Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Birmingham
Programme name	BA (Hons) Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	21 – 22 April 2015

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 03 June 2015 to provide observations on this report. The report and any observations received will be considered by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 04 June 2015. At this meeting, the Committee will accept, reject or vary the visitors' recommended outcome.

Introduction

The HCPC visited the programme at the education provider as the social work profession came onto the register in 2012 and a decision was made by the Education and Training Committee to visit all existing programmes from this profession. This visit assessed the programme against the standards of education and training (SETs) and considered whether those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was part of a joint event. The professional body considered their endorsement of the programme. The visit also considered the following programmes - MA Social Work and Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work (Masters Exit Route Only). The professional body and the HCPC formed a joint panel, with an independent chair and secretary, supplied by the education provider. Whilst the joint panel participated in collaborative scrutiny of all the programmes and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HCPC's recommendations on this programme only. Separate reports exist for the other programmes. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. Separate reports, produced by the professional body, outline their decisions on the programmes' status.

Visit details

Name and role of HCPC visitors	Richard Barker (Social worker in England) Ian Prince (Lay visitor) David Ward (Social worker in England)
HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Abdur Razzaq
HCPC observer	Elaine Buckley
Proposed student numbers	55 per cohort once a year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2015
Chair	Alison Coates (University of Birmingham)
Secretary	Wendy Banner (University of Birmingham) Katie Craddock (University of Birmingham)
Members of the joint panel	Anne Kelly (The College of Social Work) Nigel Haydon (The College of Social Work)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	☒	☐	☐
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 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 the programme is approved.

The visitors did not set any conditions for the programme.

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 for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme can be approved. Recommendations are made to encourage further enhancements to the programme, normally when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Recommendations

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.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the programme team to review the attendance policies to clarify the attendance requirements for students throughout the programme.

Reason: From a review of the programme documentation the visitors felt that the attendance requirements for the programme were in place. The visitors also noted the process by which the programme deal with issues of student non - attendance. The programme handbook on page 75 and 79 states “As the programme is a professional training course, we expect students to participate and engage fully in all parts of the programme”. However, on the same page under section university regulation it states “University regulations require programmes to carry out reasonable diligence procedures if students miss more than a third of their lectures”. These two statements may lead to confusion as to what is expected of students. The visitors therefore, felt that having a clear defined policy for non-attendance would protect the programme team from appeals should they be required to escalate issue of attendance in terms of a student’s professional related conduct.

Richard Barker
Ian Prince
David Ward

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Birmingham
Programme name	MA Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	21 – 22 April 2015

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Visit details

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HCPC executive officer (in attendance)	Abdur Razzaq
HCPC observer	Elaine Buckley
Proposed student numbers	55 inclusive of Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work (Masters Exit Route Only) per cohort once a year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2015
Chair	Alison Coates (University of Birmingham)
Secretary	Wendy Banner (University of Birmingham) Katie Craddock (University of Birmingham)
Members of the joint panel	Anne Kelly (The College of Social Work) Nigel Haydon (The College of Social Work)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

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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 the programme is approved.

The visitors did not set any conditions for the programme.

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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.

Recommendation: The visitors recommend the programme team to review the attendance policies to clarify the attendance requirements for students throughout the programme.

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Richard Barker
Ian Prince
David Ward

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	University of Birmingham
Programme name	Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work (Masters Exit Route Only)
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Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
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