

Recruitment and admissions policy

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Section 1: Overview

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 Frontline's mission and core values drive the organisation to provide fair and equal access to the Frontline programme to applicants of diverse and wide-ranging backgrounds. Frontline's selection process identifies those that share our values and have the potential to succeed and become outstanding social workers.
- 1.1.2 This policy is written to inform applicants and staff of the procedures relevant to applying for the Frontline programme, and recruitment and registration onto the programme. It details the relevant procedures, clearly outlining Frontline's expectations to support applicants to make an informed choice about applying to the programme. Frontline will regularly review and monitor matters relating to the Selection, Eligibility, Suitability and Placement process and, where appropriate, make changes to this policy.

1.2 Scope

- 1.2.1 This policy applies to applicants and prospective applicants of the Frontline programme.
- 1.2.2 The policy is available on Frontline's website.

1.3 Responsibilities

- 1.3.1 The Head of Recruitment is responsible for this policy and its implementation.
- 1.3.2 Frontline's Selection, Admissions & Support and Partnerships teams are responsible for the day to day enactment of the policy.
- 1.3.3 Applicants are responsible for checking that they meet the entry requirements as set out on the website and in this document and reading the relevant policies before submitting their application. At the point prospective applicants register their intent to apply to the programme on the Frontline website, the individual must declare that they meet the minimum requirements as described.



1.4 Definitions

Frontline programme*

The Frontline programme is a three-year social work training programme delivered by Frontline.

Year One: Participants are registered as students of our university partner Lancaster University and will undertake a Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work. At the end of the year, participants who are eligible will qualify as a social worker and register with Social Work England

Year Two: As newly qualified social workers, participants will complete their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and receive continued support from Frontline. During this year participants will not be completing any academic studies, so will not be registered students of Lancaster University

Year Three: Participants who are eligible to progress from year two will again be registered students of Lancaster University and will complete their Master's qualification

**The official name of the Frontline programme is subject to modification. Any alterations to the name will not impact the stipulated offerings and benefits to participants outlined in this policy. The essence of the programme, structure, content, and offerings, shall remain unchanged regardless of any future adjustments to the name.*

Frontline programme competencies

the qualities that an applicant with the potential to be an outstanding social worker must possess and be able to demonstrate

Applicant

someone who has submitted an application for the Frontline programme and has not yet commenced study

Participant

someone who has commenced study on the Frontline programme.

Selection process

the stages of the application process starting from submitting an application form for the Frontline programme through to the assessment centre

Conditional offer

Given to applicants who are successful at an assessment centre



and, therefore, have passed all the stages of the selection process

Eligibility checks Requirements pertaining to the academic qualifications, right to work, residency and references needed to commence the Frontline programme

Suitability checks Requirements pertaining to an applicant's health, conduct and criminal convictions that need to be reviewed and cleared in order to commence the Frontline programme

Section 2: Policy and procedures

2.1 General principles

2.1.1 Each application is considered on its merit, based on this recruitment and admissions policy. The admission of an applicant to join the Frontline programme is at Frontline's discretion, and is based on the reasonable expectation that the person is able to:

- demonstrate the Frontline programme competencies, thus evidencing the potential to become an outstanding social worker;
- complete the objectives of the Frontline programme academic course;
- achieve the standard required for the academic award;
- demonstrate that they meet the social work regulator's professional standards.

2.1.2 The Frontline programme recruitment process includes several stages, which assess the extent to which an applicant meets the Frontline programme competencies. All applicants must (i) pass the selection process; and (ii) have met the required eligibility requirements, before receiving a conditional offer of a place on the programme.

2.1.3 Applicants are required to disclose any information which might be relevant to their eligibility or suitability for the programme. Frontline reserves the right to withdraw an application or rescind an offer (see section 2.13) to the Frontline programme should it come to light that false or misleading information has been given by the applicant at any stage of the process (for example incorrect details about experience or qualifications), or by the non-disclosure of relevant information that calls into question the applicant's suitability for the programme. This is at Frontline's discretion.



