Programme Specification: Post Graduate Taught

For Academic Year 2025/26

1. Course Summary

Names of programme and award title(s)	Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work (Apprenticeship)
Award type	Postgraduate Diploma
Mode of study	Part-time
Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award	Level 7
Normal length of the programme	18 months Entry point: January
Maximum period of registration	The normal length as specified above plus 3 years
Location of study	Keele Campus
Accreditation (if applicable)	This programme is seeking accredited by Social Work England
Regulator	Office for Students (OfS); Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE)
Tuition Fees	The employer pays all course fees and no fees are charged to apprentice students. Programme price is set at the maximum funding band for this apprenticeship standard set by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) which is a government non-departmental body sponsored by the Department for Education (DFE). We reserve the right to increase price in future. Fees will be paid by the employer on behalf of the apprentice using Levy or co-funding arrangements. For further information please visit: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-funding-from-may-2017 A full breakdown of costs is set out in the training plan.

How this information might change: *Please read the important information at http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/. This explains how and why we may need to make changes to the information provided in this document and to help you understand how we will communicate with you if this happens.*

All Higher and Degree Apprenticeships combine higher education study and work-based learning to enable apprentices to achieve a higher-level award whilst in work. The provision of an academic award is integrated with experience, practice and learning in the workplace where the apprentice has paid employment status. Higher and Degree Apprenticeships are co-designed by training providers and employers to ensure that apprentices are

equipped with the skills employers need and to develop their own careers.

2. Overview of the Programme

This Postgraduate Social Work Apprenticeship programme is designed following the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education: The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies level descriptors (QAA, 2024); UK Quality Code for Higher Education (QAA, 2024). The programme has been mapped to the Social Work England standards (SWE, 2021), QAA Subject Benchmark Statement Social Work (QAA, 2019) and the British Association of Social Workers Professional Capabilities Framework (BASW, 2018).

The PG Dip Social Work Apprenticeship programme is aimed at learners wishing to obtain a social work qualification whilst in employment within a relevant setting. Some learners will be recruited to specific apprenticeship roles within local authorities, health trusts and a range of other settings. Others may be existing staff within organisations providing social work services where their employer 'sponsors' them onto this programme. The programme is designed so that graduates are able to subsequently work in a range of social work settings. Although they will, in the main, return to their sponsoring employer and/or pre-apprenticeship team, the programme has been designed to be generic, in line with regulatory requirements, and thus supports learners to develop their careers within a range of specialisms. Learners who successfully achieve all the programme requirements are eligible to apply for registration with Social Work England (SWE), the regulatory body.

Complex social problems require multi-faceted approaches, and the programme prepares learners for this challenge by promoting high-quality and research-informed social work practice, inter-disciplinary knowledge, learning, and interventions. Learners will need to demonstrate commitment to professional social work practice, with the necessary capability and suitability to develop knowledge and skills prior to graduation and will also demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationships between personal, academic and professional development.

The programme provides a rich learning experience based upon a fundamental recognition of equal human, political, and socio-economic rights, and processes by which such rights and freedoms may be restricted or infringed, equipping graduates with the knowledge and tools to encourage and undertake professional social work practice. Culturally sensitive practice competencies are promoted and enhanced through learning opportunities, including experiential and case study-based learning and practice experiences.

Social Work at Keele is located within the School of Medicine which enjoys an excellent reputation in both education and research and embraces a multidisciplinary approach to health and social care education. In addition to Social Work the School offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes including Counselling and Psychotherapy, Medicine, Physician Associate, Public Health and Paramedic Science. Social Work learners are engaged in an increasing range of exciting and practice-relevant activities, making excellent use of simulation and court room facilities, often alongside students and learners from other disciplines.

Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences:

The Faculty consists of the School of Allied Health Professions and Pharmacy, School of Medicine and the School of Nursing & Midwifery. Schools are responsible for delivering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, and for generating and supporting research, enterprise and knowledge exchange activities, hosting visiting academics, organising research seminars and conferences and for the training and supervision of research students.

The Faculty has a long tradition of providing professional programmes leading to registration with regulatory bodies and as such, the Social Work programme benefits from cross-faculty support for different activities. In 2019 we launched Keele Deal Health, setting out our commitment to work with partners in Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Shropshire and South Cheshire, to address local health and social care priorities, whilst our strong regional networks extend across not only the West and East Midlands but also to the North West and beyond. Our geography is diverse, covering remote and rural areas of the country in addition to highly deprived inner cities locations.

Apprenticeships:

This programme is used to deliver the apprenticeship standard. Apprenticeship standards are co-designed by employers and training providers to ensure that apprentices are equipped with the skills employers need. All higher and degree apprenticeships combine work-based learning with part-time study leading to a recognised qualification. The programme has been designed for delivery in a work-based learning context, where assessments for each module of the programme provide opportunities for the student to apply the learning from the module back into their workplace context.

