

Programme Specification

Award and title: MA Disability and Mental Health Social Work

<i>School:</i>	Education, Language & Psychology
<i>Subject area:</i>	Children, Young People and Education
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2023-24
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York St John University
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	Social Work England
<i>Exit awards:</i>	PG Dip Disability and Mental Health Social Work MA Disability and Mental Health PG Dip Disability and Mental Health PG Cert Disability and Mental Health
<i>UCAS code / GTTR / other:</i>	
<i>Joint Honours combinations:</i>	N/A
<i>QAA subject benchmark statement(s):</i>	Social Work (2019), Master's Degree Characteristics Statement (2020)
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Postgraduate periods of study ¹ for 2 years full time
<i>Language of study:</i>	English
<i>Paired with Foundation Year</i>	No
<i>Study abroad opportunities:</i>	No
<i>Opt-in YSJU Placement Year opportunity:</i>	No

Introduction and special features

The MA Disability and Mental Health Social Work provides professional training for those aspiring to enter the social work profession. Social Work England, the national regulator for social work, provides accreditation for the course. On successful completion of this course, you will be eligible to apply to register with them, and practice as a qualified social worker across a variety of settings.

As well as a broad understanding of social work with children and adults, this course highlights the experiences of disability and mental health across the life cycle and in the context of practice itself. These issues are central to all areas of social work practice, and you will graduate with a solid grounding in the complexities and challenges people are facing in our society, including social workers.

This course has been co-designed with a range of social work practitioners, people with lived experience, and community groups representing various priorities and interests. We believe this course is holistic, wide-ranging and uniquely relevant to real-world practice as a result.

This course will provide you with a broad range of tools and knowledge essential to becoming an effective and competent practitioner. It combines theory, skills practice, work-based placements, supervision and personal development opportunities. The course ensures that you will understand your responsibility and build your capacity to meet the professional standards set out in the British Association of Social Work (BASW) Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF).

We have designed the course to work outwards from considering the student practitioners' motivations and professional development, to working with individual children and adults, to working within family, multi-disciplinary and community settings, and finally providing an overview of the societal, cultural, organisational and political contexts of social work in England today.

Social work courses must prepare students for the realities of working in the field and as such, the course includes two practice placements and 30 skills days. The first placement is 70 days in a non-statutory setting and will encourage you to develop your skills of engaging with, assessing and understanding people. The second placement is 100 days in a statutory setting where you will put your knowledge of law into practice, experience the complexity, ethical dilemmas, organisational challenges and learn how to make decisions in more high-risk environments. The skills days offer a wide range of knowledge and skills associated with social work practice, multi-agency and partnership working, and the practicalities of delivering social work in our society.

Social work exists within a societal and political context which can directly impact on practice and organisational cultures. This course ensures you are aware of the intricacies of these factors and provides you with a holistic understanding of social work in context. This course has a strong social justice ethos which challenges hetero-patriarchy, white supremacy, capitalism and colonialism as they manifest in social work practices. You will be encouraged to challenge oppression throughout your academic work, your placements and your future careers.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the minimum entry requirements which are:

- Minimum of 2:1 BA or BSc (Hons) Degree* in any subject
- A minimum of 6 months experience in a relevant setting
- A satisfactory Medical Health Questionnaire
- A satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check
- A successful interview process
- Satisfactory references
- If your first language is not English, you need to achieve a minimum score of 7.0 overall in an IELTS test or an equivalent qualification accepted by the University (see <https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/international/how-to-apply/english-language-requirements/>).

*If you do not have this level of academic qualification for postgraduate study, but have extensive experience in a relevant setting, you may be asked to undertake the Access to Postgraduate Study module (COU6006M), as part of the entry process.

Values based recruitment

The values base for Social Work and the MA Disability and Mental Health Social Work course recruitment and selection process at York St John University is based on:

- [Social care values \(see Skills for Care\)](#)
 - o For example; Goode, J (2014) Value based recruitment toolkit Skills for Care
- [NHS values \(as embedded in the NHS constitution\)](#)
- [Values Based Recruitment Guidance \(Health Education England\)](#)
 - o For example; Health Education England (2016) Values Based Recruitment Framework
- Service user and carer consultations and guidance.
 - o For example; North of England Mental Health Development Unit (2013) Working with People with dementia and their carers: Values Based Recruitment North East Dementia Alliance

In line with this guidance, MA Disability and Mental Health Social Work applicant assessments will include a focus on user perspectives, communication skills and empathy.

Programme aim(s)

The MA aims to facilitate the development of effective, competent, ethically-minded, theoretically-informed, self-aware, reflexive social work practitioners who are capable and interested in practicing in a wide range of social work settings with particularly robust knowledge in the areas of disability and mental health.

The MA aims to ensure that student practitioners can situate themselves in the wider context of social work, society and politics and understand how a variety of pressures can influence workplace culture and practice.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 7

- 7.1 Understand the professional standards for Social Work, the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and the British Association of Social Work (BASW) code of ethics, demonstrating an ability to practise these across different contexts and institutions.
- 7.2 Demonstrate a critical awareness of self and the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required to practice as a Social Worker in a variety of multi-agency settings, with particular focus on disability and mental health.
- 7.3 Critically reflect on peoples' rights and strengths and contexts in order to promote social justice, quality of life and wellbeing, and ethical practice.
- 7.4 Apply critical evaluation and analysis to inform and provide a rationale for professional decision making, demonstrating awareness of a range of factors such as disability, mental health, trauma and grief.
- 7.5 Plan, conduct, report, and evaluate a sustained piece of research that addresses an important academic and/or professional practice issue relevant to disability or mental health social work.

