hcpc
health & care professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of the West of England, Bristol
Programme name	PGCert Approved Mental Health Professional
Mode of delivery	Full time Part time
Type of programme	Approved mental health professional
Date of visit	21 – 22 March 2017

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 at the education provider. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 12 June 2017. At this meeting, the Committee approved the programme. This means 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

The HCPC visited the programme at the education provider as it was a new programme which was seeking HCPC approval for the first time. This visit assessed the programme 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 validated 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	David Abrahart (Approved mental health professional) Dorothy Smith (Approved mental health professional) Ian Hughes (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer	Jasmine Pokuaa Oduro-Bonsrah
Proposed student numbers	Full time -15 per cohort, one cohort per year Part time - 5 per cohort, one cohort per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2017
Chair	Philip Millington (University of the West of England, Bristol)
Secretary	Lisa Connors (University of the West of England, Bristol)
Members of the joint panel	Dagmar Steffens (Internal Panel Member) Philip Watson (Internal Panel Member) Ruth Heames (Internal 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	☒	☐	☐
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	☐	☐	☒

The HCPC did not review external examiners' reports from two year ago prior to the visit as there are currently no external examiners as the programme is new.

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)	☒	☐	☐

The HCPC met with students from the Best Interest Assessors (BIA) and BSc (Hons) Social work programme, as the programme seeking approval currently does not have any students enrolled on it.

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 47 of the criteria have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining three 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 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 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 revise their admissions material to ensure the length of the programme is accurately stated.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted that length of the programme will be four months. This was confirmed by the programme team at the visit. However the visitors noted that the website for the programme states the programme length will be six months. The visitors note that the programme length is an important factor in applicants being able to make an informed decision about whether to take up an offer of a place on this programme. The visitors therefore require evidence that clearly states the duration of the programme, and how this will be effectively communicated to applicants.

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

Condition: The education provider must submit evidence to demonstrate how they maintain a thorough and effective system to approve all placements.

Reason: To evidence this criterion the visitors were directed to the placement learning opportunity profile, the placement agreement form, and were shown the placement monitoring database, (ARC) at the visit. The placement learning opportunity profile is a questionnaire that potential practice placement providers complete. Additionally, as part of the quality assurance measures for placements, the education provider ensures that there is a formal practice placement agreement between the students and the practice placement providers that must be completed at the beginning of the placement. The visitors were also told that all placements are visited prior to students undertaking that placement. The visitors agreed that the placement agreement form and the storage of the placement information on the ARC database are effective processes for monitoring placements.

However, the visitors noted that although there is a process in place for monitoring all placements, the visitors were not clear how the education provider ensures that placements are effectively audited prior to students undertaking those placements. The visitors were not satisfied that the placement opportunity profile was a sufficient process to approve placements prior to students going on that placement as it was a placement opportunity questionnaire rather than an audit. Furthermore, the visitors did not receive any information regarding what formal criteria is checked when the placement is visited by a member of staff from the education provider. Therefore the visitors could not determine that there are effective policies and processes in place to approve placements. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the overarching policies, systems and procedures in place regarding the approval of placements to ensure this criterion is met.

D.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 demonstrate how students are fully prepared for placement, including clarity around the roles and responsibilities of practice placement educators.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation, the visitors noted multiple references to a variety of practice placement educator titles, specifically 'Approved Mental Health Practice Educators', 'Practice supervisors', 'AMHP supervisor', 'Practice assessor' and 'AMHP Leads'. Prior to the visit the visitors could not determine if these were different roles. At the visit, the visitors were told during the practice educator and programme team meeting that all these were essentially the same role. However, the visitors were still unclear as to whether there was a variety of practice placement educators with a range of titles and / or responsibilities as it was not reflected in the documentation. As such the visitors note that there was a potential risk that students would not understand the roles and lines of responsibility of the practice placement educators. Therefore, the visitors require further evidence which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of the various practice placement educators noted in the documentation and how this information is provided clearly and consistently to students.

D.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 programme team must revise the programme documentation to ensure that students are fully prepared for placements, including information about the duration of placements.

Reason: The visitors noted that the programme documentation submitted by the education provider included inconsistent information regarding the duration of placements. On the programme website it states that there are 40 placement days and at the visit the programme team told the visitors that there will be 40 placement days. The visitors were satisfied that the amount of placement days is appropriate for the programme. However, in the programme timetable the visitors noted that there will be

50 placement days. The visitors therefore require the documentation to be revised to ensure that the placement information communicated to students is accurate. In this way, the visitors can be sure that the documentary resources available ensures that student are fully prepared for placements

David Abrahart
Dorothy Smith
Ian Hughes