During delivery we will work with you and your employer to ensure that you progress through your apprenticeship, as a job with training. This will involve regular tripartite review meetings, monitoring compliance with apprenticeship requirements, such as the 20% of the job and identifying any changes required to your

learning plan. Throughout your apprenticeship, you and your employer will have access to Aptem, our apprenticeships management system, where you will be required to sign and submit documents to demonstrate your progress and adhere to compliance requirements.

Achievement of the apprenticeship is through the End Point Assessment (EPA) and further details are provided in the section titled 'Final and Intermediate Awards'.

3. Aims of the programme

The broad aims of the programme are to enable you to:

- Develop and acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and behaviours to practice social work upon graduation.
- Effectively apply all of these to enable you to work in a professional and ethically robust way, within a range of settings and with a wide range of service user groups.
- Develop strong critically reflective abilities in order to further your academic and professional learning, with a commitment to life-long learning and continuing professional development.
- Understand the many contexts of social work practice and key contemporary issues relevant to practice across a range of specialisms and work effectively with other professionals and in multi-agency contexts.
- Develop personal and professional confidence that will underpin your work in securing the best outcomes within your professional practice.
- Meet the requirements of the regulator and the benchmarks for Level 7 qualification.

4. What you will learn

The intended learning outcomes of the programme (what students should know, understand and be able to do at the end of the programme), can be described under the following headings:

- Subject knowledge and understanding
- Subject specific skills
- Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Subject knowledge and understanding

Successful students will be able to:

- The legal and policy framework that underpins social work practice.
- The theories, methods, approaches and perspectives that are relevant to social work across the life course.
- Assessment frameworks and approaches to multi-agency and inter-professional working across different social work contexts.
- Contemporary issues within society that impact on social work at local and national levels.
- The social, environmental and global contexts of social work, including recognition of any ethical implications.

Subject specific skills

Successful students will be able to:

- Promote the rights, strengths and wellbeing of people, families and communities;
- Establish and maintain trust and confidence of people and be accountable for the quality of your practice and the decisions you make;
- Work in partnership with service users, carers and families in the development and delivery of social work;
- Develop and disseminate critical responses to existing knowledge and skills and apply these to shape and innovate social work practice;
- Develop an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge and research, and the ability to manage your own learning and make use of scholarly reviews and primary learning materials appropriate to social work;
- Demonstrate relevant skills and evidence to achieve the SWE Professional Standards and BASW's Professional Capabilities Framework at the appropriate level.

Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Successful students will be able to:

- Become an appropriately independent, accountable and autonomous practitioner with transferable skills and prepared for postgraduate employment, able to seek guidance and support when needed (Active

learning);
- Contribute to workforce development needs of social workers in partnership with our key stakeholders (External engagement);
- Work effectively within a multidisciplinary team and be excellent communicators in both verbal and non-verbal communication (Inclusivity & Digital Capability);
- Always maintain confidentiality, and seek support and supervision as required (Inclusivity & Active Learning);
- Engage with and represent social work at wider regional, national and international levels in various strategic and research context as appropriate to role and context (External Engagement & Digital Capability).

Keele Graduate attributes

The Keele Graduate Attributes are the qualities (skills, values and mindsets) which you will have the opportunity to develop during your time at Keele through both the formal curriculum and also through co- and extra-curricular activities (e.g., work experience, and engagement with the wider University community such as acting as ambassadors, volunteering, peer mentoring, student representation, membership and leadership of clubs and societies). Our Graduate Attributes consist of four themes: **academic expertise, professional skills, personal effectiveness, and social and ethical responsibility.** You will have opportunities to engage actively with the range of attributes throughout your time at Keele: through your academic studies, through self-assessing your own strengths, weaknesses, and development needs, and by setting personal development goals. You will have opportunities to discuss your progress in developing graduate attributes with, for example, Academic Mentors, to prepare for your future career and lives beyond Keele.

5. How is the programme taught?

Learning and teaching methods used on the programme vary according to the subject matter and level of the module. They include the following planned activities:

