

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Winchester
Programme name	MSc Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	5 – 6 May 2015

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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. 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 27 August 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 it was a new programme which was seeking HCPC approval for the first time. 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 and validating body did not validate or review the programme at the visit and the professional body did not consider their accreditation of the programme. The education provider supplied an independent chair and secretary for the visit.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	David Childs (Social worker in England) Robert Goemans (Social worker in England) Christine Morgan (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Alex Urquhart
HCPC observer	Laura Coveney
Proposed student numbers	20 per cohort, one per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	1 September 2015
Chair	Judith Mcullouch (University of Winchester)
Secretary	Emma Woolf (University of Winchester)

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The HCPC did not review external examiners' reports prior to the visit as there is currently no external examiner 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	<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"/>

The HCPC met with students from the 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 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 51 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining seven 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 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 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 revise the information available to applicants ensuring that all information about a graduate's entitlement to apply for registration with the HCPC is correct.

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to the programme webpage where it was stated that "Successful completion [of the programme] leads to automatic inclusion onto the professional register for social workers in England." The visitors noted that this is an incorrect and potentially misleading statement by the education provider. After completion of the programme the graduate is eligible to apply for registration with the HCPC, they are not entitled to automatic registration as the webpage currently suggests. This statement could impact an applicant's decision to take up or make an offer of a place on the programme, therefore the education provider must revise the information made available to applicants ensuring that information about registration with the HCPC is correct.

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 revise the documentation and guidance made available in relation to any selection and entry criteria, including compliance with any health requirements.

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to the programme information on page 7 where it stated that applicants would be subject to an initial "Fitness/Suitability to practice" assessment, which includes any relevant medical information. It further stated that a self-declaration form will be completed by applicants. During the meeting with the programme team this was discussed further where the purpose of this assessment was explained. The role of the assessment is to identify where students may require reasonable adjustments so they can do the programme and to identify if there are any health condition which would impair their ability to do the programme and practice as a social worker in England. The programme team further stated that the applicant declares any health condition which the applicants thinks may impair their ability to study on the programme. However it was stated that applicants must declare if they have ever been detained under the Mental Health Act 1983. In this situation the student would be referred to the student services to make an assessment about their suitability to the programme and may have to provide a note from their doctor declaring that they are fit to study. The visitors noted that this was not clear in the documentation and could therefore potentially be misleading to potential applicants. Therefore the education provider is required to revise the documentation made available to applicants, including advertising materials clearly outlining the selection and entry criteria, including compliance with any health requirements in relation to the declaration of any previous mental health conditions.

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

Condition: The education provider must review the programme documentation, to ensure the terminology used is accurate, consistent and reflective of the language associated with statutory regulation and the HCPC.

Reason: The documentation submitted by the education provider contained an instance of incorrect terminology in relation to the role of the HCPC. The programme handbook, page 32 states “The programme is subject to relevant Professional and Statutory Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) requirements with regard to the number of days in placement that make up the full training”. This statement is incorrect as the regulatory body, the HCPC does not require a set amount of placement days on a social work programme it is something set out by the College of Social Work. The visitors noted other instances of inaccurate statements such as these throughout the documentation submitted. Incorrect and inconsistent statements have the potential to mislead potential applicants and students. Therefore the visitors require the education provider to review the programme documentation, including advertising materials, and ensure that the terminology used is accurate, consistent and reflects the language associated with statutory 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 revise the documentation to ensure that the consent form accurately reflects the protocols of attaining consent when students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching.

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to the consent form which students sign at the start of each academic year. The form states that students do not have to participate in any practical learning situation where they would feel uncomfortable, it further states that this would not be a barrier to a students continued “...eligibility to participate in skills learning exercises or the programme.” During the meeting with the programme team this was discussed further. It was noted that when a student abstains from practical learning this is recorded by the module leader and they ensure that the student undertakes compensatory work so that they can still achieve the learning outcomes. The visitors noted that the full procedure was not clear in the consent form and that this could potentially mislead students who think they may not be able to meet the learning outcomes by refusing to take part in practical teaching sessions. Therefore the education provider must revise the documentation used to gain consent of students for practical teaching sessions ensuring that students are aware of the protocols in place to gain consent and ensure that students are still able to meet the learning outcomes in 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 revise the information available to students about the current attendance policy so that the protocols in place are clear to students.

