hcpc health & care professions council

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of West London
Programme name	BSc (Hons) in Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	19 – 20 January 2016

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 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. The education provider has until 15 March 2016 to provide observations on this report. This is independent of meeting any conditions.

The report and any observations received will be considered by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 23 March 2016. At that meeting, the Committee may accept, reject or vary the visitors' recommended outcomes, including the recommended conditions or recommendations.

If the visitors' recommended outcomes are accepted by the Committee, the visitors have made a recommendation that a further visit is required to enable appropriate scrutiny of the response to the conditions to be undertaken. The visitors consider that the nature of the proposed conditions mean that a further visit would be the most appropriate method of scrutinising any further evidence provided, enabling further discussions to be conducted with key stakeholders of the programme. If the Committee makes the decision to require a further visit, the education provider will need to redraft and resubmit documentation at an appropriate time before the date of the visit. The visit, if required, will be considered the education provider's first attempt to meet any conditions imposed. If, after the further visit, there are any conditions, the education provider will be given a further opportunity to submit documentation in response to those outstanding conditions.

Introduction

The HCPC visited the programme at the education provider to consider major changes proposed to the programme. The major change affected the following standards - programme admissions, programme management and resources, curriculum and practice placements. The programme was already approved by the HCPC and this visit assessed whether the programme continued to meet the standards of education and training (SETs) and continued to ensure that 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	Bev Blythe (Social worker in England) Michael Branicki (Social worker in England) Clare Bates (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Amal Hussein
HCPC observer	Ben Potter
Proposed student numbers	Unknown
Effective date that programme approval reconfirmed from	May 2016
Chair	Debby Price (University of West London)
Secretary	Judith Spurrett (University of West London)

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 SETs	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	☒	☐	☐
Practice placement handbook	☒	☐	☐
Student handbook	☒	☐	☐
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	☒	☐	☐
External examiners' reports from the last two years	☒	☐	☐

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)	☒	☐	☐

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for ongoing 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:

1. a number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the programme can be approved; and

2. that a further visit is required to make an appropriate assessment of the response to the conditions.

Due to the level of evidence required, the visitors also recommend that any further visit would need to focus on all of the SETs. This would include meetings with the programme team, the senior team, students, and practice placement providers and practice placement educators. The Committee is also asked to make a decision on the timescale for any further visit.

The visitors agreed that 32 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining 26 SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be approved. Conditions are set when certain standards of education and training have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the standard being met.

The visitors did not make any recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme can have its ongoing approval reconfirmed. 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

2.6 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 how the admissions procedure for this programme applies selection and entry criteria including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.

Reason: The visitors reviewed the documentation provided prior to the visit and noted a number of web links to the education provider's regulations regarding the accreditation of prior (experiential) learning. Upon reviewing the web link, the visitors were unable locate the appropriate information that demonstrates how the education provider applies selection and entry criteria including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning. The education provider tabled documentation on the second day of the visit with information about the admission process, but the visitors were unable to review this documentation due to time constraints. The visitors therefore, require evidence that the admission procedure for this programme applies selection and entry criteria including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms. In particular, 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.

2.7 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.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of how the equality and diversity policies in place are implemented and monitored.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors noted that the admission procedure is managed by the admission team, including the monitoring of the results of equality and diversity policies. The visitors also noted that the admission team gather the relevant equality and diversity monitoring data from the applicants as part of this admissions process and report to the admission tutor. In the meeting with the senior team it was articulated that any relevant equality and diversity data would feed back into the equality and diversity policy as well as any issues raised as a result of monitoring would be addressed. However, in the meeting with the programme team it was revealed that there are no defined roles and responsibilities that the programme team must adhere to and as such the remit for each member of the programme team is not always clear. It was also made clear that due to the shared responsibilities of the team there was no one who had overall responsibility for ensuring that any results from the equality and diversity monitoring fed back into the admissions process for the programme. As such the visitors did not have the evidence they required to determine how the equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and students is monitored and implemented on this programme. In order to determine if this standard is met the visitors require further evidence as to who has responsibility for implementing the policy and how the education provider ensures this implementation is undertaken.

3.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that the programme has a secure place in the education provider's business plan.

Reason: In discussions with the senior team at the visit the visitors noted a number of statements that were provided by the attendees in support of the education providers continued commitment to this programme. Further discussions covered the financial security of the programme, including the increase in the number of students, and what processes are in place to ensure security for students if the programme was deemed no longer viable. However, in discussions at the visit the visitors were not made aware of any formal commitment to ensure that the programme was being provided with additional resources in light of the increase in the number of students. In particular the visitors could not determine what process had been followed to ensure that there programme has sufficient staffing and practice resource in light of the increase in cohort size. The visitors also could not identify in the documentary evidence where this programme has a secure place in the education providers business plan. The education provider tabled documentation on the second day of the visit with information about the security of the programme, but the visitors were unable to review this documentation due to time constraints. Therefore the visitors did not have the evidence they required in order to determine if this programme has a secure place in the education provider's business plan. In order to determine if this standard is met the visitors require further evidence of the business plan that the education provider has and the processes it uses to ensure that this programme is adequately resourced and remains a secure part of the provider's provision. The visitors feel that documentary evidence will not be sufficient to determine that the programme can meet this standard and that the most appropriate way to gather this evidence will be through an additional visit to the education provider

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to clearly articulate areas of responsibility across all areas of the programme to demonstrate that the programme is effectively managed.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors were aware that there is currently a programme leader in place, that there is an acting head of the department in which this programme resides and that there was an ongoing recruitment for a head of subject and additional programme staff happening at the time of the visit. In discussion with the senior and programme teams it was clear that the current programme lead does not have overall professional responsibility for the programme. It was also confirmed that the programme leader did not have any supervisory responsibilities. The visitors were also made aware that the acting head of department has been given responsibility for some aspects of the programme such as line management and budget control. However, the visitors were not provided with evidence which clearly articulated the roles and responsibilities of the programme leader, the subject lead, the head of school or any other members of the programme team. As such they could not identify which staff members were responsible for which aspects of the programme and whether these staff were contributing to the programme in a full time or part time capacity. Therefore the visitors did not have the evidence they required to determine how the programme is being effectively managed. In order to determine if this standard is met the visitors require further evidence of the structure for the day to day

management of the programme, who is responsible who what elements of that structure, and evidence of how the structure enables effective management of the programme. The visitors feel that documentary evidence will not be sufficient to determine if the programme can meet this standard and that the most appropriate way to gather this evidence will be through an additional visit to the education provider.

