Recruitment and Admissions
Policy & Procedure

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Definitions

A glossary of terms frequently used at Frontline is provided at Appendix 1.

Note: This document has been written in line with HCPC Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students; the Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics; Managing Fitness to Practise; and Guidance on Health and Character.

The Frontline Organisation is registered in England and Wales as a company limited by guarantee (Registered Office: 1 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4SR; Company Registration No: 09605966). The Frontline Organisation is also registered in England and Wales as a charity (Registered Office: 1 Rosebery Avenue, London EC1R 4SR; Charity Registration No: 1163194).
1. Introduction

1.1. The Frontline Programme is a two-year programme offering graduates and career changers a route to becoming qualified social workers. Participants work towards a Postgraduate Diploma in the first year and a master's in the second year of the Programme, academic programmes that are delivered by Frontline and accredited by their University Partner. This Recruitment and Admissions Policy explains how a potential Applicant applies to the Frontline Programme and is enrolled onto the Programme.

1.2. This policy is written to inform Applicants and Staff Members of the procedures involved in making an application and how Participants are recruited and enrolled onto the Programme. It aims to clearly outline all the procedures so Applicants can make an informed choice about applying to the Frontline Programme and so it is clear what Frontline’s expectations are throughout the process.

1.3. 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 (Ch. B2, QAA, 2016) and guidance issued by HCPC and the Higher Education Authority (2014).

1.4. Where Applicants/Participants have a complaint about any element of the admissions process, or any Frontline Staff Member, Frontline’s policy and procedure relating to complaints will be followed.

2. Frontline’s Mission and Values

2.1. Frontline’s mission is to transform the lives of vulnerable children by recruiting and developing outstanding individuals to be leaders in social work and broader society.

2.2. The Frontline Organisation's values are:

- **Be brave** - be prepared to challenge and do not always reach for the easy answer;
- **Show respect** - recognise and value the contributions of others;
- **Pioneer** - generate new ideas and make ripples or waves by sharing successes and setbacks;
- **Stay curious** - be continually reflective and open to adapting how we work;
- **What matters is what works** - be practical, flexible and outcome-focused.

2.3. Frontline's mission and underpinning core values drive the organisation to strive to provide fair and equal access to the Frontline Programme to Applicants of diverse and wide ranging backgrounds.

2.4. Frontline’s selection process aims to identify those that share our values and have the potential to succeed and become outstanding social workers.

2.5. The principles of equality, diversity and integrity are the foundations of the processes put in place by which individuals become Participants of the Programme. All criteria and assessments applied in the Frontline recruitment and selection processes are designed to ensure equal opportunities. Frontline welcomes applications from motivated students with appropriate qualifications from a diverse range of backgrounds.
3. General Principles

3.1. Each application from someone for admission is considered on its merit, based on this admissions policy and our mission and values. 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 Competencies and thus become an outstanding social worker;
- complete the objectives of the Frontline Programme academic courses;
- achieve the standard required for the academic awards;
- demonstrate the HCPC Standards of Proficiency.

3.2. Frontline recruits to the Programme through a series of stages which assess the extent to which an Applicant meets the Frontline Competencies. All Applicants must meet the level expected in order to be made a conditional offer of a place on the Programme.

3.3. Applicants are required to disclose all facts and information that might be relevant to their application for admission onto the Programme. Frontline reserves the right to:

3.3.1. withdraw any offer of admission to the Frontline Programme;

3.3.2. cancel any applicant’s application or offer where it comes to light that false or misleading information has been given by the Applicant (for example false 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.

3.4. Frontline similarly reserves the right to terminate the enrolment process for any Participant who is subsequently found to have gained admission by providing false or misleading information or by non-disclosure of information in support of or during the application process.

3.5. Participants will have to repay any bursary disbursed and any academic credits or awards they have achieved may be withdrawn if they are removed from the Programme.

3.6. An Applicant can only make one application per Cohort recruitment year. Frontline reserves the right to cancel any application where an Applicant is found to have re-applied after being rejected in the same Cohort recruitment year.

3.7. Frontline is committed to equal opportunities. Frontline establishes arrangements for Applicants and Participants with disabilities to be supported and assessed as appropriate, and it makes reasonable adjustments as required to enable disabled Applicants to be assessed in a fair and supported way.

3.8. The number of places available each year on the Programme is established based on recruitment targets driven by our contract with the Department for Education and the number of practice learning experience opportunities in Local Authority partners secured by Frontline.

4. The Frontline Competencies

4.1. Throughout the selection process, Applicants will be required to demonstrate competence in a range of areas. Frontline has developed the Frontline Competencies
with social work experts including the views of young people with experience of social work and care. The Frontline Competencies are defined as the qualities that an Applicant with the potential to be an outstanding social worker must possess and be able to demonstrate.

