

Pathways
programme



**Social Work Leadership
Pathways programme**

Pathway 1

1

Welcome to the Social Work Leadership Pathways programme

The Social Work Leadership Pathways programme is a national practice leadership development programme for social workers, created by social work charity Frontline, funded by the Department for Education and delivered in partnership with North Yorkshire County Council and What Works for Children's Social Care, and with the support of Hertfordshire County Council.

The Pathways programme will replace the Practice Supervisors Development Programme (PSDP), Firstline programme, Headline programme and Practice Leaders Development Programme (PLDP), consolidating all leadership development for these levels of leadership into one cohesive offer.

Frontline recognises the significant strength and impact that these programmes have had on social work practice over many years, so will be learning from and building on this within the Pathways programme.

Funded by



Department
for Education

Delivered in partnership

Frontline



Frontline's commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression

As with all our programme cohorts, we will also work to ensure they are from a diverse range of backgrounds and ethnicities.

As a charity striving to bring about social change for children and families through excellent social work practice, leadership and innovation, we are focused on ensuring that we are a genuinely anti-racist and anti-oppressive organisation and that we have diverse cohorts across all the programmes we deliver.

We fully recognise the value that such diversity brings to social work practice – we cannot develop excellent social work practice and leadership without including a wide variety of voices, experiences and backgrounds.

What is the Pathways programme?

The Pathways programme consists of multiple bespoke pathways for four levels of social worker role.

- **Practice supervisors** – primary responsibility is to supervise the practice and decision-making of child and family practitioners and to develop the skills of individuals and teams.
- **Middle managers** – leading and supervising a team of social workers including managing practice supervisors; they have operational and management responsibilities.
- **Heads of service** – leading a whole children's service area with multiple teams of social workers, having both operational and strategic responsibility. Also referred to as a service manager.
- **Practice leaders** – qualified social workers with the day-to-day operational responsibility across the whole local system for child and family social work practice, ensuring it operates correctly and overseeing child and family frontline practitioners and leaders. Most usually, this is referred to as the assistant director of children's social care or director of family services or an equivalent position.

Throughout their pathway, leaders will participate in a range of learning experiences, all embedded in the 4C leadership capability framework, that provide opportunities for shared learning as well as access to bespoke content for their experience level and particular needs.

Pathway 1: practice supervisors

Who is Pathway 1 for?

This pathway will empower leaders to model and develop excellent social work practice and leadership in others. It will develop the skills of individuals and teams within child and family social work services.

This pathway is for:

- Practice supervisors or those in an equivalent role
- Qualified social workers whose primary responsibility is to supervise the practice and decision-making of child and family practitioners

"My reflexivity is much improved, and I have been able to take on a new understanding, maturity and confidence in my role and responsibility. The results have been extremely positive and well evidenced through team performance and team stability."

Team Manager, end of Firstline programme, Spring 2021 Cohort



What are the aims and outcomes of this pathway?

The Pathways programme curriculum is centred on developing knowledge, skills and expertise against the 4C leadership capability framework. This has been designed with the '[Seven features of practice and seven outcomes](#)' firmly embedded in it and has been mapped against the KSS for practice leaders and PQS for practice supervisors.

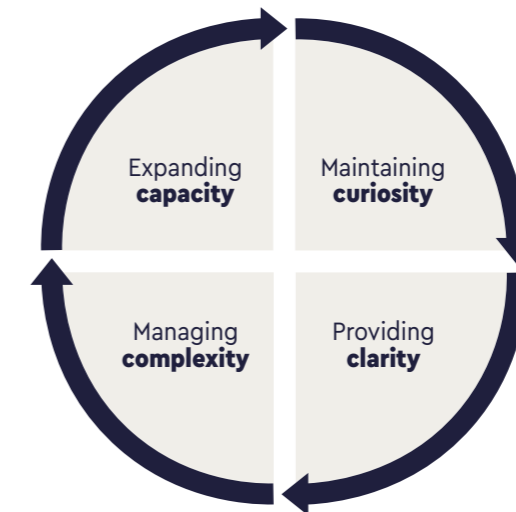
Pathway 1 will specifically focus on:

Expanding capacity

- Apply approaches for prioritising mental health and wellbeing, including developing the resilience of supervisees.
- Build strategies to create a team culture of feedback and reflection, encouraging openness and honesty.

Maintaining curiosity

- Understand own vision and values, grounded in child-centred, inclusive practice.
- Develop leadership of supervisees, identifying how to best support them through observation and feedback.