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must submit further information to demonstrate how Hourly Paid Lecturers (HPL) involvement within the programme is managed effectively.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation and from discussions with the programme team and senior team, the visitors noted that Hourly Paid Lecturers (HPL) are integral to the delivery of the taught curriculum as well as fulfilling the roles of personal tutor and practice tutor for students. In discussions with the senior team, the visitors were made aware of how HPLs are selected and recruited on to the programme as well as how they will contribute to the programme. However, the visitors were unable to determine from the discussions the number of HPLs that will be used contribute to this programme or the role and responsibilities of all the HPLs involved. In addition, the visitors were unsure of the mechanisms in place to manage HPLs and who holds the responsibility to ensure that HPL are prepared and supported effectively. As such, the visitors require the education provider to submit further information to demonstrate how HPL involvement within the programme is managed effectively.

3.3 The programme must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence to demonstrate that there are regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place to ensure the quality of provision.

Reason: From the documentation provided prior to the visit, the visitors could not determine what regular monitoring and evaluation systems are in place to ensure the quality of placement learning. During the visit, the visitors discussed the monitoring and evaluation of several aspects of the programme with the programme team however, the visitors were unclear about several aspects of the feedback systems. In particular, the visitors could not determine how student and external examiner feedback will be considered by the education provider, how any changes initiated by this feedback will be implemented, and how any changes to the programme following feedback will be communicated to students and to the external examiner. In addition, the visitors noted that as evidence to meet this standard the education provider has stated in their initial submission that the visitors should "See Annual course report and revalidation documents". However, this initial submission of documentation, did not include annual course report and revalidation documents. The education provider tabled documentation on the second day of the visit with information about the monitoring and evaluation of the programme, but the visitors were unable to review this documentation due to time constraints. As such, the visitors require further evidence to clearly articulate the regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place for this programme, how these systems will be implemented and how they will be used to quality assure the delivery of this programme to ensure that this standard is met.

3.4 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 the Register.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of the named person with overall professional responsibility and details of their role within the programme.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors were aware that there is currently a programme leader in place, that there is an acting head of the department in which this programme resides and that there was an ongoing recruitment for a head of subject happening at the time of the visit. In discussion with the senior and programme teams it was clear that the current programme lead does not have overall professional responsibility for the programme. The visitors were also made aware that the acting head of department has been given responsibility for some aspects of the programme such as line management and budget control. However, the visitors were not provided with evidence which clearly articulated the roles and responsibilities of the programme leader, the subject lead, the head of school or any other members of the programme team. As such they were unable to determine who has overall professional responsibility for the programme. Therefore the visitors did not have the evidence they required in order to determine if the person who has overall professional responsibility for the programme is appropriately qualified, experienced and on the relevant part of the HCPC register. In order to determine if this standard is met the visitors require clear evidence of the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the management and delivery of the programme, alongside evidence of how the person with overall professional responsibility is appropriately qualified, experienced and, if appropriate, on the HCPC register. The visitors feel that documentary evidence will not be sufficient to determine if the programme can meet this standard and that the most appropriate way to gather this evidence will be through an additional visit to the education provider.

3.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Reason: From the documentation provided the visitors were aware that there is currently a programme leader in place, that there is an acting head of the department and that there was an ongoing recruitment for a head of subject and additional programme staff happening at the time of the visit. In discussion with the senior and programme teams it was clear that the current programme lead does not have overall professional responsibility for the programme. The visitors were also made aware that the acting head of department has been given responsibility for some aspects of the programme such as line management and budget control. However, the visitors were not provided with evidence which clearly articulated the roles and responsibilities of the programme leader, the subject lead, the head of school or any other members of the programme team. As such they could not identify which staff members were responsible for which aspects of the programme and whether these staff were contributing to the programme in a full time or part time capacity. In scrutinising the

evidence, in particular the external examiner's reports for the 2013–14 and 2014-15 academic years, the visitors noted that the external examiner had expressed concerns about the number of staff in place to deliver an effective programme. In addition, the external examiner expressed concerns about the increase in student number in relation to the number of staff currently in place. From the discussions at the visit, the visitors were unable to determine how, following the recruitment of the head of the department, there will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme. In order to determine if this standard is met the visitors require clear evidence of the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the delivery of the programme and a clear articulation of what staff are in place and available to deliver the programme effectively.

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

Condition: The education provider must provider further evidence that subject areas are being taught by staff with specialist expertise and knowledge.

Reason: The programme documentation submitted prior to the visit, the visitors were unable to determine to fully determine the range of teaching contribution or specialist areas of practice for the programme. During discussion at the visit it was highlighted recruitment for staff to the programme was ongoing and the final arrangements as to the module leaders and module contributors were still to be confirmed. However, the visitors were not provided with evidence which clearly articulated the roles and responsibilities of the programme leader, the subject lead, the head of school or any other members of the programme team. As such they could not identify which staff members were responsible for which aspects of the programme and whether these staff were contributing to the programme in a full time or part time capacity. Therefore the visitors did not have the evidence they required to be assured that subject areas will be taught by staff with the relevant specialist expertise and knowledge. The visitors therefore require details of the module leaders and how the education provider will ensure that subject areas will be taught by staff with specialist expertise and knowledge in order to determine how this standard can be met by the programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide details of the module leaders and where contributions made from hourly paid lectures will be.

Reason: From a review of the documentation, the visitors noted that a proportion of the programme is delivered by hourly paid lecturers (HPL) and not permanent members of programme staff. However, the visitors were unable to locate any information about how the education provider ensures that the HPLs have the relevant specialist expertise and knowledge to teach the required subject areas. As such, the visitors were unable to determine how the education provider ensures the quality of teaching is at the level required to deliver the programme effectively. From the meeting with the students it became clear that HPLs also act as placement tutors and support students on the programme and that HPLs can act as module leaders. However the visitors did not have sufficient evidence to be able to determine what expectations the education provider has of the HPLs involved on this programme and what limits of responsibilities the HPLs have. For this reason, the visitors require further evidence to demonstrate

how the education provider ensures that contributors to the programme have the relevant specialist expertise and knowledge to deliver their subject area. The visitors feel that documentary evidence will not be sufficient to determine if the programme can meet this standard and that the most appropriate way to gather this evidence will be through an additional visit to the education provider.

3.7   A programme for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of a programme for staff development which ensures that staff have the opportunity to develop and maintain their professional skills.

Resource: From a review of the documentation, the visitors were unable to determine whether there is a programme in place for staff development that ensures continuing professional and research development. In the meeting with the senior team it was articulated that there are polices in place that offer opportunities for further study and continuing professional development. However, in the meeting with the programme team it was revealed that there are no defined roles and responsibilities that the programme team must adhere to and as such the remit for each member of the programme team is not always clear. It was also made clear that due to the shared responsibilities of the team, staff felt unable to utilise the opportunities to keep their keep their professional skills up to date due which the visitors were told is due to issues regarding staff resourcing. As such the visitors did not have the evidence they required to determine how staff are provided with the opportunity to access programmes for staff development. The visitors therefore require further evidence of how the education provider will ensure that all staff have the opportunity to develop and maintain their professional skills. The visitors feel that documentary evidence will not be sufficient to determine if the programme can meet this standard and that the most appropriate way to gather this evidence will be through an additional visit to the education provider.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of they ensure the resources in place to support student learning in all settings are being effectively used.