- 2.1.4 Frontline similarly reserves the right to withdraw a participant from the Frontline programme who is subsequently found to have gained admission by providing false or misleading information or by non-disclosure of information during the application process. Any potential breaches of terms and conditions that may arise will be dealt with via the appropriate policies
- 2.1.5 Frontline reserves the right to withdraw applications, or to rescind an offer of a placement, where the applicant is found to have previously been a participant on the Frontline programme. This decision will be at Frontline's discretion and applies to previous participants who have either been withdrawn from the programme by Frontline, or who have withdrawn voluntarily.
- 2.1.6 An applicant can make only one written application per cohort recruitment year. Frontline reserves the right to cancel any application where an applicant is found to have already made a written application.
- 2.1.7 The principles of equality, diversity and integrity underpin all Frontline processes and the criteria and assessments undertaken during the Frontline programme recruitment and selection processes are designed to ensure equal opportunities. Frontline welcomes applications from individuals with the appropriate skills and qualifications from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- 2.1.8 Frontline arranges for applicants and participants with disabilities, health conditions and/or learning needs to be supported and assessed as appropriate and makes reasonable adjustments as required to enable disabled applicants to be assessed in a fair and supported way. Applicants are encouraged to declare any disabilities or learning needs on their application form or as soon as possible thereafter, to ensure they are well positioned to receive the full offer of support. Any disabilities declared on an application form will be considered in relation to the assessment stages only. Following a conditional offer, applicants will be encouraged to provide detailed information in relation to their health and are encouraged to review our Suitability for Professional Training policy for more detailed information on how support is assessed in advance of the start of the programme so that it can be provided provided on the programme.
- 2.1.9 Frontline operates an equal opportunities policy. At the point of application, all applicants complete an anonymous diversity survey on which they answer equal opportunities data questions. This information enables Frontline to monitor implementation of the policy and contributes to improving the overall recruitment process. Applicants can select 'prefer not to say' if they choose not to answer a question. Data collected is used solely for this purpose and this



information is not visible and used towards any decisions made on an individual's application to the programme, unless applicants opt in to allow us to use the information as part of our contextual recruitment process.

2.1.10 In order to promote social mobility and diversity, and to support applicants from underrepresented groups, Frontline employs a contextualised recruitment approach. This means that applications are assessed in the context of the applicant's background, based on information gathered at the registration stage, such as socio-economic background. It is not compulsory for applicants to share such information. However, if an applicant consents, the information provided will be used within the selection process when assessing performance.

2.1.11 Frontline will ensure that staff who are involved in the recruitment process are appropriately trained, proficient and operate in a clear and consistent way and that applications are processed in a timely and effective manner. Where significant delays are anticipated, Frontline will aim to ensure these are communicated to applicants accordingly.

2.1.12 Frontline clearly communicates all qualifications required to meet the eligibility criteria to the Frontline programme on its website, which is updated annually: <https://thefrontline.org.uk/our-programmes/frontline-programme/eligibility-requirements/>

2.2 Frontline's programme competencies

2.2.1 Frontline's programme competencies are:

- **motivation:**
- **self-awareness:**
- **resilience:**
- **effective communication:**
- **empathy and relationships:**
- **analysis and adaptability:**
- **leadership**

Further details about the Frontline programme competencies can be found on [Frontline's website](#).



- 2.2.2 Throughout the selection process, applicants will be required to demonstrate competence in a range of areas. Frontline has developed the Frontline programme competencies with social work experts with input from people with experience of social work and care.
- 2.2.3 The Frontline competencies map directly to the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) issued by the British Association of Social Workers, meaning that applicants must meet the domains of the PCF at entry level to be offered a place on the Frontline programme.
- 2.2.4 Applicants will be assessed against these competencies at all stages of the selection process and must demonstrate they have met the Frontline programme competencies along with passing all eligibility and suitability checks in order to commence training on the programme.

2.3 Entry requirements

- 2.3.1 To commence training on the Frontline programme, **all** applicants **must** have:
- Obtained GCSE English Language at Grade C or above, or the new level 4 and above (or approved equivalent);
 - A predicted or obtained 2.2 or higher in an undergraduate honours degree (or international equivalent);
 - Possess the right to work and study in the UK (including access to public funds for the duration of the programme);
 - Be resident in England for the duration of the programme;
 - Not already be a qualified social worker (including overseas social work qualifications that Social Work England accept for their register);
 - Provided satisfactory references, as requested by Frontline, in support of their application;
 - Advised of any conduct issues and had these assessed by Frontline;
 - Advised of any health needs that that could place others at risk, and had these assessed by Frontline;
 - Completed a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check initiated by Frontline;
 - Had a suitable local authority placement identified for them by Frontline;
 - Completed preparation for programme placement (e.g. shadowing days with a local authority).