- **Lectures:** Although this programme does not utilise the standard academic lecture as a delivery mode in the traditional way, shorter lectures may be included in workshops or as an introduction or conclusion to seminar-type sessions where academic staff present knowledge to learners in a less explicitly interactive way than most learning activities embedded within this programme. Mini lectures may also be recorded for asynchronous learning and to supplement in-class learning.
- **Seminars:** Seminars, sometimes combined with elements of workshops, are based upon learner participation and often upon preparation via reading of reflective activities that are then explored within the seminar group, with the lecturer present largely as facilitator of the session.
- **Workshops:** Many of your modules on this programme will include workshops whether held online or in situ on the Keele campus. Workshops may be whole day or half day in length and typically combine staff-led input on core concepts and knowledge and learner activities and collaborative learning. Whilst many workshops may serve to help you develop academic and professional skills, not all will be formally counted as skills days (see below).
- **Skills sessions:** These are mandatory to attend and participate in and have at their core your practice of core social work skills, from initial to more advanced in terms of complexity. Often these will involve collaborative work with your peers and may involve work with learners from other professional programmes. In addition, most of these sessions are run collaboratively with input from service users and carers and/or social work practitioners.
- **Group tutorials:** These are timetabled small group sessions with your Academic Mentor. Held every 4-6 weeks, these serve to support you to integrate learning from across your different modules and from different elements of your studies, as well as to support your academic and professional development. Whilst in the early months of the programme staff will lead these sessions, later in your studies, learners will take an increasingly active role in this process in line with our commitment to using an explicit 'process' curriculum (see below) that helps you develop additional transferable skills.
- **Academic mentoring sessions:** 1-1 sessions with your academic mentor take place on a regular basis to support your progress and offer additional guidance and support as you progress through your studies. Your academic mentor supports you in placement too and will visit placement to ensure that your learning is well supported and appropriate to your professional goals.

Apart from these formal activities, learners are also provided with regular opportunities to talk through particular areas of difficulty, and any special learning needs they may have, with their Academic Mentors or module lecturers on a one-to-one basis. In addition, staff have carefully designed learning and assessment processes to further support your academic and professional skills development in what we have referred to as the 'process curriculum'. For example, where learners are asked to chair a meeting or to present to a group, this is explicitly linked to professional skills, capabilities and confidence.

6. Teaching Staff

All staff leading modules and acting as Academic Mentors on your programme are qualified and registered social workers. This means that all maintain their own continuing professional development as social workers as well as educators by engaging in research and scholarship, and/or by ongoing involvement in practice or regulatory

activities. Staff bring a wide range of practice and educational experiences and the staff team benefits from very experienced educators and also those who have more recently practised as social workers.

The University will attempt to minimise changes to our core teaching teams, however, delivery of the programme depends on having a sufficient number of staff with the relevant expertise to ensure that the programme is taught to the appropriate academic standard.

Staff turnover, for example where key members of staff leave, fall ill or go on research leave, may result in changes to the programme's content. The University will endeavour to ensure that any impact on students is limited if such changes occur.

7. What is the structure of the programme?

The programme is an 18 month course and you can generally expect to attend scheduled teaching sessions between the end of January and mid-April, from end of April to August, and from September to December. Our degree courses are organised into modules. Each module is usually a self- contained unit of study and each is usually assessed separately with the award of credits on the basis of 1 credit = 10 hours of learner effort. An outline of the structure of the programme is provided in the tables below.

All modules within your programme are compulsory modules - a module that you are required to study on this programme. There are no optional modules within the PG-Dip Social Work Apprenticeship.

Map of Programme showing sequencing:

Module Name/dates	**Indicative Content**	**Module structure**
Readiness for Social Work Practice w/c 13th Jan 2025 to End Feb 2025	What is a social worker? PCF/National Framework/Registration & regulation Professionalism Shadowing Assistive Technology Role play / Simulation Case Recordings Reflection on feedback Learning needs (table of PCF at Readiness level) Academic writing skills	Day 0 Programme induction (in person) Day 1 Taught (online) Day 2 Taught & Skills (in person) Day 3 Skills/Role play (in person) Day 4-6 Shadowing
Theory, Methods and Perspectives March 2025	Development across the life course Systems theory Trauma informed practice Crisis intervention, motivational interviewing Using theoretical approaches in SW practice	Day 1 (in person) Day 2-3 Taught (online) Day 4 (in person) Day 5-6 Taught (online)

Rights, Justice & Ethics April 2025	Human rights & equality Social justice Ethics (self-directed study materials) - debate as formative assessment English legal system & decision making Intro to Social policy SW role in legal processes Information security	Day 1 (in person) Day 2-3 Taught (online) Day 4 (in person) Day 5-6 Taught (online)
Placement 1 - 90 days April 2025 to August/Sept 2025	Prep for placement Recall days - to include theory and professional skills (including reflective models)	1 day Prep for placement 2 Recall Days looking at Critical Reflection and interprofessional working.
Developing Knowledge for SW Practice End Sept 2025 to Dec 2025	SW practice with children and families SW practice with vulnerable adults Working with mental health (adults and children) To include relevant legislation and practice considerations for each area Skills curriculum to run alongside here	1 day per week (This module could be shortened to enable to final placement to commence earlier) Days 1-12 can be mixed online/in person or hybrid.
Contemporary Social Work Jan 2026 (3 days) plus 3 recall days	Authority and leadership Evidence-based practice Intro to research-mindedness Sociological perspectives Contemporary issues - e.g. exploitation, hybrid working, technology How world events affect SW practice, e.g. migration, war, poverty, pandemic, climate change?	Days 1-3 Taught (online) Days 4-6 Taught (online/in-person/hybrid) in recall days.
Placement 2 (100 days) January 2026 to June 2026	100 days + recall days for contemporary social work module	1 day Prep for placement 5 recall days (3 to be other module and 2 to be placement related) Could be full 'recall week' or spread out.
End Point Assessment June 2026		Via Examination Board and completion lists to regulator.

