
Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of York
Programme name	BA (Hons) in Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	6 – 7 March 2014

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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 or 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 ongoing approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 26 August 2014. At the Committee meeting, the ongoing approval of the programme was re-confirmed. This means that the education provider has met the conditions 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 visit also considered different programmes. The education provider, 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 all the programmes and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HCPC's recommendations on this programme only. Separate reports exist for the other programmes. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. Separate reports, produced by the professional body, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Beverley Blythe (Social worker) Anthony Power (Physiotherapist) Aidan Worsley (Social worker)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Hollie Latham
Proposed student numbers	30 Full time once per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2014
Chair	John Robinson (University of York)
Secretary	Samantha McDermott (University of York)
Members of the joint panel	Lee Sobo-Allen (The College of Social Work) Kath Morris (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"/>
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 assured 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 their 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 41 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 16 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for approval. 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 two recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme is recommended for approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set 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 review the information available to potential applicants with particular reference to bursaries and costs associated with practice placements.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors could see that potential applicants were directed to a link which would advise them on the current NHS bursaries available. The documentation also mentioned that applicants may be eligible to receive a bursary for travel related expenses whilst on placement. However, the visitors were unable to locate any information on the recent changes to bursary arrangements and how the University of York planned to allocate the bursaries they received. The visitors also heard that not all students had a clear understanding of the new bursary arrangements when they came onto the programme. In addition to this, it became clear that there were variants in the arrangements from placements providers with relation to travel costs on placement. The visitors heard that some placement providers will cover the cost of travel within placement where others do not. The visitors consider that cost implications may be an important factor in the decision making process for potential applicants. For this reason the visitors require further evidence of how potential applicants will be provided with information around funding and cost implications to enable them to make an informed choice on whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of how selection and entry criteria are applied to students being offered a place through clearing.

Reason: From the documentation submitted the visitors were satisfied with the selection and entry criteria. In the meeting with practice educators it was stated that some applicants had been offered a place on the programme through clearing. In discussions with the programme team the visitors heard that that, due to the practicalities of clearing, these students did not follow the same selection process and were not required to attend a face to face interview. The visitors understand that the clearing process places restrictions on the practicalities in place for selection. However, the visitors were unable to identify an alternative procedure for ensuring that applicants offered a place through clearing meet the academic and professional entry standards as highlighted in the admissions documentation. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of the procedure for applying selection and entry criteria to those applying to the programme through clearing.

2.6 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of the process for applying accreditation of prior (experiential) learning (AP(E)L) and how this is specific to the programme.

Reason: The programme documentation states that students wishing to apply through the AP(E)L route will be considered on a case by case basis. The programme team expanded on this at the visit, explaining the institution wide policies in place for mapping credit and exemption for modules. They also explained that students will be subject to the programme's selection procedures and an assessment to prove that they have met the required learning outcomes. However, the visitors were unclear how the programme team utilises this process to map students' prior learning to the learning outcomes specific to the programme. The visitors therefore require specific evidence to show how the prior learning of students transferring onto the programme through the AP(E)L route are mapped against the learning outcomes specific to this programme.

3.6 Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information about any external contributors to the programme. Specifically, the education provider must provide evidence to show how they ensure the quality of teaching from guest lecturers.

Reason: From documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors were satisfied that current permanent staff to the programme had the relevant knowledge and expertise to deliver their subject areas. However, from meetings with students and the programme team it became clear that, from time to time, guest lecturers and external contributors taught on the programme. The visitors were unable to locate any information that enabled them to determine whether external contributors had the relevant specialist expertise and knowledge to deliver their subject area and were therefore unable to determine the quality of teaching. For this reason, the visitors require further evidence to show that any external contributors to the programme have the relevant specialist expertise and knowledge to deliver their subject area.

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

Condition: The education provider must ensure that all documentation relating to the programme is updated so that it is reflective of the current landscape of statutory regulation for social workers in England.

Reason: The visitors noted the documentation submitted by the education provider contained inaccuracies and incorrect terminology. For example page 22 of the 'BA Social Work Handbook' states that "Social work students are on a professional programme that is validated by the HCPC." The HCPC does not validate social work programmes. The HCPC Approves programmes. In addition to this, page 24 of the First Placement Handbook states that "It is a requirement of both HCPC and TCSW that service users and carers are directly involved in both the learning and the assessment processes for the student." It is not yet a requirement of the HCPC for service users and carers to be involved in the programme. Therefore, the visitors require the education provider to review the programme documentation and ensure the terminology used is accurate, and reflects the language associated with statutory regulation and avoids any potential confusion for students.