2.4 Registering to apply

2.4.1 In order to register to apply for the Frontline programme, **all** applicants must ;

- Have obtained GCSE English Language at Grade C or above, or the new level 4 and above (or **approved equivalent** qualification – higher qualifications will not be accepted in lieu of GCSEs);
- Have a predicted or obtained 2.2 or higher in an undergraduate honours degree (or international equivalent);
- Possess the right to work and study in the UK for the duration of the programme (including access to public funds);
- Intend on being resident in England for the duration of the Frontline programme;
- Not be a qualified social worker or be currently studying a degree to become a social worker (including overseas social work qualifications that Social Work England accept for their register).

2.4.2 With the exception of a pending undergraduate degree where an applicant will not receive their qualification until the summer of the entry year, applicants must have obtained **all** qualifications required to meet the eligibility criteria at the point of application. Final year undergraduate applicants must provide evidence of their undergraduate award and classification prior to the start of the programme.

2.4.3 Applicants educated outside of the UK must hold qualifications which are **equivalent** to those noted in the criteria above. International qualifications must be confirmed as equivalent by the UK National Information Centre for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills (UK ENIC). Applicants are advised to liaise with UK ENIC before submitting their application.

2.4.4 All international qualifications must meet the minimum academic level as agreed with our university partner, Lancaster University.

2.4.5 Frontline cannot recognise or accredit any prior (experiential) learning with regards to the Frontline programme. Any prior (experiential) learning cannot be accepted as contributing to any of the eligibility criteria nor can it replace or be accredited against any of the academic modules and elements of the Frontline programme.



- 2.4.6 Non-UK citizens are able to apply as long as they are eligible to work in the UK for the duration of the programme (from mid-July for 38 months or longer where studies are interrupted for any reason). Non-UK citizens must also have access to public funds. The Frontline programme is unable to support work visa applications. Eligibility to work in the UK for the duration of the three-year programme is governed by an individual's visa conditions, which need to meet the UK Government requirements. Further information can be found at www.gov.uk and www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk.
- 2.4.7 Applicants should ensure they have evidence of their qualifications and right to work in the UK before they submit their application. This will include providing identity documentation and a UK government share code.
- 2.4.8 Frontline will accept clear, colour uploads of qualifications in most cases, in order to satisfy the eligibility requirements for the Frontline programme. Frontline reserves the right to request hard copy evidence of qualifications if the uploads are not satisfactory or to confirm the validity of a qualification. If required, hard copy evidence would be requested as part of the post-offer onboarding process. Applicants joining the programme on an accepted visa will be required to show hard copy versions of their qualifications.
- 2.4.9 Normally only official final certificates will be accepted as proof of meeting the GCSE and degree criteria. Where original copies are no longer available, official replacements will be accepted provided they have been issued by the relevant awarding body. At the discretion of Frontline, alternative documentation may be accepted in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.4.10 Applicants with international qualifications will need to provide their original certificates and transcripts of their qualifications, not translated copies.
- 2.4.11 A British or Irish passport, EU passport along with proof of settlement under the EU Settlement Scheme or non-UK/EU passport along with a visa (confirming access to public funds for the duration of the programme) will be accepted as evidence as proof of right to work. Non-UK applicants will also be expected to provide a UK government share code where appropriate.



- 2.4.12 If any eligibility documents do not match the full name the applicant has provided as part of their application or if there are any disparities of an applicant's name between documentation, the applicant will be required to provide official proof of name change.
- 2.4.13 Frontline will accept an official deed poll certificate, official marriage certificates, full birth certificates or a statutory declaration. Frontline reserves the right to request which of these are needed based on the documentation provided by the applicant. In some instances, more than one type of document will be required to evidence a proof of name change.
- 2.4.14 Frontline reserves the right to request and verify the above documentation at any stage of the selection or eligibility process and, where appropriate, may place an application on hold until the requested information has been provided and confirmed as meeting our requirements.
- 2.4.15 Where applicants have mislaid their documentation, they are strongly advised to contact the relevant exam boards, their previous university or relevant bodies prior to submitting their application as delays in providing this information can result in an application being withdrawn.
- 2.4.16 Applicants are responsible for covering any costs incurred where replacement documentation needs to be purchased.