4.2. Applicants will be assessed against these competencies at all stages of the recruitment process and will be expected to show competence across these areas. Applicants must demonstrate they have met these Frontline Competencies in order to be made a conditional offer of a place on the Programme.

4.3. The Frontline Competencies map directly to the entry level 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. In this way, this process meets the HCPC Standard of Education and Training number 2.5, which specifies that the admissions procedure must include assessment against appropriate professional entry standards. Details about the Frontline Competencies can be found on Frontline’s website.

5. Entry Requirements

5.1. An Applicant must have already achieved certain educational levels and/or qualifications prior to being made a conditional offer of a place on the Frontline Programme, with exception to undergraduate degree, where an Applicant may not receive the qualification until June/July of the Summer Institute year. The conditional offer is based on the expectation that the individual will be awarded a 2.1 honours degree. Successful Applicants will be admitted to a postgraduate diploma in social work at a university, and therefore the admission criteria attend to the standards set by HCPC, the statutory regulator which protects the title of ‘social worker’ in England. The entry criteria also meet guidance contained in the document ‘Guidance for Higher Education Admissions Tutors and partners in implementing new arrangements for the selection of students to social work degree courses’. Successful completion of the Programme will mean that participants are eligible to apply for registration with HCPC.

5.2. Applicants’ entry qualifications are verified prior to being made a conditional offer of a place on the Programme.

5.3. Frontline clearly communicates all qualifications required for admission to the Frontline Programme on its website and this is updated annually - www.thefrontline.org.uk.

5.4. Holding the indicated entry qualifications does not guarantee an Applicant a conditional offer of a place on the Programme. Rigorous selection processes described in this document assess Participants against the Frontline Competencies, which are applied to decide to whom conditional offers will be made.

5.5. It is the responsibility of potential Applicants to check that they meet the entry requirements as set out on the website and in this document. At the point potential Applicants register their intent to apply to the Programme on the Frontline website, the potential Applicant must declare that they meet the minimum requirements as described. The Frontline Programme does not allow for open access.

5.6. Applicants must meet all of the entry requirements set out below to register to apply:

- at least grade C in English Language and Maths at GCSE (or equivalent);
- a 2.1 (or equivalent) or higher in an undergraduate honours degree (predicted or obtained);
• be eligible to reside and study in the UK for the duration of the programme (including access to public funds for non-EEA applicants);
• competence in basic use of IT facilities, including word processing, internet browsing and use of email;
• competences in spoken and written English;
• willingness to undertake an enhanced level DBS check (formerly known as a CRB police check) and health check (with an additional Occupational Health check where necessary); NOT be a qualified social worker or be currently studying a degree to become a social worker.

5.7. If all eligibility documents do not match the Applicant’s current name, the Applicant will be required to provide proof of name change documentation.

Applicants from Outside of the UK

5.8. In line with current regulations, Applicants from within the EEA are able to apply to Frontline as they have permission to work in the United Kingdom.

5.9. Non-UK, non-EEA 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 25 months, or longer where studies are interrupted for any reason). Non-UK, non-EEA citizens must also have access to public funds. Unfortunately, the Frontline Programme is unable to support work visa applications. Eligibility to work in the UK for the duration of the two-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.

Entry Requirements of Applicants from Outside the UK

5.10. Applicants educated outside of the UK must hold qualifications which are equivalent to those noted in the criteria above.

5.11. Applicants for whom English is not their first language must be able to communicate in English to the standard equivalent to level 7 of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), with no element below 6.5. If offered a place, Applicants are required to provide evidence of attainment of level 7 IELTS or an equivalent qualification at that stage. The IELTS test is valid for two years from the date it was taken. Applicants must have a valid IELTS certificate at the point of application.

Inclusion Mechanisms

5.12. All Applicants must demonstrate the ability to meet the entry requirements and the requirements must be met by registration of the Applicant as a student at the University of Bedfordshire. All offers made are conditional on meeting the entry requirements (where the entry requirements have not been met) and on providing evidence to prove any qualifications or achievements.

Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning (APEL)

5.13. Frontline cannot recognise prior (experiential) learning with regards to the Frontline Programme– all Participants must successfully complete every part of the course. The specific content and mode of delivery of the Programme means that Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning is not suitable for the Frontline Programme. The Programme cannot accept prior experiential learning as meeting or contributing to
any of the admissions criteria, and Participants must complete every part of the Programme regardless of their prior experience or academic study.

