Approval process report

University of Sheffield, Speech and Language Therapy, 2022-23

Executive Summary

This is a report of the process to approve speech and language therapy programme(s) at the University of Sheffield. This report captures the process we have undertaken to assess the institution and programme(s) against our standards, to ensure those who complete the proposed programme(s) are fit to practice.

We have:
- Reviewed the institution against our institution level standards and found our standards are met in this area.
- Reviewed the programme(s) against our programme level standards and found our standards are met in this area following exploration of key themes through quality activities.
- Recommended all standards are met, and that the programme(s) should be approved.
- Decided that all standards are met, and that the programme is approved.

Through this assessment, we have noted:

- The following areas should be referred to another HCPC process for assessment:
- The education provider noted they are developing a degree apprenticeship specific Recognition of prior learning (RPL) process which would be applicable across their provision. Given this is still in development stage, more information / reflection should be provided about it through their next performance review process in 2027-28.
- The programme(s) meet all the relevant HCPC education standards and therefore should be approved.

Previous consideration	Not applicable. This approval process was not referred from another process.
Decision	The Education and Training Committee (Panel) is asked to decide whether the programme(s) is approved.
Next steps	The provider has just gone through their performance review. Their next performance review will be in the 2027-28 academic year.

Included within this report

Section 1: About this assessment

About us

We are the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), a regulator set up to protect the public. We set standards for education and training, professional knowledge and skills, conduct, performance and ethics; keep a register of professionals who meet those standards; approve programmes which professionals must complete before they can register with us; and take action when professionals on our Register do not meet our standards.

This is a report on the approval process undertaken by the HCPC to ensure that the programme detailed in this report meet our education standards. The report details the process itself, evidence considered, outcomes and recommendations made regarding the programme approval.

Our standards

We approve education providers and programmes that meet our education standards. Individuals who complete approved programmes will meet proficiency standards, which set out what a registrant should know, understand and be able to do when they complete their education and training. The education standards are outcome focused, enabling education providers to deliver programmes in different ways, as long as individuals who complete the programme meet the relevant proficiency standards.

Our regulatory approach

We are flexible, intelligent and data-led in our quality assurance of programme clusters and programmes. Through our processes, we:
- enable bespoke, proportionate and effective regulatory engagement with education providers;
- use data and intelligence to enable effective risk-based decision making; and
- engage at the organisation, profession and programme levels to enhance our ability to assess the impact of risks and issues on HCPC standards.

Providers and programmes are approved on an open-ended basis, subject to ongoing monitoring. Programmes we have approved are listed on our website.

The approval process

Institutions and programmes must be approved by us before they can run. The approval process is formed of two stages:
- Stage 1 – we take assurance that institution level standards are met by the institution delivering the proposed programme(s)
- Stage 2 – we assess to be assured that programme level standards are met by each proposed programme

Through the approval process, we take assurance in a bespoke and flexible way, meaning that we will assess whether providers and programmes meet standards based on what we see, rather than by a one size fits all approach. Our standards are split along institution and programme level lines, and we take assurance at the provider level wherever possible.

This report focuses on the assessment of the self-reflective portfolio and evidence.

How we make our decisions

We make independent evidence based decisions about programme approval. For all assessments, we ensure that we have profession specific input in our decision making. In order to do this, we appoint partner visitors to design quality assurance assessments, and assess evidence and information relevant to the assessment. Visitors make recommendations to the Education and Training Committee (ETC). Education providers have the right of reply to the recommendation. If an education provider wishes to, they can supply 'observations' as part of the process.

The ETC make the decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of programmes. In order to do this, they consider recommendations detailed in process reports, and any observations from education providers (if submitted). The Committee takes decisions through different levels depending on the routines and impact of the decision, and where appropriate meets in public. Their decisions are available to view on our website.

The assessment panel for this review

We appointed the following panel members to support this review:

Lucy Myers	Lead visitor, Speech and language therapist
Paul Bates	Lead visitor, Paramedic
Temilolu Odunaike	Education Quality Officer
Tracey Samuel-Smith	Education Manager

Section 2: Institution-level assessment

The education provider context

The education provider currently delivers seven HCPC-approved programmes across three professions and including two Prescribing programmes. It is a Higher Education Institution and has been running HCPC approved programmes since 1990.