Reason: From the documentation provided and the meetings at the approval visit, the visitors were made aware of the resources that are available to all students on the programme. In discussions with the students, the visitors were made aware that there has been issues around room size, with staff encountering significant issues when trying to obtain rooms of an appropriate for the number of students on the programme. The visitors heard that students have fed this back to the programme team but no action was taken to resolve the problem and the issues with crowding due to small room sizes was still continuing. In scrutinising the evidence, in particular the external examiner's reports for year 2013–14 and 2014–15, the visitors noted that the external examiner had also expressed similar concerns to those articulated by the students in regards to the resources available to this programme. The visitors, however were not provided with a response to the external examiner's concerns around resources nor did the discussions with the senior management team clarify how the concerns raised by the external examiner and students have been addressed. As such, the visitors were unable to determine how the education provider has the process and policies in place to

ensure that there are resources in place to effectively support student learning in all settings and that when issues arise they are dealt with appropriately. The visitors feel that documentary evidence will not be sufficient to determine if the programme can meet this standard and that the most appropriate way to gather this evidence will be through an additional visit to the education provider.

3.9 The resources to support student learning in all settings must effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence to show that resources in place effectively support the required learning and teaching activities for this programme and that where issues regarding resources arise they are dealt with.

Reason:
From the documentation provided and the meetings at the approval visit, the visitors were made aware of the resources that are available to all students on the programme. In discussions with the students, the visitors were made aware that there has been issues around room size, with staff encountering significant issues when trying to obtain rooms of an appropriate for the number of students on the programme. The visitors heard that students have fed this back to the programme team but no action was taken to resolve the problem and the issues with crowding due to small room sizes was still continuing. In scrutinising the evidence, in particular the external examiner's reports for year 2013–14 and 2014–15, the visitors noted that the external examiner had also expressed similar concerns to those articulated by the students in regards to the resources available to this programme. The visitors, however were not provided with a response to the external examiner's concerns around resources nor did the discussions with the senior management team clarify how the concerns raised by the external examiner and students have been addressed. As such, the visitors were unable to determine how the education provider has the process and policies in place to ensure that there are resources in place to effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme and that when issues arise they are dealt with appropriately. The visitors feel that documentary evidence will not be sufficient to determine if the programme can meet this standard and that the most appropriate way to gather this evidence will be through an additional visit to the education provider.

3.12 There must be a system of academic and pastoral student support in place.

Condition: The education provider must provide further information about the student support systems in place for the programme including how long tutorials are, how frequent they are, how personal tutors are allocated and when these allocations happen.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included information about the academic and pastoral support systems in place and the visitors noted each student was allocated a personal tutor. Discussions with students revealed the programme team was considered to be very supportive, but there was some variability in the levels of support offered to students and when allocations of personal tutors were made. Given this information the visitors were unclear how the education provider ensure that the programme team ensures a sustained, consistent level of support is provided to the students on this programme. Discussions with the programme and senior teams revealed that staff devoted much time and effort to supporting students and that an additional member of staff (starting after the visit) to manage and support the

programme including the personal tutoring system. Even with an extra member of staff, the visitors could not clearly determine how the education provider will ensure the sustainability of the pastoral support system as they were not provided with evidence of the demands placed on the programme team in delivering the programme. In particular they were unclear as to how the education provider will ensure that there is a sustainable and consistent provision of academic and pastoral support. Therefore the visitors did not have the evidence they required to determine how students will be support on this programme. To demonstrate the student support systems are sustainable and can be delivered consistently the visitors require further evidence of the systems in place to ensure that the student support systems in place will operate as required. The visitors feel that documentary evidence will not be sufficient to determine if the programme can meet this standard and that the most appropriate way to gather this evidence will be through an additional visit to the education provider.

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 programme team must provide further evidence that a robust monitoring system for student attendance is in place and that information is provided to all students and staff as to what would trigger procedures to remedy poor attendance.

Reason: The visitors were made aware from the documentation that all students are required to record their attendance both for practice and academic modules. The education provider uses the electronic Student Attendance Monitoring (SAM) system to monitor student attendance for the academic modules. However, in discussions at the visit, students highlighted several instances where the system has not reported correctly. The visitors also heard that some staff did not use the SAM system, that some used a paper register to monitor attendance, and some did not monitor attendance at lectures at all. From the documentation provided the visitors were unable to determine how the mandatory attendance requirement is communicated to students and how any mechanisms in place to record attendance are effectively used. In addition, the visitors could not identify what information is provided to students as to what will trigger the procedures to deal with instances of low attendance, in a placement or in an academic setting. In order to ensure that this standard is met, the visitors require further evidence that there is an effective mechanism for recording student attendance. They also require further evidence of what will constitute low attendance in each setting, what specific action will be taken in such cases and how this policy is communicated to students to ensure that they are aware of any possible repercussions linked to poor attendance.

3.17 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence regarding the plans for continued service user and carer involvement within the programme.

Reason: From the documentation provided, the visitors were sign posted to how service users and cares will be involved in the programme. Discussions at the visit indicted that the involvement of service users and carers were informal and based on the relationship the service user and carer has with members of the programme team. It was clear from the discussions that there are no strategic plans in place to formalise the involvement of service users and carers. In the meeting with the programme team it

was revealed that there are no defined roles and responsibilities that the programme team must adhere to and as such the remit for each member of the programme team is not always clear. It was also made clear that due to the shared responsibilities of the team there was no one who had overall responsibility for ensuring service users and carers are recruited, trained and appropriately involved in the programme. As such the visitors did not have the evidence they required to determine how the programme team had a clear rationale as to why the service users and carers involved in the programme were determined to be the most appropriate people to be involved. The visitors were also unclear as to how the team had determined the most appropriate ways to involve service users and carers in the programme. Therefore the visitors require further evidence to determine how the programme can meet this standard.

4.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency for their part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how the learning outcomes ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers in England.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included module descriptors, together with a mapping document giving information about how students who successfully complete the programme meet the SOPs. However, the SOPs mapping made very broad references, rather than specific references to the modules and did not map onto the learning outcomes. Therefore, the visitors were unclear how each of the module learning outcomes linked to each of the SOPs, to ensure that a student completing the programme can meet the SOPs for social workers in England. The visitors therefore require further documentation to clearly evidence how the learning outcomes that will ensure that students can meet the relevant SOPs on successful completion of the programme. The visitors require the education provider to submit further evidence, such as revised documentation, to clearly define the link between the learning outcomes associated with all aspects of this programme and how these outcomes will ensure that students completing the programme can meet all of the relevant SOPs for social workers in England.

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 as to how the number, range, duration and timing of placements provides opportunity for students to achieve the required learning outcomes.

