

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

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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 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. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 5 June 2014. 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

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 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:

	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 criteria for approving AMHP programmes	<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"/>

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"/>
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 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.

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