

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Central Lancashire
Programme name	PG Cert Mental Health Practice including Approved Mental Health Professional training (AMHP)
Mode of delivery	Work based learning
Type of programme	Approved mental health professional
Date of visit	10 – 11 March 2015

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 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 practitioners (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 August 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 criteria for approving AMHP programmes and professionals who complete it will be able to achieve the criteria for approved mental health professionals. 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 education provider reviewed the programme. The education provider 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 criteria for approving approved mental health professional (AMHP) programmes. A separate report, produced by the education provider, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Robert Goemans (Approved mental health professional) Clare Bates (Lay visitor) Steve Benson (Approved mental health professional)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Nicola Baker
Proposed student numbers	15 per cohort; 1 cohort per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2015
Chair	Louisa Jones (University of Central Lancashire)
Secretary	Carolyn Johnson (University of Central Lancashire)
Members of the joint panel	Tony Graham (Internal Panel Member) Peter Hall (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 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"/>
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 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 43 of the criterion have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining seven criteria.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be approved. Conditions are set when certain criteria have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the 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 can be approved. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally 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 as to how they effectively collaborate with local authorities and employers of prospective students to ensure that applicants receive all of the relevant admissions information.

Reason: The mapping document for this criterion stated that the fact sheet provides prospective students with information on the programme, and that admission is carried out in partnership with the local authority. At the visit, the visitors heard from current students that they had received information about the programme mainly from their local authority, rather than directly from the education provider. The agencies distribute the education provider's programme information, such as fact sheets, and some authorities had held introduction sessions for the AMHP programmes available at this education provider and at a different education provider. The visitors were unclear how the education provider ensures that up-to-date, clear information specific to this programme, such as the education provider's staff, support and resources available or the programme's content were available to applicants for the programme, where they were not directly providing the information to applicants. The visitors also were unclear how the education provider ensures that a distinction is made between its application criteria, which is applicable to all potential students, and any local authority criteria which will have to be met only by some applicants. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the education provider ensure that up-to-date, clear information is provided to all applicants where this is done principally through the local authority.

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 as to how they communicate clear information about the programme's entry requirements to those applicants not applying via a local authority.

Reason: The programme specification's entry requirements state that: "The applicant might not be employed by the local authority however applications are processed and nominated by the local authority". The visitors understood that this statement was in relation to applicants coming from a healthcare trust background, but could not find information for potential applicants coming directly to the education provider within this document. The programme specification also lists "Employment with an agency with the ability to provide a suitable practice placement...", as a requirement, though the admissions handbook gives further information on page 7 which indicates that applications can still be made where this employment is not in place. The visitors therefore found that the entry requirements presented in some of the documentation could be misleading to people not applying via, or employed by, a local authority and therefore require the programme team to revisit information provided to all potential applicants to ensure it is consistent and clear.

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 of how the admissions procedures enable the education provider to gather sufficient information about applicants to make an informed decisions about admissions.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the entry requirements for the programme as outlined in the programme specification, course pro-forma and admissions handbook. The documentation outlines how the local authority interview and nominate applicants for the programme. The visitors noted on page 6 of the admissions handbook that: “The nominating Local Authority will take into consideration the length of post qualifying experience and suitability for the programme using their own applications process.” Discussions with the programme team at the visit confirmed that the education provider also screens application forms through a ‘Programme Selection Panel’ to ascertain whether applicants have demonstrated that they have the level of professional competence, capacity and ability to undertake and complete an AMHP training programme at this level, and has the final decision on admission. This panel also assesses an additional reflective account of professional development for non-graduate entry students. However, from the evidence provided, the visitors could not find the detailed criteria applied by the education provider as part of the selection panel’s screening process, or evidence of how the suitability criteria is communicated to students applying to the programme. The visitors therefore need further information about the screening process and how the admissions procedures at the education provider ensure they have sufficient information to make the final decision as to whether to offer applicants a place on the programme.

A.2 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and professional entry standards

Condition: The education provider must provide further detail of the professional entry standards they use in the screening of applicants, and how these are applied

Reason: As for criteria A.1, the visitors noted on page 6 of the admissions handbook that: “The nominating Local Authority will take into consideration the length of post qualifying experience and suitability for the programme using their own applications process.” Discussions with the programme team at the visit confirmed that the education provider also screens application forms through a ‘Programme Selection Panel’ to ascertain whether applicants have demonstrated that they have the level of professional competence, capacity and ability to undertake and complete an AMHP training programme at this level, and has the final decision on admission. This panel also assesses an additional reflective account of professional development for non-graduate entry students. However, from the evidence provided, the visitors could not find the detailed criteria applied by the education provider as part of the selection panel’s screening process, or evidence of how this criteria was applied consistently through the review of application forms. The visitors therefore need further information on this screening process and how the admissions procedures at the education provider ensure appropriate academic and professional entry standards are applied.

B.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider’s business plan

Condition: Further evidence must be provided as to the approach taken to secure the viability of running the programme and any actions taken to broaden the pool of potential applicants for the programme.