Reason: From the initial documentation and information provided regarding the approval and monitoring of placements, the visitors could not determine how the education provider ensures the number, duration and range of practice placements is appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes. In scrutinising evidence, such as the placement handbook and in discussions with the programme team and the practice placement provider, the visitors learnt that the education provider, holds a database with details on the number, range and duration of placements available for students. However, it was noted in the programme team meeting that this data base was not directly managed by members of the practice learning team. Furthermore, the visitors were not provided with prior access

to this database and were not provided with any other evidence to be able to determine what range of placements are on offer to students on this programme. The visitors therefore require the education provider to clearly articulate the requirements relating to the number, timing, duration and range of practice placements that students must undertake in order to achieve the programme's learning outcomes. This should include information as to how the education provider ensures that the standards of proficiency are met through the placement experience. The visitors feel that documentary evidence will not be sufficient to determine if the programme can meet this standard and that the most appropriate way to gather this evidence will be through an additional visit to the education provider.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to clearly articulate the mechanisms which will be in place to ensure a safe and supportive environment at all placement settings.

Reason: From the initial documentation and information provided regarding the approval and monitoring of placements, the visitors could not determine how the education provider ensures that practice placement settings are a safe and supportive environment. In scrutinising evidence, such as Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) audit form and in discussions at the visit, the visitors learnt that the education provider holds a database of the different placements available to students. However, the visitors were not provided with access to this database and were not provided with any other evidence to be able to determine what range of placements are on offer to students on this programme. Discussions with the programme team indicated that there is a process in place to ensure practice placement settings are safe and support environment, but the visitors were unsure what these processes were and how they form part of the auditing and approval mechanisms that the education provider has in place to assure the quality of all placements. In order to determine how the programme continues to meet this standard the visitors require the education provider to provide evidence to clearly articulate the mechanisms which will be in place to ensure a safe and supportive environment at all placement settings.

5.4 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 of approving and monitoring all placements.

Reason: The visitors noted a number of different documents submitted by the education provider to demonstrate how the programme meets this standard. However, in considering the programme documentation and discussions held at the visit, the visitors could not find sufficient evidence of any overarching policies, systems and procedures in place regarding the approval and monitoring of placements. When this was discussed with the programme team, the visitors remained unclear as to how the education provider would maintain overall responsibility for the approval and monitoring of practice placements. Other than the Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) audit form the visitors could not determine the criteria used by the programme team to assess a placement and what the overall process would be to approve it, as well as what activities would feed into any quality monitoring of placements. The visitors

therefore require further evidence of the overarching policies, systems and procedures in place regarding the approval and monitoring of placements, and how they are put into practice to ensure this standard is met. In particular, the visitors require further evidence of the criteria used to approve placement providers and settings, the overall process for the approval and on-going monitoring of placements, and how information gathered from placement providers at approval, or during a placement experience is considered and acted upon.

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.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence of how they ensure equality and diversity policies are in place within practice placements.

Reason: The documentation submitted prior to the visit included Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) audit form as well as a placement learning agreement template. The visitors reviewed this information but were unable to determine from this how the education provider ensures that practice placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place in relation to students. Discussions with the programme team indicated that there is a process in place to ensure practice placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place, but the visitors were unsure what these processes were and how this process formed part of the auditing and approving of all placements. In order to determine how the programme continues to meet this standard the visitors require the education provider to provide evidence to demonstrate how they ensure practice placement providers have equality and diversity policies in place.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how they ensure all placement settings have an adequate number of appropriately qualified, experienced and, where required, registered staff to supervise students from this programme.

Reason: From the initial documentation and information provided regarding the approval and monitoring of placements, the visitors could not determine how the education provider ensures that practice placements have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff. In scrutinising evidence, such as the Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) audit form and in discussions with the programme team and the practice placement provider, the visitors learnt that the education provider, holds a database of staff that can act as placement educators. However, the visitors were not provided with prior access to this database and were not provided with any other evidence to be able to determine how the education provider ensures all placement settings have an adequate number of appropriately qualified, experienced and, where required, registered staff. The visitors were also told that via the 'Pan London meeting', work is on-going to ensure that there will consistently be sufficient qualified and experience staff at practice placement settings. Due to the evidence provided and the development of the Pan London partnership group the visitors were unclear how much responsibility the education provider has for ensuring that the placement settings have an adequate number of appropriately qualified, experienced and, where required, registered staff in place. The visitors were therefore

require further evidence as to how the education provider ensures that practice placements settings have an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to supervise students from this programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence to demonstrate how they ensure all practice placement educators have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to supervise students from this programme.

Reason: From the initial documentation and information provided regarding the approval and monitoring of placements, the visitors could not determine how the education provider ensures that practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to supervise students from this programme. In scrutinising evidence, such as the Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) audit form and in discussions at the visit, the visitors learnt that the education provider holds a database of staff that can act as placement educators. However, the visitors were not provide with access to this database and were not provided with any other evidence to be able to determine how the education provider ensures that practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to supervise students from this programme. From the discussions with the programme team, the visitors unclear as to how the programme team checks that practice placement educators have relevant knowledge, skills and experience. The visitors therefore had insufficient evidence to make a judgment about whether this standard is met. Practice placement educators should have relevant knowledge, skills and experience to ensure that all students on placement have as consistent experience as practicably possible when trying to achieve the learning outcomes. Subsequently the visitors require evidence of what the programme team considers relevant knowledge, skills and experience and how the team will check that educators on practice placements meet these standards.

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

Condition: The education provider must demonstrate how they ensure practice placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training in order to appropriately supervise students from this programme.

Reason: From the initial documentation and information provided regarding the approval and monitoring of placements, such as the Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) audit form and discussions at the visit, the visitors learnt that the education provider holds a database of staff that can act as placement educators. However, the visitors were not provided with prior access to this database and were not provided with any substantive evidence to be able to determine how the education provider ensures practice placement educators undertake appropriate practice placement educator training. The visitors were also unclear as to what the programme team considers appropriate practice placement educator training. Practice placement educators should have relevant training to ensure that all students on placement have as consistent experience as practicably possible when trying to achieve the learning outcomes. The visitors therefore require evidence of what the programme team considers appropriate practice placement educator training and how the monitoring mechanisms in place to check that educators on practice placements meet this

requirement. This is to ensure that the practice placement educators are appropriately trained and that the programme continues to meet this standard. The visitors feel that documentary evidence will not be sufficient to determine if the programme can meet this standard and that the most appropriate way to gather this evidence will be through an additional visit to the education provider.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence of their processes to ensure placement educators are appropriately registered.

Reason: From the initial documentation and information provided regarding the approval and monitoring of placements, such as the Quality Assurance of Practice Learning (QAPL) audit form and in discussions at the visit, the visitors learnt that the education provider, holds a database of staff that can act as placement educators. However, the visitors were not provide with access to this database and were not provided with any other evidence to be able to determine how the education provider ensures that practice educators are appropriately registered unless other arrangements are agreed. As such they are unclear as to how the programme team checks that practice placement educators are appropriately registered and able to supervise students from this programme. Practice placement educators should be appropriately registered to ensure that all students on placement have as consistent experience as practicably possible when trying to achieve the learning outcomes. The visitors therefore require evidence of what the programme team considers an appropriately registered member of staff and how the monitoring mechanisms in place to check that this is the case at all practice placement settings. The visitors feel that documentary evidence will not be sufficient to determine if the programme can meet this standard and that the most appropriate way to gather this evidence will be through an additional visit to the education provider.