The education provider already runs two HCPC approved Speech and Language Therapy programmes - BMedSci (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy and MMedSci Speech and Language Therapy. However, the new programme is their first HCPC degree apprenticeship programme.

The education provider has gone through their first HCPC performance review process and have received a recommendation of five-year review period. This will be presented to the Education and Training Committee in August 2023 for their decision.

Practice areas delivered by the education provider

The provider is approved to deliver training in the following professional areas. A detailed list of approved programme awards can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

	Practice area	Delivery level		Approved since
Pre-registration	Orthoptist	☒Undergraduate	☐Postgraduate	2017
	Practitioner psychologist	☐Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	1990
	Speech and language therapist	☒Undergraduate	☒Postgraduate	2003
Post-registration	Orthoptist Exemptions			2018

Institution performance data

Data is embedded into how we understand performance and risk. We capture data points in relation to provider performance, from a range of sources. We compare provider data points to benchmarks, and use this information to inform our risk based decisions about the approval and ongoing approval of institutions and programmes.

This data is for existing provision at the institution, and does not include the proposed programme(s).

Data Point	Bench-mark	Value	Date	Commentary
Total intended learner numbers compared to total enrolment numbers	194	214	2023	The benchmark figure is data we have captured from previous interactions with the education provider, such as through initial programme approval, and / or through previous performance review assessments. Resources available for the benchmark number of leaners was assessed and accepted through these processes. The value figure is the benchmark figure, plus the number of

				learners the provider is proposing through the new provision.
Learners – Aggregation of percentage not continuing	3%	5%	2020-2021	This data was sourced from a data delivery. This means the data is a bespoke Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects. The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing below sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 2%. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because the data (2019-20) available at the time of assessment showed the education provider's score was same as the benchmark which suggested they were performing in line with sector norms.
Graduates – Aggregation of percentage in employment / further study	94%	96%	2019-2020	This data was sourced from a data delivery a bespoke HESA data return, filtered bases on HCPC-related subjects. The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 1%. We did not explore this data point through this assessment because the score is still higher than the

				benchmark and as such, we did not consider any impact on SETs.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) award	N/A	Silver	2019	The definition of a Silver TEF award is "Provision is of high quality, and significantly and consistently exceeds the baseline quality threshold expected of UK Higher Education."
National Student Survey (NSS) overall satisfaction score (Q27)	76.5%	78.5%	2022	This data was sourced at the subject level. This means the data is for HCPC-related subjects. The data point is above the benchmark, which suggests the provider is performing above sector norms. When compared to the previous year's data point, the education provider's performance has dropped by 3%. We did not explore this drop through this assessment because, overall, the data shows teaching quality is still above sector norm and no impact on SETs considered.
HCPC performance review cycle length	N/A	N/A	2022	The education provider has just gone through their performance review. Visitors have recommended a five-year review period which will be submitted to the Education and Training Committee in August 2023 for their decision.

The route through stage 1

Institutions which run HCPC-approved provision have previously demonstrated that they meet institution-level standards. When an existing institution proposes a new programme, we undertake an internal review of whether we need to undertake a full

partner-led review against our institution level standards, or whether we can take assurance that the proposed programme(s) aligns with existing provision.

As part of the request to approve the proposed programme(s), the education provider supplied information to show alignment in the following areas.

<u>Admissions</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Information for applicants** –
  - Full information about all programmes can be found on the education provider website. For the proposed programme, information can be found under the Health and Sciences School (HSS) website.
  - The education provider recognises there will be small changes to the admissions policies due to the different delivery model of the degree apprenticeship programme. For example, the joint interview stage by the education provider and employer will apply.
  - They also confirmed applicants to this programme would apply via the postgraduate taught online application process as per other degree apprenticeships.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs degree apprenticeship programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Assessing English language, character, and health** –
  - The education provider has institution wide polices relating to English language, character and health.
  - In line with their already approved speech and language therapy programmes, the education provider requires a higher International English Language Test (IELTs) score. This is in line with the professional body (Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT)).
  - A satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) report is required for entry to all programmes. All applicants on health professional programmes must undergo an Enhanced DBS check.
  - All applicants on health professional programmes must undergo an occupational health assessment via the education provider.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Prior learning and experience (AP(E)L)** –
  - The Recognition of prior learning (RPL) policy applies across the education provider. The education provider recognises there will be small changes for the proposed programme. Assessment will still be undertaken on a case-by-case basis, but it will align with the knowledge, skills and behaviour of the apprenticeship standards.
  - The education provider noted they are currently developing specific RPL processes for the degree apprenticeship programmes they run.
  - In the meantime, this aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs degree apprenticeship programmes.