Equal Opportunities

5.14. Frontline operates a policy of equal opportunities. At the point of application, all Applicants complete an anonymous equal opportunities and diversity survey which requires them to answer equal opportunities data questions. This allows Frontline to monitor implementation of the policy and contributes to improving the application process. Data collected will be used solely for this purpose and will not form part of the selection process. This information is not visible at any point in the recruitment process and Applicants are able to select ‘prefer not to say’ if they choose not to answer a question in the survey. Please see section 9.2 which outlines the contextual admissions process.

6. References

6.1. Applicants who meet the entry requirements set out above, and successfully pass the Assessment Centre will be required to submit satisfactory references before receiving a conditional offer for the programme.

6.2. Applicants are required to provide at least two satisfactory references covering the entirety of the two years prior to the date of their Assessment Centre. Where appropriate, Applicants will be required to provide additional references from employment or voluntary experience with children. If an Applicant does not have experience employment or voluntary experience working with children within the last 2 years but has experience in the last 2-5 years, Frontline will request one additional reference from this experience.

6.3. Where an Applicant has a period of 3 months or more in which they were not working, volunteering or studying, they will be required to provide a character reference for the relevant period.

6.4. To be considered a ‘satisfactory reference’, the reference must be on the Frontline template, all competency questions must have scores of ‘average’ or above, there must be no concerns raised in response to safeguarding questions, and all details relating to both the Applicant and the referee must correspond with information on the applicant’s application form.

6.5. Further information on Frontline’s reference requirements is provided to Applicants before their Assessment Centre.

7. Self-declaration and Suitability for Professional Training Throughout the Application Process

7.1. It is important that Applicants and Participants do not pose an undue risk to the children, families and adults at risk with whom they will work. All Applicants are required to make declarations about criminal convictions, conduct, and health conditions that may affect their suitability for professional training and practice.

7.2. Applicants must be aware when applying and when making self-declarations that they will have to undertake an enhanced DBS check and health check, and an Occupational Health check where necessary, which will be carried out if the Applicant is successful in the assessment process.
7.3. Applicants should also be aware that this information, if they are successful and join the Frontline Programme, may be shared with their allocated Local Authority.

7.4. All Applicants and Participants should be aware that they will be subject to Frontline’s policy and procedure relating to suitability for professional training and practice, and to its policy and procedure relating to safeguarding. All potential Applicants should read and understand these policies before making the decision to apply to the Programme.

Pre-Programme Suitability Checks: self-disclosure before the Assessment Centre

7.5. All Applicants invited to attend the Assessment Centre are required to complete an Applicant Suitability Self-Declaration Form which must be brought to the Assessment Centre. This form remains sealed and is only opened and reviewed for those Applicants who were successful at Assessment Centre. All other forms are destroyed.

7.6. Those Applicants who are successful at Assessment Centre and who have declared a criminal conviction, issue of conduct, or health condition may be required to provide further information. Frontline will follow the processes outlined in its policy and procedure relating to suitability and any other relevant policies and procedures, such as those pertaining to disability and health.

Pre-Programme Suitability Checks: suitability checks at the point of conditional offer

7.7. All successful Applicants will be required to complete an enhanced DBS check. The fees for the enhanced DBS check will be covered by Frontline.

7.8. Applicants who have lived outside the UK within the 5 years prior to DBS forms being sent out will be required to obtain a criminal record certificate (‘letter of good conduct’) from every country in which they lived for a period of 6 months or longer within the last 5 years. This applies to periods where the Applicant was aged 18 or over. Any costs associated with obtaining such certificates are the responsibility of the Applicant. If an Applicant is unable to provide this documentation (for example if the country does not have a procedure for issuing certificates) Frontline will carry out further checks, such as requesting additional references to cover the time spent overseas.

7.9. Applicants are also required to complete a health self-disclosure form, which must be approved and stamped by their GP to confirm that the information is correct. Any charges imposed by GPs are the responsibility of the Applicant.

7.10. Applicants are required to complete checks in a timely fashion within the timeframes set out in communication from Frontline and the University of Bedfordshire Admissions Team. Failure to carry out the required actions within the timeframes given may result in an offer being rescinded.

7.11. Further information about pre-programme suitability checks can be found in Frontline’s policy and procedure relating to suitability for professional practice.

7.12. All offers remain conditional until satisfactory completion of suitability checks and processes.

8. Disability Declaration

8.1. Applicants are encouraged to declare any disabilities on their application form or as soon as possible thereafter, although there is no obligation to do so.
8.2. Frontline will establish arrangements for Applicants with known disabilities to be supported and assessed as appropriate, and will make reasonable adjustments as required for the Assessment Centre.