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

Condition: From the documentation provided and from discussions at the visit, the visitors were made aware that some service level agreements with practice providers were less form than others. Where the agreements were less formal the visitors were made aware that the success of the placement could rely on the good relationships that the programme team had built with the placements providers. In was also highlighted in the discussion with the placement providers that no regular, formal, meetings take place between the education provider and practice placement providers. Furthermore, practice placement providers expressed a view that it would be useful to have a system in place whereby providers can comment their experience of supervising students on placements. The visitors discussed this with the programme team and it was indicted that there is an intention is to develop a formalised system to maintain regular and effective collaboration with placement providers, over and above the informal contact that happens currently on a regular basis. However, due to the nature of the informal arrangements that the programme team have with some placement providers the visitors did not have sufficient evidence to determine how the education provider ensures that there is regular and effective collaboration with between the programme team and the practice placement providers. Therefore the visitors were unable to determine how the programme continues to meet this standard. The visitors require

further evidence to show how the programme team ensure that there is regular and effective collaboration between them and practice placement, in particular how this collaboration can be formalised to ensure that it happens on a regular basis.

5.11 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 provide further information as to how the education provider ensures placement educators and students are fully prepared for placements.

Reason: The visitors could not determine from the documentary evidence provided how the programme team ensures that students, practice placement providers and educators are fully prepared for placement. In particular they could not identify how placement providers were made aware of what individual students' ability and expected scope of practice would be before they were allocated to a placement setting. As such they could not identify how the programme team manages the expectations of both the students and practice placement educators to ensure that students gain the experience they require at each placement setting. At the programme team meeting, the visitors were made aware that all students have a preparation meeting prior to going to the placement setting. However, they were made aware in discussions with the students that there was a varied experience of the preparation placement meeting which impacted on student's feelings of preparedness. It was reported that the preparation for placement meeting took place the year before the commencement of the placement. The visitors therefore require further evidence about the mechanisms in place, including the expected outcomes from a preparation meeting, which demonstrate how the education provider ensures students are fully prepared for placement. In particular this should demonstrate how practice educators are made aware of students' experience and expected scope of practice for each placement and how the expectation of both the students and practice placement educators at placement are managed to ensure that students get the experience they require to meet the relevant learning outcomes. The visitors feel that documentary evidence will not be sufficient to determine if the programme can meet this standard and that the most appropriate way to gather this evidence will be through an additional visit to the education provider.

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 demonstrate how the assessments of learning outcomes ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for social workers in England.

Reason: The documentation provided prior to the visit included module descriptors, together with a mapping document giving information about how the assessment procedures for the programme will ensure that students who successfully complete the programme meet the SOPs. However, the SOPs mapping made broad references, rather than specific references to the modules and did not map directly onto the learning outcomes. Therefore, the visitors were unclear how each of the assessment of modules and the associated learning outcomes were linked to the achievement of each of the SOPs, to ensure that a student completing the programme has demonstrated that they have met the SOPs for social workers in England. As such the visitors require further documentation to clearly evidence how the assessment of the learning outcomes ensures that students meet the meet the SOPs for social workers in England on successful completion of the programme. Further evidence such as revised documentation should clearly define the link between the assessment of students, at each stage of this programme, and how the successful completion of these assessments will ensure that students completing the programme have demonstrated that they have meet all of the relevant SOPs.

Clare Bates
Michael Branicki
Bev Blythe

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of York and Think Ahead
Validating body / Awarding body	University of York
Programme name	Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Practice (Think Ahead)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	26 – 27 January 2016

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 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. The education provider has until 21 March 2016 to provide observations on this report. This is independent of meeting any conditions. The report and any observations received will be considered by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 23 March 2016. At this meeting, the Committee will accept, reject or vary the visitors' recommended outcome. If necessary, the Committee may decide to vary the conditions.

The education provider is due to redraft and resubmit documentary evidence in response to the conditions outlined in this report by 18 April 2016 The visitors will consider this response and make a separate recommendation to the Committee on the approval of the programme. It is anticipated that this recommendation will be made to the Committee on 20 May 2016.

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) Gary Hickman (Social worker in England) Kathleen Taylor (Lay visitor)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Hollie Latham
HCPC observer	Jamie Hunt
Proposed student numbers	100 per cohort, 1 cohort per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	18 July 2016
Chair	Lars Waldorf (University of York)
Secretary	Samantha McDermott (University of York)

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 SETs	☒	☐	☐
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	☒	☐	☐
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 the last two years 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	☒	☐	☐
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 BA (Hons) in Social Work and MA in Social Work at the University of York 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 50 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining eight 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 recommendation.

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

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence which demonstrates that there are effective systems in place to manage the staffing structure and numbers.

Reason: From the documentation and in meetings at the visit the visitors learnt that the Think Ahead staffing structure is currently intended to work with 25 Consultant Social Workers (CSW), each supervising four students. The CSWs report into three Practice Specialists, with each Practice Specialist supervising eight CSWs.

In addition to the above structure the education provider intends to hire a number of Reserve CSWs to cover instances where CSWs are unable to deliver their role long term due to illness or other such instances of absence. Whilst the visitors were satisfied that there is a clear structure in place for staff responsibilities, they were unable to identify how the staffing structure and numbers would be effectively managed to ensure each staff member has the time and resources to successfully deliver their role and responsibilities. In particular the visitors noted that each practice specialist has a number of fundamental responsibilities, some of which include:
- ensuring partnerships are working well;
- ensuring each student has access to the resources they need;
- ensuring parity in placement caseloads for students;
- ensuring a range of placement experience;
- providing academic and pastoral support; and
- mentoring eight CSWs.

Based on the outlined structure and responsibilities the visitors were not satisfied that Practice Specialists and CSWs will have the time and support they need to deliver their responsibilities within the current system. Consequently, the visitors cannot see that the current staffing system in place is effective to manage the programme.

In addition to this the visitors noted that the Reserve CSWs will be expected to 'step in' where CSWs are unable to deliver their role. The programme team explained the support mechanisms in place for this role including attendance at training sessions, however, the visitors were unable to see how a Reserve CSW would be able to step in and take responsibility for a CSWs workload effectively. In particular, the visitors were unable to see how the workload of Practice Specialists would allow sufficient time to support the transition of a Reserve CSW into a CSW role without impact to their responsibilities. Consequently, the visitors are unable to see that there are effective staffing systems in place to manage the programme.

The visitors therefore require further evidence which demonstrates that there are effective staffing systems in place to manage the programme. Specifically, how the staffing structure is effectively managed to ensure that the people involved have the support they need to work within the systems in place.

