hcpc health & care professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Birmingham
Programme name	Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Specialist Work in Mental Health Services (Approved Mental Health Professional)
Mode of delivery	Work based learning
Type of programme	Approved mental health professional
Date of visit	7 – 8 January 2014

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 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 professionals (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 27 March. At this 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 approval criteria for 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 approval criteria for AMHP programmes and professionals who complete it will be able to achieve the criteria for approved mental health professionals.

During the approval process, the education provider informed us that they were changing the name of the transitionally approved programme, "Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Specialist (Social) Work in Mental Health Services (Approved Mental Health Professional)", to the programme name as stated at the top of this report. Therefore, this programme remains transitionally approved until its approval status is amended by the HCPC.

This visit was an HCPC only visit. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit. The visit also considered Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Specialist Work in Mental Health Services (Approved Mental Health Professional). A separate visitor report exists for this programme.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and visitor role	Steve Benson (Approved mental health professional)
	Sheila Skelton (Approved mental health professional)
	Derek Adrian-Harris (Radiographer)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Abdur Razzaq
HCPC observer	Jamie Hunt
Proposed student numbers	40 Inclusive of Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Specialist Work in Mental Health Services (Approved Mental Health Professional)
First approved intake	April 2014
Chair	Alistair Hewison (University of Birmingham)
Secretary	Davina Weston (University of Birmingham)

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 section 1 of the approval criteria for approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met section 2 of the approval criteria for approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes	☒	☐	☐
Practice placement handbook	☒	☐	☐
Student handbook	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐	☐
External examiners' reports from the last two years	☒	☐	☐

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

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for approval, the visitors must be assured that the programme meets all of the approval criteria for 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 47 of the criteria have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining three criteria.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for approval. Conditions are set when a certain criterion has not been met or there is insufficient evidence of a criterion 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 criterion has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

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 before the visit included information about the education provider's practice placement policies such as Practice Mentors Assessors' (PMAs) training and the Programme Management Group (PMG) however there was no information about the initial approval or ongoing monitoring of placements. At the visit, discussion in the meetings with the practice placement providers and with the programme team indicated the local authorities were responsible for managing placements, including ensuring settings are appropriate and managing any difficulties that may arise, with limited involvement from the education provider. The visitors noted there was a PMG meeting which includes representatives from all practice placement providers and members of the programme team. It was clear that there were informal protocols in place if an issue was identified at a practice placement, however the visitors were unable to find a formal system for the initial approval and ongoing monitoring of all placements The visitors also could not determine how the education provider maintains overall responsibility of the approval and monitoring of placements to ensure they are safe and appropriate settings. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider maintains a thorough and effective system of approving and monitoring all placements.

E.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme

Condition: The education provider must confirm the programme title, ensure the programme documentation, including advertising materials, articulates all programme awards consistently and clearly, and articulates whether the awards will lead to eligibility to apply to work as an AMHP within a local authority.

Reason: From the documentation submitted before the visit and discussions at the visit regarding the programme title, it was apparent the education provider is required to change and confirm the final award that would lead eligibility to apply and work as an AMHP within a local authority. The programme is also contained within a suite of different post qualification awards. This criterion requires education providers to clearly articulate students' progression and achievements within the programme documents and therefore the awards that can and cannot lead to eligibility to apply to work as an AMHP within a local authority. During the programme team meeting, the visitors highlighted that the draft programme documentation referred to the different programme titles inconsistently and in discussion with the programme team consensus was reached as to what will be the award titles. In order to determine this criterion is met the visitors require the education provider to confirm the approved programme titles, ensure the programme documentation, including advertising materials, articulates all programme awards consistently and clearly, and articulates whether the awards will lead to eligibility to apply to work as an AMHP within a local authority or otherwise.

E.10 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 an appropriate professional register

Condition: The education provider must include a clear statement in the programme documentation that at least one external examiner for the programme will be from the relevant part of an appropriate professional register, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail about the external examiner recruitment policy. It was not evident that there was an explicit requirement for at least one of the external examiners to be from the relevant part of an appropriate professional register. The visitors saw curriculum vitae for the current external examiner at the visit and were satisfied they were appropriately experienced and qualified for the role as external examiner. In discussion with the programme team it was indicated the programme team would take account of this standard and update programme documents. In order to determine this standard is met, the visitors need to see evidence of the HCPC requirements regarding external examiners within the programme documentation.

Recommendation

B.15 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the programme team consider further strengthening the current and future plans for service user and carer involvement.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied that the service users and carers are involved in the programmes and so determined this criterion is met. Discussion with the students indicated the contribution of service users and carers was valuable to their learning. During discussions with the programme team, it was indicated that there are planned future developments with service user and carer involvement in different aspects of the programme, such as delivering curriculum and assessing students' performance, however provided limited detail about how this would be done, or the extent of their involvement. The visitors recommend the programme team consider further strengthening the current and future plans for service user and carer involvement. The visitors suggest that a more robust service user and carer involvement will allow a greater depth to students' learning and other aspects of the programme.

<div align="right">

Steve Benson
Sheila Skelton
Derek Adrian-Harris

</div>