

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	Staffordshire University
Programme name	BA (Hons) Social Work
Mode of delivery	Part time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	9 – 10 December 2014

Contents

Executive summary	2
Introduction.....	3
Visit details	3
Sources of evidence	4
Recommended outcome	5
Conditions.....	6
Recommendations.....	11

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 4 June 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 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 endorsement of the programme. The professional 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 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 professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	David Childs (Social worker) Simon Mudie (Lay visitor) Paula Sobiechowska (Social worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Abdur Razzaq
Proposed student numbers	83 inclusive of the full time route
Proposed start date of programme approval	1 September 2015
Chair	Marjorie Spiller (Staffordshire University)
Secretary	Jackie Campbell (Staffordshire University)
Members of the joint panel	Helen Wenman (The College of Social Work) Bill Penson (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"/>
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 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

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to show that the partnership arrangements between the education provider and the partner organisations have been finalised and agreed.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation provided, that the proposed partnership arrangements between the education provider and the partner organisations articulate the responsibilities each partner has in the effective delivery of the programme. The visitors were unsure of the current status of the agreements and were therefore unable to identify how the arrangements will ensure that this programme has a secure position in the education provider's business plan. In the senior team meeting it was discussed that there is a workforce planning meeting in the beginning of 2015 to discuss different aspects of this programme and update partnership agreements between the education provider and its partner organisations. The visitors will require further evidence to show the draft of these partnership agreements are finalised and signed, to determine how the programme has a secure place in the education provider's business plan. In this way the visitors will be able to consider how the programme can meet this standard.

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of what commitment is being made to ensure the programme has a secure place in the education providers' business plan with the current student numbers.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the documentation submitted prior to the visit and noted that the programme has resources in place for the proposed intake of 83 students once a year. However, during the meetings and discussions with the senior team, programme team and the practice placement providers, the visitors learnt that the student numbers have increased on this programme recently. The education provider has another social work programme with placement requirements in their provision. The visitors also learnt that the placement providers have placement agreements with other education providers in the geographical area. In the senior team meeting it was discussed that there is a workforce planning meeting in the beginning of 2015 to discuss different aspects of this programme including placements availability determining the students' intake number. The visitors could not determine how the current resources including practice educators and practice placements detailed in the documentation are appropriate for the above changes to student intake. This condition is also linked to the other condition placed on SET 3.1 regarding finalisation of placement agreements. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to show the commitment made and how the education provider is planning to put appropriate resources in place to ensure the programme is secure with the increased student numbers.

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

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

Reason: The documentation submitted by the education provider contained incorrect terminology. For example, the programme specification on page 14 states “You will need to attend 30 compulsory skills days (210 hours) which form part of the practice learning opportunity for the first year and these hours are the minimum requirement of the regulating body, The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)”. In another example on page 17, it states “The 200 days in practice are a minimum requirement of the regulatory body, the HCPC”. These statements are incorrect as HCPC do not prescribe the number of hours or days students need to be on placement as part of their programme, instead education providers must demonstrate and justify how they meet the HCPC standards of education and training (SETs). Therefore, visitors require the programme documentation to be reviewed to remove any instances of incorrect terminology. 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 the resources to support student learning in all settings will be effectively used.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation submitted prior to the visit that the programme is delivered through full and part time routes. During discussions with the senior team and the programme team, the visitors learnt that most of the teaching on the part time route is delivered at a different campus (Lichfield campus) compared to the full time route (Stoke campus). The visitors were unable to find references in the documentation except one, in the document 3 BA (Hons) Social Work course, page 1 that “you can study the course full time at our Stoke campus or part time at our Lichfield campus (some teaching on the part time route takes place at the Stoke campus)”. During the visit, the visitors saw facilities in place for the full time route (Stoke campus) only. The visitors were unable to determine that the resources in place at Lichfield campus to support student learning are appropriate and effectively used. Therefore, the education provider will need to submit further evidence so visitors can determine whether the resources in place at Lichfield campus are appropriate and will be effectively used to support students learning.