3.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence which demonstrates how the Practice Specialist and Consultant Social Worker (CSW) roles are appropriately resourced to support effective delivery of the programme.

Reason: From documentation and in meetings at the visit the visitors were able to gain an understanding of the current staffing structure and numbers from Think Ahead. However, the visitors were unable to see how the current staff numbers within this structure are suitable to deliver an effective programme. Specifically the visitors noted that each practice specialist has a number of fundamental responsibilities, some of which include:
- ensuring partnerships are working well;
- ensuring each student has access to the resources they need;
- ensuring parity in placement caseloads for students;
- ensuring a range of placement experience;
- providing academic and pastoral support; and
- mentoring eight CSWs.

Due to the practical requirements of this programme the visitors consider that the current number of staff in this role is not appropriate to achieve the workload as outlined within the programme documentation and by the senior team. In particular, the number of CSWs and consequently students that each Practice Specialist will be responsible for. The visitors note that from discussions at the visit it became clear that the Practice Specialist is a pivotal role in ensuring the programme is effectively delivered. The visitors wish to stress that with such a significant responsibility on this particular role it is imperative that they are able to clearly see that this role is well supported and that the role criteria is achievable. The visitors are unable to see that these areas are achievable with the current staffing numbers. The visitors therefore require further evidence which demonstrates that there are an appropriate number of staff in place to deliver an effective programme. Specifically, how the role of the Practice Specialist will be appropriately resourced and supported to achieve the role criteria.

3.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence which demonstrates how the Practice Specialist role is appropriately resourced to effectively support and mange CSW's and Reserves CSWs.

Reason: From documentation and in meetings at the visit the visitors were able to gain an understanding of the current staffing structure and numbers from Think Ahead. However, the visitors were unable to see how the current staff numbers within this structure are suitable to deliver an effective programme. Specifically, the visitors noted that the Reserve CSWs will be expected to 'step in' where CSWs are unable to deliver their role. The programme team explained the support mechanisms in place for this role including attendance at training sessions, however, the visitors were still unable to see how a Reserve CSW would be able to step in and take responsibility for a CSWs workload effectively. In particular, the visitors were unable to see how the workload of Practice Specialists would allow sufficient time to support the transition of a Reserve CSW into a CSW role without impact to their responsibilities. Consequently, the visitors

are unable to see that are suitable arrangements in place to deal with situations such as staff absences. The visitors therefore require further evidence which demonstrates that there are an appropriate number of staff in place to deliver an effective programme. Specifically, how the role of the Practice Specialist will be appropriately resourced and supported to effectively support and mange CSW's and Reserves CSWs.

3.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence which demonstrates a clear timeline and plan for the implementation of the recruitment strategy, and that appropriate contingencies are in place.

Reason: From documentation and in meetings with the senior and programme teams, the visitors learnt that the programme intends to recruit a total of three Practice Specialists and 25 Consultant Social Workers. The senior team stated that they currently have one Practice Specialist and 18 CSWs recruited for the programme and were confident that they could recruit the remaining Practice Specialists and a total of 23 CSWs by the end of March 2016. However, the visitors were not provided with a clear plan or timeline to achieve this goal. The visitors also noted that 23 CSWs did not reach the required number of CSWs as outlined in the staffing structure within the documentation. In addition to this, the senior team were not able to provide any contingency plans should they not be able to recruit the required number of staff for this programme in the time frames required.

The visitors note that from discussions at the visit it became clear that roles of Practice Specialists and CSWs are vital to the successful delivery of this programme. The visitors also note that these members of staff are due to undergo extensive training in preparation for their role which is vital in ensuring they are appropriately prepared to deliver their role as a Practice Specialist or CSW. It is therefore imperative that the visitors are confident that the programme will recruit an appropriate number of staff in the timeframes outlined within the programme documentation. This is supported by the comments under the previous conditions under SET 3.5 of this report.

The visitors therefore require documentation which clearly outlines an appropriate and defined timeline for the implementation of the recruitment strategy as well as an appropriate contingency plan. Each of these areas should take into consideration the conditions regarding staff numbers set under SET 3.2 and 3.5 of this report.

3.7 A programme for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate that there is an appropriate programme for staff development in place for the Practice Specialist and Consultant Social Worker (CSW) roles.

Reason: From the documentation provided and discussions at the visit it was clear that there is a programme for staff development in place for staff members from the University of York. However, the visitors were unable to locate a clear programme for staff development for Practice Specialists and CSWs beyond their initial training. In discussions with the programme team it was stated that continuous professional development (CPD) opportunities will be provided for CSWs within their own

organisations but there was nothing formal provided from Think Ahead. As the education provider, it is the responsibility of Think Ahead to ensure a programme of staff development is in place for all employees. Whilst there may be opportunities within partner organisations for Practice Specialists and CSWs to undertake, there is no formal programme for staff development in place for these roles which is managed by Think Ahead.

The visitors note that from discussions at the visit it became clear that the Practice Specialist is a pivotal role in ensuring the programme is effectively delivered. The visitors wish to stress that with such a significant responsibility on this particular role it is imperative that they are able to clearly see that this role is well supported with appropriate training and staff development opportunities. The visitors therefore require evidence to demonstrate that there is an appropriate programme for staff development in place, managed by Think Ahead, for the Practice Specialists and CSW roles.

5.1 Practice placements must be integral to the programme.

Condition: The education provider must provide copies of the signed Lead Partner Delivery Agreements for all partner organisations.

Reason: The education provider currently has a number of partner organisations in place who have each committed a number of placements for students on this programme. The visitors were provided with some copies of these agreements ahead of the visit, however, these were not signed at the time of review. The senior team stated that the agreements are due to be signed by the end of February 2016. The visitors note that without seeing final, signed agreements they are unable to be confident that placements are integral for all students. The visitors therefore require further evidence in the way of signed Lead Partner Delivery Agreements to ensure that this standard is met.

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 which demonstrates that the Practice Specialist and Consultant Social Worker (CSW) roles will be appropriately resourced to ensure effective management of placement experience.

Reason: From the documentation and in meetings at the visit the visitors learnt that the Practice Specialist holds a number of fundamental responsibilities for the programme including ensuring parity in placement experience for all students. Specifically, Practice Specialists will be responsible for ensuring students have access to a range of placements and receive parity in caseloads. Whilst the visitors were satisfied that this could be an appropriate structure for ensuring students have access to a range of placements, they could not see how the current number of staff in this role will be able to deliver this responsibility effectively for the number of CSWs and students they are each responsible for. Additionally, the visitors could not see how each Practice Specialist would be able to maintain appropriate oversight of each placement alongside their other key responsibilities as outlined under the condition for SET 3.2 of this report. The visitors note that with such significant responsibility on this particular role to ensure a range of placement experience, it is imperative that they are able to see that the role is appropriately resourced and supported for the programme. The visitors are unable to see that this is achievable with the current staffing numbers.

In addition to this, as referenced under the conditions for SET 3.5 of this report, the visitors cannot be certain that all CSWs and Reserve CSWs will be recruited to post before the start date of the programme. The visitors note that the CSW is another vital role in ensuring that each student is supported on placement in the way of acting as a practice educator and providing all opportunities within different placement settings. With the CSW being such a vital role in ensuring a range of placement experience and the uncertainty of this role being adequately recruited in time for the start date of the programme, the visitors are unable to be certain that the number and range of placements available are appropriate to support the delivery of the programme.

The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that the Practice Specialist role will be appropriately resourced to ensure the range of placements are appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes. In addition to this, the visitors require evidence which demonstrates that there is a clear and appropriate recruitment and contingency plan in place for the CSW role to ensure the number and range of placements are appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate that a system is in place which ensures thorough and effective approval and monitoring for staff resourcing associated with practice placements.

Reason: In relation to the condition under SET 5.2 of this report the visitors were unable to see that there is a thorough and effective system in place for approving and monitoring staff resourcing associated with placements. The visitors note that due to the practical requirements of this programme, the approval and monitoring of staff resourcing is imperative to ensuring a successful placement experience. Currently, the visitors are not satisfied that the current system for approving and monitoring placements will ensure that all staff will be recruited and in place within appropriate time frames. Additionally, the visitors are not satisfied that there are appropriate mechanisms in place for the ongoing management of staff. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that an appropriate system is in place to ensure that the Practice Specialist and CSW roles will be appropriately resourced in time for the start date of the programme and will be appropriately managed for the duration of the programme.

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

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence to demonstrate that the Practice Specialist and Consultant Social Worker (CSW) roles are appropriately resourced to support students on placement.

Reason: In relation to the conditions under SET 5.2 of this report the visitors were unable to see that the Practice Specialist and CSW roles are adequately resourced and supported to support students in their learning in a safe environment. The visitors note that due to the practical requirements of this programme, the number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff at the practice placement setting is imperative to

ensuring a successful placement experience. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate that the Practice Specialist and CSW roles will be appropriately resourced to ensure an adequate number of qualified and experienced staff at the placement setting.

6.8 Assessment regulations, or other relevant policies, must clearly specify requirements for approved programmes being the only programmes which contain any reference to an HCPC protected title or part of the Register in their named award.

Condition: The education provider must revisit the programme documentation and assessment regulations to ensure that the interim award is clearly articulated and does not contain any reference to an HCPC protected title or part of the Register.

Reason: In the documentation provided prior to the visit the visitors noted reference to a PG Cert that the programme will offer as an interim award which does not lead to eligibility to apply to the HCPC Register. The senior team clarified that this award would be titled 'Post Graduate Certificate in Applied Social Welfare'. The visitors were satisfied that this is an appropriate name for the interim award, however were unable to locate the full name of this award within the programme documentation and assessment regulations. The visitors note that without clarification of the interim award in the programme documentation and assessment regulations they cannot be satisfied that this standard is met. The visitors therefore require the education provider to revisit the programme documentation and assessment regulations to ensure the interim award title is clearly stated.

Recommendations

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

Recommendation: The education provider should consider reviewing the wording used in the practice placement audit to eliminate possible misinterpretation.

Reason: Prior to the visit the visitors were provided with a practice placement audit document which included checks within the placement environment. The visitors are therefore satisfied that this standard is met. However, the visitors noted that the wording within the document states that placement providers 'will' complete certain checks as opposed to 'have' completed certain checks. Whilst the visitors are satisfied that these checks are being undertaken in the current audit process, they consider that there is a risk that practice placement providers could misinterpret the wording within this document. Specifically, placement providers could interpret the wording as a task that they will complete over time and not necessarily ahead of the students placement. The visitors therefore recommend that the programme team considers reviewing the current wording within the practice placement audit document to eliminate any possibility of misinterpretation.

David Childs
Gary Hickman
Kathleen Taylor

Observations from the University of York and Think Ahead

Name of education provider	University of York and Think Ahead
Validating body / Awarding body	University of York
Programme name	Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work Practice (Think Ahead)
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	26 – 27 January 2016

We would like to thank the three HCPC visitors, David Childs, Gary Hickman and Kathleen Taylor, Hollie Latham, the HCPC executive officer, and Jamie Hunt, the HCPC observer, for conducting the visit on 26 and 27 January 2016.

We would also like to thank the visitors for their report. We view this process as an important means to refine the programme before delivery and are grateful to the visitors for their input.

Within the body of the report, we have noted three areas in which we would like to submit an 'observation' as we believe them to be factually inaccurate. We are therefore seeking for the visitors' report to be updated to reflect these.

In our observations, we have indicated the specific wording within the condition that is inaccurate in yellow, and our suggested amended wording in bold.

Observation 1:

3.2 The programme must be effectively managed.

Condition: The education provider must provide further evidence which demonstrates that there are effective systems in place to manage the staffing structure and numbers.

Reason: From the documentation and in meetings at the visit the visitors learnt that the Think Ahead staffing structure is currently intended to work with 25 Consultant Social Workers (CSW), each supervising four students. The CSWs report into three Practice Specialists, with each Practice Specialist supervising eight CSWs.

In addition to the above structure the education provider intends to hire a number of Reserve CSWs to cover instances where CSWs are unable to deliver their role long term due to illness or other such instances of absence. Whilst the visitors were satisfied that there is a clear structure in place for staff responsibilities, they were unable to identify how the staffing structure and numbers would be effectively managed to ensure each staff member has the time and resources to successfully deliver their role and responsibilities. In particular the visitors noted that each practice specialist has a number of fundamental responsibilities, some of which include:

- ensuring partnerships are working well;

- ensuring each student has access to the resources they need;

- ensuring parity in placement caseloads for students;

- ensuring a range of placement experience;

- providing academic and pastoral support; and

- mentoring eight CSWs.

Based on the outlined structure and responsibilities the visitors were not satisfied that Practice Specialists and CSWs will have the time and support they need to deliver their responsibilities within the current system. Consequently, the visitors cannot see that the current staffing system in place is effective to manage the programme.

In addition to this the visitors noted that the Reserve CSWs will be expected to 'step in' where CSWs are unable to deliver their role. The programme team explained the support mechanisms in place for this role including attendance at training sessions, however, the visitors were unable to see how a Reserve CSW would be able to step in and take responsibility for a CSWs workload effectively. In particular, the visitors were unable to see how the workload of Practice Specialists would allow sufficient time to support the transition of a Reserve CSW into a CSW role without impact to their responsibilities. Consequently, the visitors are unable to see that there are effective staffing systems in place to manage the programme.

The visitors therefore require further evidence which demonstrates that there are effective staffing systems in place to manage the programme. Specifically, how the staffing structure is effectively managed to ensure that the people involved have the support they need to work within the systems in place.