- o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** –
  - o The education provider has a range of policies such as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion University Policy for Students and Disability Equality Strategy. These will apply to the proposed programme.
  - o In addition, The University of Sheffield Equal Opportunities code of practice outlines how the education provider ensures they comply to the relevant legislation. This applies to the proposed programme.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: The education provider should provide more information about how their review of the RPL for degree apprenticeship programmes is progressing at their next performance review in 2027/28.

Management and governance

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Ability to deliver provision to expected threshold level of entry to the Register[1]** –
  - o The education provider has several policies which ensure the programme meets the threshold level of entry. There are policies / processes for the Annual Reflection Process, external examiner involvement and academic regulations.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Sustainability of provision** –
  - o The education provider outlined their Student protection plan which has been approved by the Office for Students (OfS). This outlines the steps the education provider will take if there is ever a risk to their programme discontinuing. This is an institution wide policy.
  - o The education provider also undertakes an Annual Reflection Process which includes internal and external reviews. This ensures the quality of the provision offered, including meeting regulatory requirements. It also ensures the identification of best practice and areas for improvement.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Effective programme delivery** –
  - o The education provider outlined their programme management structure, which follows an institution wide format. This includes

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[1] This is focused on ensuring providers are able to deliver qualifications at or equivalent to the level(s) in SET 1, as required for the profession(s) proposed

information about the reporting structures for the programme lead within the department and wider faculty.

- o As outlined above, the education provider undertakes an Annual Reflection Process to ensure the sustainability of and effectiveness of delivery.
- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
- o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Effective staff management and development** –
  - o A range of policies exist at the institution level relating to staff management and development. For example, the Learning and Teaching professional Recognition Scheme which outlines how all new teaching staff are supported to gain Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowship.
  - o All staff undertake a Staff Review and Development Scheme (SRDS) annually.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Partnerships, which are managed at the institution level** –
  - o The education provider outlined how the proposed programme was developed in collaboration with NHS England, (formerly Higher Education England) and how they will continue with a regular review by NHS England and the employer(s).
  - o The Partnership and Regional Engagement team works across the provision to develop and maintain relationships. This includes public, knowledge and regional development.
  - o The education provider is part of the Learning Environments and Assessment Placements (LEAP) in the Humber and North Yorkshire regions. This focusses on "creating a healthier" environment for learners within practice-based learning.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

Quality, monitoring, and evaluation

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Academic quality** –
  - o As outlined earlier in Sustainability of provision, the education provider runs an Annual Reflection process.
  - o The education provider also outlined their Tell Us learner feedback system. This ensures feedback from learners informs programme / module development. Feedback is collected at the end of each module and at the end of the academic year.
  - o The External examiner code of practice is an institution wide policy. For example, it ensures programmes are delivered to the right standard

and assessment methods are appropriate. They are strongly encouraged to suggest programme / curriculum developments.

- o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
- o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Practice quality, including the establishment of safe and supporting practice learning environments** –
  - o The education provider has a range of institution wide policies / guidance to ensure the practice-based learning quality. This includes audits undertaken prior to attendance; practice educator training; and how learners raise concerns while in the practice-based learning environment.
  - o The education provider outlines, that in addition, learners on the proposed programme will have a clinical mentor within the practice-based learning environment to ensure appropriate learning and progression.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs degree apprenticeship programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learner involvement -**
  - o The education provider uses the institution wide policy of Tell Us to gather learner feedback, reflect and take forward appropriate actions.
  - o The education provider works with the Student Union and Academic Reps who represent their year group and department. At a departmental level, the Student Voice Committee reports to the Education Committee.
  - o For the Health Science School, the Student Academic Reps from different programmes meet to discuss shared issues.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Service user and carer involvement** –
  - o Patients as Educators are involved in teaching and research to assist learners to better understand the needs and experiences of this stakeholder group.
  - o For speech and language therapy provision, the Phillippa Cottam Communication Centre operates as a professional clinic. Service users from the centre will participate as Patients as Educators in the delivery of the proposed programme.
  - o Learners will also gain service user feedback while working in their organisation of employment, in addition to their practice-based learning.
  - o This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs degree apprenticeship programmes.
  - o We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

