The team indicated verbally that the contrasting placements would emerge for students as part of their work in the child and family (C&F) settings. In this condition we were asking for the detail as to how the education provider would ensure the parity and fairness for students in the access to these placements (if they did not "emerge" as part of the C&F experience). We also wanted clarity in the documentation as to how these contrasting placements would be managed and assessed. As such this condition should stand as written.

Beverley Blythe: I agree with Christine. The contrasting placements were offered as evidence of a deeper understanding of "adult social work" but from the

evidence provided there appeared a lack of clarity of purpose, assessment of suitability and parity of experience for these. Therefore the arrangement of the contrasting placements came across as potentially ad hoc. This condition should stand as written.