2.5 The selection process

- 2.5.1 The selection process is made up of a number of stages assessing the competencies list in 2.2.1. For full details of the stages, please visit our website: <https://thefrontline.org.uk/frontline-programme/choice-process/>
- 2.5.2 Through each selection stage, applicants' performance will be reviewed, and applicants must meet a score threshold in order to pass the stage. These thresholds are carefully considered and determined by the success of applicants from previous recruitment seasons. Applicants that pass the thresholds proceed to the next selection stage.
- 2.5.3 If successful in the earlier stages, applicants will be invited to attend an assessment centre. Those who do not meet the standards will be advised they have not been successful at this stage. Applicants must provide eligibility documentation including GCSE, right to work and degree documents prior to booking an assessment centre slot (see section 2.4.1 for details).



2.5.4 Frontline will provide email correspondence at every stage of the selection process, using the email address provided by the applicant upon registration. Emails will provide detail on how to complete the upcoming selection stage and the deadline set. It is the responsibility of the applicant to regularly check for email correspondence and to adhere to deadlines provided.

2.6 The assessment centre

2.6.1 Applicants invited to an assessment centre will be able to choose a date that is convenient for them. If an applicant does not attend an assessment centre to which they have committed, and does not contact Frontline within two working days in advance of the assessment centre date to notify Frontline of any changes or difficulties in attending, Frontline will not be obliged to invite the applicant to another assessment centre.

2.6.2 Applicants are responsible for ensuring they arrive promptly to the Assessment Centre, and to all activities throughout the day.

2.6.3 The assessment centre comprises a number of activities that all applicants will complete during the day. This full list of activities can be found on the [Frontline website](#), all of which may be observed or assessed at Frontline's discretion, including the self-reflection exercises.

2.6.4 All applicants are required to take part in an assessment centre as the final stage of the selection process. The assessment centre activities have been devised through a consultative process with leading social work academics and practicing social workers, directors of children's services and occupational psychologists, as well as young people and adults with experience of social work and social care. The blend of activities is designed to assess the applicant against the Frontline programme competencies through tasks that simulate the experiences of a social worker. Assessment centres also allow applicants to make a judgement about the role of a social worker and their own suitability and willingness for that role.

2.6.5 Sometimes as a part of the process applicants disclose personal experiences or circumstances that Frontline may need to explore further in a second interview, or as part of suitability checks.

2.6.6 Frontline is subject to mandatory reporting procedures. If, as part of the interview or any other part of the assessment centre, an applicant discloses anything which places either themselves or



someone else at risk, Frontline has a duty to report it to the appropriate team within Frontline or external services in accordance with its safeguarding policy.

- 2.6.7 On occasion, Frontline may re-assess applicants, who obtained borderline scores at an assessment centre, within the same cohort recruitment year. This decision is taken at Frontline's discretion.

2.7 Conditional offers

- 2.7.1 Applicants who successfully pass all stages of the selection process and are confirmed to have met the relevant eligibility criteria required at that stage, will be made a conditional offer for the Frontline programme. Offers will be conditional on applicants meeting Frontline's eligibility and suitability requirements, Frontline identifying a suitable local authority placement and applicants completing shadowing days and preparation for placement within their local authority (if identified).
- 2.7.2 An applicant's place on the programme will remain conditional and they will be unable to commence study on the Frontline programme and fully register with our university partner, Lancaster University to start the PG Diploma in Social Work Practice undertaken in year one, until they have met all conditions of their offer (see section 2.12 for further guidance on registration).
- 2.7.3 Frontline expects applicants to respond to requests for information and complete required tasks within the timeframes communicated and reserves the right to rescind a conditional offer if these are not met. In these instances, applicants will have their application withdrawn and will not be permitted to re-apply for the same cohort.
- 2.7.4 Frontline reserves the right to rescind any offer made to an applicant that fails to comply with its policies and procedures.
- 2.7.5 Frontline reserves the right to rescind any offer made to an applicant who fails to comply with Frontline's competencies or [Social Work England's professional standards](#) at any point prior to commencing the programme. This will be managed through the Suitability for Professional Training Policy.