<u>Learners</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Support** –
  - The education provider has a range of learner support services available on their website. For example, Welfare and Wellbeing; Customer and Digital Experience Service and Library support.
  - The Student Support Committee meets four times a year to ensure the support services continue to be appropriate and applicable to the education provider vision and wider higher education environment.
  - The proposed programme will be delivered online. It was confirmed that all the services, except possibly the University Health Service (which provides NHS GP access to those living in Sheffield), are available online. They confirmed learners living outside Sheffield would be required to contact their local GP.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs degree apprenticeship programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Ongoing suitability** –
  - The education has institution wide policies related to ongoing suitability. These include the Fitness to practise policy and procedures and Fitness to study policy. These ensure learners continue to be suitable to undertake professional programmes and are supported to participate if they have any physical or mental health concerns.
  - In addition, due to the nature of the programme, the learner's employer will also have applicable suitability policies / processes.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs degree apprenticeship programmes.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Learning with and from other learners and professionals (IPL/E)** –
  - Across the education provider, and where possible, learners are taught in mixed groups. This mix is dependent on the profession though will include learners from other health care professions and the wider professional groups.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** –
  - The education provider has institution wide policies / procedures relating to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). These include The University of Sheffield Equal Opportunities Code of practice; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion University Policy for students; and Accessibility of digital learning tools.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None

<u>Assessment</u>

Findings on alignment with existing provision:
- **Objectivity** –
  - The University of Sheffield assessment guidance applies to all programmes. Programme leads ensure assessment loads, length of assessments and credit ratings follow guidance from the Academic Programmes Office.
  - Programmes ensure external examiners are appointed in line with the education providers appointment process. They contribute to a range of activities to ensure the objectivity of assessment, such as the setting of assessments; marking and feeding back on modules; and submitting annual reports.
  - The education provider also outlined that where possible, assessments were undertaken via the virtual learning environment where marking is anonymously, adhering to the Institutional marking and moderation policy.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Progression and achievement** –
  - Learners are informed via their handbooks about the policies / processes relating to progression and achievement. These also outline the attendance level required for learners to progress through the programme. The education provider outlined how, for health programmes, this is higher than the general education provider requirements.
  - Exit awards are clearly outlined to learners should they be unable to meet the requirements for the programme.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.
- **Appeals** –
  - The Student complaints and appeals process is set at an institution level. This outlines the specific policies for those involved to follow and clarifies the differences between the two policies.
  - This aligns with our understanding of how the education provider runs.
  - We think this as the education provider has indicated there have not been any changes to how they meet this area.

Non-alignment requiring further assessment: None.

Outcomes from stage 1

We decided to progress to stage 2 of the process without further review through stage 1, due to the clear alignment of the new provision within existing institutional structures, as noted through the previous section.

Section 3: Programme-level assessment

Programmes considered through this assessment

Programme name	Mode of study	Profession (including modality) / entitlement	Proposed learner number, and frequency	Proposed start date
BSc (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy (Degree Apprenticeship)	WBL (Work based learning)	Speech and Language Therapist	20 learners, one cohort per year	01/09/2023

Stage 2 assessment – provider submission

The education provider was asked to demonstrate how they meet programme level standards for each programme. They supplied information about how each standard was met, including a rationale and links to supporting information via a mapping document.

Quality themes identified for further exploration

We reviewed the information provided, and worked with the education provider on our understanding of their submission. Based on our understanding, we defined and undertook the following quality assurance activities linked to the quality themes referenced below. This allowed us to consider whether the education provider met our standards.

Quality theme 1 – impact on capacity of practice-based learning in the same geographical area.

Area for further exploration: Due to the nature of degree apprenticeship programmes, it was clear that learners will complete placements within their own organisations and that the employer will be responsible for sourcing these placements. Although the intention is for the education provider to work in collaboration with NHS England, employers and the learner to secure placement provision. This collaboration was welcomed.

