CHANGING LIVES TOGETHER

PARTNER WITH US TO IMPROVE CHILDREN’S SOCIAL WORK SERVICES
Over half a million children in England do not have a safe or stable home. As some of the most vulnerable in our country, this can have a huge impact on their ability to thrive at school and in later life.

Great social work has the ability to transform the lives of these children and their families for the better.

Yet our social work system has never been under more pressure. Local authorities and children’s trusts face challenges in their efforts to attract, develop and retain talented social workers.

Read on to find out more about the benefits of partnering with us, and how we are working with local authorities and children’s trusts to deliver the best outcomes for children and families.

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WHo We ARE

Frontline is a charity working in partnership with local authorities and children’s trusts to bring safety and stability to children across England.

By recruiting and training high potential individuals to be social workers and developing the practice skills and leadership of existing social workers, we are building a movement to transform the lives of the children and families who rely on the profession.

We work closely with our partners to improve the effectiveness of their social work practice and, most importantly, deliver the best outcomes for children and families.

“We have already benefited greatly from our involvement with Frontline, adding to our frontline social work teams in terms of the calibre of social workers, whilst developing our own potential managers of the future who manage the participants and implement the training programme. A ‘win-win’ in our constant desire to improve our service delivery to the most vulnerable of children and their families.”

Ross Williams, Head of Family Safeguarding, Hertfordshire County Council
WHY PARTNER WITH FRONTLINE?

Enable excellent practice
Our model of training is innovative, with a clear framework that focuses on systemic practice, motivational interviewing and evidence-based parenting interventions. We emphasise excellent practice and positive measurable outcomes.

We will work with you to ensure your staff are equipped to be effective practitioners and managers who achieve the best outcomes for children and families.

Access knowledge and learning across the profession
Our programmes provide opportunities to share knowledge, develop skills and attend training across the country, keeping your staff motivated and connected to developments across the profession.

Both leadership seminars and regional research and practice forums enable staff across your service to hear from leading thinkers and system influencers.

On completion of our programmes, your staff will join the Fellowship — a movement of outstanding individuals working to address social disadvantage. Members benefit from being part of a network of skilled individuals, enabling them to consult peers and attend practice related events, which further energises them in their work. Most importantly, they will be supported to develop their skills and keep learning new ways to bring about positive change for children and families.

Upskill and retain your workforce
Benefit from our high-quality training for your existing team. Our Frontline and Firstline programmes provide excellent training opportunities to develop experienced practitioners’ skills and ensure they are engaged and motivated. The programmes offer learning opportunities and career progression, as your staff use their skills to develop the professional expertise of new and existing members of your workforce.

Existing managers in local authorities

**Frontline programme**
We’ll work with you to identify key members of staff who are suitable to train as a consultant social worker (CSW). We then deliver focussed training that upsskills a CSW to guide small units of Frontline participants through their first year of training while remaining in practice with a reduced caseload.

**Firstline programme**
Firstline leaders were “overwhelmingly positive” about the programme, with many considering it “the best training and professional development they’ve received as managers and leaders.”

Loughborough University (2017)
Firstline: evaluation, p.8.
WHY PARTNER WITH FRONTLINE?

Gain new staff who are practice ready

Access a diverse pool of talented, practice-ready new staff with high potential. Our selection process is rigorous and we take an innovative approach to teaching on the Frontline programme, combining evidence-based methodologies with learning on the job. This means social workers are more prepared for the demands of statutory social work. You will gain master’s qualified social workers, who will join your service with a heightened level of awareness and theoretical knowledge. The master’s is achieved through action research which requires social workers to develop advanced practice expertise, ensuring they bring real value to your organisation.

“The participants that have joined our local authority have brought new ideas, enthusiasm, passion and an appetite to promote positive outcomes for children and young people that we have been able to share within the teams, allowing us to learn from each other. I have been so impressed by their abilities so early in their social work career and have a great deal of confidence that they will continue to succeed in this profession which supports, protects and brightens the lives of so many.”

