

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Bradford
Programme name	MA in Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	15 – 16 April 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 or 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 ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 24 August 2014. At the Committee meeting, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. 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 the social work 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 “BA Honours in Social Work” and “Post Graduate Diploma Mental Health Practice”. 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 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	David Childs (Social worker in England) David Ward (Social worker in England)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Hollie Latham
Proposed student numbers	30 per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2014
Chair	Deborah Allcock (University of Bradford)
Secretary	Kirstin Bell (University of Bradford)
Members of the joint panel	Sue Furness (The College of Social Work) Robert Johns (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 53 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining four 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 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 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

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate that the programme has a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Reason: Documentation submitted prior to the visit provided little evidence of the arrangements that are in place to ensure the continued security of the programme for future cohorts. In a meeting with the senior team the visitors heard several statements regarding the security and future of the programme, however, the visitors were unable to contextualise this information in the format provided. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how the programme fits into the education providers' business plan to ensure that this standard continues to be met.

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

Condition: The programme team must revisit the programme documentation to ensure terminology used is accurate and reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HCPC.

Reason: In the documentation provided it states that; "As well as regulating individual social workers and students, the HCPC also regulates the performance of social work courses." The HCPC does not regulate students. Therefore the visitors require the education provider to review the programme documentation, to ensure that the terminology used is accurate, reflects the language associated with statutory regulation and avoids any potential confusion for applicants and students.

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 further evidence that, where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols are in place to obtain consent.

Reason: Through documentation and discussion with the programme team, the visitors noted that consent was obtained verbally from students when participating as service users in practical teaching. The programme team clarified that they emphasise to students only to share what they feel comfortable with. However, the visitors were not presented with clear protocols to demonstrate that a formal system is in place for explicitly gaining students' informed consent before they participate as service users in practical teaching. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide evidence of formal protocols for obtaining consent from students and for managing situations where students decline from participating in practical and clinical teaching.

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

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly state that aegrotat awards do not confer eligibility to apply to the Register.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could not identify where it is clearly stated that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility to apply to the Register. The visitors were also unclear as to how this information is clearly communicated to students. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate where in the programme documentation it is clearly stated that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility to apply to the Register.

Recommendations

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 visitors recommend the education provider provides a more formal training process to all those involved in the interview process to ensure that the equality and diversity policy is being applied consistently and clearly at programme level.

Reason: The visitors noted from the documentation provided at the visit and in discussion with the programme team that the education provider has an equality and diversity policy in relation to applicants and students. Therefore the visitors are satisfied that this standard is met. However, from the evidence given the visitors could not determine how all those involved in the interview process were trained to implement the equality and diversity policies. In particular, the visitors heard that service users and carers had an involvement in the interview process but were not given any formal training for the interview days. The visitors therefore recommend that the education provider provides formal training for all those involved in the interview process to ensure that equality and diversity policies are being applied clearly and consistently at programme level. In this way the education provider may be better able to identify where issues concerning equality and diversity may occur and put in place actions to circumvent any such issues arising.

3.7 A programme for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that staff development strategies are revisited to take into consideration the feedback from staff and enable staff to maintain their own professional and research development.

Reason: The visitors discussed the system in place for staff development for the programme team and it was clear that, although difficult at times, the staff were engaging in CPD activities. Therefore the visitors are satisfied that this standard is met. However, it was noted that finding time and resources to enable CPD could sometimes be restrictive for staff. The visitors understood the difficulties faced; however they wish to stress to the programme team the need to continually ensure that the time and resources are available to aid members of staff in their CPD and research activities. The visitors also noted the programme team's desire to further develop themselves with higher level qualifications. Therefore, the visitors wish to encourage the programme team to revisit staff development strategies to take into consideration the feedback from staff.

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

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the programme team consider maintaining currency of records for practice placement educators and their training.

Reason: From the discussion with the programme team and the practice placement providers it was clear that the education provider runs regular initial training courses for

practice placement educators as well as ensuring a currency in their knowledge. Therefore the visitors are content that this standard is met. However, the visitors recommend the programme team consider implementing a formal system to provide and monitor refresher training to practice placement educators. In this way the visitors felt that the programme team may be able to more easily evaluate the currency of placement educators training and evaluate where any additional training may or should be delivered.

David Childs
David Ward