The visitors also noted the intention for the apprenticeship placements to be additional to the placements currently offered by local services for the other Speech and Language Therapy degree programmes, although it was not clear how this will be managed. We understood the apprentices will also be undertaking some of these placements. The visitors were aware that securing placement capacity for those programmes is challenging. There have also been two new Speech and Language Therapy providers opening programmes close to Sheffield. The visitors sought an indication of any processes for reducing the risk of the apprenticeship programme drawing placement capacity away from other programmes.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We explored this through email clarification / additional evidence. We considered this the most effective way to get a clearer understanding of how the education provider addressed the issues raised.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider in their response, outlined the processes in place to preserve and expand current placement capacity within their existing Speech and Language Therapy programmes. Some of which include:

- NHS England national education contract;
- Quarterly Higher Education Institute/ NHS England contract review meetings;
- South Yorkshire Integrated Care System (ICS) Education Delivery Group; and
- Stakeholder meetings with managers, Allied Health Professions (AHP) leads and employers across the North and North West region.

They also noted other processes to develop new placements with other stakeholders such as the Local Education Authority, Academy Schools, Social Care, Independent Practice and Local Authority. For example, we understood their Language Enrichment Activity Programme (LEAP) placement allows learners on the MMedSci programme to work in pairs in schools. This helps to deliver the LEAP to primary school children identified (by the schools) with speech, language and communication needs. Simulation is also being used to support practice-based learning capacity and the education provider expects the increase in the placement capacity for the existing programmes to reduce the risk of the apprenticeship programme drawing away placement capacity.

The visitors noted the education provider has identified a wide range of initiatives aimed at increasing placement capacity on the existing programmes in order to protect them from any impact of the proposed new programme. They are working in partnership with a wide range of organisations to identify innovative solutions to challenges around placement capacity. Therefore, the visitors were satisfied that the quality activity had adequately addressed the issue and they considered the standard met.

Quality theme 2 – ensuring numbers of staff will be appropriate to deliver the programme effectively to all learners.

Area for further exploration: The visitors noted the programme team are already successfully delivering approved Speech and Language Therapy programmes which provides assurance that there are appropriately qualified and experienced staff members available.

We considered the apprenticeship programme is an entirely separate programme to those that currently exist within the institution and will require considerable resource to deliver the teaching required. The programme is delivered online and while the team have extensive experience of online delivery to post registration learners, they considered this programme will be new content to learners and create learning resources for this programme will be time consuming.

The other significant resourcing demand on the new programme is the 8-12 week in person tripartite meetings which the education provider noted will take place at the apprentice's employer. The visitors' understanding of the documentation was that this will mean each apprentice has approximately five meetings a year, across 20 learners that will be 100 additional off-site meetings to organise and staff per year. This will equate to 400 meetings when the programme is fully running.

There is a commitment to increase existing staffing by 1.7 full time equivalent (FTE) across 18 months. The visitors sought further information to understand what mapping has taken place to indicate that this increase is indeed sufficient.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this through email clarification / additional evidence. We considered this the most effective way to get a clearer understanding of how the education provider has addressed the issues raised.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained that although the Degree Apprenticeship is a new programme, its content aligns with the existing Speech and Language Therapy degree programmes. We understood staff who will teach into and support the new programme will create new learning and teaching resources specific to the programme from existing resources. Their experience of delivering learning and teaching online during the COVID-19 pandemic would also be an advantage and we understood there are available resources to support the new programme.

The education provider noted visitors' feedback about the staffing of the tripartite meetings and responded that this will be continually reviewed. We understood some of the meetings will be completed online / remotely at the request of employers / apprentices. Staffing was mapped and there are plans in place to increase from 1.7FTE to 2.2FTE. The education provider submitted their academic staff calculation which provided a breakdown of how the 2.2FTE will be utilised across the entire programme, including the number of hours each staff will be committed to the programme.

The visitors considered the breakdown comprehensive. They also noted the process for reviewing staffing levels should they find that the tripartite meetings do require further resource than is currently anticipated was adequately explained. The visitors were satisfied the quality activity adequately addressed the issue and as such, they considered the standard met.

Quality theme 3 – identification of standards of proficiency (SOPs) in the programme.

Area for further exploration: In the submission, the visitors reviewed the SOPs mapping document and compared this to the module descriptors and learning outcomes.

Visitors were unable to identify information in the Practice placement or Professional autonomy in Speech and Language modules relating to how learners would manage their own physical and mental health. This specifically related to:

- SOP 3 - look after their health and wellbeing, seeking appropriate support where necessary.

