

Council, 4 December 2012

Consultation on criteria for approving Approved Mental Health Professional Programmes in England

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

The General Social Care Council (GSCC) previously had a statutory responsibility to approve Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) education programmes in England, as part of their role in regulating social workers in England.

We have taken on responsibility for approving these programmes in England, as we have also taken on responsibility for regulating social workers. We have powers to set criteria for approving AMHP programmes, to publish those criteria and to communicate the criteria to education providers. Our powers and responsibility to approve AMHP programmes only extends to England.

The attached consultation paper sets out our draft criteria for approving AMHP programmes. We have developed the criteria drawing on our standards and GSCC documents. We also brought together stakeholders within the AMHP field to help us to draft the criteria.

This paper was discussed by the Education and Training Committee at its meeting on 15 November. A number of changes have been made to the consultation document following that meeting and after legal scrutiny, including:

- minor changes to some of the language used;
- adding a paragraph about the use of language within the criteria; and
- explaining what we mean by the term 'service user'.

We plan to consult on the criteria between January and April 2013. We currently expect to publish the criteria in autumn 2013.

Decision

The Council is invited to:

- discuss the attached paper;
- agree that a consultation should be held on criteria for AMHP programmes; and
- approve the attached document (subject to minor editing amendments, any changes arising from the Council's discussion and legal scrutiny).

Background information

The Council last considered a paper on AMHP programmes at its meeting on 5 July 2012: <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10003B1Fenc17-ApprovedMentalHealthProfessionalcriteria.pdf>

Resource implications

The resource implications include writing up the outcomes of the consultation and preparing the criteria for publication. These resource implications are covered within the departmental workplan for 2012/2013 and will be included within the workplan for 2013/2104.

Financial implications

The financial implications include the cost of mailing consultation documents to relevant stakeholders. The Executive will use a survey tool to contact stakeholders, rather than a postal mailing, to increase involvement in the consultation. The financial implications of this consultation are included within the department's budget for 2012/2013.

Appendices

None

Date of paper

22 November 2012

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1. Introduction

1.1 We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This consultation seeks the views of stakeholders on draft criteria for approving Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) education programmes in England.

About this consultation

1.2 The General Social Care Council (GSCC) previously had a statutory responsibility to approve AMHP education programmes in England. The GSCC also regulated social workers in England.

1.3 We have taken on responsibility for approving these programmes in England and the regulation of social workers in England has transferred from the GSCC to ourselves.¹ We have powers to set criteria for approving AMHP programmes, to publish those criteria and to communicate the criteria to education providers.

1.4 We will use the criteria to approve AMHP programmes, to check that education providers manage their education programmes appropriately and to make sure that professionals completing the programmes meet the necessary competencies.

1.5 This consultation will run from **date** to **date**.

1.6 This consultation will be of particular interest to education providers delivering AMHP training, professional bodies, employers, service users and other stakeholders.

1.7 You can download copies of this consultation document from our website here: www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations

1.8 You can find out how to respond to this consultation in paragraphs **1.15 – 1.17**.

About the Health and Care Professions Council

1.9 We are a regulator and we were set up to protect the public. To do this, we keep a register of health and care professionals who meet our standards for their professional skills and behaviour. Individuals on our Register are called 'registrants'.

1.10 We currently regulate 16 professions:

- Arts therapists
- Biomedical scientists
- Chiropodists / podiatrists
- Clinical scientists
- Dietitians
- Hearing aid dispensers

¹ Social workers in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales continue to be regulated by the relevant Care Council and are not directly affected by these proposals.

- Occupational therapists
- Operating department practitioners
- Orthoptists
- Paramedics
- Physiotherapists
- Practitioner psychologists
- Prosthetists / orthotists
- Radiographers
- Social workers in England
- Speech and language therapists

1.11 Before 1 August 2012, we were known as the Health Professions Council.

About this document

1.12 This document is divided into four sections.

- **Section one** introduces the paper.
- **Section two** provides background to the paper, including information about AMHP practice and programme approval.
- **Section three** explains our approach to setting the criteria and how we will use the criteria.
- **Section four** sets out our proposed criteria for approving AMHP programmes.

Consultation questions

1.13 We would welcome your response to our consultation. We have listed some questions below to help you. We would welcome your comments on any related issue and the questions are not exhaustive. Please provide reasons alongside your answers where possible.