- 2.7.6 Applicants who are subsequently found to be ineligible and not possess the required qualifications or right to work status declared will have their offer rescinded and will be required to re-apply for a future cohort, if they later become eligible. Ineligible applicants will not be offered the opportunity to defer.
- 2.7.7 Should anything change in relation to an applicant's eligibility or suitability, applicants are required to inform Frontline as soon as possible. Failure to do so may conflict with the requirements under the Suitability for Professional Training Policy.
- 2.7.8 The terms set out in any offer letters will remain binding until an applicant commences the Frontline programme and fully registers with Lancaster University for the PG Diploma in Social Work Practice. Once on programme, they will be bound by the relevant policies pertaining to Frontline programme participants and, in years one and three, to Lancaster University students. For the avoidance of doubt all Frontline policies remain applicable to participants until they complete the programme.
- 2.7.9 Frontline shall have no liability in respect of loss of a chance or opportunity, loss of profits or income or other consequential losses, and its liability in relation to any claim or series of claims arising under or in connection with the terms of any offer and any agreement it may reach with an applicant shall be limited to £1000 in total.

2.8 The onboarding process: eligibility checks

- 2.8.1 The eligibility criteria for the Frontline programme has been agreed in partnership with our university partner, Lancaster University, and is also agreed in line with our approval from the Department for Education (DfE) and the social work regulator Social Work England (SWE).
- 2.8.2 Frontline are unable to adjust the eligibility criteria on an applicant by applicant basis and our requirements are fixed. Therefore, applicants who do not meet these will be considered ineligible to apply.
- 2.8.3 In order to meet the eligibility requirements of the programme, applicants **must have:**
- Provided official evidence of having obtained at least a grade C, or the new grade 4 and above in GCSE English Language;(or approved equivalent)



- A predicted or obtained 2.2 or higher in an undergraduate honours degree (or international equivalent);
- Have provided evidence of having the right to work and study in the UK (with recourse to public funds) for the duration of the programme;
- Be resident in England by the time the programme commences and provided evidence of this, when requested;
- Have provided evidence of any name changes, if applicable;
- Have provided satisfactory references, as requested by Frontline, in support of their application.

2.8.4 Frontline reserves the right to request hardcopy evidence of qualifications in order to satisfy the eligibility requirements, where appropriate.

2.8.5 Applicants in their final year of their undergraduate studies will be required to obtain a 2.2 classification proof of which will be required before they can fully register with Lancaster University. Official certificates will be collected during the first five weeks of the programme. Applicants who discover that they will not learn of their final grade until after the programme has started must notify Frontline immediately. This information may result in a deferral or withdrawal, at Frontline's discretion.

2.8.6 All qualifications obtained outside of the UK must be confirmed as the UK equivalent by the UK National Information Centre for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills (UK ENIC). All international qualifications must meet the minimum academic level as agreed with our university partner, Lancaster University.

2.8.7 All applicants must be resident in **England** from the start of the programme for the full duration. The Department for Education's funding for fast-track social work education is underpinned by section [67\(4\)\(a\) of the Care Standards Act 2000](#). This allows the Secretary of State to:

- a) Make grants and pay travelling and other allowances to persons resident in England in order to secure their training in the work of social care workers;
- b) Make grants to organisations providing training in the work of social care workers.

The Department for Education, therefore, has no powers to fund the training of social workers who are not resident in England. Applicants who reside outside of England will need to provide



evidence of their English residency in order to commence the Frontline programme and fully register with Lancaster University on the PG Diploma in Social Work Practice.

- 2.8.8 All final year undergraduate applicants will be required to provide a reference from their academic tutor who can comment on their likelihood to obtain a 2.2. classification in their undergraduate degree.
- 2.8.9 If a local authority placement is identified, all applicants will be required to provide satisfactory references decided by Frontline before they can commence their shadowing days.
- 2.8.10 Frontline has a duty to ensure the children and families we work with are kept safe and, due to the nature of social work, it's imperative applicants undergo thorough checks before commencing the programme. Frontline, therefore, reserves the right to request additional references or details, when required.
- 2.8.11 Further information on Frontline's reference requirements can be found in the reference guidance which will be made available to applicants who are made a conditional offer.