In addition, the visitors were referred to the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours (KSB) in the Work Based Learning (WBL) Portfolio and KSB mapping document. The visitors were also unable to identify information in the Practice placement or Professional autonomy in Speech and Language modules relating to leadership. Therefore, the visitors were unable to determine how the following leadership SOPs were included in the programme:

- SOP 8.6 - understand the qualities, behaviours and benefits of leadership;
- SOP 8.7 - recognise that leadership is a skill all professionals can demonstrate;
- SOP 8.8 - identify their own leadership qualities, behaviours and approaches, taking into account the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion; and
- SOP 8.9 - demonstrate leadership behaviours appropriate to their practice, were also mapped against practice placement modules and professional autonomy in Speech and Language Therapy.

In addition, the visitors were referred to the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours in the Work Based Learning (WBL) Portfolio and KSB mapping document. The visitors were unable to identify information in the Practice placement, Understanding Society, or Key Clinical modules relating to health promotion. They were therefore unable to determine how the following health promotion SOP was included in the programme:

- SOP 15.1 understand the role of their profession in health promotion, health education and preventing ill health was mapped against learning outcome (LO)6 for cognition and communication in adults.

The visitors therefore sought clarity relating to where the above areas were included in the programme to ensure that learners would be able to demonstrate all the SOPs upon successful completion of the programme.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this through additional evidence. We considered this the most effective way to get a clearer understanding of how all SOPs will be covered in the programmes / mapped to the learning outcomes.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider submitted an updated SOPs mapping document which clearly outlined where the SOPs are mapped. The visitors also reviewed the updated programme handbook which showed the module descriptors now include the missing areas highlighted above. This reassured the visitors that the identified SOPs are all covered in the programme. The visitors were satisfied the quality activity adequately had addressed their concerns.

Quality theme 4 – how the programme reflects curriculum guidance.

Area for further exploration: Reviewing the programme against the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) curriculum guidance, the visitors did not see any reference to the following areas in the module descriptors:
- Cleft lip and palate
- Head and neck cancer/oncology/palliative care
- Hearing impairment/deafness

The visitors considered the above areas relevant to the curriculum as noted in the RCSLT guidance and such that the education provider needed to have considered these. They therefore requested that the education provider submit further evidence to show they have reflected upon the professional body's curriculum guidance. This would then demonstrate how these areas are covered in the curriculum so we are assured that learners will have the necessary skills and knowledge base to practice safely and effectively in these areas.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this through email clarification and additional evidence. We considered this the most effective way to get a clearer understanding of how the issues identified are addressed.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider submitted updated module descriptors which clearly outlined how and where the identified areas are covered in the programme. The visitors considered the education provider had clarified in the updated documentation where the content highlighted is placed within the programme and therefore how the programme reflects the RCSLT curriculum guidance. Therefore, they were satisfied the quality activity had adequately addressed the issue raised and that the relevant standard is met.

Quality theme 5 – processes in place to ensure the curriculum remains relevant to current practice.

Area for further exploration: It was clear through the documentation that the programme reflects current practice. However, it was not clear what mechanisms were in place to ensure that the programme continues to remain relevant to current practice. Therefore, the visitors requested further evidence of the processes that are in place to review and update the curriculum to ensure that it continues to reflect current practice.

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this through email clarification and additional information. We considered these the most effective ways to get a clearer understanding of how the issues identified are addressed.

Outcomes of exploration: Through their response to quality activity, we understood a RCSLT accreditation is one of the major ways by which the education provider ensures the programme remains relevant to current practice. There are several other internal processes which the programme will go through to ensure it remains relevant to current practice, for example the education provider's bi-annual reflection process and their Health Sciences School Learning & Teaching Committee meetings.

The visitors considered the response had clarified there are a range of processes to ensure that the programme remains relevant to current practice. They include both internal and external processes and draw in a range of stakeholders. The visitors were therefore satisfied the quality activity had adequately addressed the issue raised and as such, they had no further concerns.

Quality theme 6 – further clarity around requirements to pass the programme.

Area for further exploration: Learners are required to pass all modules before progressing to the next part of the programme.

The work-based learning portfolio provides a comprehensive record of the learner's progress and achievement and covers all the areas queried above in relation to the way specific SOPs are addressed in the modules. The visitors were unclear whether learners are required to have reached required to have reached the highest level in the work-based learning portfolio, described as 'dissemination' for all the elements in the work-based learning portfolio. The visitors could see it described as part of the evidence required but were unclear whether that meant it was necessary but not sufficient or whether learners could provide evidence instead of the work-based learning portfolio (WBLP).