1.14 We have incorporated the questions alongside our proposals in section four of this document. However, we have also listed the questions below.

1. Do you think the criteria are set at the level necessary for safe and effective AMHP practice?
2. Do you think any additional criteria are necessary?
3. Should we add a criterion requiring service user involvement in the AMHP programmes?
4. Do you think there are any criteria which should be reworded or removed?
5. Do you have any comments about the language used in the criteria?
6. Do you have any other comments on the criteria?

How to respond to the consultation

1.15 The consultation closes on **date**.

1.16 You can respond to this consultation in the following ways:

- By completing our easy-to-use online survey: [link to be inserted]
- By emailing us at: consultation@hcpc-uk.org
- By writing to us at:

Consultation on criteria for approving AMHP programmes
Policy and Standards Department
The Health and Care Professions Council
Park House
184 Kennington Park Road
London
SE11 4BU

Fax: +44(0)20 7820 9684

1.17 Please note that we do not normally accept responses by telephone or in person. We normally ask that consultation responses are made in writing to ensure that we can accurately record what the respondent would like to say. However, if you are unable to respond in writing please contact us on +44 (0)20 7840 9815 to discuss any reasonable adjustments which would help you to respond.

Please contact us to request a copy of this document in an alternative format, or in Welsh.

1.18 Once the consultation period is completed, we will analyse the responses we have received. We will then publish a document detailing the comments received and explaining the decisions we have taken as a result. This will be available on our website.

1.19 If you would prefer we do not make your response public, please indicate this when you respond.

1.20 We look forward to receiving your comments.

2. Background

About AMHPs

- 2.1 AMHPs exercise functions under the Mental Health Act 1983. Those functions relate to decisions made about individuals with mental health problems, including the decision to apply for compulsory admission to hospital.
- 2.2 Social workers, mental health and learning disabilities nurses, occupational therapists and practitioner psychologists, registered with their respective regulator, can train to become AMHPs.
- 2.3 Successful completion of an approved programme only makes a person eligible for appointment as an AMHP. Only those who have been appointed as an AMHP by a Local Services Authority (LSSA) can perform the functions of an AMHP.
- 2.4 An LSSA may only approve someone to act as an AMHP if the person:
- meets one of the ‘professional requirements’ – in other words, is registered in one of the professions mentioned above in paragraph 2.2;
 - meets the key competencies set out in Schedule 2 to the Mental Health (Approved Mental Health Professionals)(Approval)(England) Regulations 2008; and
 - has previously been approved as an AMHP or has completed an AMHP training programme in the last 5 years.

Our powers

- 2.5 We have taken on responsibility for approving these programmes in England. We have powers to set criteria for approving AMHP programmes, to publish those criteria and to communicate the criteria to education providers.
- 2.6 The criteria we publish will be stand alone and we will publish them in a separate document.

About the approval of AMHP programmes

- 2.7 One of our roles as a regulator is to approve programmes delivering education and training for the professions we regulate. Usually we only approve pre-registration education and training, in other words, the education and training an individual must complete before they may be registered and can start practising in their profession. However, we also have separate powers to approve AMHP training in England.
- 2.8 The approval process involves an approval visit and initial decision about whether a programme meets our standards.² With AMHP programmes, we will be deciding whether the programme meets the criteria we have set.

² For most programmes, these are the standards of education and training. There is more information about these in paragraph 3.5 – 3.6.

- 2.9 Two visitors, at least one of which is from the profession with which the programme is concerned, conduct the visit. When we visit AMHP programmes at least one of the two visitors will be from one of the professions which may train to be an AMHP (set out in paragraph 2.2 above) and who has current or past experience of working as an AMHP or Approved Social Worker (the title used before AMHP roles were created).³
- 2.10 A programme might be recommended for approval, subject to meeting certain conditions against the criteria. We normally approve a programme on an open-ended basis, dependent on satisfactory monitoring. This means that we do not have a cyclical or periodic schedule of approval visits.
- 2.11 There are two monitoring processes – annual monitoring and major change. Both of these processes are paper-based but may trigger a new approval visit. The annual monitoring process is a retrospective process where we look back at the programme and decide whether it continues to meet the criteria. The major change process considers significant changes to a programme and their effect in relation to our criteria. If information from either process indicates that further investigation is necessary we may decide to visit a programme before deciding whether the criteria continue to be met.

