

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Bradford
Programme name	Post Graduate Diploma Mental Health Practice
Mode of delivery	Full time
Type of programme	Approved mental health professional
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 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 professional (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 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

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 criteria for approving 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 criteria for approving AMHP programmes and professionals who complete it will be able to achieve the criteria for approved mental health professionals

This visit was part of a joint event. The visit also considered the following programmes – BA (Hons) Degree in Social Work and MA Degree in Social Work. The professional body (reviewing social work provision only) 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 criteria for approving approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and visitor role	Dorothy Smith (Approved mental health professional) Lynn Heath (Approved mental health professional)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Abdur Razzaq
Proposed student numbers	12 per intake once a year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2014
Chair	Deborah Allcock (University of Bradford)
Secretary	Kirstin Bell (University of Bradford)

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 criteria for approving AMHP programmes	<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"/>

During the visit the HCPC also met with service user and carer representatives.

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for approval, the visitors must be assured that the programme meets all of the criteria for approving 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 36 of the criteria have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 14 criteria.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for approval. Conditions are set when certain criteria have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the criterion being met.

The visitors did not make any 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 criterion has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

A.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 provide further evidence to demonstrate how they inform potential applicants of the different stages of the admission process and requirements including prior experience in mental health.

Reason: Documentation received prior to the visit included the programme specification which outlined the education provider admission requirements including prior experience in (page 8) “Applicants who wish to apply for only the Postgraduate Certificate in Mental Healthwill need to demonstrate significant prior experience in mental health through employment, voluntary work or as service users or carers”. During the visit, the visitors learnt students need to have two years’ experience in mental health before they will be considered as potential students for this programme.

During the visit it was also indicated there are different stages to the admissions process which are held within the local authorities and then the education provider. The visitors noted an applicant may be approved through the local authority process but then not be accepted via the education provider’s process. The visitors considered it to be important for applicants to be aware they may not get through all stages of the admissions process. The visitors also felt that exact details of the admission requirements should be clearly laid out to potential students so they are able to make an informed decision about the programme. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide evidence to demonstrate how they inform potential applicants about the requirements and different stages of the admissions process.

B.2 The programme must be effectively managed

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to clearly outline the management structure of the programme, including the lines of responsibility and links to the practice placement providers.

Reason: At the visit the panel met with the programme team, senior staff and practice placement providers and discussed how various aspects of the programme are managed. However, from the documentation provided and discussions, the visitors were unable to determine the management processes in place for the programme. The visitors were subsequently unable to determine if there are effective structures in place to manage the programme. The visitors require the programme team to provide further evidence which clearly articulates:

- the management structure of the programme;
- the roles and lines of responsibility;
- where the links to the management of practice placement providers are; and
- any associated processes.

This will enable the visitors to determine this programme will be effectively managed.

B.14 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place

Condition: The education provider must submit evidence to demonstrate how they monitor attendance at practice placement and revise the programme documentation to include these processes and policies for absence and monitoring.

Reason: From the documentation submitted prior to the visit, the visitors noted the mandatory attendance requirements. The visitors learnt students' attendance was recorded and monitored to deal with any issues around attendance in the academic setting. For the practice placement settings students must inform their practice educators of any absences. The visitors however could not determine how the education provider would be made aware of the students' attendance at practice placements. The education provider may need to become involved if there are any issues with attendance at practice placement. The visitors require the education provider to submit evidence to demonstrate how they monitor attendance at practice placement and to revise the programme documentation to include these processes and policies for absence and monitoring.

C.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the curriculum reflects the current regulatory landscape of the HCPC.

Reason: The programme intends to deliver graduates that are eligible to be approved as an AMHP. The visitors noted from the criteria mapping document, reading the documentation and from discussions with the students that the programme is heavily focused on the key competencies laid out in the mental health regulations 2008 England (AMHP). The visitors noted during the meetings with the students that they knew very little about the role of the HCPC and the importance of the HCPC's Criteria for AMHPs section two. During discussions with the programme team, the visitors learnt the programme team will update the programme curriculum to reflect the role of HCPC. In order to be satisfied this criterion is met, the visitors require the education provider to submit revised curriculum documentation to reflect the current regulatory landscape of the HCPC.

C.5 The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of the HCPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics and / or the NMC's code: standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives on their practice as an AMHP

Condition: The education provider must review the programme documentation to ensure students understand the implications of the HCPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics and / or the NMC's code: standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives on their practice as an AMHP.