The final line of the first paragraph of the reasoning within this condition states that "The CSWs report into three Practice Specialists, with each Practice Specialist supervising eight CSWs."

We are requesting that the wording be amended to **"The Practice Specialists will be responsible for quality assuring the practice placements of participant units and their CSWs."**

This is factually inaccurate because the primary responsibility for supervision of the CSW remains with the host organisation; they will be reporting to their own line managers within the existing frameworks of their employing organisation's structures. The role of the Practice Specialist is one of quality assurance, and not line management.

Further on within this condition, the first line of the second paragraph within this condition states "In addition to the above structure the education provider intends to hire a number of Reserve CSWs to cover instances where CSWs are unable to deliver their role long term due to illness or other such instances of absence."

We are requesting that the wording be amended to **"In addition to the above structure the education provider has supported partner organisations in the recruitment of a number of Reserve CSWs to cover instances where CSWs are unable to deliver their role long term due to illness or other such instances of absence."**

This is factually inaccurate because Think Ahead does not *hire* the CSWs and Reserve CSWs, instead Think Ahead *supports* partner organisations in the recruitment of CSWs and Reserve CSWs, and these organisations will then continue to employ them (emphasis has been added

here for ease of reference). Furthermore, at the time of the visit in January 2016, the recruitment process for CSWs- which we were supporting- was already underway.

These amendments are important because the current wording suggests that we, as the education provider, are responsible for the employment of CSWs and Reserve CSWs, which is not true. The employer of the CSWs and Reserve CSWs is the partner organisation within which they work. Failure to amend this miscommunication would be contrary to the intentions of the Delivery Agreements with partner organisations and incorrectly confer employment obligations upon us as the education provider.

Observation 2:

3.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence which demonstrates a clear timeline and plan for the implementation of the recruitment strategy, and that appropriate contingencies are in place.

Reason: From documentation and in meetings with the senior and programme teams, the visitors learnt that the programme intends to recruit a total of three Practice Specialists and 25 Consultant Social Workers. The senior team stated that they currently have one Practice Specialist and 18 CSWs recruited for the programme and were confident that they could recruit the remaining Practice Specialists and a total of 23 CSWs by the end of March 2016. However, the visitors were not provided with a clear plan or timeline to achieve this goal. The visitors also noted that 23 CSWs did not reach the required number of CSWs as outlined in the staffing structure within the documentation. In addition to this, the senior team were not able to provide any contingency plans should they not be able to recruit the required number of staff for this programme in the time frames required.

The visitors note that from discussions at the visit it became clear that roles of Practice Specialists and CSWs are vital to the successful delivery of this programme. The visitors also note that these members of staff are due to undergo extensive training in preparation for their role which is vital in ensuring they are appropriately prepared to deliver their role as a Practice Specialist or CSW. It is therefore imperative that the visitors are confident that the programme will recruit an appropriate number of staff in the timeframes outlined within the programme documentation. This is supported by the comments under the previous conditions under SET 3.5 of this report.

The visitors therefore require documentation which clearly outlines an appropriate and defined timeline for the implementation of the recruitment strategy as well as an appropriate contingency plan. Each of these areas should take into consideration the conditions regarding staff numbers set under SET 3.2 and 3.5 of this report.

The first line of the reasoning in this condition states that it is the programme's intention to "recruit… 25 Consultant Social Workers."

We are requesting that the wording be amended to **"From documentation and in meetings with the senior and programme teams, the visitors learnt that the programme intends recruit three Practice Specialists and to support partner organisations in the recruitment of a total of 25 Consultant Social Workers."**

The reason for this change is the same as the reason outlined above in Observation 1 in relation to the employment status of the Consultant Social Workers.

The second line of the reasoning within this condition states "The senior team stated that they currently have one Practice Specialist and 18 CSWs recruited for the programme and were confident that they could recruit the remaining Practice Specialists and a total of 23 CSWs by the end of March 2016."

We are requesting that the wording be amended (in addition to the amendments set out above) to **"The senior team stated that they were confident that they could support partner organisations in the recruitment of total of 25 full-time equivalent CSWs by the end of March 2016."**

At the time of the visit in January 2016, our programme team expressed our confidence in supporting the recruitment process to secure the full complement of CSWs in time for the programme commencing. We therefore would like this to be reflected in the report.

By amending the wording, we feel that it importantly changes the context in which we will meet the visitors' conditions by demonstrating that there will be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Observation 3:

3.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

Condition: The education provider must provide evidence which demonstrates a clear timeline and plan for the implementation of the recruitment strategy, and that appropriate contingencies are in place.

Reason: From documentation and in meetings with the senior and programme teams, the visitors learnt that the programme intends to recruit a total of three Practice Specialists and 25 Consultant Social Workers. The senior team stated that they currently have one Practice Specialist and 18 CSWs recruited for the programme and were confident that they could recruit the remaining Practice Specialists and a total of 23 CSWs by the end of March 2016. However, the visitors were not provided with a clear plan or timeline to achieve this goal. The visitors also noted that 23 CSWs did not reach the required number of CSWs as outlined in the staffing structure within the documentation. In addition to this, the senior team were not able to provide any contingency plans should they not be able to recruit the required number of staff for this programme in the time frames required.

The visitors note that from discussions at the visit it became clear that roles of Practice Specialists and CSWs are vital to the successful delivery of this programme. The visitors also note that these members of staff are due to undergo extensive training in preparation for their role which is vital in ensuring they are appropriately prepared to deliver their role as a Practice Specialist or CSW. It is therefore imperative that the visitors are confident that the programme will recruit an appropriate number of staff in the timeframes outlined within the programme documentation. This is supported by the comments under the previous conditions under SET 3.5 of this report.

The visitors therefore require documentation which clearly outlines an appropriate and defined timeline for the implementation of the recruitment strategy as well as an appropriate

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contingency plan. Each of these areas should take into consideration the conditions regarding staff numbers set under SET 3.2 and 3.5 of this report.

The second line of the reasoning within this condition states "The senior team stated that they currently have one Practice Specialist and 18 CSWs recruited for the programme and were confident that they could recruit the remaining Practice Specialists and a total of 23 CSWs by the end of March 2016."

We are requesting that the wording be amended to **"…The senior team stated that they currently have one Practice Specialist in post and two Practice Specialists starting in April 2016, and supported partner organisations in the recruitment for 18 CSWs. The senior team were confident that partner organisations could recruit the remaining number of CSWs by the end of March 2016."**

To say that we as an education provider "were confident that [we] could recruit the remaining Practice Specialists" is factually inaccurate because at the time of the visit in January 2016, Think Ahead had one Practice Specialist in post and had successfully appointed two further Practice Specialists with start dates set for 04 April 2016, and this was communicated by the Think Ahead Programme Director during the senior team meeting.

By amending the wording, we feel that it importantly changes the context in which we will meet the visitors' conditions by demonstrating that there is an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced staff in place to deliver an effective programme.

11 March 2016