Current arrangements

- 2.12 The GSCC approved all AMHP programmes again before the GSCC closed, to make sure that the programmes met the GSCC's requirements. Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, programmes which the GSCC approved before the transfer of the regulation of social workers in England on 1 August 2012, are treated as transitionally HCPC approved until we visit the programme ourselves. We expect to visit AMHP programmes in the 2013 – 2014 and 2014 – 2015 academic years.
- 2.13 We expect to visit AMHP programmes in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 academic years. We have put in place some interim criteria based on our standards of education and training and the relevant GSCC criteria. We will use these interim criteria to manage any exceptional circumstances (such as a new programme approval or investigating complaints about existing programmes) which arise whilst we are developing our own standalone criteria.⁴

³ This is a summary of our requirements for visitors approving these programmes and there is more information available here: <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10003C4B11-visitorcriteria-AMHPs.pdf>

⁴ Please see <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/education/socialworkers/amhp/>

3. Developing the criteria

About the criteria

- 3.1 We will use the criteria to approve and then monitor AMHP programmes. The criteria should therefore set clear expectations of the processes and systems that education providers delivering AMHP training should have in place to manage the programme.
- 3.2 The criteria should also set out our expectations of AMHP professionals, drawing on the competencies set out in Schedule 2. Education providers must ensure that professionals who complete the AMHP training are able to meet these competencies.

Drafting the criteria

- 3.3 When we drafted the criteria we looked at the following documents:
- the GSCC's specific requirements for AMHP education programmes;⁵
 - the core mental health specialist requirements and standards set out in the requirements for AMHP education programmes;⁶
 - the key competencies set out in Schedule 2 Requirements; and
 - our standards of education and training.
- 3.4 We also looked at the GSCC's report of their learning from their inspection of AMHP courses in England.⁷
- 3.5 We use our standards of education and training to approve pre-registration programmes which lead to eligibility to apply for registration and to start practising. The standards are generic (in that they apply to all the professions we regulate) and set out clear expectations of the processes an education provider should have in place to ensure that students who complete the programme are able to practise safely and effectively. They cover areas such as admissions, student assessment and practice placements.
- 3.6 The standards of education and training offer a useful framework for approving education programmes. The standards are written flexibly, to allow education

⁵ GSCC 'Specialist standards and requirements for post qualifying social work education and training – Social work in mental health services', section three
www.gsc.org.uk/cmsFiles/Education%20and%20Training/PQ%20documents/Social%20work%20in%20mental%20health%20services%20revised%202010.pdf

⁶ GSCC 'Specialist standards and requirements for post qualifying social work education and training', section two

⁷ GSCC 'Targeted inspections of Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP) courses in England (2001-12)

www.gsc.org.uk/cmsFiles/News%20items/GSCC_targeted_inspections_of_AMHP_courses_research_report.pdf

providers to meet them in different ways, whilst still ensuring that education providers have the appropriate systems and processes in place. We have drawn on the standards of education and training to help us to develop criteria for education providers delivering AMHP training (section one of the criteria).

- 3.7 We also publish guidance on our standards of education and training. The guidance gives more information about how we will assess and monitor programmes against our standards. The guidance is available on our website here: www.hpc-uk.org/education/downloads/
- 3.8 We used the GSCC's requirements and the key competencies set out in the Schedule 2 Requirements to draft section two of the draft criteria. We have focussed on the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to practise as an AMHP.
- 3.9 We use phrases such as 'be able to' in the criteria. This ensures that the criteria can be met by professionals completing the AMHP training and that the criteria are relevant and applicable to AMHPs once they start practising in that role.

Stakeholder involvement

- 3.10 We also held a stakeholder event to help us to draft the standards.
- 3.11 We brought together representatives from professional bodies representing the different professions that can train to become AMHPs, employers and education providers to give us their views. We also asked some service users and carers to attend the meeting.
- 3.12 We asked stakeholders at the event:
- what their expectations of safe and effective AMHPs and AMHP training were;
 - whether the criteria were set at the necessary level for safe and effective AMHP practice; and
 - whether the criteria were written in clear language and with sufficient detail.
- 3.13 We are very grateful to those who attended the stakeholder event for their involvement, as their feedback was invaluable in helping us to develop the criteria.