2.9 The onboarding process: suitability checks

- 2.9.1 Due to both the academic and professional focus of social work training, it is imperative that applicants meet our baseline suitability requirements. This is to ensure that applicants are likely to meet Frontline's competencies, the expected academic standards for Frontline and Lancaster University as our awarding body_ and programme is bound by.
- 2.9.2 We assess an applicant's suitability for the programme through our suitability process which commences once an applicant has successfully passed the last stage of the selection process, the assessment centre. All applicants that have passed this stage must complete Frontline's suitability checks.
- 2.9.3 In order to meet the suitability checks for the Frontline programme, applicants **must**:
- Have had a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, including both children and adults barred lists;
 - Have disclosed any conduct issues, previous incomplete social work training, involvement with social care as the responsible adult;



- Have disclosed any health needs that could place others at risk of harm.

2.9.4 Applicants may also be required to undergo the following suitability checks:

- A satisfactory overseas police check;
- An occupational health assessment;
- Other relevant checks such as those related to misconduct; disciplinary findings; sanctions; conduct-related matters during university, training, employment or professional practice; and contact with social work services.

2.9.5 Where there are complex cases that mean an applicant may be unable to meet Social Work England's professional standards, applicants will be asked to attend a suitability panel, during which its members will come to an informed and considered decision as to their suitability for the programme. If, during the suitability panel, it is determined that the information disclosed makes it difficult or impossible for an applicant to safely and effectively perform the duties of a Frontline programme participant (with or without reasonable adjustments) then we may be unable to progress with an offer. Please refer to the Suitability for Professional Training Policy for further details.

2.9.6 Applicants may be required to complete a health disclosure form. Once completed, Frontline may seek to request further information from a GP or health professional.

2.9.7 Applicants will be required to complete an enhanced DBS check with barred list information and may be asked to sign up for the DBS update service by either Frontline or their assigned local authority. Frontline will be responsible for the cost of the DBS check. Applicants will be required to cover any costs incurred when sending evidence to the DBS provider.

2.9.8 The DBS process will be initiated by Frontline in the spring leading up to the start of the programme and all applicants will be required to obtain a DBS check via Frontline, even if they already hold a current DBS certificate. This process must be completed prior to the commencement of the programme.

2.9.9 If an applicant has lived or worked outside the UK within the last five years, they will be required to obtain a criminal record certificate (letter of good conduct) from every country in which they have lived for a period of six months or longer within the last five years. This only applies to



periods where they were aged 18 or over. The Home Office guidance on [criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#) contains details on how to request these certificates. Alternatively, applicants may contact the embassy of the country in question. In some cases, the countries are unable to provide this documentation, in which case Frontline will carry out further checks such as requesting additional references.

2.9.10 Further information on suitability policies can be found in Frontline's suitability for professional training policy, found within [the policy section on our website](#).

2.10 The placement process

2.10.1 Frontline works with local authorities across England. All of our locations offer the same excellent training, development and support. By applicants being flexible with their preferences, they will be going a long way to improving the outcomes for children and families in the areas that need Frontline participants the most.

2.10.2 Once an applicant has successfully passed the last stage of the selection process, the assessment centre, they will be required to complete a placement survey. The purpose of this survey is to find out more about an applicant's preferences and to support us in making the most informed decision regarding an applicant's placement to a local authority.

2.10.3 Placements will be carefully chosen with consideration of an applicant's circumstances alongside the need in our regions and with our local authority partners. This can result in applicants having to relocate to take part.

2.10.4 Frontline will make every effort to consider an applicant's location preference indicated within a placement survey but cannot guarantee that applicants will be placed in their preferred location.

2.10.5 Many of our local authority partners require participants to have a driving licence. If applicants are placed in a local authority where they will need to have a licence and access to a car, it will be an applicant's responsibility to ensure they meet these requirements by the start of the placement.

2.10.6 Any applicant who has applied for a local authority with driving requirements must pass their test by the start of July 2024, prior to registration with Lancaster University.

2.10.7 Frontline highly recommends that applicants who have successfully passed the assessment centre do not make any key decisions (i.e. hand in their notice or sign a tenancy agreement) until



they have been formally notified of a local authority placement and introduced to their consultant social worker (CSW).

2.10.8 Applicants who have been placed in a local authority are required to meet all eligibility and suitability requirements for the Frontline programme. Should an applicant fail to meet these, following being placed in a local authority, they will have their placement and offer rescinded.

2.10.9 If an applicant doesn't wish to accept the region or local authority placement identified for them, Frontline reserves the right to rescind their conditional offer.

