

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Leeds Metropolitan University
Programme name	BA (Hons) Degree in Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	4 – 5 March 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 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

The HCPC visited the programme at the education provider as the Social Work (in England) 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 professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes – MA Degree in Social Work, PG Diploma in Social Work (Masters Exit Route Only) and Postgraduate Certificate Mental Health Practice. The professional body (for the social work provision) 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. Separate reports exist for the other programmes. 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 professional body, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Richard Barker (Social worker) Paula Sobiechowska (Social worker) Shaaron Pratt (Radiographer)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Abdur Razzaq
Proposed student numbers	50 per cohort once a year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2014
Chair	Sue Palmer (Leeds Metropolitan University)
Secretary	Sheila Casey (Leeds Metropolitan University)
Members of the joint panel	Julie Irvine (The College of Social Work) Sue Furness (The College of Social Work)

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"/>

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 standards of education and training (SETs) and that those who complete the programme meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their 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 55 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining two SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for approval. 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 recommendation 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 standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

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 submit further evidence to show that resources in place effectively support the required learning and teaching activities for this programme.

Reason: From the review of the documentation, the visitors noted students were expected to secure some voluntary or paid work experience for the Development of Professional Skills level 4. Students would “not be able to successfully complete the module unless you have completed this experience and there will be no exceptions to this” (module handbook Development of Professional Skills, page 2). The visitors also noted the module descriptor stated the module “requires students to take an active role in their own learning journey, demonstrate professionalism and apply transferable learning skills in a voluntary or paid social care setting” (Module Approval Template (MAT) Development of Professional Skills level 4). The visitors had concerns about the students seeking their own volunteering or paid employment experience without the programme team undertaking checks to ensure they are safe, supportive and appropriate for the students learning. During discussions with the programme team the visitors learnt students will provide the details of the organisation who will offer voluntary or paid employment to the education provider and the education provider will ensure they provide a safe and supportive environment for students’ learning. However, this information was not stated within the documentation. The visitors considered it to be important to have this documented and therefore require the education provider to revise programme documentation to show this information is clearly articulated. In this way, the visitors will be assured the resources in place effectively support the required learning and teaching activities for this programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to show the requirements for students progression clearly articulated in the documentation.

Reason: From the review of the documentation, the visitors noted a lack of clarity when referring to expectations for student progression. In the module handbook Development of Professional Skills it says, “As part of the module you will be expected to secure some voluntary or paid work experience, working directly with an appropriate service user group... you will not be able to successfully complete the module unless you have completed this experience and there will be no exceptions to this” (page 2). The visitors considered it to be unclear as to whether the experience is expected or required. The visitors also noted it was stated as being expected within the student handbook (page 21). During discussions with the programme team the visitors learnt students will need to complete this learning outcome in order to progress. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revisit programme documentation to clarify this programme requirement.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the education provider continue exploring ways to support students financially whilst they are on placements.

Reason: The visitors are satisfied the programme provides support for the students in all settings and are therefore satisfied this standard is met. The visitors noted during meetings with the placement providers / educators and students that students have raised concerns around the travel costs whilst on placement with one particular placement provider. The programme team indicated they are aware of this concern. It was also highlighted that students are made aware before joining the programme that the placements may incur travel costs. The programme team indicated that due to financial constraints placements providers find it hard to support students financially for costs incurred during placements. The visitors recommend the programme team continue to work closely with the placement providers to support students including considering ways to support students financially.

Richard Barker
Paula Sobiechowska
Shaaron Pratt