8.3. Please note Applicants should also declare any health conditions that may affect their suitability for professional practice through the self-disclosure process, even if these do not require reasonable adjustments throughout the selection process. This is separate and additional to declaring a disability for which reasonable adjustments may need to be made, though health conditions will often overlap and be relevant to both declarations (Applicants are advised to seek advice from the Selection Advisor where necessary).

9. The Selection Process

9.1. Applicants should be aware that the selection process is made up of the following distinct components:

- **Self-Assessment Stage**
  - **Self-Assessment Questionnaire**: Before starting an application form, potential Applicants can learn more about the role and tasks of a social worker as well as determine if they meet the eligibility criteria to join the programme completing the online self-assessment questionnaire.

- **Application Form**
  - **Application Form**: Applicants register online, and those who meet the minimum eligibility requirements are notified by email and are provided with a log in username and password which allows them to start work on the main application form. They will be required to provide further information about their academic qualifications, as well as outlining their professional and/or voluntary experience. In addition, Applicants are required to complete essay-style questions. The questions are competency-based, and provide the opportunity for Applicants to show commitment to the Frontline mission and to social work in general, as well as demonstrating experience of working with people and their suitability for the role.

- **Online Test (verbal reasoning, verbal comprehension and situational judgment)**
  - **Online Test**: All Applicants who complete an application form will also complete a combined situational judgment, verbal reasoning and verbal comprehension test. This test is an opportunity for Applicants to demonstrate their ability to use logic to solve complex problems and is an opportunity for Applicants to demonstrate their suitability for social work.

- **Video Interview**
  - **Video Interview**: Applicants who successfully pass through the application and online test stage are invited by email to a video interview. The email contains a link with login details to allow them to activate the video interview. Applicants need to answer a series of competency-based questions. Applicants should note there is a time limit in which to answer the questions, and answers cannot be re-recorded. The answers are recorded via webcam and once complete are automatically sent through to Frontline to be assessed. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to resolve any IT issues and complete the video interview, though Applicants are encouraged to seek support from the video interview provider when required.

- **Assessment Centre**
Assessment of the Application Form, Online Tests and Video Interviews

9.2. Applicants must meet a minimum threshold in the online tests. These thresholds are determined by the success of applicants from previous recruitment seasons. Applicants that pass the thresholds proceed to the application form screening. Applicants are screened taking into consideration the extent they meet the Frontline competencies in their written answers, test scores and educational and work/voluntary history.

9.3. Frontline employs contextualised recruitment which means Applicant’s academic and other achievements are assessed in the context of their socio-economic background. Information is gathered at the registration stage and it is not compulsory for Applicants to share such information. However, if provided, the information will be used in the application screening process when assessing previous academic performance. The intention is to promote social mobility within the Cohort.

9.4. Language and writing skills are also assessed at this stage and a second check is carried out to ensure all academic criteria are met.

9.5. Those applications who meet the required standards will be invited to video interview.

9.6. The completed video interviews are screened against the Frontline Competencies.

9.7. If successful at video interview Applicants will be invited to attend an Assessment Centre, those that do not meet the standards will be rejected at this stage.

Pre-Assessment Centre Information

9.8. Applicants invited to an Assessment Centre will have the option 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 two working days in advance of the Assessment Centre date to notify Frontline of any changes or difficulties in attending, Frontline will be under no obligation to invite that Applicant to any further Assessment Centre.

9.9. Applicants are responsible for making their own travel arrangements to the Assessment Centre and for arriving promptly as outlined in their Assessment Centre invitation letter.

9.10. Reasonable travel expenses, prioritising standard class public transport, for attendance at Assessment Centres are reimbursed by Frontline up to the value of £35 upon presentation of receipt(s) of purchase.

Assessment Centre Information

9.11. The Assessment Centre comprises a number of activities that all Applicants will complete during the day. This includes activities such as those listed below, all of which may be observed or assessed at Frontline’s discretion, including the self-reflection exercises:

- **Interview** – This is a competency-based interview. This is the chance for the Applicant to explain why social work and Frontline specifically is the right career choice for them and share relevant experiences to demonstrate their qualities and suitability for the Programme.

- **Written Activity** – Social workers need to be skilled in writing reports and analysing evidence. In this activity, Applicants have to read briefing materials which present a case scenario and carry out an analysis of the key information.
• **Role Play** – Applicants are assessed in a role play where they play the role of a social worker.

• **Group Activity** – Applicants work within a team to come up with the best solution to an everyday social work challenge.

• **Self-Reflection** – Throughout the day, there will be opportunities for Applicants to reflect on their performance and demonstrate any learning through written self-reflection questions.

• **Meeting Young People** – Applicants will have a conversation with young people who have experience of being in care in order to assess their communication and interpersonal skills.

9.12. All Applicants are required to take part in an Assessment Centre in person. 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 Competencies through tasks that simulate the experiences of a social worker.

9.13. Assessment Centres also allow Applicants to make a judgment about the role of a social worker and their own suitability and willingness for that role.

9.14. Sometimes as a part of the process Applicants disclose personal events or circumstances that Frontline may need to explore further in a second interview to ensure suitability.

9.15. 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 services in accordance with its policy and procedure relating to safeguarding.

**Document Checking at Assessment Centre**

9.16. All Applicants are required to bring the following documents to the Assessment Centre:

- Photographic proof of identity (e.g. passport and/or driver’s licence);
- Eligibility to work in the UK (please check here for eligible documents [https://www.gov.uk/legal-right-to-work-in-the-uk](https://www.gov.uk/legal-right-to-work-in-the-uk));
- Original certification of GCSE English and Maths (Grade C or above) or equivalent;
- Original certification of an undergraduate honours degree outcome: where the degree was awarded (2.1);
- Original certification of English Language proficiency (if applicable);
- Original certification of proof of name change (if applicable);
- Applicant Suitability Self-Declaration Form (sealed until an applicant is successful at Assessment Centre).

9.17. In some cases, Applicants who bring all required documents to the Assessment Centre will be required to have their documents re-checked at a later date for further confirmation of validity or equivalency.

9.18. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to bring all documents to the Assessment Centre. Successful applicants that fail to bring all required documents will need to send
their documents to the Frontline office within two weeks of being informed that they have passed the Assessment Centre. **It is the Applicant's responsibility to send the documents by post (and they are also responsible for the cost of postage and return) or bring them in person – Frontline recommends using special delivery for sending and returning documents.** In some cases, the documents will need to be sent/taken to the University of Bedfordshire for further confirmation of validity or equivalency. Failure to comply with these timeframes may result in the conditional offer being withheld, or an application being withdrawn by Frontline.

9.19. If any eligibility or qualification documentation is lost or missing, Applicants are strongly advised to contact the relevant issuing body e.g. exam boards, UK passport office, their former University, **before** attendance at the Assessment Centre. For successful Applicants, failure to act can lead to failure to produce the necessary documents within the timeframe required, and this will likely result in a conditional offer being withheld, or an application being withdrawn by Frontline.

10. **Offer of a Place on the Frontline Programme**

10.1. Those Applicants who successfully pass through the selection process will be made a conditional offer of a place on the Frontline Programme. Conditions of the offer include abiding by the Frontline expectations, fulfilling all qualification checks and suitability processes (including DBS, conduct health checks and, if necessary, an Occupational Health check, as outlined above), and obtaining any predicted grades required. Offers remain conditional **until all conditions are met.** This means that Applicants may still be considered to hold a conditional offer at the start of the Summer Institute (for example if they have not yet received their degree award or if the enhanced DBS check is delayed). As such, they are considered Applicants undergoing enrolment processes until all such checks and processes are satisfied, at which point they are enrolled fully as Participants of the Programme. If any of the conditions are subsequently not met Frontline reserves the right to rescind the offer, even if the Applicant has started the Programme.

10.2. All offers are conditional upon Applicants continuing to comply with HCPC 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. In these cases, the procedures that apply to Applicants will be followed (sometimes there are different processes/procedures for Applicants and Participants).

10.3. All Participants must read and complete a ‘Statement of Understanding’ in order to confirm their offer of a place. Applicants must take responsibility for reading and signing this particularly in relation to the terms that they must meet in order to receive instalments of their bursary throughout the first year of the Programme.

**Allocation**

10.4. Frontline allocates successful Applicants first to the broader region in which they will be placed and then to a specific Local Authority. Applicants are given an opportunity to indicate their preference for the region and local area in which they would like to be placed, and to list any extenuating circumstances relating to this. Whilst preferences are taken into account when allocating regions and Local Authorities, Frontline cannot guarantee Applicants will be allocated to the region or Local Authority they have listed as their preferred choice.
10.5. Applicants are expected to show flexibility in accepting the region and Local Authority to which they are allocated.

10.6. Frontline reserves the right to move Applicants or Participants to another Local Authority or between Units in one Local Authority at any time when there is a compelling reason for this. Whilst all efforts will be taken to ensure minimal disruption to Participants in this scenario, Applicants should be aware that in these circumstances, they may be placed in another Local Authority at short notice.

10.7. Whilst Frontline will make every effort to accommodate the preferences and situations of Applicants, if they are placed in a Local Authority where they need to either have a driving licence or own a car, it is their responsibility to meet these requirements, which could mean purchasing a car or learning to drive.