Reason: Evidence provided for this criterion included information on the School of Social Work, and two sets of course committee minutes. The visitors were given sight of the School Business Plan at the visit, and met with key senior staff for the School of Social Work. The visitors heard from senior staff that there was a commitment to provide resources to deliver the programme and that they considered it viable to continue running the programme even with a very small cohort. The visitors noted from the course leader's internal annual monitoring reports that the programme cohort consisted of two students in 2013 – 14, though an initiative for a preparatory year had enabled higher intake numbers for the current academic year. In meeting with placement providers the visitors heard of a new scheme within one of the key providers to centralise AMHP provision, meaning that they would need to train fewer AMHPs in future and could not give guarantees of future applicants to the education provider. The criteria mapping states that, "Regular course committee minutes are held and attended by agency partners and we have regular discussions about future planning". From the minutes submitted, the visitors noted a high proportion of apologies received from agency partners and were therefore unable to determine the extent to which future planning discussions were taking place. Though the senior team stated the programme was immune to requiring certain numbers, the visitors could not find evidence in the documentation provided outlining the programme team's approach to managing risks to the programme's continued viability, such as a robust strategy for consolidating and developing the preparatory year scheme, or reaching out to broaden the pool of applicants. They therefore require further evidence to ensure the education provider undertake review and future planning of the programme's viability and that this criterion will be met.

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

Condition: The education provider must clarify where the responsibility falls in ensuring that the placement settings provide a safe and supportive environment, and how this is communicated and confirmed in agreements with all parties.

Reason: The documentation submitted and discussions at the visit highlighted that the practice placement representatives organised the placements, including ensuring settings are appropriate, in discussion with the education provider. The visitors reviewed the Practice Learning Contract (Practice learning handbook, appendix 6) and noted that the health and safety checklist introduced students to various policies at the placement setting. It was clear from the Practice Learning Contract that there were defined roles and responsibilities for various elements of practice placement organisation, however the visitors could not determine who holds the responsibility for ensuring the placement setting provides a safe and supportive environment. The visitors also could not find evidence of the formal mechanisms in place to ensure the quality of practice placements before they are used (see criterion D.4). This criterion requires the education provider to hold overall responsibility for ensuring the placement settings will provide a safe and supportive environment for student learning. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the processes in place to

demonstrate that the education provider ensures practice placements provide safe and supportive environments.

D.4 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements

Condition: The education provider must further evidence how they implement and maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements for students.

Reason: Documentation submitted for this criterion comprised several documents within the practice learning handbook, including the Supplementary Application Form, Practice Learning Contract and Placement Evaluation Forms. The documentation submitted and discussions at the visit highlighted that the practice placement representatives organised the placements, including ensuring settings are appropriate, in discussion with the education provider, and that the Practice Learning Contract forms the basis of the approval of placements. The visitors also heard from meetings at the visit that, though a tutor from the education provider will review and be part of the Practice Learning Contract, they will not always attend the practice learning agreement meeting. The visitors were unable to find evidence of a thorough and effective system used by the education provider for the initial assessment and ongoing, regular monitoring of all placements. Irrespective of who manages the processes for identifying, assessing and auditing placements, this criterion requires the education provider to demonstrate a thorough and effective system for ensuring the placement settings are appropriate. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider maintains a thorough and effective system of approving and monitoring all placements.

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

Condition: The education provider must evidence how they implement clear requirements that placement educators taking students have undertaken appropriate placement educator training.

Reason: Documentation submitted prior to the visit indicated the programme has no requirement for practice placement educators to have completed a practice educator training programme, though there are opportunities and learning resources available to practice educators at the education provider. This was reiterated during the visit in discussions with the placement providers, who confirmed that, though they believed that most placement educators did have formal training, they have no requirements for a certain level or award to have been completed. The visitors therefore could not determine how this criterion is met by the programme. The visitors therefore require further evidence demonstrating that the education provider ensures all practice educators have undertaken appropriate practice placement educator training.

E.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the competencies set out in section 2 of the criteria

Condition: The education provider must clearly demonstrate how the programme ensures that the following criteria of Section 2: Approved mental health professionals will be assessed as met:

7.3 Be able to plan, negotiate and manage compulsory admission to hospital or arrangements for supervised community treatment.

Reason: Through their review of the criteria mapping and curriculum documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors felt that the programme's delivery would ensure that any successful graduate of the programme could meet this criteria. In discussion with students at the visit, there appeared to be a general understanding that this competency could be assessed as met in the placement setting without the student having coordinated compulsory admission, through a combination of experience from other assessments. At the visit, the visitors were also provided with an additional document: "Guidance in relation to AMHP approval criteria /Key competencies", which gives suggestions as to appropriate evidence for each competency. For this criteria, the terminology 'consider' and 'address' are used, and the visitors were not able to find explicit communication to students and placement educators that the students will have to co-ordinate the compulsory admission process in order to assess the competency as met. The programme team confirmed that students would need to take the lead in coordinating compulsory detentions in order to demonstrate this competency in practice. However, in order to ensure this criterion is met, the visitors require further evidence as to how the assessment of this criteria is explicitly communicated to all parties.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider is recommended to continue to seek further formalisation of the agreements with practice placement providers to ensure the effective collaboration continues.

Reason: The visitors reviewed course committee minutes prior to the visit, and were able to see the strong collaborative links that were in place with the education provider and the placement providers. In the meeting with the senior team, the visitors heard that there were discussions ongoing with local authorities and agencies in the region with the view to further strengthen and formalise these partnership arrangements. The visitors encourage the education provider to continue to pursue formalised agreements wherever possible, to ensure the collaborative partnership approach that has been developed continues.

Clare Bates
Steve Benson
Robert Goemans