hcpc health & care professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Cumbria
Programme name	UAWd Approved Mental Health Practice
Mode of delivery	Work based learning
Type of programme	Approved mental health professional
Date of visit	28 – 29 January 2015

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 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 4 June 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 an HCPC only visit. The education provider did not validate or review the programme at the visit. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit. The visit also considered the following programmes – Post Graduate Diploma Mental Health Practice, and MA Mental Health Practice. This report covers the HCPC's recommendations on this programme only. Separate reports exist for the other programmes.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Steve Benson (Approved mental health professional)
	Ian Hughes (Lay visitor)
	Dorothy Smith (Approved mental health professional)
HCPC executive officer	Jamie Hunt
Proposed student numbers	20 per cohort, one cohort per year, across all three programmes
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2015
Chair	Fiona Powley (University of Cumbria)
Secretary	Suzanne Parkes (University of Cumbria)

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 the criteria for approving AMHP programmes	☒	☐	☐
Practice placement handbook	☒	☐	☐
Student handbook	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐	☐
External examiners' reports from the last two years	☒	☐	☐
Module guides for HSWG 7009 and HSWG 9003	☒	☐	☐
Programme Annual Evaluatory Reports from 2012–13 and 2013–14	☒	☐	☐

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	☒	☐	☐
Service users and carers	☒	☐	☐
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 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 41 of the criteria have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining nine 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.4 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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to show how equality and diversity policies are implemented and monitored in relation to the programme.

Reason: The visitors noted that the education provider referenced the institution wide admission policy and admissions procedure as sources of evidence for this criterion in their mapping document. These documents were University of Cumbria wide, and did not specify how the policy and procedure was implemented or monitored for this programme. The education provider also referenced the Programme Specification documents, which contained a statement that the education provider "encourages and welcomes students of all ages, cultures, disabilities and social backgrounds and gives fair consideration to all applicants, treating them solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential in line with equality legislation" (pages 19 and 21). After reviewing these documents, the visitors were clear that there is an equality and diversity policy in relation to admissions, but were unable to determine how the policy was implemented and monitored in relation to this programme. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how the policy is implemented for this programme and how equality and diversity in admissions is monitored to ensure that this criterion is met.

B.2 The programme must be effectively managed

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the programme management structure, highlighting the lines of responsibility between the programme team, senior team and placement providers.

Reason: Prior to the visit, the visitors reviewed the Department of Rehabilitation and Social Work Programme Structure diagram, along with a list of names and job titles for the programme team from the Programme Handbook (pages 6 and 7). From discussions at the visit, the visitors were clear that there is cooperation between the programme team, senior team and placement providers. However, the visitors were unclear how the lines of reporting and hierarchy worked, and whether the informal cooperation was embedded into clear management policies and procedures for the programme. The visitors require evidence that demonstrates clear University of Cumbria ownership of the processes that underpin the running of the programme, including structures of decision making and lines of reporting, at both Department and University level, to ensure that this criterion is met.

B.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme

Condition: The education provider must ensure that they have a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place before the commencement of the next cohort.

Reason: In the education provider's mapping submission, the education provider referenced the list of the programme team from the Programme Specification (pages 6 and 7), and the staff CVs when evidencing how this criterion is met. Considering this evidence, the visitors were satisfied that there was an adequate number of staff in place to deliver an effective programme in its current form, and that the staff team were appropriately qualified and experienced. However, at the visit, the education provider confirmed that the maximum number of students per year would increase from twelve to twenty from September 2015. The visitors acknowledge the pressure that current staffing levels put on the programme team with the current cohort size. This is further impacted by the long term absence of the programme leader, although the visitors consider that the interim programme leader is appropriately qualified and experienced for the role, and that the programme therefore meets criterion B.4. Considering the pressure on the programme team with current numbers, and the increased workload resulting from an increase in cohort size, the visitors were not satisfied that current staffing levels are adequate should the planned increase in cohort size go ahead. Therefore, the visitors require evidence demonstrating that there is, or will be, an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff for the cohort that starts the programme in September 2015.

B.7 A programme for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure an effective programme is in place for the development of teaching staff not employed directly by the University of Cumbria.

Reason: From the documentary submission, and from discussion with the programme team, the visitors noted a significant proportion of the programme's teaching is delivered by external or visiting lecturers, who were not directly employed by the University of Cumbria. In the Programme Specification documents, there are "Staff development priorities for staff teaching this programme", but it is unclear from these documents whether these priorities apply to external staff who teach on the programme. The further evidence provided in this area (Statement on Staff Development on the education provider's website, and generic Role Profiles for Level 2 and 3) related only to development for staff employed by the University. The visitors were unclear how the education provider supports the development of visiting lecturers in order to ensure they are kept up to date in terms of practice and research. To ensure this criterion is met, the visitors require evidence that demonstrates how the education provider ensures that visiting lecturers are supported by an effective programme for their professional and research development.

D.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

Condition: The education provider must update the programme documentation to accurately reflect the competency based nature of the practice learning.