Service user involvement in education

- 3.14 We have recently consulted on proposals to add a standard to our standards of education and training to require the involvement of service users in approved programmes.⁸ At the time of this consultation, we were considering the responses to that consultation on changing our standards of education and training.

⁸ Consultation on service user involvement in education and training programmes approved by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) www.hpc-uk.org/aboutus/consultations/index.asp?id=150

- 3.15 When we say service users, we mean those who are affected by the services that our registrants provide. We use service users to cover a wide range of people including those who receive services, carers, family members, colleagues and others as appropriate, depending upon the environment in which a registrant works.
- 3.16 We recognise that the GSCC required service user and carer involvement in all aspects of AMHP training. The GSCC explored this issue as part of their recent inspections of all AMHP programmes and published their findings in their learning report on approving AMHP programmes (see paragraph 3.4).
- 3.17 The GSCC identified in their report that most, but not all, AMHP programmes met the requirement to involve service users and carers when the GSCC visited the AMHP programmes.
- 3.18 We recognise the value that service users can bring to delivering effective education programmes. We are proposing that if a standard requiring service user involvement is added to our standards of education and training, a criterion in similar terms should also be included in the criteria for approving AMHP programmes. We have included a draft criterion at 2.16 to reflect this and have also added a specific consultation question on this issue.

4. Criteria for approving AMHP programmes

- 4.1 The criteria are set out on the next few pages for your comments.
- 4.2 We have listed the specific consultation questions below. However, the questions are not exhaustive and we would welcome your comments on any issue linked to the criteria.
1. Do you think the criteria are set at the level necessary for safe and effective AMHP practice?
 2. Do you think any additional criteria are necessary?
 3. Should we add a criterion requiring service user involvement in the AMHP programmes?
 4. Do you think there are any criteria which should be reworded or removed?
 5. Do you have any comments about the language used in the criteria?
 6. Do you have any other comments on the criteria?

Draft criteria for approving Approved Mental Health Professional Programmes

Section 1: Education providers

This section sets out criteria around how an education provider must design and deliver an AMHP programme.

1. Programme admissions

No	Criterion
1.1	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 an programme
1.2	The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• evidence of a good command of reading, writing and spoken English• evidence of appropriate professional registration• appropriate academic entry requirements• compliance with any health requirements• appropriate accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms
1.3	The admissions procedures must ensure that the education provider has equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and students, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored

2. Programme management and resources

2.1	The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan
2.2	The programme must be effectively managed
2.3	The programme must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place
2.4	There must be a named person who has overall professional responsibility for the programme who must be appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be on the relevant part of an appropriate professional register
2.5	There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme
2.6	Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge
2.7	A programme for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development

2.8	The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used
2.9	The resources to support student learning in all settings must effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme
2.10	The learning resources, including IT facilities, must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff
2.11	There must be adequate and accessible facilities to support the welfare and wellbeing of students in all settings
2.12	There must be a system of academic and pastoral student support in place
2.13	There must be a student complaints process in place
2.14	Where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent
2.15	Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place
2.16	Service users must be involved in the programme ⁹

3. Curriculum

3.1	The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the criteria in section 2
3.2	The programme must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance
3.3	Integration of theory and practice must be central to the curriculum
3.4	The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice
3.5	The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of the HCPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics and/or the NMC's code: standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives on their practice as an AMHP
3.6	The delivery of the programme must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking
3.7	The delivery of the programme must encourage evidence-based practice
3.8	The range of learning and teaching approaches used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum

⁹ Please see paragraphs 3.14 – 3.18 of the main document.

4. Practice placements

4.1	Practice placements must be integral to the programme
4.2	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
4.3	The practice placement settings must provide a safe and supportive environment
4.4	The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all placements
4.5	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
4.6	There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting
4.7	Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience
4.8	Practice placement educators must undertake appropriate practice placement educator training
4.9	Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed
4.10	There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider
4.11	Students, practice placement providers and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for placement which will include information about an understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
4.12	Learning, teaching and supervision must encourage safe and effective practice, independent learning and professional conduct
4.13	A range of learning and teaching methods that respect the rights and needs of service users and colleagues must be in place throughout practice placements

5. Assessment

5.1	The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the competencies set out in section 2 of the criteria
5.2	All assessments must provide a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external-reference frameworks

	can be measured
5.3	Professional aspects of practice must be integral to the assessment procedures in both the education setting and practice placement setting
5.4	Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes
5.5	The measurement of student performance must be objective and ensure safe and effective practice as an AMHP
5.6	There must be effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment
5.7	Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme
5.8	Assessment regulations must clearly specify that any requirements for an aegrotat award which may be made will not lead to eligibility to be approved as an AMHP
5.9	Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for a procedure for the right of appeal for students
5.10	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 an appropriate professional register

Section 2: Approved Mental Health Professionals

Education providers must make sure that professionals who complete their AMHP training can meet the criteria set out below.