Year	Compulsory	Optional	
		Min	Max
Level 7	120	0	0

Module Lists

Level 7

Modules are taken in the following sequence:

Year 1

Readiness for Social Work Practice (SWK-40103)

Social Work Theory, Methods and Perspectives (SWK-40109)

Rights, Justice & Ethics for Social Work (SWK-40105)

Practice Placement One - 90 days (SWK-40111)

Year 2

Developing Knowledge for Social Work Practice (SWK-40107)

Contemporary Social Work (SWK-40113)

Practice Placement 2 (100 days) (SWK-40115)

Compulsory modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Developing knowledge for social work practice	SWK-40107	30	Semester 1
Readiness for Social Work Practice	SWK-40103	15	Semester 2
Rights, Justice and Ethics for Social Work	SWK-40105	15	Semester 2
Social Work Theory, Methods and Perspectives	SWK-40109	15	Semester 2
Contemporary Social Work	SWK-40113	15	Semester 2
Practice Placement One (90 days)	SWK-40111	15	Semester 2-3
Practice Placement Two (100 days)	SWK-40115	15	Semester 2-3

Learning Outcomes

The table below sets out what students learn in the programme and the modules in which that learning takes place. Details of how learning outcomes are assessed through these modules can be found in module specifications.

Level 7

The table below sets out what learners learn in the programme and the modules in which that learning takes place. Details of how learning outcomes are assessed through these modules can be found in module specifications.

Subject Knowledge and Understanding	
Learning Outcome	**Module in which this is delivered**
The legal and policy framework that underpins social work practice.	Developing knowledge for social work practice - SWK-40107 Rights, Justice and Ethics for Social Work - SWK-40105 Practice Placement One (90 days) - SWK-40111 Practice Placement Two (100 days) - SWK-40115
The theories, methods, approaches and perspectives that are relevant to social work across the life course.	Rights, Justice and Ethics for Social Work - SWK-40105 Social Work Theory, Methods and Perspectives - SWK-40109 Developing knowledge for social work practice - SWK-40107
Assessment frameworks and approaches to multi-agency and inter-professional working across different social work contexts.	All modules
Contemporary issues within society that impact on social work at local and national levels.	Social Work Theory, Methods and Perspectives - SWK-40109 Practice Placement One (90 days) - SWK-40111 Practice Placement Two (100 days) - SWK-40115 Developing knowledge for social work practice - SWK-40107
The social, environmental and global contexts of social work, including recognition of any ethical implications.	Practice Placement Two (100 days) - SWK-40115 Contemporary Social Work - SWK-40113 Rights, Justice and Ethics for Social Work - SWK-40105 Developing knowledge for social work practice - SWK-40107 Practice Placement One (90 days) - SWK-40111

Subject Specific Skills	
Learning Outcome	**Module in which this is delivered**
Promote the rights, strengths and wellbeing of people, families and communities;	Readiness for Social Work Practice - SWK-40103 Practice Placement One (90 days) - SWK-40111 Rights, Justice and Ethics for Social Work - SWK-40105 Practice Placement Two (100 days) - SWK-40115
Establish and maintain trust and confidence of people and be accountable for the quality of your practice and the decisions you make;	Readiness for Social Work Practice - SWK-40103 Practice Placement One (90 days) - SWK-40111 Practice Placement Two (100 days) - SWK-40115
Work in partnership with service users, carers and families in the development and delivery of social work;	Practice Placement One (90 days) - SWK-40111 Practice Placement Two (100 days) - SWK-40115 Readiness for Social Work Practice - SWK-40103
Develop and disseminate critical responses to existing knowledge and skills and apply these to shape and innovate social work practice;	All modules
Develop an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge and research, and the ability to manage your own learning and make use of scholarly reviews and primary learning materials appropriate to social work;	All modules
Demonstrate relevant skills and evidence to achieve the SWE Professional Standards and BASW's Professional Capabilities Framework at the appropriate level.	Practice Placement Two (100 days) - SWK-40115 Practice Placement One (90 days) - SWK-40111 Contemporary Social Work - SWK-40113 Rights, Justice and Ethics for Social Work - SWK-40105 Developing knowledge for social work practice - SWK-40107 Readiness for Social Work Practice - SWK-40103