Reason: The visitors noted the statement in the Practice Handbook which "require[s] students to undertake a minimum of 100 hours practice" (page 5). The visitors were not satisfied that this short period of practice would effectively support the achievement of the learning outcomes. In discussions at the visit, various groups

(including the students and the programme team) acknowledged that the 100 hours functioned as a minimum, and in reality, all students undertook a far greater number of practice hours. The programme team also stated that completing the practice placements is competency based rather than time limited. However, with the current stated minimum number of hours, the visitors consider there is a risk that students could undertake a period of practice learning that is too short to support the achievement of the learning outcomes. The visitors also considered that the stated minimum could mislead potential applicants to the programme, who may be expecting to complete exactly or just over 100 hours of practice, when in reality this would not be sufficient. The visitors require the education provider to revise the programme documentation to state a more representative expected minimum period for practice learning, and to accurately reflect the competency based nature of practice learning if it is judged to be adequate.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further information about the revised arrangements for practice placement educator training.

Reason: The visitors noted from discussions at the visit that not all practice placement educators undertake practice placement educator training. Currently, the individual designated as the Lead Practice Educator undertakes specific practice placement educator training with the education provider. The visitors considered this appropriate under current arrangements, as all students are formally supervised by this individual, which helps to ensure parity in student placement experience and assessment. However, the visitors noted from discussions with the programme team that the education provider plans to change the way it manages practice placements, with other practice educators becoming more involved in students learning and assessment. As part of this change, the education provider is developing and widening their programme of practice placement educator training with the intention of ensuring consistency and equivalence in the teaching and assessment of students on placement. To ensure this criterion is met, the visitors require further information about this training, including a timeline for when it will be implemented.

E.5 The measurement of student performance must be objective and ensure safe and effective practice as an AMHP

Condition: The education provider must provide further information to detail how their monitoring processes ensure objective assessment of students' AMHP competence.

Reason: From the documentation provided, the visitors noted several policies intended to demonstrate objectivity in the assessment of students, including the Academic Regulations and the Procedures Governing Marking and Moderation of Assessment. The visitors also noted from the documentation, and from discussions with the programme team, senior team, and practice placement providers and educators, that there are further policies in place intended to ensure objectivity in the assessment. For example, the programme's external examiner is changed regularly and reports annually, and there is regular internal monitoring and validation. However, the visitors were unclear how relevant policies and procedures were applied to this programme. The visitors also noted the reliance on external individuals to ensure consistency and objectivity in the assessment, rather than clear ownership of the

application of relevant policies by the University of Cumbria. Therefore, to ensure this criterion is met, the visitors require further information to demonstrate how the education provider ensures objectivity in the assessment processes. This could be in the form of a cohesive account of the processes in place to achieve objectivity in the assessment, and how they are applied to this programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must name the programme(s) of study that ensures individuals meet section 2 of the approval criteria for AMHP programmes, and ensure that the programme documentation, including advertising materials, articulates the programme award(s) clearly and consistently.

Reason: From the documentation, and discussions at the visit regarding the programme title, the visitors noted that there was not a final award given to individuals who meet section 2 of the HCPC approval criteria for AMHP programmes. The Programme Handbook states that a "transcript [is provided] to enable [the student] to apply to the LA to become an AMHP" (page 11). This transcript is given after completing the modules linked to AMHP competence, along with a Qualificatory Practice Unit. These modules are contained within a suite of post qualifying study, which includes modules that are not directly linked to AMHP training. The education provider gives awards when students complete certain programmes of study within this suite equalling 60 or 120 credits. However, this criterion requires education providers to clearly articulate student progression and achievement within the programme, and therefore the awards that do and do not lead to individuals meeting section 2 of the approval criteria for AMHP programmes. In order to determine this criterion is met, the visitors require the education provider to confirm the programme title(s) that lead to individuals meeting section 2 of the approval criteria for AMHP programmes, and ensure that the programme documentation, including advertising materials, articulates the programme award(s) and what activity they entitle an individual to perform clearly and consistently.

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 programme team must provide further information to demonstrate how their criteria for appointing external examiners for the programme ensures that at least one will be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of an appropriate professional register.

Reason: In the mapping provided, the education provider referenced the University of Cumbria wide external examiner policy, which states "the Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring that the criteria for appointment of the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) are met" (page 3). They also referenced a generic statement about why the programme appoints external examiners in the Programme Handbook (page 16). Neither of these statements were clear in articulating the programme specific criteria that are used when appointing external examiners to this programme. The visitors were satisfied with the current external examiner for the programme. However, to ensure this criterion is met, the visitors require evidence that

articulates the criteria that the programme team use to appoint external examiners to the programme.

Recommendation

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

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the programme team embed service user and carer involvement more formally into the programme's structure.

Reason: From the documentation, and from discussions at the visit, it was clear that service users and carers were involved in the programme. The service users and carers were generally satisfied with their involvement, and mentioned their involvement in other programmes in the faculty. Therefore the visitors were satisfied that this criterion is met. However, although the service users and carers were clear about the areas in which they were involved currently, they were unsure of formal protocols and procedures should they wish to contribute to the programme in different ways. For example, there was no regular meeting of the service users and carers to discuss their involvement in the programme. The visitors also noted that involvement was very reliant on informal working relationships between the service users and carers and members of the programme team. Although the service users and carers were confident that they were well supported in their roles, they were also not clear about the formal training they had received, and one individual was not aware that they had been nominated as a specific "Expert by Experience Champion". The visitors considered that there were risks to involvement in its current form, especially if individuals from the service user and carer group or the programme team change. Therefore, the visitors recommend that service user and carer involvement is embedded more formally into the programme's structure and includes provision for input on curriculum development and planning.

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