

## Visitors' report

<b>Name of education provider</b>	New College Durham
<b>Validating body / Awarding body</b>	Open University
<b>Programme name</b>	BA Hons Social Work
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	Full time
<b>Relevant part of the HCPC Register</b>	Social workers in England
<b>Date of visit</b>	5 – 6 April 2017

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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 24 August 2017. At the Committee meeting on 24 August 2017, the programme was approved. This means that the education provider has met the conditions 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 as the validating body considered its validation of the programme. The visit also considered a BSc (Hons) Social Work programme that is delivered by the education provider validated by Teesside University. The validating body 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 HCPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the validating body, outlines their decisions on the programmes' status.

## Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Anne Mackay (Social worker in England) Richard Barker (Social worker in England) Frances Ashworth (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer	Tamara Wasylec
Proposed student numbers	Full time - 36 per cohort, 1 cohort per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	1 September 2017
Chair	Mick McCormick (Open University)
Secretary	Helen McCreeth (New College Durham)
Members of the joint panel	Joan Fletcher (External Panel Member) Andrew Whittaker (External Panel Member) Kim Bown (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 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The HCPC did not review the external examiners' reports for the last two years as this programme is new and there is currently no external examiner. Instead the visitors considered the external examiners' reports for the BSc (Hons) Social Work programme at the education provider that is validated by Teesside University.

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"/>

The HCPC met with students from the BSc (Hons) Social Work programme, validated by Teesside University, 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 45 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 13 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 ensure potential applicants to the programme are given a complete range of admissions information in order to make an informed choice about the programme.

**Reason:** For this standard, the visitors were referred to the New College Durham website. The visitors understood that an 'offer of a place on the programme is subject to a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)' check, however they could not determine what the process would be should an applicant declare a criminal conviction. In discussion with the programme team, the visitors understood that the team would discuss the applicant, consult the practice placement providers and that applicants would be considered on a case by case basis. However the visitors could not determine how this process is clearly communicated to potential applicants. In reviewing the website the visitors also noted that the UCAS point requirement is stated as 240 however the programme documentation states that applicants must achieve 90 UCAS points to be eligible to apply to the programme. Due to this discrepancy the visitors could not determine how potential applicants would ascertain the correct information regarding the UCAS point requirement. In reviewing the information provided, the visitors could not see how potential applicants are made aware of the new validator for the programme. In discussion with the programme team, the visitors heard that information about the new validator will be added to the website following successful validation by the Open University. In review of the website the visitors noted that there was no reference to additional costs related to travelling to placements on the programme. As a result the visitors could not see how applicants are provided with the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up an offer of a place on the programme. Consequently, the visitors require evidence demonstrating how information regarding the DBS process, the UCAS point requirement, the new validating body and potential additional costs is communicated to applicants so that they have the information required to make a decision about whether to apply to the programme.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must demonstrate the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning mechanisms applicable to the programme and how this information is made available to potential applicants.

**Reason:** For this standard the visitors were referred to the student regulations on the New College Durham website however they were unable to find the information regarding accreditation of prior learning on the website. In discussion with the programme team, the visitors heard that the education provider has a policy on accreditation of prior learning. In discussion with the programme team, the team clarified that applicants would be able to use the accreditation of prior learning policy as evidence to meet learning outcomes on this programme. However, the visitors could not determine, from the evidence provided, where this is clearly articulated in the programme documentation to ensure that applicants could access this policy. The

visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the programme documentation will clearly articulate that the accreditation of prior learning policy of the education provider is applicable for applicants to this programme and how this information is made available to prospective applicants.

**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:** The education provider must provide evidence of how equality and diversity policies are implemented and monitored through the admissions procedures.

**Reason:** For this standard the visitors were referred to the single equality scheme documentation however the visitors could not find this documentation in the submission provided. In discussion with the programme team the visitors heard that equality and diversity policies are applied once students are accepted on to the programme however the visitors could not determine how equality and diversity policies are applied in relation to applicants or how this is implemented and monitored through the admissions procedures. As such the visitors require information about how the admissions procedures ensure that equality and diversity policies are applied, monitored and implemented in relation to applicants.

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

**Condition:** The education provider must review the programme documentation to ensure the terminology used is accurate, consistent and reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HCPC.

