# Bursary & Financial Policy

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<th>Version</th>
<th>Approved</th>
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<td>1.1</td>
<td>8th September 2016</td>
<td>Applicants onto the Frontline Programme</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>Deputy Programme Director &amp; Head of Academic Studies</td>
<td>3 years</td>
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<td>Participants of the Frontline Programme during the qualifying year</td>
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This Policy document has been prepared by The Frontline Organisation and is based on information available as of the date hereof. No representation or warranty as to the accuracy or completeness of any information contained herein is given by or on behalf of The Frontline Organisation or any of its personnel and no liability whatsoever (whether direct, indirect, incidental, special, consequential, punitive or otherwise) is accepted for any loss arising from any use of such information. The information contained herein does not purport to be complete and is subject (in whole or in part) to updating, completion, revision, amendment and verification. Where policy and procedures set out in this document conflict with policy and procedures set out in any other Frontline document(s), Frontline shall determine which is the most appropriate policy and procedures to apply in the circumstances, subject to any rights of appeal which may be available to any person.
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 (‘Frontline’) 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 committed to assisting Participants throughout their studies including financially. The Department for Education provides a Bursary to qualifying Participants. Payment of the funds is subject to the Department for Education continuing its funding of the Frontline Programme.

1.2. The Bursary is not a salary and does not include benefits. Participants are student trainees for the duration of the first year of the Programme and at no time during the first Programme Year should a Participant hold himself or herself out as being an officer, employee or worker of the Local Authority or of Frontline.

1.3. Participants receive the Bursary to cover all living and travel costs associated with completing the first year of the Frontline Programme. This includes travel to and from Recall Days and other requirements that are part of completion of the Frontline Programme in Year 1.

1.3.1. No Bursary is paid in Year 2 of the Frontline Programme when Participants are employees of the Local Authority and are paid a Newly Qualified Social Worker salary.

1.4. Participants are not required to pay tuition fees to complete the Postgraduate Diploma or Master's Award in the course of the two-year Frontline Programme. Frontline covers all costs associated with tuition fees for the duration of the Programme.

1.5. Frontline covers all costs associated with food and accommodation for the Summer Institute. Accommodation and food are only covered for Participants themselves and not for family members or spouses, who are not permitted to stay overnight at the Summer Institute without booking their own room directly with the venue.

1.6. Frontline provides a crèche at the Summer Institute but does not cover any costs associated with use of this crèche. No childcare costs are provided by Frontline during Participants’ completion of the Programme.

1.7. Participants have 25 days during the first year of the Programme when they are not required to attend their practice learning experience. These days have to be requested and agreed in advance by the Consultant Social Worker and are intended for personal relaxation / holiday etc. These 25 days are not paid annual leave and are not a benefit of the Bursary.

Additional Financial Support while on the Programme

1.8. The Bursary is intended to cover all living and travel costs for the first year of the Frontline Programme during which Participants are training for qualification as social workers.

1.9. Frontline recognises that additional financial assistance may be required to support individuals to complete the Summer Institute, and the Frontline Loan Scheme is intended to support Participants to cover expenses during this specific and distinct period. Details about the loan scheme will be provided to all Participants prior to the Summer Institute.
1.10. Additional financial assistance is currently available from the government to full-time students in higher education who have an adult who depends on them financially; such persons can apply for an Adult Dependants’ Grant of up to:

a. £2,834 for the academic year 2017 to 2018;
b. £2,757 for the academic year 2016 to 2017;

1.10.1. Participants can apply for this grant on top of any other student finance and do not have to repay it. Further information can be found at https://www.gov.uk/adult-dependants-grant/overview

1.11. Participants with dependent minors can potentially claim: Child Benefit, Maternity/Paternity Benefit, Housing Benefit (means tested), Income Support (usually only during Summer Institute, also means tested), Dependant's Grant (means tested), Parent's Learning Allowance (means tested), Child Tax Credit (means tested), and Childcare Grant (means tested). Further information is available at: http://www.gov.uk

1.12. Participants are encouraged to contact Frontline and the Health and Wellbeing Team at the University of Bedfordshire (Registrar’s Department) if they are experiencing difficulties that arise from financial considerations. Advice and guidance is available to all Participants from Frontline; there may be additional support or advisory services available from the Local Authority, but Frontline cannot guarantee any such provision.

2. Terms of Payment and Repayment

2.1. To receive the Bursary in instalments Participants must:

a. remain enrolled and actively participating in the Frontline Programme;
b. ensure their attendance and engagement meets the requirements of the Programme;
c. submit all assignments, attend all Recall Days and engage in all academic teaching, in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures relating to attendance and academic engagement and conduct;
d. abide by the procedures and regulations of Frontline and of the Local Authority as applicable;
e. provide Frontline with any evidence relating to their health, character and criminal convictions as reasonably requested by Frontline.

2.2. Bursary amount

2.2.1. The Frontline Bursary is £16,428 for 2017-18. The Bursary amount is subject to change each year and is dependent on funding being made available to Frontline from the Department of Education.

2.2.2. Frontline uses the London Councils website to guide decisions about Inner and Outer London weighting. These amounts are subject to change each year.