Key or Transferable Skills (graduate attributes)	
Learning Outcome	**Module in which this is delivered**
Become an appropriately independent, accountable and autonomous practitioner with transferable skills and prepared for postgraduate employment, able to seek guidance and support when needed (Active learning);	All modules
Contribute to workforce development needs of social workers in partnership with our key stakeholders (External engagement);	All modules
Work effectively within a multidisciplinary team and be excellent communicators in both verbal and non-verbal communication (Inclusivity & Digital Capability);	All modules
Always maintain confidentiality, and seek support and supervision as required (Inclusivity & Active Learning) ;	All modules
Engage with and represent social work at wider regional, national and international levels in various strategic and research context as appropriate to role and context (External Engagement & Digital Capability).	Contemporary Social Work - SWK-40113 Practice Placement One (90 days) - SWK-40111 Practice Placement Two (100 days) - SWK-40115

8. Final and intermediate awards

Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work (Apprenticeship)	120 credits	You will require at least 120 credits at level 7 from the compulsory modules including placement modules. Graduates are eligible to apply for registration with Social Work England and upon successful registration are entitled to practice social work in England.
Postgraduate Certificate in Social Welfare	60 credits	You will require at least 60 credits at level 7. The credits for this award may come from any combination of the modules successfully completed. ***NB:*** This award does **NOT** confer eligibility to apply for registration with Social Work England and recipients are not entitled to use the title of Social Worker.

End Point Assessment (EPA)

The End Point Assessment Plan is available at this link: https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/media/6337/st0510_-social-worker-statutory-integrated-epa-_level-6_ap-for-publication_26082022.pdf

The EPA period should only start, and the EPA be arranged, once the employer and Social Work England Approved Education Provider are satisfied that the apprentice is consistently working at or above the level set out in the occupational standard and all of the pre-requisite gateway requirements for EPA have been met. It is expected that the gateway will be reached on completion of all the modules and before the Approved Education Provider's examination board.

The EPA period is expected to last a maximum of 1 month beginning when the apprentice has passed the EPA gateway. The EPA will determine the overall apprenticeship grades of:

- Fail
- Pass

This apprenticeship has a statutory integrated EPA.

End Point Assessment gateway:

Apprentice has met the knowledge, skills and behaviours.

- Employer and Social Work England Approved Education Provider are satisfied the apprentice has consistently demonstrated they meet the KSBs of the occupational standard.
- Achieved English and mathematics at Level 2.
- Successfully completed supervised practice in at least two contrasting settings, one with a focus on statutory work, and knows why these were completed.
- Successfully completed and documented 200 days in supervised practice learning. Up to 30 of these days can be allocated to apprentices developing their skills for practice, also known as 'skills days'.
- Achieved all required modules, taking into account any recognition of prior learning (RPL) of the Social Worker qualification but before the Approved Education Provider's examination board.

End Point Assessment (which would typically take place within 1 month)

The EPA starts with the examination board and finishes when the Approved Education Provider submits the required documentation to Social Work England. The apprentice is not required to carry out any additional assessments. The EPA is:

- Consideration by the examination board and notice of grade decision to Social Work England.

Once awarded a pass grade apprentices have the option to apply for registration with Social Work England, to enable them to practise as a social worker.

9. How is the Programme Assessed?

The wide variety of assessment methods used on this programme at Keele reflects the broad range of

knowledge and skills that are developed as you progress through the degree programme. Teaching staff pay particular attention to specifying clear assessment criteria and providing timely, regular and constructive feedback that helps to clarify things you did not understand and helps you to improve your performance. The following list is representative of the variety of assessment methods used on your programme:

- Reflective Analysis Assignments
- Portfolio
- Report
- Oral Presentation
- Practical Assessment
- Poster Presentation
- **Written work/assignments** test the quality and application of subject knowledge. In addition, they allow you to demonstrate your ability to carry out basic literature searches, communicate your ideas effectively in writing and support your arguments with appropriate referencing. Written pieces vary in their length depending upon the module.
- **Written examinations** are undertaken and may be online or in situ. This type of assessment is designed to test your knowledge and your ability to apply that knowledge appropriately to professional practice.
- **Reflective assignments** enable you to develop your skills of reflective learning and practice and support portfolio development. These are fundamental skills used by all health and social care professionals as part of their continuing professional development.
- **Oral presentations and examinations** assess your subject knowledge and understanding. They may also be used to test your ability to work effectively as a member of a team, to communicate what you know orally and visually, and to reflect on these processes as part of your own personal development.
- **Dissertation** is a significant assessment designed to develop your capacity as an independent learner and your ability to engage with a range of literature associated with a social work topic of your choice. It also develops IT skills in the use of various software for literature searching and analysis.
- **Practice placement assessment** is undertaken via immersion in statutory and non-statutory placement areas. You will undertake supervised practice with service users and carers and will be required to demonstrate your capability linked to BASW's Professional Capabilities Framework and SWE Professional Standards (2021). Assessments linked to the placement areas will help to prepare you for qualified practice.