Programme structure

Code	Level	Year	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
MSW7001M	7	1	Children and Young People	20	C	NC
MSW7002M	7	1	Adults and Older People	20	C	NC
MSW7003M	7	1	Family Contexts and the Hostile Environment	20	C	NC
MSW7004M	7	1	Preparation for Practice 1	10	C	NC
MSW7005P	7	1	Placement 1 (70 days)	0	C	NC
MSW7006M	7	2	Advanced Practice in Disability and Mental Health Social Work	20	C	NC
MSW7007M	7	2	Society, Culture and Political Context of Social Work	10	C	NC
MSW7008M	7	2	Trauma and Grief	10	C	NC
MSW7009M	7	2	Preparation for Practice 2	10	C	NC
MSW7010P	7	2	Placement 2 (100 days)	0	C	NC
MSW7011M	7	2	Dissertation	60	C	NC

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the table above as non-compensatable. A non-compensatable module is one that must be passed at the relevant level (with a mark of 50) in order to progress.

Academic sessions are substantial, and attendance will be closely monitored. All 200 placement and skills days must be attended, and academic attendance must not drop below 80% in order to be eligible to register with Social Work England.

The course will extend across university semesters, and standard university breaks will not apply.

Learning, teaching and assessment

The course is delivered full-time over two years and combines taught, practical and experiential learning.

The content will ensure you are prepared to meet the appropriate stages of the [BASW Professional Capabilities Framework \(PCF\)](#) with a focus on its 9 domains:

- Professionalism
- Values and Ethics
- Diversity
- Rights and Justice
- Knowledge
- Critical Reflection
- Intervention and Skills
- Contexts and Organisations
- Professional Leadership

In the first year, you will complete four taught modules which represent the foundations of social work knowledge. Taught sessions include lectures, seminars and small group work. Academic staff, social work professionals, other related professionals and people with lived experience will be involved in the delivery of lectures and seminars. Your independent study will include reading and preparation for the seminars as well as the completion of assessments. The assessments are designed to best suit the theoretical and practical content and will vary between modules. You will be provided with ongoing formative feedback during lecture/seminars. Your summative assessment for each module will produce one or more of the

following: an essay, a report, a portfolio, a creative artefact, a recorded interview, a public facing document, or a presentation. Reflection is encouraged through informal peer supervision, individual tutorials and use of a reflective journal.

The first year will focus on preparing you for practice. You will complete 20 professional skills days in advance of your first placement to support you in developing your professional capabilities. Your first placement consists of 70 days in a community social work setting. Placement settings include charities, volunteer groups and services involved with a range of people in a variety of settings. Regular group supervision sessions throughout the placement will ensure that learning can be shared across the group and challenges can be considered collectively.

Assessment of placements are undertaken by Practice Educators who are practicing, registered social workers. They provide individual supervision throughout your placement to support you to link up theory and practice and ensure you are meeting the professional standards.

In the second year, you will complete four taught modules, including preparation work for your dissertation. The modules will build on your knowledge and understanding of social and organisational contexts, especially in the areas of disability and mental health.

You will complete 10 professional skills days and will start your second placement at the end of semester 1. Your second placement will be 100 days in a statutory setting such as a Local Authority, NHS or other statutory provider where you will build your capacity in managing the fast pace, multi-agency working and complexity of cases that are the beating heart of social work practice.

For your dissertation you have the option to conduct a research project or a systematic review; it will be due at the end of your second year. You will have the support of a supervisor to conduct your research or review. Your dissertation is your opportunity to deeply investigate a topic in the area of disability or mental health and encourages you to relate this back to social work practice. In this way, you will graduate with a wealth of disability and mental health knowledge and how it relates to different areas of social work practice.

Throughout the course, student practitioners will be expected to adhere to the [BASW Code of Ethics](#) and uphold social work [professional standards](#) at all times.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [general regulations for](#) postgraduate awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensatable.

Placements and Skills Days

Students must successfully complete and pass a minimum of 200 days of professional practice placements and skills days.

Students who fail their first placement must redeem this before progressing to Year 2 of the programme.

Students who fail their second placement must redeem this if they wish to be eligible to apply to register as a qualified social worker.

Students will only be able to fail and redeem one practice placement. Subsequent failure of a second practice placement will mean that only an exit award without a placement element (MA/PG Dip/PG Cert Disability and Mental Health) can be awarded.

Exit awards are as follows:

- PG Dip Disability and Mental Health Social Work: All modules except the dissertation. Students who attain a PG Dip Disability and Mental Health Social Work are usually eligible to apply to Social Work England to register as a social worker.

- MA Disability and Mental Health: 180 credits with no requirement to pass the zero credit modules (placement 1, placement 2, preparation for practice 2). Application to register as a social work is not possible.
- PG Dip Disability and Mental Health: 120 credits with no requirement to pass the zero credit modules. Application to register as a social work is not possible.
- PG Cert Disability and Mental Health: 60 credits with no requirement to pass the zero credit modules. Application to register as a social work is not possible.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University mission and values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)
- [British Association of Social Work \(BASW\) Professional Capabilities Framework \(PCF\)](#)
- [Social Work England \(SWE\) Education and Training Standards Guidance](#)
- [SWE Practice Placement Guidelines](#)
- [SWE Assessment Guidelines](#)
- [Dept of Health Knowledge and Skills Statement \(KSS\) for Social Workers in Adults Services](#)
- [Dept of Education Knowledge and Skills Statement \(KSS\) for Child and Family Social Work](#)
- [BASW Code of Ethics](#)
- [SWE Professional Standards](#)

Date written / revised:

Programme originally approved: