

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Cumbria
Programme name	MA Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker, in England
Date of visit	8 – 9 May 2013

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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. The HCPC is a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. The HCPC currently regulates 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 ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 22 August 2013. At the Committee meeting, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. 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 (in England) came onto the register on 1 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 education provider validated the programme and the professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The visit also considered a BA (Hons) Social Work. The education provider, 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. A separate report exists for the other programme. 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 education provider and the professional body, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Linda Mutema (Diagnostic Radiographer) Dorothy Smith (Social worker) Paula Sobiechowska (Social worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Ruth Wood
Proposed student numbers	25
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2013
Chair	Helen Kerry (University of Cumbria)
Secretary	Suzanne Parkes (University of Cumbria)
Members of the joint panel	Steve J Hothersall (External Panel Member) Jane Maffey (External Panel Member) Peter Crossley (Internal Panel Member) Becky Liebman (Internal Panel Member) Sue Furness (The College of Social Work) Terry Williams (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 50 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 7 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

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.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information to demonstrate how the admissions procedures ensure potential applicants and applicants to the programme can make an informed choice about the programme.

Reason: Documentation provided and discussion at the visit included information about the admissions policies for the programme. Open days were highlighted as the main way to provide detailed information about the programme and the application process. The visitors did not receive any documentation regarding the open days prior to the visit. During discussions with the programme team the visitors highlighted the importance of providing full information about the programme so applicants are able to make informed decisions. Information about the application process requirements, the enhanced disclosure and barring service and a medical clearance; information about the interview day, the written tests and group work to be completed; and particularly the potential consequences of not having any means of personal transport and associated costs of transport. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the above information is provided to potential applicants and applicants through the admissions procedures to inform their decisions about the programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must revise the programme documentation to ensure it is accurate and reflects the status of current regulation.

Reason: The visitors noted the documentation provided for the visit contained some inaccuracies when referring to the programmes delivered, the HCPC and HCPC requirements. Discussion at the visit also indicated there were some inaccurate statements within the documentation. The documentation references a PG Dip Social Work exit award which was originally included in the programmes to be visited and approved at this event. Before the visit it was confirmed the education provider would not be revalidating the PG Dip Social Work programme. This programme was closed on our records and therefore students graduating with this award after July 2012 will not be eligible to apply for HCPC registration. The documentation therefore needs to reflect the final MA Social Work award as being the only award leading to eligibility to apply for HCPC registration. The visitors noted references to the General Social Care Council (GSCC) within some practice placement documentation. The visitors also noted there was a statement implying HCPC have requirements for the number of practice hours to be completed, "programme leaders consider the number of practice hours undertaken by the applicant and check that these meet HCPC requirements for the competency level reached" (MA programme specification, page 19). The HCPC have no requirements for the number of practice hours to complete. As the GSCC no longer exists, the documentation needs to be reviewed to ensure the current regulator is reflected appropriately and accurately. During discussion it was highlighted the programme was no longer offering international placements for students. It was also highlighted the personal tutor contact time was considered to be a minimum requirement of 2 hours instead of the 'total of 2 hours total per student per year' as

indicated within the programme specification document (page 16). The visitors considered these inaccuracies will need to be corrected for the students to have accurate information about their programme. The visitors therefore require the programme team to review the programme documentation taking into account the above detail to ensure it is accurate and reflects the status of current regulation.

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

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence to demonstrate there is a protocol in place to inform students of consent.

Reason: Documentation provided at the visit was to include a 'Consent form to participate in role play and other exercises' (Supplementary Documents). The form included in this documentation was however a 'consent form for filming of patients'. The visitors raised consent to participate with the current students and learnt they were unaware of having signed a consent form. The students were content they could opt-out of any teaching that may cause them emotional distress and that this would be appropriately managed by the programme team. The programme team highlighted discussion would set boundaries for the session teaching if role plays would be used. It was later indicated the programme team plans to implement a form for students to sign and indicate their understanding of consenting to participate. The visitors considered it to be important for the programme team to ensure they have fully informed students about consenting to participate and associated support when necessary. The visitors therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence to demonstrate there is a protocol in place to inform students of consent.

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

Condition: The education provider must submit details of how the processes for approving and monitoring placements are managed effectively.

Reason: Documentation provided for the visit included three placement audit forms for the student, the practice educator and the education provider to complete. At the visit it was indicated that due to staff movement, there had been difficulties in the past maintaining the placement systems. The education provider's Placement Learning Unit (PLU) has now become involved and has just completed an audit of all placement areas to ensure the database of placements is up to date. The programme team is currently in the process of developing the policies and processes for placement management with the PLU. Because the processes are still in development it was not known to what extent the PLU and the programme team would input to the management of placements and visitors were therefore unable to determine this SET was met. The visitors consider the placement auditing tools should be used to determine the appropriateness of placements, that HCPC requirements for placements are kept under advisement and to enable the programme team to regularly review and undertake appropriate actions if necessary. The visitors note this condition could be linked to SETs 5.3, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide further information about the processes for placement management.