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to the definitive document, where on page 21 it states that students are expected to attend all taught sessions and that "...significant absences will affect a students' ability to undertake their duty of care to service users and carers." Further the programme handbook stated on page 17-18 that there is currently no mandatory attendance policy and that the university is currently developing an attendance policy and details of this new policy will be circulated to students. This was further discussed at the meeting with the programme team. The programme team stated that attendance is recorded by a register at each teaching session. If a student's attendance falls below 80 per cent then they receive an email from the programme team enquiring as to why they have missed the taught session and if any reasonable adjustments need to be made. The visitors noted that the protocol for monitoring attendance was not clear and therefore there was potential that it would not be clear to students on the programme. Therefore the education provider is required to revise the information available to students about the current attendance policy so that the protocols in place are clear to students.

5.3 The practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment.

Condition: The education provider must revise the documentation available to students and practice placement educators ensuring that it is clear that it is the responsibility of the placement provider to provide a safe and supportive environment for students when in the placement setting.

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to the Placement handbook where, on page 18 the responsibilities of the on-site practice placement educator were outlined. The third duty stated that the practice educator must "...ensure that the student is aware of the agency's health and Safety responsibilities, and appropriate agency policies and procedures". During the meeting with both the practice placement providers and the programme team it was clarified that it was the responsibility of the practice placement educators to ensure that the student was in a safe and supportive environment. The visitors noted that this was not reflected in the documentation and that the practice placement educator and student may potentially be unaware whose responsibility it is to ensure that the placement setting provides a safe and supportive environment. Therefore the education provider is required to revise the documentation available to students and practice placement educators so that it states that it is the responsibility of the practice placement educator to ensure that the student is in a safe and supportive environment.

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

Condition: The education provider must revise the documentation available to students surrounding the process for multiple attempts and exceptional circumstances making it clearer to students.

Reason: For this standard the visitors were directed to the programme handbook where the requirements for student progression and achievement are outlined. However on page 27 it states that if a student fails an assignment they will have a second chance to re-submit. It further states that "as all modules are compulsory this programme may allow exceptional third attempts." The visitors noted that these statements conflict and the visitors were unsure about the exact policies surrounding retakes and exceptional

circumstances and that this is potentially unclear to students. Therefore the education provider must revise the documentation available to students surrounding the process for multiple attempts and exceptional circumstances making it clearer to students.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: It is recommended that the programme team keep the process for applying selection and entry criteria in regards to mental health under review to ensure that the process does not potentially create any unnecessary barriers for potential applicants.

Reason: In meeting this standard the visitors were directed to the programme information on page 7 where it stated that applicants would be subject to an initial "Fitness/Suitability to practice" assessment, which includes any relevant medical information. It further stated that a self-declaration form will be completed by applicants. The programme team further stated that the applicant declares any health condition which the applicants thinks may impair their ability to study on the programme. The visitors noted that the standard meets the standard as the process aims to identify where any reasonable adjustments may need to be made, however it was stated that applicants must declare if they have ever been detained under the Mental Health Act 1983. In this situation the student would be referred to the student services to make an assessment about their suitability to the programme and may have to provide a note from their doctor declaring that they are fit to study. The visitors noted that this may potentially create further barriers in the application process to any applicant who has been detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 and potentially deter an applicant with a previous or current mental health issue from applying to the programme. The visitors therefore recommend that the education provide keep this process under review in the future, so to ensure that the process does not create any potential barriers or deter any applicants from applying to the programme.

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 that further consideration is given to ensuring that the balance of expertise in delivering the programme includes an adequate number of staff who are appropriately qualified and experienced in adult social care as well as those in child social work.

Reason: In meeting this standard the visitors were directed to the Curriculum Vitae of the staff on the programme and the structure of the teaching staff, and during the meeting with the programme team the visitors asked the staff for the background they have in social work. The programme team stated that there was one member of staff who was from an adult social work background who has just been appointed. The programme team further stated that they had acknowledged that there is a lack of adult experience on the programme and to compensate for this they bring in visiting lecturers from an adult background. The visitors recommended that this standard was met, however they highlighted that with the experience of a majority of the staff from a child social work background there was potential for the programme to focus more on child social work rather than adult. Therefore the visitors recommend that the education provider ensure that enough experience from an adult social work background is secured for both the teaching and the design of the programme.

David Childs
Robert Goemans
Christine Morgan