

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of the West of England, Bristol
Programme name	BSc (Hons) Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time Part time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	4 – 5 March 2015

Contents

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

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 30 June 2015. At this 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 profession came onto the register in 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 professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. 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 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 HCPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the professional body, outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Beverley Blythe (Social worker in England) Nicholas Drey (Lay visitor) David Ward (Social worker in England)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Nicola Baker
Proposed student numbers	58 per cohort including full time and part time routes; one cohort per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	1 September 2015
Chair	Roger Conlon (University of the West of England)
Secretary	Lisa Connors (University of the West of England) Rebecca Smith (University of the West of England)
Members of the joint panel	Amanda Thorpe (The College of Social Work) Kausur Iqbal (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"/>
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 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 53 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining five 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 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 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 ensure that all information regarding the programme's entry requirements and potential costs of the programme are up to date and communicated consistently in admissions.

Reason: The visitors noted inconsistencies in the professional and academic entry requirements laid out in the programme specification document (page 15) and advertising materials on the website. The programme specification states 280 UCAS points are required, whereas the website references 300 tariff points. The programme specification also states, "There is no requirement of previous experience in social work or social care", which appears to contradict the website: "Applicants must have some knowledge and direct experience of working in social work or social care". The programme team confirmed that the UCAS points are currently set at 300 and that language may vary in describing experience required for the programme. In discussions with students at the visit, the visitors heard that student ambassadors present at the open day, were key in providing information on the student experience including placement information and potential associated costs which students may encounter once enrolled on the programme. The visitors were unsure how applicants would be provided with this information if they did not ask the student ambassadors at the open day. The visitors require the programme team to revisit the key documentation for the programme in conjunction with guidance given in admissions to ensure all entry requirements and potential costs of the programme are clearly and consistently presented for potential applicants to the programme. This way the programme team can ensure that all applicants are given the information they require in order to make an informed choice as to whether to apply or accept an offer of a place.

2.4 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including compliance with any health requirements.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information as to what process and criteria are used in determining health requirements are met for students coming on to the programme.

Reason: The visitors reviewed programme documentation and advertising materials prior to the visit. They noted a statement in the entry requirements that applicants must be in 'good health' in order to be able to undertake the programme, and therefore those offered a place are required to fill in an occupational health form (provided at the visit). In discussion with the programme team, the visitors heard that a contract with the occupational health service determined the implementation of this entry requirement, and applied the health requirements for the programme. However, from the evidence and discussions it was unclear what criteria and decision-making process were used in determining the threshold health requirements for the programme in admissions. The visitors also discussed with the programme team the policy used to determine whether students required vaccination for occupational exposure to pathogens such as hepatitis B, amongst others, in placement settings, and how students are responsible for keeping abreast of their own immunity status. The visitors could not determine how this process

was robust in ensuring the safety of students and service users in relation to their occupational health, and therefore require further evidence of the health requirements and their implementation in order to ensure this SET is 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 education provider must provide further evidence that there are appropriate protocols to provide all students with the required information on their consent where they are required to participate in practical teaching activities, including any implications of non-consent.

Reason: The visitors were provided with a Consent form (page 137) as evidence for this standard. The form contains this statement: "I hereby give my consent to take part in practical exercises on the BSc (Hons) Social Work programme. I understand that I have the right to withhold any personal information from the group which I do not wish to share." However, in discussion with the students, there was some uncertainty as to whether they had signed consent to participate in practical teaching, and what would happen if they felt unable to share or participate. The visitors could not find further detail of how this right not to participate with appropriate reasons, and associated form is introduced to the students, or if any verbal or written explanation would accompany the form to ensure students' consent is fully informed. Therefore, the visitors could not determine how students were informed about the specific participation requirements within the programme. There was further uncertainty about how records were maintained to indicate consent had been obtained, and how situations where students declined from participation were managed with alternative learning arrangements so that there would be no impact on their learning. The visitors therefore require the programme team to provide further evidence of protocols for obtaining informed consent from students and for managing situations where students decline from participating in practical teaching sessions.

3.15 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 evidence that there are robust attendance monitoring mechanisms in place.

Reason: The evidence provided prior to the visit indicated that an electronic signing in process was used to monitor student attendance at taught sessions. In discussion with students at the visit, the visitors heard that there had been some issues experienced with this electronic system. There had been occasions where some students were mistakenly recorded as absent, which potentially would have affected bursary allocations and had further implications if mandatory course requirements have not been met. The programme team outlined how they were working with the students and IT staff to resolve the issue, and had withdrawn the link with bursary allocations for this particular cohort in order to ensure fairness. The programme team stated that it was now too late in the year to start manually taking attendance records. From this evidence, the visitors could not see how this SET had been met for this cohort or how it would be ensured that attendance is monitored effectively going forward. The visitors therefore require further evidence that a robust monitoring mechanism is in place and

being implemented to ensure student absenteeism is picked up and dealt with appropriately.

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 demonstrate that the assessment regulations clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who, unless other arrangements are agreed, is from the relevant part of the Register.

Reason: The visitors were directed to Part F of the Assessment regulations and procedures as evidence for this SET. However, the visitors could not find sufficient 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 HCPC Register unless other arrangements are agreed. The visitors were satisfied with the current external examiner arrangements for the programme. However, the visitors need to see evidence that HCPC requirements regarding the external examiner on the programme have been included in the documentation to demonstrate that this standard will be met going forward.

Beverley Blythe
Nicholas Drey
David Ward