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 provide further evidence of how the resources to support student learning in all settings will effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation submitted prior to the visit that the programme is delivered through full and part time routes. During discussions with the senior team and the programme team, the visitors learnt that most of the teaching on the part time route is delivered at a different campus (Lichfield campus) compared to the full time route (Stoke campus). The visitors were unable to find references in the

documentation except one, in the document 3 BA (Hons) Social Work course, page 1 that “you can study the course full time at our Stoke campus or part time at our Lichfield campus (some teaching on the part time route takes place at the Stoke campus)”. During the visit, the visitors saw facilities in place for the full time route (Stoke campus) only. The visitors were unable to determine that the resources to support student learning at Lichfield campus effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme. Therefore, the education provider will need to submit further evidence so that visitors can determine whether the resources in place at Lichfield campus are appropriate and will effectively support students learning. This condition is linked to the condition placed under SET 3.8.

3.10 The learning resources, including IT facilities, must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how learning resources, including IT facilities, are appropriate to the curriculum and are readily available to students and staff on the part time route.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation submitted prior to the visit that the programme is delivered through full and part time routes. During discussions with the senior team and the programme team, the visitors learnt that most of the teaching on the part time route is delivered at a different campus (Lichfield campus) compared to the full time route (Stoke campus). The visitors were unable to find references in the documentation except one, in the document 3 BA (Hons) Social Work course, page 1 that “you can study the course full time at our Stoke campus or part time at our Lichfield campus (some teaching on the part time route takes place at the Stoke campus)”. During the visit, the visitors saw facilities in place for the full time route (Stoke campus) only. The visitors were unable to determine that learning resources, including IT facilities to support student learning at Lichfield campus are appropriate to the curriculum and, are readily available to students and staff. Therefore, the education provider will need to submit further evidence so that visitors can determine whether the resources including IT facilities at Lichfield campus are appropriate and will be readily available to students and staff. This condition is linked to conditions placed under SET 3.8 and 3.9.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to show there are adequate and accessible facilities to support the welfare and wellbeing of students in all settings.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation submitted prior to the visit that the programme is delivered through full and part time routes. During discussions with the senior team and the programme team, the visitors learnt that most of the teaching on the part time route is delivered at a different campus (Lichfield campus) compared to the full time route (Stoke campus). The visitors were unable to find references in the documentation except one, in the document 3 BA (Hons) Social Work course, page 1 that “you can study the course full time at our Stoke campus or part time at our Lichfield campus (some teaching on the part time route takes place at the Stoke campus)”. During the visit, the visitors saw facilities in place for the full time route (Stoke campus) only. The visitors were unable to determine that adequate and accessible facilities to

support the welfare and wellbeing of students are in place at Lichfield campus. Therefore, the education provider will need to submit further evidence to show that the facilities in place at Lichfield are adequate and accessible to support the welfare and wellbeing of students. This will enable visitors to make a judgment whether this standard is met. This condition is linked to conditions placed under SET 3.8, 3.9 and 3.10.

3.12 There must be a system of academic and pastoral student support in place.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to show there is a system in place for academic and pastoral support for students on the part time route.

Reason: The visitors noted in the documentation submitted prior to the visit that the programme is delivered through full and part time route. During discussions with the senior team and the programme team, the visitors learnt that most of the teaching on the part time route is delivered at a different campus (Lichfield campus) compared to the full time route (Stoke campus). The visitors were unable to find references in the documentation except one, in the document 3 BA (Hons) Social Work course, page 1 that “you can study the course full time at our Stoke campus or part time at our Lichfield campus (some teaching on the part time route takes place at the Stoke campus)”. During the visit, the visitors saw facilities in place including academic and pastoral support for students on the full time route (Stoke campus) only. The visitors were unable to determine that adequate and accessible facilities to support the welfare and wellbeing of students are in place at Lichfield campus. Therefore, the education provider will need to submit further evidence to show that the facilities in place at Lichfield include a system in place of academic and pastoral support for students. This will enable visitors to make a judgment whether this standard is met. This condition is linked to conditions placed under SET 3.8, 3.9 and 3.10.