Reason: From the documentation submitted, the visitors could not identify where students are made aware of the implications of the HCPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics and / or the NMC's code: standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives on their practice as an AMHP. The visitors therefore require particular evidence about where in the programme students are made aware of the standards of conduct, performance and ethics and / or the NMC's code: standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives on their practice as an AMHP, if they are included in any teaching, and if there is opportunity for students to access any of these standards. In this way the visitors can determine

how the programme team ensure that students understand the implications of these standards.

D.3 The practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the practice placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated the programme would use the Quality Assurance in Practice Learning (QAPL) system for approving and monitoring placements through the QAPL Audit. Discussion at the visit indicated this system was in the process of being implemented for this programme and the education provider will be able to ensure the practice placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment. Due to the placement systems being in development the visitors are unable to determine how this criterion is met. The visitors note this condition relates to other criteria in section D. The visitors require further evidence of how the education provider will ensure the practice placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment.

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 provided prior to the visit indicated the programme would use the QAPL system for approving and monitoring placements through the QAPL Audit. Discussion at the visit indicated this system was in the process of being implemented for this programme. Due to the placement audit systems being in development the visitors are unable to determine how this criterion is met. The visitors note this condition relates to other criteria in section D. The visitors require further evidence of how the QAPL system will be used for this programme to ensure the education provider maintains overall responsibility for the approval and monitoring of placements.

D.5 The placement providers must have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how placement providers have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated the programme would use the QAPL system for approving and monitoring placements through the QAPL Audit. Discussion at the visit indicated this system was in the process of being implemented for this programme and the education provider will be able to ensure the practice placement settings have equality and diversity policies in relation to students. Due to the placement systems being in development the visitors are unable to determine how this criterion is met. The visitors note this condition relates to other criteria in section D. The visitors require further evidence of how the education provider will ensure the practice placement settings have equality and diversity policies in relation to students.

D.6 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the education provider ensures there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated the programme would use the QAPL system for approving and monitoring placements through the QAPL Audit. Discussion at the visit indicated this system was in the process of being implemented for this programme and the education provider will be able to ensure there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting. Due to the placement systems being in development the visitors are unable to determine how this criterion is met. The visitors note this condition relates to other criteria in section D. The visitors require further evidence of how the education provider will ensure there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting.

D.7 Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the education provider ensures practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Reason: Documentation provided prior to the visit indicated the programme would use the QAPL system for approving and monitoring placements through the QAPL Audit. Discussion at the visit indicated this system was in the process of being implemented for this programme and the education provider will be able to ensure practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience. Due to the placement systems being in development the visitors are unable to determine how this criterion is met. The visitors note this condition relates to other criteria in section D. The visitors require further evidence of how the education provider will ensure practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

D.8 Practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training

Condition: The education provider must ensure practice placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Reason: Documentation submitted prior to the visit indicated the programme has a requirement for practice educators to have completed a practice educator training programme delivered externally. This was reiterated during the visit in discussions with the programme team. The visitors were concerned that although the programme has the requirement for all practice educators to have completed the training, they could not determine how the programme specific information was disseminated to practice educators initially or the ongoing processes for informing practice educators of changes made to the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence demonstrating the education provider ensures all practice educators have undertaken appropriate practice placement educator training.

D.10 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the collaboration between the programme team and practice placement providers.

Reason: During the practice placement providers meeting, the visitors were made aware that some of the placement providers were dissatisfied with the limited collaboration arrangements in place. For example, several of the placement provider representatives commented that they did not meet sufficiently and as regularly with the education provider. The visitors consider effective collaboration should mean there are strong links from the management of practice placements to the programme management team. This criterion links to criterion B.2. In order to be satisfied this criterion is met the visitors require evidence showing the links between the management of practice placement providers and programme team.

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

Condition: The education provider must revise programme documentation to correct the progression and achievement requirements.

Reason: Documentation indicated the programme is made up of two parts. The first three modules undertaken could lead to an exit point with a Postgraduate Certificate. The final two modules lead to the final AMHP award of Postgraduate Diploma. The documentation indicated that students could not progress onto the final two modules without successfully completing the first three modules (Programme Specification, page 5). Discussion at the visit with the programme team however, indicated this is not the case and students can progress to the final two modules if they need to re-sit from the first three modules. The visitors considered the documentation to be misleading and therefore require the education provider to revise programme documentation to correct the progression and achievement requirements.

E.8 Assessment regulations must clearly specify that any requirements for an aegrotat award which may be made will not lead to eligibility to be approved as an AMHP

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation to clearly state that aegrotat awards do not confer eligibility to be approved as an AMHP.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could not identify where it is clearly stated that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility to be approved as an AMHP. 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 be approved as an AMHP.

Lynn Heath
Dorothy Smith