The assessment strategy aims to be diverse, recognising the strengths of learners with different life and work experiences and to align with practice skills, including those involving the production of high-quality written work and also presentations. Assessment points have been designed to provide continuous feed forward and feedback so that learners gain a deep understanding as to the requirements pertaining to each professional development theme. Assessment points are dispersed throughout the learning experience and have been mapped to Social Work England's requirements, QAA level 7 requirements and the BASW Professional Capabilities Framework to encourage learner engagement throughout the programme. Marks are awarded for summative assessments designed to assess your achievement of learning outcomes. Feedback, including guidance on how you can improve the quality of your work, is also provided on all summative assessments within three working weeks of submission, unless there are compelling circumstances that make this impossible, and more informally in the course of tutorial and seminar discussions.

The value of formative assessment in higher education is well documented and evidenced. Primarily, formative assessment methods are adopted in this programme to empower learners and encourage self-regulated learning and reflection. Tutorial support and formative feedback will be available to support learners as they develop within their learning. You will also be assessed formatively to enable you to monitor your own progress and to assist staff in identifying and addressing any specific learning needs.

10. Accreditation

This programme is seeking accredited by Social Work England.

11. University Regulations

The University Regulations form the framework for learning, teaching and assessment and other aspects of the student experience. Further information about the University Regulations can be found at: http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/

If this programme has any exemptions, variations or additions to the University Regulations these will be detailed in an Annex at the end of this document titled 'Programme-specific regulations'.

12. What are the typical admission requirements for the Programme?

Under UK Government rules, apprentices must be employed for a minimum of 30 hours per week and must have the right to live and work in the UK (applies only in England). An apprentice cannot be self-employed. The employer must enter into an Apprenticeship Agreement with the apprenticeship student. All candidates must be employed in a role related to the subject matter of the apprenticeship and be sponsored by their employer. Applications can only be made through the sponsoring employer. The University will consider all such

applications and will have the final decision whether to accept the candidate for entry to the programme.

The recommended minimum entry requirements for Level 4 entry to the programme include English and Maths at Level 2.

Applicants must be able to satisfy the general requirements of Keele University and the School of Medicine. The School implements an inclusive system of academic requirements to widen access for appropriately qualified candidates at different career stages.

You would be expected to have some general knowledge of the nature of social work and related social problems before you start your course. Although it is not a requirement for entry, relevant experience is recommended in order to ensure this is an appropriate career aim and to evidence your motivation. Experience may come from a range of 'helping contexts' and may include personal experience. You should possess a driving licence by the time of your first placement, to support your placement experience, wherever possible.

All offers are conditional upon the applicant having a satisfactory declaration of suitability, and an acceptable enhanced clearance by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Applicants for whom English is not a first language must provide evidence of a recognised qualification in English language. The minimum score for entry to the Programme is Academic IELTS 7.0 overall (to include a minimum of 6.5 in each subtest) or equivalent.

Please note: All non-native English speaking learners are required to undertake a diagnostic English language assessment on arrival at Keele, to determine whether English language support may help them succeed with their studies. An English language module may be compulsory for some learners during their first year at Keele.

We normally require applicants to evidence the above qualifications before starting the apprenticeship.

Applications are welcomed from those with qualifications equivalent to the above. Relevant or prior experience will be taken into account when considering a candidate's suitability for the programme.

At application applicants are required to undertake a 'Skills Scan' where they are asked to self-assess against the knowledge, skills and behaviour of the apprenticeships standard. Applicants are also asked if they want to make an application for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) through the University procedure. There is a requirement for new knowledge and skills to be developed through apprenticeships, with a minimum duration of one year.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is considered on a case-by-case basis and those interested should contact the Programme Director. The University's guidelines on this can be found here: https://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/programmesandmodules/recognitionofpriorlearning/

13. How are students supported on the programme?

The School provides a comprehensive range of support for learners on the programme in addition to that provided by the University. Key to the success of this support are the following:

- As a learner you are allocated to an Academic Mentor who is responsible for reviewing and advising on academic and placement practice progress. Academic Mentors also offer pastoral support, acting as a first point of contact for non-academic issues which may affect your learning. Academic Mentors can refer you on to a range of specialist health, welfare and financial services coordinated by the University's Student Services.
- Module Leaders provide support for learning on the modules and the related assessments. They ensure that appropriate module-specific tutorial support is available via the module team, and that the team provides feedback in a timely manner. Module Leaders also ensure that individual feedback on in-course assessments is available to all learners and also brief learners regarding the module's assignment/s. The Disability Inclusion Tutor provides support for learners with disabilities (including specific learning difficulties) and works closely with wider university student support staff.
- The Award Lead will provide the day to day operational management of the programme and will support you with more general issues relating to the programme.
- The Programme Director for Social Work is responsible for the overall learner experience and therefore able to provide support to learners where Academic Mentors, Module Leads and Award Lead are not available or where the situation is particularly complex or concerning.
- Practice Educators provide supervision whilst you are on placement. Lecturers liaise between the School and Placement Bases and provide you with support during placement practice experience modules. Academic staff will be available to see you on an individual basis via an appointment system. Those meetings may be face to face or can be facilitated via electronic media e.g. Microsoft Teams if you are, for example, on a placement that is distant from the University.