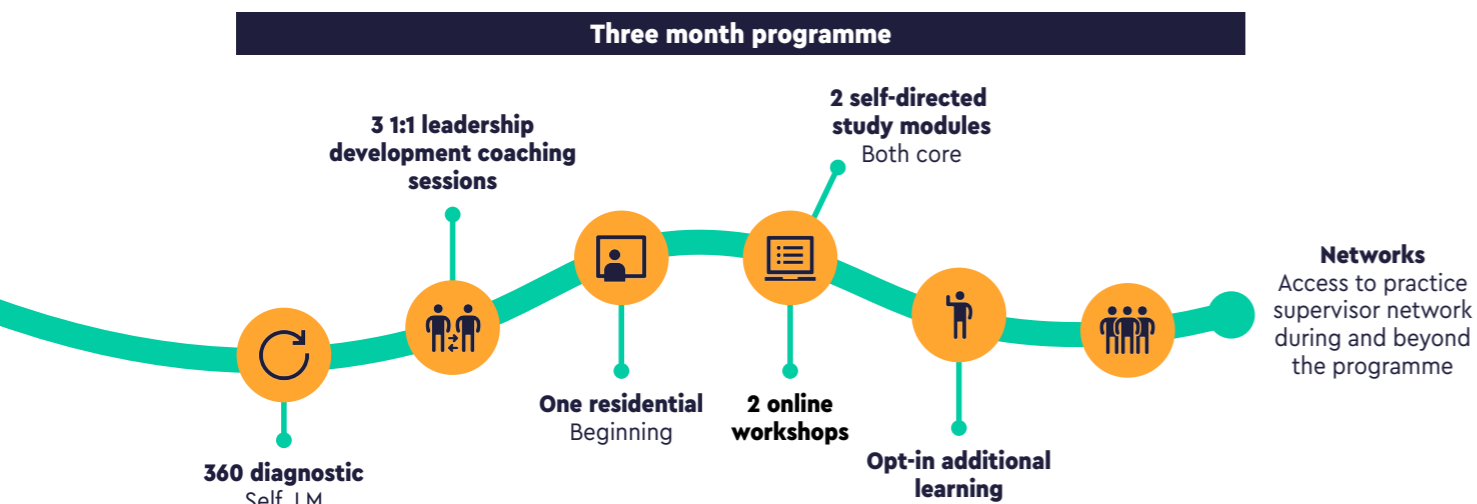
Managing complexity

- Deepen knowledge of high-quality reflective supervision that is rooted in best-practice research and implement this into practice.
- Develop effective prioritisation skills to manage competing demands, maximising time spent supporting supervisees and working directly with children and families.

Providing clarity

- Define your leadership journey in the context of the impact you want to have on your teams, children and families and the wider system.
- Develop understanding of high-quality practice, focused on relational, strengths-based and anti-oppressive approaches.

Pathway 1: delivery model



Dates of delivery 2022–23

	Cohort 1 2022–23	Cohort 2 2023	Cohort 3 2023
Residential 2 days, 2 nights	November 2022	February 2023	May 2023
1:1 leadership development coaching session 1 1.5 hours			
Self-directed study 1 1.5 hours		February–March	
Online workshop 1 3 hours	December	March	May–June
1:1 leadership development coaching session 2 1.5 hours	January 2023		
Self-directed study 2 1.5 hours		April	June
Online workshop 2 3 hours			June–July
1:1 leadership development coaching session 3 1.5 hours	February	April–May	July

"The opportunity to network with colleagues from different local authorities was invaluable. By meeting face to face, we were able to develop meaningful relationships, to be open and honest about our own personal development and the impact of our experiences, but also to learn innovative ways of promoting change."
Team Manager, end of Firstline programme, Spring 2021 Cohort

What will be gained on completion of Pathway 1?

- A certificate of completion which can contribute towards CPD hours for social work registration.
- Continued access to the practice supervisor network to support you in your on-going development.
- Completion of this pathway prepares you for accessing Pathway 2.

"I am more confident to challenge from the children and family's perspective, asking more questions and encouraging the social workers to build effective relationships with their families by doing things with them."

Team Manager, end of Firstline programme, Autumn 2020 Cohort

What is the cost and time commitment?

- The Pathways programme has been rigorously designed and developed to deliver high-quality content and coaching across all four pathways. The programme is fully funded by the Department of Education, so there is no charge to local authorities. However, it's vital that leaders are able to attend all sessions and are given sufficient time to complete the self-directed learning to ensure completion of all programmatic elements.
- Pathway 1 is a 3-month programme with a time commitment of approximately 4 days, including one residential (2 days / 2 nights)

How to apply

- Applications are open from July 2022
- Complete and submit the application form on our website.
- Applicants will need to confirm that they have line manager support when applying to ensure full engagement and participation in all elements of the programme.

For further information including a more comprehensive list of FAQs please [visit our website](#).



About Frontline

At Frontline, everything we do aims to make life better for children who need a social worker, to help keep them safe from harm and to give them every possible chance to fulfil their potential.

We know that excellent social work leadership is one of the crucial elements to achieving this; strong leadership skills empower people at all levels to navigate their roles and contributes to creating a culture which prioritises children and families above all else.

That's why a focus on equipping social workers with the skills to deliver the best possible support and improved outcomes for children and families sits at the heart of the Pathways programme.

The aim is for 1,000 social work leaders to complete the Pathways programme each year. These leaders will be from local authorities across England, working within different contexts at different stages of their career.

Frontline

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The Frontline Organisation is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

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