**Redeployment of a Unit of Participants**

10.8. Participants should be aware that in some rare circumstances, they may be allocated to a Unit within a Local Authority which then, at a later date, is no longer viable for the Programme year (for example due to unexpected Consultant Social Worker illness), or a Local Authority is no longer deemed able to host the Unit. In these cases, the Participants allocated to this Unit will be redeployed to other Local Authorities where there are spaces within Units or which are willing to take on additional Participants.

10.9. Whilst all efforts will be taken to ensure minimal disruption to Participants in this scenario, Participants should be aware that in these circumstances, they may be placed in another Local Authority at short notice.

10.10. This could happen before or after Applicants/Participants have started the Frontline Programme.

10.11. In exceptional cases outside of Frontline’s control, it may not be possible to find a suitable placement for Applicants/Participants whose unit has disbanded and in such circumstances, an Applicant/Participant would be deferred to the following year’s Cohort.

**Unallocated Offers**

10.12. Each year Frontline will make a number of offers which at first will not be allocated to a region or Local Authority. Frontline will conduct a phased allocation process and Applicants may be required to wait to find out the region and Local Authority to which they have been allocated. This could happen at any point up to the Summer Institute.

10.13. There are some circumstances in which an Applicant may be given a place to start in one year and then be deferred to the following year. Frontline reserves the right to defer Applicants or Participants to the following year’s cohort when there are no Participant places available.

10.14. All successful Applicants who are not able to join the cohort will automatically be deferred to the following year’s cohort.

10.15. Whilst all efforts will be taken to ensure minimal disruption to Participants in this scenario, Applicants should be aware that in these circumstances, they may be deferred to the following year at short notice.
10.16. Frontline reserves the right to operate a reserve list should the projected number of offers be higher than the number of Participant places available. In this instance, all reserve Applicants are given information about the Programme and the processes that follow. Reserve Applicants will be told that they may join that year’s cohort, should a Participant place arise. If a place does not arise their conditional offer will be deferred to the following year’s cohort.

Deferral Requests and Conditions

10.17. If an Applicant requests to defer, this will be considered on a case by case basis, at Frontline’s discretion. Frontline is under no obligation to grant deferral requests. Frontline’s criteria for deciding whether a candidate can defer could include but are not limited to:

- Medical condition – pregnancy etc.
- Significant change in personal circumstances beyond the Applicant's control.

10.18. All deferral requests are considered by the Frontline Recruitment Director. Frontline reserves the right to refuse deferral requests if they do not meet Frontline’s criteria for deferral. Applicants may only request one deferral and may not apply for a deferral if their place has already been deferred by Frontline unless any of the conditions in 10.17 apply.

10.19. Individuals can request to defer at the point of offer. They cannot request to defer once they have been placed in a Local Authority unless their personal circumstances significantly change. In these cases, they may be required to have further assessment of their motivations before a firm place is offered on the subsequent cohort.

Shadowing

10.20. Applicants will be required to undertake a period of shadowing in a Local Authority (usually in their host Local Authority if already allocated). This experience consists of two days with one day in a children’s service and one day in an adults’ service. The purpose is to give Applicants the opportunity to become familiar with their host Local Authority and meet their Consultant Social Worker, along with other key members of staff.

10.21. Any offer of a place on the Frontline Programme is conditional on the Applicant completing these two days of shadowing.

10.22. All Applicants must complete two Reflective Learning Logs about these shadowing days and these are submitted as part of their Readiness for Practice Folder, submitted at the Summer Institute.

10.23. 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 may be rescinded.

11. Conduct of Applicants Throughout the Recruitment and Admissions Process

11.1. All Applicants must apply to Frontline via the Frontline website and must complete the full selection process. No Applicant can be admitted to the Frontline Programme without successfully completing all elements of the selection process described in this document.
11.2. Applicants must ensure that all information provided to Frontline throughout the admissions process is their own and has not been plagiarised, either from another person or any previously completed and submitted Frontline application (where applicable).

11.3. Applicants must ensure that all information provided to Frontline throughout the admissions process is accurate, true and complete, and that facts and material information have not been omitted when requested. Applicants should note that provision of false or misleading information may amount to a criminal offence.

11.4. Applicants found to have fraudulent documents may be referred to the Frontline Programme Safeguarding and Misconduct Board and may subsequently have their offer rescinded or be removed from the Programme as a result.

11.5. Throughout the application process, Applicants are expected to follow HCPC Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students and Frontline'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 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;
- behaviour at informal evening events;
- general behaviour towards Frontline Staff Members and fellow Applicants in person or in communication by telephone or any form of electronic communication.

11.6. Applicants to the Frontline Programme should be aware that Frontline’s Code of Conduct and Misconduct Procedure and Frontline’s Social Media Policy apply throughout the application process as well as once enrolled onto the Programme. Applicant behaviour or actions that do not comply with these policies will result in the procedures outlined in those policies being applied.