1. Autonomous practice

1.1	Be able to practise as an autonomous professional, exercising appropriate use of independence, authority and autonomy
1.2	Be able to recognise, assess and manage the risks linked to the AMHP role
1.3	Be able to manage anxiety, risk and conflict

2. Informed decision making

2.1	Be able to evaluate critically local and national policy to inform AMHP practice
2.2	Be able to draw on a range of research relevant to evidence-based AMHP practice
2.3	Be able to gather, analyse and share information appropriately

3. Equality and Diversity

3.1	Be able to use AMHP practice to identify, challenge and redress discrimination and inequality
3.2	Understand and respect a service users' qualities, abilities and diverse background
3.3	Be able to promote the rights, dignity and self-determination of service users consistent with their own needs and wishes to enable them to contribute to the decisions made affecting their quality of life and liberty
3.4	Be able to demonstrate sensitivity to a service user's needs for personal respect, confidentiality, choice, dignity and privacy

4. Communication

4.1	Be able to communicate effectively with service users, families, carers and colleagues when undertaking the AMHP role
4.2	Be able to communicate advice, instruction, information and professional opinion, including presenting a case at a hearing
4.3	Be able to balance and manage the competing requirements of confidentiality and effective information sharing to the benefit of the service users, families, carers and colleagues

5. Collaborative working

5.1	Be able to work with service users, families, carers and colleagues to evaluate the outcomes of interventions and identify any unmet needs
5.2	Be able to build and sustain effective professional relationships with service users, families and carers when undertaking the AMHP role
5.3	Be able to work as an AMHP in partnership with others, including inter-agency and inter-professional working
5.4	Understand the roles and responsibilities of other professionals involved in statutory mental health work
5.5	Be able to use networks and community groups to influence collaborative working with service users, agencies and advocates
5.6	Be able to work within local, regional and national resources for the support of people experiencing mental distress, their families and carers

6. Assessment and intervention

6.1	Be able to assess the suitability of and contribute to planning and implementing options for care of the service user
6.2	Be able to plan, negotiate and manage compulsory admission to hospital or arrangements for supervised community treatment
6.3	Be able to manage and co-ordinate effectively the relevant legal and practical processes, including the involvement of colleagues , service users, families, carers and colleagues
6.4	Be able to complete statutory documentation and written records in accordance with applicable legislation, protocols and guidelines
6.5	Be able to identify outcomes and make decisions that reflect the service user's needs

7. Knowledge

7.1	Understand and be able to apply mental health legislation, related codes of practice and national and local policy and guidance applicable to the role of an AMHP
7.2	Understand and be able to apply parts of other legislation relevant to their practice as an AMHP with sensitivity to race, culture, gender, sexuality, religion and belief
7.3	Understand the needs of children and young people and their families and the impact those needs have on AMHP

	practice
7.4	Understand the legal position and accountability of AMHPs, employers and the authority the AMHP is acting for in relation to the Mental Health Act 1983
7.5	Understand the social perspective on mental health problems and mental health needs, in working with service users, families, carers and colleagues and its impact on practice
7.6	Understand the implications of mental health problems and a range of treatments and interventions for service users, their relatives and carers and the impact on AMHP practice
7.7	Understand relevant research on the origins and treatment of mental health problems across specific groups including children and young people, people with learning disability, older people and people with sensory impairment
7.8	Understand and be able to apply a range of models of mental health problems, including the contribution of social, physical and development factors
7.9	Understand child and adult protection procedures in relation to AMHP work
7.10	Understand the impact and presentation of mental distress across the lifespan
7.11	Understand complexity, including the interrelationship between drugs and substance misuse and mental health problems, and the implications for intervention
7.12	Understand the impact of physical health conditions on mental health