**Reason:** The visitors noted the programme documentation submitted by the education provider did not fully comply with the relevant guidance issued by HCPC. For example, the visitors were referred to a 'HCPC consent form', however the HCPC does not publish a consent form for use by students or education providers. The documentation also refers to HCPC accreditation rather than approval. The visitors identified other instances such as these throughout the documentation and noted that incorrect and inaccurate statements may mislead students and provide an incorrect impression of the HCPC as a statutory regulator. Therefore the visitors require the education provider to review the programme documentation and ensure the terminology used is accurate, reflects the language associated with statutory regulation and avoids any potential confusion for students. In this way the visitors can be sure that the documentary resources available to support students' learning are being effectively used and that this standard can be met.

**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 ensure the resources in place to support student learning in all settings are being effectively used.

**Reason:** In their reading of the documentation provided, the visitors noted that students would be able to access the learning resources of the education provider as well as that

of the validating body, the Open University (OU). The visitors were also made aware during the visit that the resources that the OU offers will be able to facilitate students completing the course in all settings as a number of resources available will be provided electronically. However, from the evidence provided, the visitors were unclear what support and guidance would be provided by the education provider to enable students on this programme to access and effectively use the resources of that were on offer from the OU. In particular the visitors were unclear as to how students will be supported in understanding what resources the OU will offer and how they will be supported to access relevant resources to effectively support their learning. Therefore the visitors require further evidence as to how the education provider will support students in understanding and accessing the OU resources that will be available to support their learning. In this way the visitors will be able to determine how this programme can meet this standard.

### **3.13 There must be a student complaints process in place.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence of the complaints process that is in place for this programme, how this process takes account of any process at the validating body and how this is communicated to students.

**Reason:** From the evidence provided, both prior to the visit and in discussion with the programme team, the visitors were clear that the education provider has a complaints process for students. In further discussions at the visit, the visitors were made aware that the validating body, the OU, has a student complaints process and that students would be able to raise a complaint through this process. However, from the information provided, the visitors were unclear as to how the complaints processes would work together. In particular they were unclear if, after a student raised a concern at the education provider and had it considered, they could then raise a concern at the validating body as well. They were also unsure as to how students were made aware of both complaints processes and informed about how the processes would work concurrently. Therefore the visitors require further evidence as to how the complaints process of the education provider will operate with the complaints process of the validating body. They also require further evidence as to how students will be made aware of both processes, are clearly informed as to how they should raise a concern and told about how a concern will be dealt with, if one is raised.

### **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 is required to provide further evidence to demonstrate the protocols in place whereby the education provider obtains consent from students for role play throughout the programme.

**Reason:** The visitors noted through discussion with the students and the programme team that there were no recognised protocols for obtaining informed consent from students before they participated in role-play sessions. The visitors were unclear as to how, without consent protocols in place it would be hard to mitigate any risk involved with students participating as service users. The visitors could not determine how students were informed about participation requirements within the programme, how records were maintained to indicate consent had been obtained, or how situations where students declined from participation were managed with alternative learning arrangements so there would be no impact on their learning. The visitors therefore



require the programme team to provide evidence of protocols for obtaining informed consent from students and for managing situations where students decline from participating in practical and clinical teaching

### **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 of the education provider and validating body's processes that are in place for dealing with issues regarding students' professional conduct, how they will work in tandem and how students will be informed about them.

**Reason:** From the evidence provided, both prior to the visit and in discussion with the programme team, the visitors were clear that the education provider has a process for dealing with students' profession related conduct. In further discussions at the visit the visitors were made aware that the validating body, the OU, also has a process for dealing with any issues about students' profession related conduct and that issues about students' conduct could be addressed by the OU. However, from the information provided, the visitors were unclear as to how the processes for dealing with any issues about students' conduct would work together. In particular they were unclear if, after an issues about a student's conduct was dealt with at the education provider, it could subsequently be raised with the validating body through their process. They were also unsure as to how students were made aware of both processes and informed about how the processes would work in tandem, and what the consequences could be for their progression. Therefore the visitors require further evidence as to how the process of the education provider will operate with the process of the validating body to appropriately, and consistently, deal with any issues that are raised about students' conduct. They also require further evidence as to how students will be made aware of both processes, are clearly informed as to how any issues will be dealt with and what consequences they could face if subject to these processes.

### **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 demonstrate how the learning outcomes ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers.