2.10.10 In some cases, it may not be possible to find a suitable placement for applicants and, in such circumstances, an applicant would be offered a deferral to the following year's cohort (providing the following year's cohort has been approved and the applicant remains eligible).

2.10.10 Though unlikely, a Hub may be disbanded following confirmation of a local authority placement. In this instance, an applicant would be offered a deferral to the following year's cohort (providing the following year's cohort has been approved) should another placement not be identified.

2.11 Preparation for placement

2.11.1 Applicants who have been allocated a local authority placement, will be required to undertake preparation for placement activities which will include a period of shadowing in a local authority (usually in their host local authority if already allocated). This experience normally consists of two days, with one day in a children's service and one day in an adult's service. This gives applicants the opportunity to become familiar with their local authority and meet their consultant social worker and other key members of staff.

2.11.2 Applicants must complete reflective learning logs about these activities and these will be used towards the readiness for practice assessment which takes place during the first five weeks of the programme.

2.11.3 Applicants must make every effort to arrange shadowing at times convenient to the local authority in which they are placed. If an applicant fails to complete shadowing caused in part or in full by their own actions, their conditional offer will be rescinded.



2.12 Conditional offers & registration with university partner

- 2.12.1 Offers remain conditional until all conditions are met. This means applicants may still be considered to hold a conditional offer at the start of the programme. Once all enrolment checks and processes are satisfied, offers will become final.
- 2.12.2 All offers are dependent on applicants continuing to comply with the social work regulator's guidance on conduct and ethics for students and Frontline's code of conduct. Failure to comply with either of these codes may result in an offer being rescinded prior to commencement of the programme. In these cases, the relevant procedures that apply to applicants will be followed.
- 2.12.3 The final stage of the applicant journey is registration with Frontline's university partner, Lancaster University on the PG Diploma in Social Work Practice, the academic award studied in year one of the Frontline programme. Registration is the process through which a successful applicant who has met all the conditions of their offer is confirmed as having the status of a student of Lancaster University for year one. Every applicant must complete registration in order to commence the Frontline programme.
- 2.12.4 Applicants will be required to meet all conditions of their offer by a deadline set by Frontline, in order to register with our university partner and commence study. Applicants who are unable to meet this deadline may have their offer rescinded.
- 2.12.5 At the discretion of Frontline and its university partner, in certain instances, some applicants who have outstanding conditions of their offer may be provisionally registered with our university partner and permitted to commence the first five weeks of the programme only. Such applicants will not be considered fully registered until they have met all conditions of their offer and passed all eligibility and suitability checks. Any such provisionally registered participants will be required to meet all final conditions by a deadline, set by Frontline, in advance of the commencement of their placement with a local authority. Those who are unable to meet all final conditions by the agreed deadline will not be permitted to fully register and will have their application withdrawn.
- 2.12.6 Those who are provisionally registered will not be permitted to commence their local authority placement.



2.12.7 Applicants will receive instructions from the university partner and must comply with any requirements within the timeframes given.

2.12.8 Participants who successfully complete years one and two of the Frontline programme and progress into year three will be required to re-register with Frontline's university partner to undertake year three and complete their Master's award.

2.13 Concurrent registration

2.13.1 No participant shall normally be allowed to register on the Frontline programme whilst being concurrently registered for any other higher or further education scheme of study.

2.13.2 Applicants who will be registered on another scheme of study after the start of the Frontline programme will be asked to declare this information at the point of submitting an application.

2.13.3 Whether a participant can be concurrently registered on more than one scheme of study will be at Frontline's discretion. Applicants or participants may be requested to provide evidence of the requirements of their other scheme of study, or of their withdrawal from it, before commencing the Frontline programme.

2.14 Withdrawals and deferrals

2.14.1 Frontline reserves the right to withdraw applicants, at any stage of the selection or onboarding process, should it be confirmed that they do not meet the relevant eligibility criteria.

2.14.2 Frontline reserves the right to withdraw applicants if they do not meet the relevant deadlines or communicate with Frontline in a timely manner. Applicants who are subsequently withdrawn will be unable to re-apply for the same cohort year.

2.14.3 Deferral requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis at Frontline's discretion, providing the following year's cohort has been approved and the applicant remains eligible. Requests will only be considered:

a) Where there are exceptional circumstances (e.g. medical conditions or a significant change in personal circumstances beyond an applicant's control);

b) Where an applicant has completed all the relevant eligibility checks, as determined by Frontline.



c) where the deferral request has been received in good time, prior to the start of the summer institute

2.14.4 Applicants who do not meet the criteria to be considered for a deferral, and cannot commence, will be required to withdraw their application and re-apply for a future cohort.