At your workplace, you will be supported by your employer. Exact arrangements and terminology are the responsibility of the employer but typically, you will have a named contact person who manages the relationship between the programme and the employer. The University and the employer are bound by contract to work

together to support you as an apprentice. This will include 3-4 tripartite review meetings between the University, the apprentice, and the employer.

If your employment circumstances change whilst you are on the programme; support can be accessed from the University's Careers and Employability Service.

14. Learning Resources

The School is committed to providing a vibrant and supportive environment for you, which facilitates development of confidence and competence in academic studies and practice.

The learning resources available to learners on the Programme include:

- An extensive collection of materials in the University Library, which contains books, journals, case reports and government publications. Much of this material is also accessible online to Keele learners from anywhere in the world with a University username and password.
- The Keele Learning Environment (KLE) is used by Keele to provide every member of staff and all learners with a personal web-based teaching and learning workspace. It gives learners access to information, activities and resources associated with the modules they are studying. These might include, for example, lecture notes and slide sets, pictures and other material together with interactive features such as discussion groups. The KLE and Microsoft Teams are also used to facilitate a blended learning approach to modules as appropriate.

In situ elements of the programme are mainly delivered in modern teaching rooms in the School of Medicine, equipped with computers, internet access and projection equipment. Rooms are designed to be flexible and can be used for larger groups, and more informally for small groups working together.

15. Other Learning Opportunities

You will have the opportunity to present your final year work via poster or oral presentation at conferences, or indeed, via publication where excellent marks are achieved. A contribution from the School towards the costs incurred in these ventures may be available and will be considered on an individual basis. Such opportunities occur outside the normal timetabled programme; this will therefore require a commitment of time on your part.

16. Additional Costs

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Clearance for an enhanced DBS check is mandatory. Learners will be provided with instructions on how to apply for a DBS check, including a link to apply via a company called UCheck. There is also an online DBS update service to sign up for once the DBS certificate has been received, which allows employers to check DBS status and lets learners keep their DBS certificates up to date online.

The costs are an initial £45.40 plus £3.80 for a digital ID check (the preferred option) totalling £49.20* for the enhanced DBS check, plus £13 per year for the update service.

**NB:* the current costs for a DBS check are detailed on the additional costs webpage: https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/postgraduatestudy/tuitionfeesandfunding/postgraduatetuitionfees/additionalcosts

Every effort will be made to allocate a placement experience close to your term time address, but this may not always be possible. Therefore, you may have to travel some distance to undertake your placements (up to 1.5 hours each way especially in rural areas in particular) which will incur some costs. If you are in receipt of a bursary this will include an element to contribute to travel costs for placements. If you do not receive a bursary you may be able to apply for the NHS Placement Travel Allowance, if you meet the eligibility criteria as set out by the NHS BSA.

Activity	**Estimated Cost**
Enhanced DBS Clearance (£49.20) and annual update (£13 per year)	£62.20*
Travel to placement	Dependent on placement location

These costs have been forecast by the University as accurately as possible but may be subject to change as a result of factors outside of our control (for example, increase in costs for external services). Forecast costs are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain representative. Where additional costs are in direct control of the University we will ensure increases do not exceed 5%.

As to be expected there will be additional costs for inter-library loans and potential overdue library fines, print

and graduation. We do not anticipate any further costs for this programme.

17. Quality management and enhancement

The quality and standards of learning in this programme are subject to a continuous process of monitoring, review and enhancement.

- The School Education Committee is responsible for reviewing and monitoring quality management and enhancement procedures and activities across the School.
- Individual modules and the programme as a whole are reviewed and enhanced every year in the annual programme review which takes place at the end of the academic year.
- The programmes are run in accordance with the University's Quality Assurance procedures and are subject to periodic reviews under the Revalidation process.

Student evaluation of, and feedback on, the quality of learning on every module takes place every year using a variety of different methods:

- The results of student evaluations of all modules are reported to module leaders and reviewed by the Programme Committee as part of annual programme review.
- Findings related to the programme from the annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), and from regular surveys of the student experience conducted by the University, are subjected to careful analysis and a planned response at programme and School level.
- Feedback received from representatives of students on the programme is considered and acted on at regular meetings of the Student Staff Voice Committee.