Quality activities agreed to explore theme further: We decided to explore this through email clarification. We considered this the most effective way to get a clearer understanding of how the education provider has addressed the issues raised.

Outcomes of exploration: The education provider explained that some evidence of this dissemination level is expected on completion of year four. We understood not all competencies have to be achieved at dissemination level to pass the programme. This clarification was also provided in the programme documentation.

The visitors considered the education provider had clarified the levels that learners are expected to achieve on the WBLP by the end of the programme. As such, the visitors were satisfied the quality activity had adequately addressed the issue raised and that the relevant standard has been met.

Section 4: Findings

This section details the visitors' findings from their review through stage 2, including any requirements set, and a summary of their overall findings.

Conditions

Conditions are requirements that must be met before providers or programmes can be approved. We set conditions when there is an issue with the education provider's approach to meeting a standard. This may mean that we have evidence that standards are not met at this time, or the education provider's planned approach is not suitable.

The visitors were satisfied that no conditions were required to satisfy them that all standards are met. The visitors' findings, including why no conditions were required, are presented below.

Overall findings on how standards are met

This section provides information summarising the visitors' findings against the programme-level standards. The section also includes a summary of risks, further areas to be followed up, and areas of good practice.

Findings of the assessment panel:
- **SET 1: Level of qualification for entry to the Register** – this standard is covered through institution-level assessment.

- **SET 2: Programme admissions** –
  - Potential applicants have to be employed by their organisation as a speech and language therapist apprentice and meet the entry requirements of the programme.
  - The visitors considered the selection and entry criteria are clear and the responsibility for different aspects of recruitment and selection are clearly delineated.
  - Therefore, they are satisfied that the relevant standard in this SET area is met.

- **SET 3: Programme governance, management and leadership** –
  - Collaboration with practice partners has driven the development of the programme and collaboration with NHS England has been central to its development. There is also evidence of effective collaboration with Yorkshire and North West employers.
  - University of Sheffield Practice Educator (USPE) meeting minutes demonstrated detailed joint working between the education provider and their practice education providers. The minutes demonstrated reflection on previous experiences as well as forward planning. It is clear that items can be raised by practice partners which are then followed up and addressed by the education provider team. The minutes showed that issues that take longer to resolve are followed through until completion.
  - From the initial documentation and through quality theme 1 we noted clear processes for ensuring capacity of practice-based learning. It was also clear how the risk of the apprenticeship programme drawing away placement capacity from existing Speech and Language Therapy programmes will be reduced.
  - As outlined in quality theme 2 and from the initial submission, it is clear how the education provider will ensure proposed additional staff that will be recruited will be adequate to ensure effective delivery of the programme to all learners. It is also clear how workload is shared among staff to ensure existing programmes are not affected.
  - The programme team already delivers pre-registration speech and language therapy programmes. Curriculum vitae (CVs) provided

indicate a range of knowledge and experience. There is sufficient evidence to determine the educators have the necessary knowledge to deliver their parts of the programme effectively.

- o The education provider submitted evidence that resources that are appropriate and effective to deliver the programme are in place. With online learning, resources are available online and accessible to both learners and educators.
- o The visitors are therefore satisfied that the education provider has clearly demonstrated that the programme meets all standards within this SET area.

- **SET 4: Programme design and delivery** –
    - o The initial programme documentation showed how the majority of the standards of proficiency (SOPs) are mapped on to the knowledge, skills and behaviours and practice placements of the proposed programme. Through quality theme 3, we noted how the remaining SOPs would be delivered in the programme.
    - o There is evidence that the learning outcomes of the programme meet the expectations of professional behaviour including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
    - o Visitors identified discrepancies for one of the module titles. Clarification was provided by the education provider and evidence provided that all programme documentation had been updated to reflect correct module titles.
    - o Through quality theme 4, we noted evidence that demonstrated the programme reflects relevant curriculum guidance including areas around cleft lip and palate, head and neck, cancer / oncology / palliative care, and hearing impairment / deafness. This further demonstrated how the education provider will ensure learners will have the necessary skills and knowledge base to practice safely and effectively.
    - o The initial submission demonstrated the programme broadly meets current curriculum guidance. As detailed in quality theme 5, further information submitted demonstrated there are processes in place to review and update the curriculum to ensure that it continues to reflect current practice.
    - o Through their review, the visitors determined the programme is designed and will be delivered in a way that will ensure learners who complete it meet our standards for their professional knowledge and skills and are fit to practise.
    - o The visitors considered all standards within this SET area met.

