

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Birmingham City University
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	13 – 14 November 2014

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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. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 12 February 2015. At the Committee meeting, the programme was approved. This means that the education provider has met the condition(s) outlined in this report and that the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

Introduction

The HCPC visited the programme at the education provider as the social work profession came onto the register in August 2012 and a decision was made by the Education and Training Committee to visit all existing programmes from this profession. This visit assessed the programme against the standards of education and training (SETs) and considered whether those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was part of a joint event. The education provider considered their re-approval of the programme and the professional body, the College of Social Work (TCSW) considered their endorsement of the programme. The education provider, TCSW 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 covers the HCPC's recommendations on the programme only. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. Separate reports, produced by the education provider and the TCSW outline their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Gary Dicken (Social worker) Sid Jeewa (Lay visitor) Dorothy Smith (Social Worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Jamie Hunt
HCPC observer	Joy Tweed (HCPC Council member)
Proposed student numbers	90
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2015
Chair	Fiona Church (Birmingham City University)
Secretary	Jane Binks (Birmingham City University)
Members of the joint panel	Helen Wenman (The College of Social Work) Aiden Worsley (The College of Social Work) Ash Chand (The College of Social Work) Wilson Muleya (External panel member) Paul Webster (External panel member) Jane Dooley (External panel member) John Okole (External panel member) Rachel Curzon (Internal panel member) Philip Dee (Internal 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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Descriptions of the modules	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice placement handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External examiners' reports from the last two years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internal quality documents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Admissions documents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Resource paper	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment documents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Placements providers and educators / mentors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service users and carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 one condition is set on the programme, which must be met before the programme can be approved.

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 have also made two recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme can be 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.

Condition

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 submit further evidence to show that their policy for the recruitment of external examiners ensures that at least one external examiner will be appointed, who is appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the Register.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied with the current external examiner arrangements. However, the visitors noted that there was insufficient detail concerning the recruitment of external examiners to the programme in the documentation submitted. This standard requires the assessment regulations to clearly articulate the requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be appropriately registered with the HCPC. The visitors therefore require evidence that HCPC requirements regarding the appointment of external examiners to the programme have been included in the relevant documentation to ensure that this standard is met.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should produce information that clearly shows how their internal quality assurance policies work together, or if this information exists, make it more readily available.

Reason: From reviewing the documentation submitted, and considering discussions with the senior team and the programme team, the visitors were satisfied that the programme has regular monitoring and evaluations systems in place, and therefore that this standard is met. The visitors were also satisfied that the programme's stakeholders know how to engage with monitoring and evaluation systems relevant to their role. However, the visitors noted that it was not always immediately clear how quality assurance policies and procedures worked together. For example, the Quality Day Action Plan (Appendix 7, Social Work Critical Review) shows areas that have been identified for improvement, and statements that improvements have been made, but not the process by which the improvements were made. Therefore, the visitors recommend that the education provider produce an overarching quality assurance policy or mapping document, or, if this document exists, ensure that it is readily available when required. This document should enable stakeholders who are unfamiliar with the programme, for example external reviewers, or new staff or students, to understand how the internal quality assurance procedures work together, and for new stakeholders, how they would go about interacting with the policies.

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

Recommendation: The education provider should further formalise and embed the involvement of their service user and carer group in the programme, develop their communication with the group, and review the group's recruitment policy.

Reason: From reviewing the documentation, and from meeting service users and carers and the programme team, the visitors were satisfied that service users and carers were involved in the programme, and therefore that this standard is met. However, the visitors noted several concerns of the service users and carer group which may impact on the way the standard is met in the future.

Firstly, the visitors noted the groups' concerns about the reliance of their involvement on an individual person. The group has always had an individual to contact directly about their involvement in the programme, which they found useful. Currently, this individual is the programme leader. The visitors noted that this reliance on one individual might not constitute sufficient stability for the sustainability of the group's contribution. The group noted that when responsibility has transferred from one individual to another in the past, their level of involvement dropped for a period. The group is satisfied that their involvement is now back to where it was, but was unsure how the programme would facilitate their involvement in the programme to a consistent level should responsibility for facilitating the group's involvement changes again, and was concerned that their involvement would drop to a level below where it is now.

Secondly, the visitors noted that the group were unclear about the payment policy, and the training available to members of the group. The visitors were clear that these

policies exist, and that individuals in the group were remunerated and trained on an individual basis specific to their role, but this was not reflected in the group's understanding of the policies.

Finally, the visitors noted the group's concerns about recruiting new members, along with ensuring that the group has a diverse range of experiences. For example, the group members noted the lack of care leavers involved in the forum. The group were unsure how service users and carers who were interested in joining the group would find out about the group's work (beyond word of mouth), or how they would be appointed to the group.

Therefore, the visitors recommend that the education provider considers further formalising the service user and carer group's involvement in the programme to decrease reliance on individuals, reviews their communication policies with the group around payment and training, and reviews their recruitment policy for the group.

Gary Dicken
Sid Jeewa
Dorothy Smith