

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Lincoln
Programme name	MSc Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	13 – 14 November 2014

Contents

Executive summary	2
Introduction.....	3
Visit details	3
Sources of evidence	4
Recommended outcome	5
Conditions.....	6
Recommendations.....	8

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 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 approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 14 May 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 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 (in England) 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 an HCPC only visit. The education provider did not validate or review the programmes at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programmes. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit. The visit also considered the following programmes – BSc (Hons) Social Work and Post Graduate Diploma Interprofessional Practice (Approved Mental Health Professional). Separate reports exist for these programmes.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Deirdre Keane (Lay visitor) Richard Barker (Social worker) Vicki Lawson-Brown (Social worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Abdur Razzaq
HCPC observer	Alex Urquhart
Proposed student numbers	30 per cohort once a year
Proposed start date of programme approval	1 September 2015
Chair	Paul Walsh (University of Lincoln)
Secretary	Carolyn Smith (University of Lincoln)

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"/>
Service users and carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The HCPC did not physically see the learning resources and specialist teaching accommodation however, there was a briefing about learning resources and teaching rooms.

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for approval, the visitors must be satisfied 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 the relevant 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 54 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 approved. 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 recommendation for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme can be approved. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally 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 revisit all programme documentation, including advertising materials and the website, to ensure that potential applicants have all the information they require in order to make an informed choice about taking up a place on the programme.

Reason: From the information provided, the visitors noted on page 13 of D1 Practice Learning Handbook “All students are expected to hold a full UK driving license and own a car by the time they enter first placement. No compensation will be made for students who do not own a car and full driving license”. However during the meeting with the programme team, visitors learnt that students are encouraged to own a car and have full UK driving licence. In exceptional circumstances, such as students with special needs, the education provider will make compensation to requirements of owning a car and full UK driving licence. The visitors were unable to determine how this exception to the admission requirement will be communicated to potential applicants. The visitors consider this to be essential information for applicants and therefore, require the education provider to review the programme advertising materials, to ensure potential applicants are informed of the exceptions to admissions procedures. This way the visitors can determine how the programme can meet this standard by ensuring that applicants have all the information they require in order to make an informed choice about taking up a place on the programme.

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

Condition: The programme team must revisit programme documentation to ensure the terminology used is current and up to date.

Reason: The visitors noted that the programme documentation submitted by the education provider included several instances of incorrect and out of date terminology. For example, page 13 of the A3 Programme Specification states that “At enrolment, all candidates must have an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau check”. This method has now change to Disclosure Barring Service (DBS). The visitors also noted in the frequently asked questions (FAQs) for applicants that “The programme contains an 80-day first placement and final 100-day placement, which take place in Terms 2-3 of the first and second year respectively”. During the meeting with the programme team, the visitors learnt that the education provider only uses the DBS method for checking previous convictions and that the first placement for the MSc Social Work programme is 70 days. In discussion with the programme team it was also indicated the programme team would take account of these examples in particular when updating programme documents. The visitors require the documentation to be reviewed to remove any instances of incorrect or out-of-date terminology. This way the visitors can be sure that the documentary resources available to support students’ learning are being effectively used and that this standard can be met.

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 evidence of the protocols to obtain informed consent from students when they participate as service users and for managing situations when students decline from participating as service users, in practical sessions.

Reason: From the documentation submitted prior to the visit, the visitors were unable to determine how this standard is met. During the visit and discussions with the programme team, the visitors learnt that there are appropriate protocols in place to obtain informed consent from students when they participate as service users and that students are asked verbally before each activity. However, the visitors could not determine how students were informed about participation requirements within the programme, how records were maintained to indicate consent had been obtained, or how situations where students declined from participation were managed with alternative arrangements so there would be no impact on their learning. The visitors therefore require the programme team to provide evidence of protocols for obtaining informed consent from students and for managing situations where students decline from participating in practical and clinical teaching.

6.11 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 the Register.

Condition: The education provider must include a clear statement in the programme documentation that at least one external examiner for the programme will be from the relevant part of the Register, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Reason: The visitors saw curriculum vitae for the current external examiners and were satisfied with the current arrangement. However, in the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail about the external examiner recruitment policy. It was not evident that there was an explicit requirement for at least one of the external examiners to be from the relevant part of the Register. In discussion with the programme team it was indicated the programme team would take account of this standard when updating programme documents. In order to determine this standard is met, the visitors need to see evidence of the HCPC requirements regarding external examiners within the programme documentation.

Recommendations

2.5 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and / or professional entry standards.

Recommendation: The visitors suggest the education provider consider providing further information to potential applicants about the academic entry requirements.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied the admissions procedures give applicants the information they require to make an informed choice about the programme and provide initial information about requirements. The visitors noted that the education provider requires a “good undergraduate degree (normally 2:1 or above), achieved or predicted”. The visitors suggest the education provider may wish to consider rephrasing this statement by adding that students with lower academic grades when there is sufficient evidence of experience in the field of social care or other relevant qualifications may be considered for a place on this programme. The visitors feel this way the education provider would further enhance the potential pool of applicants for this programme.

Dee Keane
Vicki Lawson-Brown
Richard Barker