The University appoints senior members of academic staff from other universities to act as external examiners on all programmes. They are responsible for:

- Approving examination questions
- Confirming all marks which contribute to a student's degree
- Reviewing and giving advice on the structure and content of the programme and assessment procedures

Information about current external examiner(s) can be found here:
http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminers/currentexternalexaminers/

18. The principles of programme design

The programme described in this document has been drawn up with reference to, and in accordance with the guidance set out in, the following documents:

a. UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education:
http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code
b. QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-social-work.pdf?%20sfvrsn=5c35c881_6
c. Keele University Regulations and Guidance for Students and Staff: http://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations

d. Apprenticeship standard (Social Work): https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/social-worker-integrated-degree-v1-1

19. Annex - Programme-specific regulations

Programme Regulations: Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work (Apprenticeship)

Final Award and Award Titles	Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work (Apprenticeship)
Intermediate Award(s)	Postgraduate Certificate in Social Welfare
Last modified	July 2025: DBS and OH information added
Programme Specification	https://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/programmespecifications

The University's Academic Regulations which can be found on the Keele University website (https://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/)[1] apply to and regulate the programme, other than in instances where the specific programme regulations listed below over-ride them. These programme regulations list:

- *Exemptions* which are characterised by the omission of the relevant regulation.
- *Variations* which are characterised by the replacement of part of the regulation with alternative wording.
- *Additional Requirements* which set out what additional rules that apply to students in relation to this programme.

The following **exemptions, variations** and **additional requirements** to the University regulations have been checked by Academic Services and have been approved by the Faculty Education Committee.

A) EXEMPTIONS

The clause(s) listed below describe where an exemption from the University's Academic Regulations exists:

For the whole duration of their studies, students on this Programme are exempt from the following regulations:

- **No exemptions apply.**

B) VARIATIONS

The clause(s) listed below describe where a variation from the University's Academic Regulations exists:

Variation 1:

This programme varies from regulation D5 in that learners must successfully complete all assessments in all modules and there will be no compensation nor condonement in respect of any module.

Additional Requirements

The programme requirements listed below are in addition to the University's Academic Regulations:

Additional requirement 1: Health suitability checks and Disclosure and Barring Service checks are a regulatory requirement and subject to modification via external agencies. The School will inform prospective learners of these requirements, and any changes made to these by the external agencies, upon request.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

Clearance for an enhanced DBS check is mandatory on this programme. Students will be provided with instructions on how to apply for a DBS check, including a link to apply via a company called UCheck. Students must also sign up to the online DBS update service once the DBS certificate has been received.

Any student who has not completed the DBS application and sign up process, or who has not made the Programme Team, Student Support, Admissions Team aware of any Exceptional Circumstances, by the first working day in November (for September start programmes) or the first working day in March (for January start programmes) will be in breach of regulation B8 (11.1) in relation to providing incomplete information during the application process, and will enter the formal termination of studies process.

Additional requirement 1: Social Work England require that academic regulations for the approved PG-Dip Social Work Apprenticeship are appropriate. As such they may be more stringent than University norms in some areas in order to ensure safe and effective social work practice.

Additional requirement 2: As a professionally regulated programme the PG-Dip Social Work Apprenticeship and its learners are subject to the Fitness to Practise regulation (Regulation B5) and Health and Conduct

processes if required. Further details of these can be found in the programme handbook.

Additional requirement 3: Prior to undertaking their first placement experience, all learners must be approved by the Readiness to Practise Panel. For approval to be confirmed all elements of the Readiness for Social Work Practice module (SWK-40103) must be successfully completed and the learner must have an approved enhanced DBS certificate for both adults and children's social work. This additional requirement is needed to comply with regulatory requirements.

Additional Requirement 4, Attendance requirements: Due to the professional nature of this course, learners are expected to attend and engage in all scheduled learning sessions. Whilst we understand that there may occasionally be valid reasons why learners cannot attend, apologies to the Module Lead responsible for the session will be expected in line with professional standards of courtesies and learning missed will need to be made up. Where attendance drops below an acceptable standard on academic modules (with 'acceptable' usually being more than 80% of sessions), regardless of circumstances, learners will be required to engage in appropriate learning activities to be confirmed by the relevant Module Lead in order to ensure no gaps in essential knowledge. Where placement days are missed for any reason, they must be made up before the placement ends in order to ensure that the required number of days are completed. In addition, any skills days missed for any reason must be made up in consultation with the relevant Module Lead. Whilst all appropriate efforts will be made to support learners who may be struggling to attend and/or engage with taught sessions, where absence presents professional concerns, the Programme Director may decide to refer the learner to either Fitness to Practise processes or Health and Conduct processes as appropriate.

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[1] References to University Regulations in this document apply to the content of the University's Regulatory Framework as set out on the University website here https://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/.

Version History

This document

Date Approved: 21 August 2025

What's Changed

Additional costs and Annex -programme specific regulations sections updated.

Previous documents

Version No	Year	Owner	Date Approved	Summary of and rationale for changes
1.1	2025/26	CATH HOLMSTROM	07 July 2025	Updated information relating to DBS and Occupational Health requirements added to the programme-specific regulations annex
1	2025/26	CATH HOLMSTROM	17 June 2025	
1	2024/25	CATH HOLMSTROM	16 September 2024	