4.2 The programme must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.

Condition: Further evidence must be provided to show how the programme reflects the relevant curriculum guidance and external reference frameworks.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted that page two of the programme specification states one of the educational aims of the programme is “To enable students to achieve the learning outcomes associated with the QAA benchmark statement and the Department of Health requirements.” The SETs mapping also directed the visitors to the Social Work PCF Delivery and Assessment Mapping. However, the visitors could not find through the programme documentation any further references or mapping to the 2008 QAA benchmark statements for Social Work. The visitors therefore could not determine from the documentation how these external frameworks are reflected in the programme or how the programme team worked to include the benchmarks within the curriculum. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate how the curriculum reflects the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge of the social work profession and qualification.

5.2 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 provide further evidence of the processes in place to find and secure a suitable number of placements for current and future students.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted there has been a significant struggle to recruit a suitable number of placements for all students. This is highlighted as a high “(Red)” risk in the Medium-Term Planning document, page eight. The visitors also heard that students had felt the need to seek their own placements as they were aware of the restricted availability. In a meeting with the programme team the visitors heard that 15 additional placements had recently been secured through Leeds City Council as a response to the current availability of placements. However the visitors were unable to determine if the current number of placements was sufficient for the number of current and potential students on the programme. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to show that the number of placements is appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further information on the quality assurance measures in place for overseas placements.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted that students had the opportunity to take up placements overseas such as in Peru and Uganda. In the meeting with the programme team the visitors were given information that the Peru placement was 70 days and counted towards the students overall practice days. The Uganda placement was 20 days in duration and would count towards the students overall practice days. The documentation and discussions with the practice educators did not detail how the programme team quality assures the overseas placements and

ensures these overseas placements provide students with a safe and supportive environment. The programme team did discuss the support they provide to students for both placements, such as sending placement materials in advance and contacting students once a month as well as mid-placement visit or phone call via Skype. However, the visitors considered there to be no pre-placement quality assurance mechanism and so could not determine how the programme team ensured the placements would be safe and supportive. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how the education provider ensures that the overseas placements provide a safe and supportive environment.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further information on the approval and monitoring systems for overseas placements

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted that students had the opportunity to take up placements overseas such as in Peru and Uganda. In the meeting with the programme team the visitors were given information that the Peru placement was 70 days and counted towards the students overall practice days. The Uganda placement was 20 days in duration and would count towards the students overall practice days. The documentation and discussions with the practice educators did not detail how the programme approves and monitors the overseas placements and ensures these overseas placements before they are used. The programme team did discuss the support they provide to students for both placements, such as sending placement materials in advance and contacting students once a month as well as mid-placement visit or phone call via Skype. However, the visitors considered there to be no clear approval and monitoring process. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how the education provider maintains a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements.

5.6 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting.

Condition: The education provider must submit evidence which shows how they ensure that overseas practice placements, have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted that students had the opportunity to take up placements overseas such as in Peru and Uganda. However, the documentation did not detail how the education provider ensures there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place at the overseas practice placement settings. In a meeting with the programme team the visitors heard specific details of one practice educator in Peru. However no further information was provided of what processes, such as pre-placement quality assurance mechanisms, are in place that allows the education provider to determine if there are a suitable number of qualified practice educators in overseas placements. For this reason the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider ensures there is an adequate number for appropriately qualified and experienced staff for overseas placements.

5.7 Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Condition: The education provider must submit evidence which shows how they ensure that overseas practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted that students had the opportunity to take up placements overseas such as in Peru and Uganda. However, the documentation did not detail how the education provider ensures that overseas practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience. In a meeting with the programme team the visitors heard specific details of one practice educator in Peru. However no further information was provided of what processes, such as pre-placement quality assurance mechanisms, are in place that allows the education provider to determine that overseas practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience. For this reason the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate how the education provider ensures that overseas practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.

5.8 Practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Condition: The education provider must submit evidence which shows how they ensure that overseas practice placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted that students had the opportunity to take up placements overseas in Peru and Uganda. From the documentation the visitors were unable to determine how the education provider ensures overseas practice educators undertake appropriate initial and refresher practice placement educator training, including preparation to deliver both formative and summative assessment to ensure consistency across all programme placements. The visitors were unable to discuss this with the programme team due to time constraints at the visit. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how the education provider ensures that practice educators based overseas undertake appropriate practice placement educator training and regular refresher training.