3.14 Where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Condition: The programme team must provide evidence of the protocols to obtain informed consent from students when they participate as service users and for managing situations when students decline from participating as service users, in practical sessions.

Reason: From the documentation submitted prior to the visit, the visitors were unable to determine how this standard is met. During the visit and discussions with the programme team, the visitors learnt that there are protocols in place to obtain informed consent from students when they participate as service users. However, the visitors could not determine how students were informed about participation requirements within the programme or how records were maintained to indicate consent had been obtained. They also could not find information on 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.

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 students who complete the programme meet all the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers.

Reason: The visitors noted that the documentation provided prior to the visit included module descriptors, each with several of the SOPs listed as being covered in each module. There was also a mapping document which showed the SOPs mapped against module titles and learning outcomes.

The visitors also noted in the programme specification on page 14 “You will need to attend 30 compulsory skills days (210 hours) which form part of the practice learning opportunity for the first year”. However, in the same paragraph it states “Time lost through absence for any reason will need to be made up before you can progress to the second year of the programme. A minimum of 90% of the days will need to be completed during term time and the hours lost made up at the end of the academic year”. During the visit, visitors were given a breakdown of these 30 compulsory skill days and when these days will be delivered during term time. The visitors noted that there are only 30 of these skills days, with no indication of how time lost through absence will be covered as indicated above. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how learning outcomes delivered in 30 compulsory skills days will be achieved by students who have lost time through absence before the end of the academic year.

6.8 Assessment regulations, or other relevant policies, must clearly specify requirements for approved programmes being the only programmes which contain any reference to an HCPC protected title or part of the Register in their named award.

Condition: The programme team must clearly articulate that the approved programme provides eligibility to register for the HCPC protected title of social worker in England.

Reason: The visitors noted that the programme and admissions documents did provide enough clarity for students about the exit awards in place for the programme. The visitors were concerned that the programme and admission documents did not provide enough clarity for students around the final award which will lead to eligibility to apply for registration with the HCPC as a social worker in England, which is a protected title. During the programme team meeting, it was discussed that the programme team will update the programme documents to make a more explicit statement that the final award will lead to eligibility to apply for registration with HCPC as a social worker in England. In order to be satisfied this standard is met the visitors require evidence that the programme documents are produced in line with these HCPC requirements.

Recommendations

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.

Recommendation: The education provider should consider strengthening information available to potential applicants to ensure it is up to date and includes information about changes to bursary arrangements.

Reason: From the information provided, the visitors were satisfied that this standard is met and that the education provider ensures that applicants to the programme have all of the information they require in order to make an informed choice about taking up a place on the programme. In discussion with the students, it was highlighted that students on the programme are aware of the changes in bursary arrangements for social work students in England. Students gave detailed accounts of being supported by the admission tutor and the information given to them was up to date. However, the visitors suggest that the education provider consider strengthening information including advertising materials, to ensure that potential applicants are well informed and kept up to date regarding possible changes to the fee structure. This will further ensure students are well aware about the financial arrangements.

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.

Recommendation: The programme team should consider the frequency of training provided to interview panels around equality and diversity policies in place.

Reason: From the information provided, the visitors were satisfied that this standard is met and that the education provider ensures that the interview panels are made aware and appropriately trained on the equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and students at the education provider. The interview panel includes service users and carers, practice educators and academic staff. During discussions with the service users and carers, the visitors learnt that they are appropriately briefed before the interviews. This was echoed by the practice placement educators who were involved in the interviews. However, the visitors suggest that the programme team should consider increasing the frequency of training provided to interview panels. This will strengthen equality and diversity policies in place in relation to applicants and students and support the implementation and monitoring of them.

Simon Mudie
David Childs
Paula Sobiechowska