11.7. Misconduct may result in the termination of the application process (including denying future access to the Programme), or the rescinding of the conditional offer.

11.8. Frontline reserves the right to rescind any offer made to an Applicant that fails to comply with its policies and procedures in relation to conduct and suitability for professional training and practice. In addition, Frontline reserves the right rescind any offer made to an Applicant who fails to comply with HCPC Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students at any point in the recruitment and admissions process.

12. Rescinding Offers

12.1. Frontline reserves the right to rescind conditional offers to join the Frontline Programme if successful Applicants do not meet the conditions required. A successful Applicant must provide Frontline with original certificates to show they have met the eligibility criteria, they must also provide their passport or birth certificate to demonstrate their identity and their right to work in the UK and at least two satisfactory references. If Applicants are unable to produce these documents, or the documents provided indicate that they have not met the minimum eligibility requirements then their conditional offer will be rescinded on the grounds that they have not met the eligibility requirements. Frontline also reserves the right to rescind conditional offers if Applicants do not pass a suitability panel, following suitability checks – see 6.7 to 6.10 in this
policy. The suitability panel is explained in the Suitability for Professional Practice Policy.

12.2. Frontline reserves the right to rescind conditional offers if successful Applicants do not complete and return all documentation on time, or do not complete shadowing within the timeframes given.

12.3. Frontline reserves the right to rescind conditional offers if successful Applicants do not communicate with Frontline in a timely manner. Lack of timely communication and responses from successful Applicants by email or telephone about important information regarding the Frontline Programme may result in an offer being rescinded. All successful Applicants will be given a warning, should there be delays or lack of contact, that their offer could be rescinded should Frontline fail to hear from them.

12.4. Frontline reserves the right to rescind a conditional offer should a successful Applicant not meet the standards set out in the section of this policy ‘9. Conduct of Applicants Throughout the Recruitment and Admissions Process’ or the standards set out in Frontline’s Code of Conduct at any point in the application and enrolment processes. In these cases, Applicants will normally also be subject to Frontline’s misconduct procedures, which may result in an offer being rescinded.

13. Registration of Applicants as Students with the University of Bedfordshire

13.1. The final stage of the recruitment and admissions process is enrolment, often referred to as registration. Enrolment/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 Frontline's University Partner (currently the University of Bedfordshire). Every Participant must complete enrolment/registration and become a student at the University of Bedfordshire in order to continue with and ultimately complete the Frontline Programme.

13.2. Applicants will receive instructions from the University of Bedfordshire and must comply with any requirements within the timeframes given. An offer letter for the University of Bedfordshire Post-Graduate Diploma in Social Work will be issued at this point.

13.3. Participants are considered to have exited their course of study, and registration with the University will be concluded, once they have been conferred with an award by the University Post Graduate Scheme Board of Examiners.

13.4. A Participant may lose the right to continue on the Frontline Programme or have their registration with the University Partner cancelled and be made to leave the University if they fail to comply with all relevant policies and procedures that apply to them.

14. Links with other policies

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

- Bursary policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints policy
- Disability and Health policy
- Social Media Policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Suitability for Professional Practice policy
• HCPC Guidance on conduct and ethics for students [http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002c16guidanceonconductandethicsforstudents.pdf](http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002c16guidanceonconductandethicsforstudents.pdf)
• HCPC Guidance on health and character [http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002D1AGuidanceonhealthandcharacter.pdf](http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002D1AGuidanceonhealthandcharacter.pdf)
• Higher education Authority (HEA) (2014) Assessing the suitability of students to enter and remain on qualifying social work programmes: Guidance for Universities and their employer partners in England. The Higher Education Academy with The Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee and The College of Social Work [https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/assessing_the_suitability_of_students_to_enter_and_remain_on_qualifying_social_work_programmes_0.pdf](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/assessing_the_suitability_of_students_to_enter_and_remain_on_qualifying_social_work_programmes_0.pdf)
Appendix 1

Glossary of terms frequently used at Frontline

**Academic Administrator/Registrar** – This means the person responsible for the academic administration of the Programme.

**Applicant** – This refers to any person who has applied to the Frontline Programme, from the moment that person’s application is lodged until the moment they formally enrol on the Programme.

**Assessment centre** – A key element of the selection process where candidates are assessed to determine their suitability for children’s social work.

**ASYE** – ‘assessed and supported year in employment’ which is a 12-month programme supporting newly qualified social workers to help them develop skills, knowledge and professional confidence.

**Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)** – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic is the term used to refer to members of non-white communities in the UK.