5.9 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of how they ensure overseas practice placement educators are appropriately registered or how other arrangements are agreed if not..

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted that students had the opportunity to take up placements overseas in Peru and Uganda. From documentation provided and discussion at the visit, the visitors were unable to determine, how the education provider ensures overseas practice educators are appropriately registered or agrees other arrangements if they are not. The visitors were concerned that if registration status was not reviewed, other arrangements could not be agreed to ensure practice educators have the experience, qualifications and training relevant to the practice placement. Therefore the visitors require further evidence of how the education

provider ensures that the practice educators at overseas placements are HCPC registered.

5.10 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider.

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence of the formal procedures in place for regular and effective communication with overseas practice placement providers.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted that students had the opportunity to take up placements overseas in Peru and Uganda. However, the documentation did not detail how the education provider ensures regular and effective collaboration with overseas placements. The programme team discussed the communication they undertake with both overseas placements, such as sending placement materials in advance and contacting placements once a month as well as mid-placement visit or phone call via Skype. However, the visitors could not determine a clear system of communication which considers the specific and differing requirements of each placement setting, and were therefore unclear on the partnership and ongoing relationship with overseas placement providers. Therefore the visitors require further information about the systems in place, such as documentary evidence, to ensure that there is regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the overseas practice placement educators.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence to demonstrate the assessment strategy will ensure students are able to meet the standards of proficiency for social workers in England.

Reason: The visitors were provided with a SOPs mapping document prior to the visit and were satisfied that, from this document, the SOPs were mapped suitably. However, In conversation with students and practice educators it was highlighted that not all parties were aware of the SOPs and the requirements to meet them upon completion of the programme. The visitors consider that a clear understanding of the SOPs and their purpose is vital to safe and effective practice. The visitors therefore require the education provider to provide further evidence to demonstrate how the SOPs are communicated effectively to students and practice educators.

6.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence to clarify the assessment process used for students in overseas placements.

Reason: The visitors were satisfied with the current processes used to assess students against the learning outcomes whilst on placement in the UK. The documentation provided did not mention any differences between the assessment of students if they undertook either a UK or an overseas placement. However, in a meeting with the

programme team it was suggested that students in overseas placements would be assessed differently to those undertaking placements in the UK. Due to the contrast in information the visitors were unclear if students in overseas placement would or would not be assessed differently to those in placements within the UK. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to clarify if alternative assessments are used in overseas placement settings, and if so, how these assessments ensure that those who successfully complete the programme achieve the SOPs for social workers in England.

6.5 The measurement of student performance must be objective and ensure fitness to practise.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of how the assessment measures of overseas placements ensure fitness to practice

Reason: Prior to the visit the visitors received documentation outlining the assessment methods and how these ensure fitness to practice. The visitors were satisfied with the documentation provided however could not locate any information in relation to assessment of overseas placements. In the meeting with the programme team it was mentioned that the placements in Peru and Uganda use a different process and there was a placement report to evidence this. However the visitors were not provided with evidence of this different process or the placement report. The visitors therefore require further evidence of the process used to ensure that the assessment methods used in overseas placements ensure fitness to practise.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the programme team review the current process for room bookings and allocations.

Reason: The visitors were shown a presentation which highlighted the current resources available to students including some of the teaching rooms. The visitors heard the students felt their learning was sometimes restricted due to the size of rooms allocated to lectures and seminars. They noted that, during group activities, the students could find it difficult to hear their peers when in a large room. The visitors heard that there was also potential for combining the BA (Hons) in Social Work and MA in Social Work lectures and seminars. To limit the room size problem, the visitors recommend the education provider review the current room allocation system with particular regard to the potential expansion of student numbers in lectures.

5.5 The placement providers must have equality and diversity policies in relation to students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend that the education provider ensures that students are aware of the implications if they choose not to disclose learning needs before starting the programme.

Reason: Prior to the visit the visitors were provided with documentation which evidenced the current equality and diversity policies in place for practice educators. The visitors were satisfied that the content of the policy ensured equality and diversity within placements. However, the practice educators noted that some students' needs had not been adequately assessed prior to their placement, thus restricting them from having any appropriate adjustments made. Students were therefore undergoing assessments for their learning needs alongside their placement. To prevent students experiencing a similar barrier the visitors recommend that the education provider encourages potential applicants to declare any learning needs before starting the programme. And, where relevant, undertake appropriate assessments.

Beverley Blythe
Anthony Power
Aidan Worsley