hcpc health & care professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Edge Hill University
Programme name	PgDip Social Work (Step Up To Social Work)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	7 – 8 June 2017

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. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 24 August 2017. At the Committee meeting on 23 November 2017, 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 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 meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was part of a joint event. The education provider considered the validation of the programme. 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 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. A separate report, produced by the education provider, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Susan Bell (Social worker in England) Patricia Higham (Social worker in England) Diane Whitlock (Lay)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Niall Gooch
Proposed student numbers	30 per cohort, 1 cohort per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	January 2018
Chair	Tony Turjansky (Edge Hill University)
Secretary	Katherine Griffiths (Edge Hill University)
Members of the joint panel	Rachel Bury (Edge Hill University) Lorraine Partington (Edge Hill University) Fran Wiles (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 external examiners' reports from the last two years prior to the visit as there is currently no external examiner as the programme is new.

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	☒	☐	☐
Service users and carers	☒	☐	☐
Learning resources	☒	☐	☐
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	☒	☐	☐

The HCPC met with students from the BA (Hons) Social Work, as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

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 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 49 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining nine 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 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 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.

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: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that applicants have access to the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on the programme.

Reason: The visitors were able to review documentation related to the application and entry processes for the programme, and to discuss them with the programme staff and senior team at the visit. They were informed that, as this will be a Step Up To Social Work programme, the application process is administered jointly by the education provider and partners in the local Learning Together Partnership (LTP), consisting of a number of local authorities, and the Department for Education (DfE). However, from the evidence provided, the visitors were not clear how applicants are informed that they would not need to fund their own occupational health checks and Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks. The visitors were also unclear as to where or how applicants were given information about the potential financial costs associated with accepting a bursary but failing to complete the programme. As such they were unclear how the education provider ensures that all applicants will have the information they need to make an informed decision about taking up a place on the programme. They therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence to show how they will ensure that the materials produced by them for applicants contains information that is required.

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 demonstrate how they will ensure that students have an informed understanding of consent.

Reason: The visitors were able to review a consent form in the programme documentation and discuss consent procedures with the programme team and students on the existing social work programmes. They were informed in these discussions that students could, and did, opt out occasionally for personal reasons, and there seemed to be an informal understanding of this among staff and students. The programme team did note that given the requirements and structure of the Step Up programme, it might be difficult for students to progress if they did not feel able to consent to certain activities, and the visitors were aware of this. However, from the documentation the visitors were not clear how the education provider ensured that all students were aware when they gave their initial consent that they could choose not to participate in certain practical components such as role plays, if they had a serious personal reason for doing so. The visitors therefore require that the education provider submit evidence showing how they will ensure that students are aware that consent is an ongoing process and that they can withdraw consent if they have a serious personal reason to do so.

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 will ensure that upon successful completion of the programme all students will meet the following standards of proficiency (SOPs):

1.1   know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional
1.2   recognise the need to manage their own workload and resources and be able to practise accordingly
1.4   be able to recognise and respond appropriately to unexpected situations and manage uncertainty
1.5   be able to recognise signs of harm, abuse, and neglect and know how to respond appropriately
2.9   recognise the power dynamics in relationships with service users and carers and be able to manage those dynamics appropriately
2.10 understand what is required of them by HCPC
3.2   understand the importance of maintaining their own health and well being
5.2   understand the need to adapt practice to respond appropriately to different groups and individuals
8.5   understand how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of a range of factors including age, capacity, learning ability and physical ability
8.6   be aware of the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by a range of factors including age, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status
8.7   understand the need to draw upon available resources and services to support service users' and carers' communication, wherever possible
9.2   be able to work with service users and carers to enable them to assess and make informed decisions about their needs, circumstances, risks, preferred options and resources
9.4   be able to support service users' and carers' right to control their lives and make informed choices about the services they receive
9.10 be able to understand the emotional dynamics of interactions with service users and carers
15.2 be aware of applicable health and safety legislation and any relevant safety polices and procedures in force at the workplace, such as incident reporting, and be able to act in accordance with these
15.3 be able to work safely in challenging environments, including being able to take appropriate actions to manage environmental risk