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

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

Reason: Discussion at the visit indicated the practice placement providers deliver some training for practice educators. Practice educators can also access programme specific training delivered by the education provider. This training comprises of initial training and refresher update days. Within the documentation provided there was limited information about the content of this training or how the programme team would ensure practice educators had received the mandatory initial training and refresher training when appropriate. The education provider's Placement Learning Unit (PLU) has become involved with placement management for the programme. It was discussed they would hold a database for placements which would include the practice educators training history and requirements. The programme team is currently developing the policies and processes for placement management with the PLU. Because the database and associated processes are still in development, and the visitors have not received details about the training content, the visitors are unable to determine this SET is met. The visitors require the education provider to submit further evidence to demonstrate they ensure practice educators undertake appropriate training.

5.11 Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of:

- **the learning outcomes to be achieved;**
- **the timings and the duration of any placement experience and associated records to be maintained;**
- **expectations of professional conduct;**
- **the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and**
- **communication and lines of responsibility.**

Condition: The education provider must ensure practice placement educators and students fully understand the learning outcomes to be achieved at placement.

Reason: Documentation provided for the visit included the placement handbook and associated placement assessment documentation. The visitors noted the assessment of the placement required students to evidence how they meet the professional capabilities framework (PCF) which has been mapped to the standards of proficiency (SOPs). From the documentation the visitors could not determine the assessment criteria for the learning outcomes linked to the placement module and the PCF. The visitors considered the broad nature of the PCF without any assessment criteria would be difficult for the placement educators to assess against the required learning outcomes. It would also be difficult for the students to ensure they are providing the correct evidence to demonstrate how the learning outcomes are achieved. The visitors therefore require the education provider to submit further evidence demonstrating practice educators and students fully understand the learning outcomes to be achieved and assessed at placement.

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

Condition: The education provider must clarify the assessment requirements for students, particularly considering the procedures for failing placement and details of the portfolio and oral exam.

Reason: The documentation provided stated “if a student fails a placement, then there is no possibility of a student re-registering or resubmitting for that placement module” (Placement Handbook, p6). The visitors also noted the module descriptor for the Social work placement (HSWG9001) indicated the module has a 100% weighting for the portfolio (section 5). In the additional notes (section 7) for the module, it states there is also an oral exam for the module. The visitors considered if a student is given a decision of a failed placement due to the oral exam then they may be able to appeal this decision because the module descriptor references 100% to the portfolio only. During discussions with the programme team it was indicated that although they state that there is no possibility for a student to repeat a placement, they would pick up on any problems with a student meeting the capabilities at the mid-placement meeting and there would be opportunities for the student to have extra time if necessary. It was also confirmed the oral exam was considered separately from the placement module. The visitors were satisfied by the discussions around this however considered it to be important for the students to fully understand the assessment arrangements for failing placements and for the details around the placement portfolio and associated oral exam. The visitors therefore require the programme team to revise the documentation to clarify the above details for students.

Recommendations

3.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the programme team continue to review the staffing resources for the programme.

Reason: Documentation and discussion at the visit indicated in past years there had been some staff movement which may have impacted on the delivery of the programme. The visitors were satisfied the programme team has worked hard to ensure there are no longer any difficulties delivering the programme and heard they are currently recruiting further staff. The visitors are aware the programme team will be delivering the BA (Hons) Social Work programme from a second site from the next cohort. In light of the past concerns and the development of the BA (Hons) Social Work programme, the visitors recommend the education provider continue to carefully monitor the staffing resources for the programme.

5.2 The number, duration and range of practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the programme team continue to review and monitor the number and range of placements available for the programme.

Reason: Documentation and discussion at the visit indicated placement allocation was discussed through meetings with practice providers and other education providers to ensure placements would satisfy the demands of all parties involved. The visitors noted there were slight differences in the perception of the availability of suitable placements. The senior team and programme team were satisfied they would be able to provide suitable placements for all students and indicated a possible surplus especially with the new delivery site. The visitors met with a representative group of placement providers who indicated they felt there may be some placement areas that were at capacity. The visitors understand that placement provision is a challenge, and recommend the programme team continue to review and monitor the number and range of placements available for the programme.

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

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the programme team continue to develop and strengthen the relationships between themselves and the placement providers.

Reason: Discussion at the visit indicated the programme team has been working to strengthen the relationships between placement providers and themselves. In discussion with the placement providers it was clear they appreciated the developing links to the programme, would welcome further collaboration and were keen to input further into the programme design and delivery. The visitors were pleased to hear this and wish to encourage the programme team to continue with this development.

Dorothy Smith
Paula Sobiechowska