2.2.3. Participants based in London will receive either an Inner or an Outer London weighting. For 2017/18 these weightings will affect the Bursary as below:

a. Participants based in the Inner London Local Authorities will be paid a total Bursary of £19,207 (to include the 2017/18 Inner London weighting).
b. Participants based in the Outer London Local Authorities will be paid a total Bursary of £18,181 (to include the 2017/18 Outer London weighting).
2.2.4. If for any reason a Participant moves Local Authorities, their Bursary may be subject to change to reflect the appropriate amount for the new Local Authority location.

2.2.5. Neighbouring boroughs to London, such as Windsor & Maidenhead or Essex, receive an outer London weighting.

2.3. Mode of Payment

2.3.1. Frontline disburses the Bursary in quarterly instalments.

2.3.2. Frontline will pay the Bursary to Participants directly into their bank accounts.

2.3.3. It is the Participants’ responsibility to provide their bank details to Frontline for the purposes of Bursary payment, and to ensure these details remain up to date.

2.3.4. It is Frontline’s responsibility to ensure the Bursary is disbursed in a timely fashion to Participants.

2.3.5. The Bursary is paid in four equal instalments, quarterly in advance over the course of the first year of the Programme.

2.4. Taxation

2.4.1. Frontline understand that the Bursary is not considered earnings by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

2.4.2. The Bursary is not subject to income tax or National Insurance contributions.

2.4.2.1. However, Applicants and Participants should be aware that this is open to review by HMRC and could change. Frontline aims to keep Participants updated and to clearly communicate the implications of any changes.

2.4.3. Participants must take responsibility for their own tax affairs.

2.5. Student Loan

2.5.1. The Bursary does not count as income that is subject to student loan repayments.

2.5.1.1. However, Participants who have a student loan are responsible for contacting the Student Loan Company if required to complete a form evidencing current means of support.

2.6. Repayment of Finances

2.6.1. Applicants and Participants who wish to withdraw from the Programme must do so in accordance with Frontline’s policy and procedure relating to Attendance Transfer, Absence and Withdrawal Year 1 or Frontline’s policy and procedure relating to Deferral Transfer and Withdrawal Policy Year 2, as applicable.

2.6.2. Frontline reserves the right to recoup all or any fees, and costs paid to or on behalf of Participants from the date of accepting the offer of a place on the Programme or in relation to their participation on the Programme should they leave or be removed from the Frontline Programme before completing it in full.
2.6.2.1. The costs incurred could be up to £10,000 where a Participant leaves at the end of Year 1 having obtained their Postgraduate Diploma.

2.6.3. The costs incurred are considerably more where a Participant leaves at the end of Year 2 before final completion and graduation of the Programme.

2.6.4. Should a Participant leave the Programme of his or her own volition during the first Programme Year, they are also obliged to return to Frontline any advance bursary instalments paid by the Frontline that were intended to support him or her for the time period after the Participant’s leaving date; such amounts shall be calculated on a pro-rata basis.

2.6.4.1. For example, a first Instalment made in September will be deemed to cover the period 1 September to 30 November of that same calendar year. If the Participant leaves the Frontline Programme on 15 October of that year, the Participant would be required to repay 50% of the amount received in September.

2.6.5. Where repayment applies, the Relationship & Development Manager issues a Bursary repayment letter and a repayment plan is agreed with the Applicant/Participant. This would normally require the Bursary to be repaid the following month but a longer repayment plan may be considered in cases of extenuating circumstances.

2.7. Bursary status during Interruption, Deferral, and Suspension

2.7.1. Participants should be aware that if they fail to achieve the Postgraduate Diploma award following 12 months in the practice learning setting, and an extension of the practice learning experience is required, they will not receive extra Bursary funding to cover the period of extension.

2.7.2. The total period for which the Bursary is payable to any Participant is 12 months (constituting Year 1 of the Programme), irrespective of any interruption or extension of the Programme which may take place.

2.7.3. It is the Participants’ responsibility to ensure they are able to meet their financial commitments during any extension or similar period.

2.7.4. Participants who interrupt their practice learning experience due to illness or other personal circumstances are not eligible to receive the Bursary during the period of interruption. Bursary payments are only reinstated once the Participant recommences their practice learning experience.

2.7.5. If a Participant is granted a Deferral during Year 1, she or he is not eligible to receive the Bursary during their period of Deferral.

2.7.6. If a Participant defers and re-joins the Programme the following year with that following year’s cohort, they are treated as any other Participant on the Programme and receive pro-rata Bursary payments under the same terms as any other Year 1 Participant in the same Local Authority.

2.7.7. Participants who are suspended pending a Practice Learning Experience Review (‘PLER’) (as set out in the Practice Review policy and procedure) are eligible to receive a Bursary from the first day of their suspension until the matter has been considered at the PLER and the final decision on the continued payment of the
Bursary will depend on the outcome of the PLER.

2.7.8. The same principle applies where Participants are suspended pending Panels by the Frontline Programme Safeguarding and Misconduct Board (please refer to the Code of Conduct for further details).

2.7.9. In the event that the Participant has already received an advance disbursement for future months, the Relationship & Development Manager will issue a Bursary repayment letter and a repayment plan will be agreed with the Participant. This usually requires the Bursary to be repaid the following month, but a longer repayment plan may be considered in cases of extenuating circumstances.

3. Links with other policies

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

- The Attendance Transfer, Absence and Withdrawal Policy Year 1
- Frontline’s Code of Conduct
- Deferral Transfer and Withdrawal Policy Year 2
- The Participant’s Practice Learning Agreement.
- Practice Review Policy and procedure
- Recruitment and Admissions Policy
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 Team – 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 Frontline 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.