**Chief Operating Officer (‘COO’)** – this is the person responsible for leading the operational effectiveness of Frontline and the Operations Department, which supports the delivery of the Frontline Programme, Firstline Programme and the Fellowship.

**Child protection** – This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are at risk of suffering, significant harm.

**Cohort** – The collective name given to a group of people who started the Frontline or Firstline programme in the same year - for example, 2016 cohort is used for those who began the programme in July 2016.

**Children and families social work** – Social work which supports and protects vulnerable children, young people, their families and young carers.

**Consultant Social Worker (CSW)** – An experienced social worker who line-manages and leads in-practice learning for frontline social workers within the unit model. The Consultant Social Worker is employed by the Local Authority to lead each Participant Unit.

**Enrolment** – A person is considered fully enrolled when all suitability checks have been returned, considered, verified by Frontline, and the conditional offer confirmed. Even where persons have already begun at the Summer Institute, if these stipulations have not yet been satisfied then those persons are still considered ‘applicants’ who are in the process of enrolment. This status of being an ‘applicant’ undergoing enrolment processes will continue until such time as these stipulations are fully satisfied as described.

**Frontline Fellow** – An individual who has successfully completed either the Frontline or Firstline programme, or who has spent two years as a Consultant Social Worker with Frontline.

**Frontline Fellowship** – Community of Frontline Fellows.

**Firstline manager** – This term is used to define those who directly manage frontline social workers. In practice, this generally refers to team managers and consultant social workers.

**Firstline leader** – A term used to describe someone who has completed the Firstline programme.
**Free school meals (FSM)** – A free school meal is a statutory benefit available to school aged children from families who receive other qualifying benefits. FSM status is often used as a measure of socioeconomic disadvantage.

**HCPC** – Means the Health and Care Professions Council and its successors or assigns and the procedures set out in this policy and procedure will also apply to any authority or authorities that may replace or supplement or amend these procedures. In the same way, reference to particular HCPC documents should be interpreted as also referring to any later published documents that replace those mentioned in this document.

**Head of Academic Studies** – This is the person responsible for the academic standards and content of the Programme.

**Head of Region** – This is the person responsible for the Programme in the regions.

**Health and Wellbeing** – This refers to a student support team at the University of Bedfordshire.

**LGBT** – The acronym for anyone defining as lesbian, gay, bi or transgender.

**Local Authority** – An administrative body in local government.

** Newly qualified social worker (NQSW)** – A term used to describe someone who is in their first year of practice, who has already gained a social work degree or equivalent and is registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

**Participant** – This refers to any person enrolled on the Frontline Programme. A person is considered to be a participant of the Programme from the moment they enrol on it, until the moment they successfully complete the second year in their designated Local Authority (irrespective of whether or not they completed the Master’s route in that second year).

**Postgraduate Diploma in social work** – A professionally accredited programme leading to eligibility to apply to become a registered social worker with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

**Practice skill** – The ability of someone to apply the key values, principles and techniques required for social work.

**Practice Tutor** – This is the person responsible for teaching and supporting Frontline Participants in the Units.

**The Programme** – This refers to the Frontline Programme which spans 26 months, running from the Summer Institute (July of joining year) to Programme graduation (September of year of graduation). During these 26 months, Participants in ‘Year 1’ of placement (September – August), also known as the ‘qualifying year’, undergo a Post-Graduate Diploma (PGDip) qualification worth 120 credits. In ‘Year 2’ (September – August) they have the option to undertake a further 60-credits to achieve a Master’s qualification. Leadership development elements are also built into the Programme throughout the 26 months. For cohorts starting in 2017 and following years, completion of the Master’s qualification will be a compulsory part of the Programme.

**Qualifying Participant** – In this document this refers to a Participant in Year 1 of the Programme, during which the person is training to become a qualified social worker.

**Social work practice** – Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous
knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.

**Staff Member** – This refers to any person employed by The Frontline Organisation, whether they be full time, part time, permanent or temporary employees, contractors, or casual agency staff.

**Summer Institute** – Intensive five-week residential programme where participants on the Frontline programme are taught the knowledge and skills of good social work.

**Trainee social worker** – Someone who is undergoing training to become a social worker.

**Unit** – A group of Participants based in a Local Authority with a Consultant Social Worker.

**Unit model** – A way of organising social work teams. For the Frontline programme this involves four participants being placed together in a unit and supervised by a highly skilled and experienced consultant social worker.

**University Secretary** – this is the University Secretary at the University of Bedfordshire who accredit the Programme and includes any equivalent role at any successor accreditation partner or institution.

**Vulnerable children** – Children who are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity to achieve or maintain, a reasonable standard of health or development without the support of social care services.