**Reason:** In their reading of the documentation, the visitors noted the absence of the module specifications for the following modules; 'Relating Social Work Theory to practice 3', 'Placement 1' and 'Placement 2'. As such, the visitors could not determine what learning outcomes were associated with these modules. The module specifications for these modules were tabled at the visit, however there was insufficient time for the visitors to review the documentation. As such, the visitors could not determine whether the learning outcomes, associated with the modules on this programme, ensure that students have the opportunity to meet all of the standards of proficiency for social workers on completion of the programme. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to show the learning outcomes associated with this module and how they ensure that students who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for social workers.

**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 demonstrate how the assessment strategy and design ensures those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers.

**Reason:** In their reading of the documentation, the visitors noted the absence of the module specifications containing the assessment strategy for the following modules; 'Relating Social Work Theory to practice 3', 'Placement 1' and 'Placement 2'. As such, the visitors could not determine how the associated learning outcomes for these modules are assessed. The module specifications for these modules were tabled at the visit, however there was insufficient time for the visitors to review the documentation. As such, the visitors could not determine the assessment strategy and design for the whole programme. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate that the assessment strategy and design ensures that students who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for social workers.

**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 demonstrate how students are informed about points at which they will be able to exit the programme and whether they will be able to apply for registration with the HCPC.

**Reason:** From a review of the programme documentation, the visitors could not see any named awards that students could exit the programme with, if they failed to successfully complete certain elements of the programme. In discussion with the programme team, they clarified that there could be awards that students would be able to exit the programme with, but these were not currently named in the programme documentation. This standard requires that documentation relating to the programme clearly specifies requirements for student progression and achievement. The visitors therefore require further evidence of where within the documentation students are informed of all exit awards that relate to the programme and whether the exit awards lead to eligibility for students to apply for registration with the HCPC, to ensure that all options available for students are clearly communicated.

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

**Condition:** Further evidence must be provided which demonstrates that the programme documentation includes a statement which clearly states that any aegrotat award would not provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

**Reason:** The visitors noted that the documentation provided prior to the visit made no explicit reference to an aegrotat award. However, in discussion at the visit they were made aware that any student who fails to complete the programme through ill health or other mitigating circumstances may be given an aegrotat award. The programme team stated students were informed that these awards did not confer eligibility to apply for

HCPC registration. However, the programme documentation did not contain a clear statement to this effect, which could lead to a misunderstanding about the status of these awards. The visitors therefore require the education provider to include a clear statement in the programme documentation that any aegrotat award would not confer eligibility to apply for HCPC registration.

#### **6.10 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for a procedure for the right of appeal for students.**

**Condition:** The education provider must provide further evidence of the appeal procedure that is in place for this programme, how this process takes account of any procedure at the validating body and how this is communicated to students.

**Reason:** From the evidence provided, both prior to the visit and in discussion with the programme team, the visitors were clear that the education provider has an appeal procedure for students. In further discussions at the visit the visitors were made aware that the validating body, the OU, has an appeal procedure for students and that students would be able to appeal through this procedure. However, from the information provided, the visitors were unclear as to how the appeals procedures would work together. In particular they were unclear if, after a student appealed at the education provider and had it considered, could they then raise appeal at the validating body as well. They were also unsure as to how students were made aware of both appeals procedures and informed about how the procedures would work in tandem. Therefore the visitors require further evidence as to how the appeal procedure of the education provider will operate with the appeal procedure of the validating body. They also require further evidence as to how students will be made aware of both procedures, are clearly informed as to how they are able to appeal and told about how any appeal will be dealt with, if one is made.

#### **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 assessment regulations in the programme documentation to clearly articulate that at least one external examiner appointed to the programme must be HCPC registered unless alternate arrangements have been agreed.

**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 that the assessment regulations of the programme states 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 the programme can meet this standard..

## Recommendations

### **4.9 When there is interprofessional learning the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group must be adequately addressed.**

**Recommendation:** The programme team should consider how they will ensure profession-specific skills and knowledge will be adequately addressed if they plan to deliver 'inter-professional learning' (IPL) in the future

**Reason:** In discussion with the programme team, the visitors identified that the programme team is considering including other professions in the 'Mend the Gap' programme. As such, the programme team should consider that when they develop interprofessional learning that the profession-specific skills and knowledge of other professions must be addressed.

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