- **SET 5: Practice-based learning** –
    - o Practice placements are integrated across each year of the programme. There is an intention to ensure that learners access a range of placements.
    - o Practice educators are chosen from qualified and experienced staff. Although the practice placement programme for the apprentices sits outside the placement programme for the existing programmes, the practice educators will join the existing community of practice

educators. They will access training and support from the education provider. Practice educators are required to have met the Newly Qualified Practitioner (NQP) competencies.

- o All practice educators are required to be HCPC registered and have completed their RCSLT NQP competencies. They are expected to complete training every three years. Completion of training is monitored by the education provider and placement coordinators are asked to monitor completion of training within their teams.
- o The visitors considered there is clear evidence of effective processes in place for overseeing practice-based learning. We are also satisfied that the processes would ensure practice educators are suitable and that there is adequate support for learners to take part in safe and effective practice-based learning.
- o The visitors were satisfied all standards in this SET area are met.

- **SET 6: Assessment** –
  - o An appropriate range of assessments are used across the programme. Assessments are mapped on to the knowledge, skills and behaviours of the apprenticeship standard and also mapped against the HCPC SOPs.
  - o Through quality theme 6, further clarity was provided as regards requirement for passing the programme.
  - o Professional conduct is clearly integrated into placement assessments. A range of assessments are used to assess if learners meet the expectations of professional behaviour, including the standards of conduct, performance and ethics.
  - o The End Point Assessment is completed at the end of the programme to confirm final completion of competencies.
  - o The placement assessments and the work-based learning (WBL) portfolio provide robust assessment of knowledge and skills in practice.
  - o The visitors were therefore satisfied that all standards within this SET area are met.

Risks identified which may impact on performance: None

Section 5: Referrals

This section summarises any areas which require further follow-up through a separate quality assurance process (the approval, focused review, or performance review process).

There were no outstanding issues to be referred to another process.

Recommendations

We include recommendations when standards are met at or just above threshold level, and where there is a risk to that standard being met in the future. They do not need to be met before programmes can be approved, but they should be considered by education providers when developing their programmes.

The visitors did not set any recommendations.

Referrals to next scheduled performance review

Recognition of prior learning process (RPL) for degree apprenticeship programmes

Summary of issue: Within the mapping document, the education provider stated they were currently developing a degree apprenticeship specific RPL process. This would be applicable across the education provider provision. The visitors understood RPL is currently satisfactory, but this is a development. Therefore, through their next performance review process in 2027-28, the education provider should provide more information about how their review of the RPL for degree apprenticeship programmes is progressing.

Section 6: Decision on approval process outcomes

Assessment panel recommendation

Based on the findings detailed in section 4, the visitors recommend to the Education and Training Committee that:
- All standards are met, and therefore the programme should be approved.
- The issue identified for referral through this review should be carried out in accordance with the details contained in section 5 of this report.

Education and Training Committee decision

Education and Training Committee considered the assessment panel's recommendations and the findings which support these. The education provider was also provided with the opportunity to submit any observation they had on the conclusions reached.

Based on all information presented to them, the Committee decided that:
- The programmes are approved.
- The issues identified for referral through this review should be carried out during the education provider's next scheduled performance review.

Reason for this decision: The Panel accepted the visitor's recommendation that the provider and its programme should receive approval.

Appendix 1 – list of open programmes at this institution

Name	Mode of study	Profession	Modality	Annotation	First intake date
BMed Sci (Hons) Orthoptics	FT (Full time)	Orthoptist		POM - Sale / Supply (OR)	01/09/2017
Doctor of Educational and Child Psychology (DEdCPsy)	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Educational psychologist		01/01/2005
Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DclinPsy)	FT (Full time)	Practitioner psychologist	Clinical psychologist		01/01/1990
BMedSci (Hons) Speech and Language Therapy	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapist			01/09/2018
MMedSci Speech and Language Therapy	FT (Full time)	Speech and language therapist			01/09/2018
MMedSci Vision and Strabismus	DL (Distance learning)			POM - Sale / Supply (OR)	01/09/2018
PG Exemptions Course	DL (Distance learning)			POM - Sale / Supply (OR)	01/09/2018