2.14.5 Whether a deferral request is approved will remain at Frontline's discretion.

2.14.6 Applicants may only be deferred once (i.e. for one recruitment year) and may not request a second deferral if they have previously been deferred. This is applicable to both applicants who requested to defer or were deferred by Frontline.

2.14.7 For applicants successful in their deferral request, Frontline reserves the right to request additional information including but not limited to; assessing motivation, additional reference checks and new suitability checks. Successful applicants re-joining the process shall be given similar information to that given to new applicants as part of the onboarding process.

2.14.8 Applicants deferred will not be guaranteed a place on the following year's cohort as this will be dependent on Frontline identifying a suitable placement as well as a number of checks that will need to be completed by an applicant (as noted in 2.14.7). Applicants who are deemed unable to start in the 2025 cohort or any future cohort will not be considered for deferral, and will need to withdraw (I.e., applicants who live far from all local authorities and do not wish to travel).

2.14.9 Frontline are unable to offer deferrals at the point of application and will not consider requests from those who have yet to receive a conditional offer.

2.15 Conduct throughout the process

2.15.1 Applicants must ensure that all information provided to Frontline throughout the process is their own and has not been plagiarised, either from another person, created through the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software, or any previously completed and submitted Frontline programme application (where applicable). Frontline reserves the right to withdraw applications at any stage where it is established that information has been plagiarised or created through the use of AI software.



2.15.2 Applicants must ensure that all information provided to Frontline is accurate, true and complete, and that facts and material information have not been omitted when requested. Applicants who are unsure if their circumstances meet the requirements for sharing information should contact Frontline for guidance.

2.15.3 Throughout the application process, applicants are expected to follow the social work regulator's guidance on conduct and ethics for students and the Frontline programme's code of conduct at all times. Applicants should be aware that this includes behaviour both within and outside of the formal selection elements such as the assessment centres. Behaviour outside of the formal selection elements includes, but is not limited to:

- social media activity;
- published articles online or in print;
- behaviour at induction/welcome events;
- behavior at informal evening events;
- general behaviour towards Frontline staff and fellow applicants in person or in communication by telephone or any form of electronic communication.

2.15.4 Applicants to the Frontline programme should be familiar with its code of conduct throughout the application process as applicant behaviour or actions that do not comply with this code or all relevant policies will result in an application being withdrawn.

2.15.5 Prior to commencing the programme, misconduct may result in the termination of the application process (including denying future access to the programme), or the rescinding of a conditional offer.

2.16 Appeals and Complaints

2.16.1 Due to the high volume of applications received for the Frontline programme, Frontline does not provide feedback during the application process, except at the assessment centre stage. In order to maintain a fair and consistent process for all applicants, requests for feedback at the earlier stages will be declined.

2.16.2 Frontline does not allow appeals by unsuccessful applicants who have not passed a stage of the application process and/or who have been found to be ineligible. However, if an applicant believes that their application has not been dealt with fairly in accordance with the Recruitment



and Admissions Policy they can contact the relevant team Manager in the first instance. Should the issue not be resolved and/or an applicant has an official complaint about any element of the recruitment process, or any Frontline staff member, Frontline's complaints policy and procedure will be followed.

Section 3: Relevant references

3.1 Laws and regulations

3.1.1 This policy and the procedures described herein are written in line with the expectations about recruitment, selection and admissions to higher education as set down by the Quality Code and guidance issued by the social work regulator and the Higher Education Authority.

3.2 Frontline policies and documents

3.2.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and documents:

- Bursary and financial
- Complaints
- Fitness to Practice
- Fitness to Study
- Lancaster University Manual of Academic Regulations and Procedures
- Participant Discipline Policy
- Safeguarding
- Suitability for professional practice

3.2.2 Applicants should also be aware of the following guidance:

- Social Work England Professional standards guidance:
<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/standards-guidance/professional-standards-guidance/>
- Social Work England Qualifying education and training standards guidance (2021):
<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/standards-guidance/qualifying-education-and-training-standards-guidance-2021/>
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Fitness to Practice Guidance:

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/concerns/fitness-to-practise-guide/>