Reason: The visitors were able to review a standards of proficiency (SOPs) mapping document prior to the visit and discuss the mapping of SOPs to learning outcomes with the programme team. From the documentation the visitors were not clear where and how some of the SOPs were linked to learning outcomes in the programme modules, for example SOP 5.2 regarding adaptability of practice, SOP 8.6 regarding non-verbal communication, and SOP 9.10 regarding interaction with service users and carers. In discussion with the programme team the visitors received verbal reassurances that the curriculum ensured that students who successfully completed the programme would meet all the SOPs. However, the visitors were not able to see evidence for this and so

could not be certain that the standard was met. They therefore require the education provider to submit evidence showing how all the SOPs will be mapped to learning outcomes in the modules on the programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that they have a thorough and effective system in place for approving and monitoring placements.

Reason: The visitors were able to review documentation relating to placements and discuss placement audit with the programme team. They were informed that all of the education provider's external placements had recently been externally audited. However, they were not clear that the education provider, or the Learning Together Partnership (LTP), had access to a single database giving details of all placements and practice placement educators, or had a process for approving and monitoring all placements. Instead the local authorities involved in the LTP each maintained their own data on placements and educators, and the education provider relied on these local authorities to audit the placements. As such the visitors were unclear as to how the education provider would be able to identify and address issues if they arose as they did not have ownership of the audit and monitoring information. For example, in the student meeting the visitors heard that a number of students on placements in one particular local authority had felt that they did not have a safe learning environment. The visitors were unclear how the education provider has been made aware of these issues or how they would go about addressing them. Therefore they require the education provider to submit evidence showing how they will ensure that they have a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

5.6 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that there are an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff on placements.

Reason: On the visit, the visitors were able to discuss placement audit with the programme team, and see a list of placement staff and educators. However, the education provider did inform the visitors that this was not a complete list. The visitors were not clear that the education provider, or the Learning Together Partnership (LTP), had access to a single database with details of the qualifications and experience of staff on practice placements. Instead the local authorities involved in the LTP each maintained their own data on placement staff, and the education provider relied on these local authorities to monitor the qualifications and experience of those staff. The visitors were given verbal reassurances that there were adequate numbers of qualified and experienced staff in place on placements, but they were not able to determine that the standard was met as they had not seen sufficient evidence of how the education provider monitored this. They therefore require the education provider to submit evidence showing they will ensure that there are adequate numbers of appropriately qualified and experienced staff on placements.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Reason: On the visit, the visitors were able to see a list that gave details of some placement educators and their skills and experience. However, the education provider did inform the visitors that this was not a complete list. The visitors were not clear that the education provider, or the Learning Together Partnership (LTP), had access to a single database with details of the qualifications and experience of staff on practice placements. Instead the local authorities involved in the LTP each maintained their own data on placement staff, and the education provider relied on these local authorities to monitor the qualifications and experience of those staff. The visitors were given verbal reassurances that all placement educators had appropriate expertise, but they were not able to determine that the standard was met as they had not seen sufficient evidence of how the education provider ensured this. They therefore require the education provider to submit evidence showing how they will ensure that there are adequate numbers of appropriately qualified and experienced staff on placements.

5.8 Practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that practice placement educators are appropriately trained.

Reason: On the visit, the visitors were able to see a list that gave details of some placement educators and their training status. However, the education provider did inform the visitors that this was not a complete list. The visitors were not clear that the education provider, or the Learning Together Partnership (LTP), had access to a single database with details of the training of staff on practice placements. Instead the local authorities involved in the LTP each maintained their own data on placement staff training, and the education provider relied on these local authorities to monitor the training of those staff. The visitors were given verbal reassurances that all placement educators had appropriate training, but they were not able to determine that the standard was met as they had not seen sufficient evidence of how the education provider ensured this. They therefore require the education provider to submit evidence showing how they will ensure that placement educators are appropriately trained.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they will ensure that practice placement educators are appropriately registered.

Reason: On the visit, the visitors were able to see a list that gave details of some placement educators and their registration status. However, the education provider did inform the visitors that this was not a complete list. The visitors were not clear that the education provider, or the Learning Together Partnership (LTP), had access to a single database with details of the registration status of staff on practice placements. Instead the local authorities involved in the LTP each maintained their own data on placement staff, and the education provider relied on these local authorities to monitor the

registration status of staff. The visitors were given verbal reassurances that all placement educators were appropriately registered, but they were not able to determine that the standard was met as they had not seen sufficient evidence of how the education provider ensured this. They therefore require the education provider to submit evidence showing how they will ensure that placement educators are appropriately registered.

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 will ensure that upon successful completion of the programme all students will meet the following standards of proficiency (SOPs):

1.1   know the limits of their practice and when to seek advice or refer to another professional
1.2   recognise the need to manage their own workload and resources and be able to practise accordingly
1.4   be able to recognise and respond appropriately to unexpected situations and manage uncertainty
1.5   be able to recognise signs of harm, abuse, and neglect and know how to respond appropriately
2.9   recognise the power dynamics in relationships with service users and carers and be able to manage those dynamics appropriately
2.10 understand what is required of them by HCPC
3.   be able to maintain fitness to practise
5.2   understand the need to adapt practice to respond appropriately to different groups and individuals
8.5   understand how the means of communication should be modified to address and take account of a range of factors including age, capacity, learning ability and physical ability
8.6   be aware of the characteristics and consequences of verbal and non-verbal communication and how this can be affected by a range of factors including age, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs and socio-economic status
8.7   understand the need to draw upon available resources and services to support service users' and carers' communication, wherever possible
9.2   be able to work with service users and carers to enable them to assess and make informed decisions about their needs, circumstances, risks, preferred options and resources
9.4   be able to support service users' and carers' right to control their lives and make informed choices about the services they receive
9.10 be able to understand the emotional dynamics of interactions with service users and carers
15.2 be aware of applicable health and safety legislation and any relevant safety polices and procedures in force at the workplace, such as incident reporting, and be able to act in accordance with these
15.3 be able to work safely in challenging environments, including being able to take appropriate actions to manage environmental risk

Reason: From their review of the module descriptors prior to the visit the visitors were not clear about how the learning outcomes enable students to meet the SOPs (see condition under SET 4.1) and therefore how these SOPs would be assessed. For example, they were not able to determine where and how SOP 5.2 regarding adaptability of practice, SOP 8.6 regarding non-verbal communication, and SOP 9.10 regarding interaction with service users and carers, would be assessed. In discussion with the programme team the visitors received verbal reassurances that ensuring students' ability to meet all of the SOPs was an integral part of assessment on the programme. However, the visitors were not able to see evidence for this and so could not be certain that the standard was met. They therefore require the education provider to submit evidence showing how students' ability to meet all the SOPs will be assessed in the programme.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should follow through its plans to recruit further staff to support the teaching of the programme.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that the standard was met, as they considered that the existing full time equivalent (FTE) number of staff on the programme team, plus visiting lecturers, could cover the teaching of the Step Up PgDip as well as the existing BA and MA programmes. The visitors noted that the education provider was planning to recruit further staff to support the delivery of the new programme, and they considered that this was appropriate as the delivery of the new programme was likely to add to existing workloads. They therefore suggest that the education provider continue with their plans for further recruitment. In this way the programme team may be better supported in delivering the programme effectively.

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.

Recommendation: The education provider should continue its efforts to ensure that all students gain a range of appropriate professional experience.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that the standard was met, as the available placements supported all the appropriate learning outcomes and there were placements available across a wide range of social work areas. In the student meeting the visitors were made aware that some students had concerns about not having an appropriate range of placements, or not getting enough exposure to particular areas of practice. The visitors therefore suggest that the education provider keep under review the type of placements on offer to students so that, as far as possible, they can ensure that all students are exposed to as wide a breadth of professional experience as possible, even on a Step Up programme focused on children and families social work.

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Susan Bell
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