Stuart Williams, Senior Manager, Durham Children’s Services

Save on operational costs

Save time and money as you gain four new practice-ready social workers. We cover all costs relating to the attraction, selection and recruitment of participants for our programmes. For the Frontline programme, this includes all references, health and DBS checks.

“The partnership with Frontline has strengthened over time and has been mutually beneficial, both to the local authority and organisation.”

Anne Wood, Adult and Children Training Sector Consultant, Oldham Council
What we’ve found for our Firstline leaders is it’s helped them go from really good managers to really effective influential leaders. They are leaders who absolutely shape and influence outcomes for children through high-quality conversations with managers who have a really good insight and awareness into what they bring to that.”

Rachel Anderton, Principal Child and Families Social Worker, North Yorkshire

Develop and grow a culture of leadership

As your new recruits from the Frontline programme grow under the guidance of consultant social workers, they will use their personal leadership to bring about lasting change within families.

Managers will be developed to even more effectively support and empower their social workers. They will work in their teams to bring about positive change within your organisation.

Working together, those trained by Frontline will be empowered to develop strong, influential relationships with their peers and partners from other organisations, to improve their practice systems.
We deliver innovative leadership development programmes and are building the Frontline Fellowship – a movement of leaders committed to transforming the lives of vulnerable children and families. We currently partner with over one third of local authorities across England. Join us and become part of this movement.

**FRONTLINE**

Through the Frontline programme we attract, select, train and place outstanding career changers and graduates directly within children’s services teams.

Our intensive, practice-focussed training provides a high-quality learning experience and produces newly qualified social workers, ready to work with children and families.

We also develop your experienced social workers through our consultant social worker role and development programme. By growing the practice management and leadership skill of your current workforce, this provides an opportunity for career progression as well as improving staff retention.

As a partner on the Frontline programme, you will gain talented, motivated recruits ready to work and learn, under the supervision of an experienced social worker. One of the clear advantages of the Frontline programme is that social workers spend 200 days working within a statutory child protection service. This ensures they are uniquely prepared to work effectively with families during their assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) and as they embark on their professional career with you.

**Firstline**

The Firstline programme is an intensive 10 month leadership development programme designed specifically for social work, to develop good managers into high performing, considered and influential leaders. We equip them with the tools and techniques to more effectively support and improve their teams to deliver better outcomes for children and families.

Delivered primarily in the workplace, the programme includes individual and group sessions, residential based on practising skills and a tailor made 360º feedback tool. All are designed to boost the leadership skills of your managers, so they can set high practice standards, and focus on skilfully empowering and challenging social workers whilst helping you to develop a high-functioning practice system.

"I have created a culture where practice standards are high and they know what is expected of them. The social worker is held to account and challenge is given when needed, and I feel the team has been receptive to this."

Firstline leader, Autumn 2017 Cohort

**Fellowship**

The Frontline Fellowship is a movement of individuals, applying themselves to address social disadvantage in different ways.

People join the Fellowship once they have completed the Frontline, Firstline or consultant social worker development programmes.

Fellows benefit from peer-to-peer learning and support from the Fellowship community as well as events and opportunities facilitated by Frontline. Many events are also open to local authority colleagues. Fellows’ continued learning and development is supported in the Fellowship and our national reach offers fellows a unique perspective into the different approaches taken by social work services across the country. The Fellowship is fast becoming a movement for positive change.

Directed and led by fellows, the Fellowship works within three specific areas:

- **Practice** – developing the practice skills of fellows.
- **Policy** – enabling fellows to influence social work policy.
- **Innovation** – connecting fellows to explore new initiatives that benefit vulnerable children and families.
By 2020 we will be working with around 70 local authorities throughout England.

450+ participants on each cohort of the two-year Frontline programme.

160+ participants on the Firstline programme annually.

100+ consultant social workers at any given time.

WHERE WE OPERATE

Frontline partners with over one third of local authorities across England. We work with partners in the North East, Yorkshire, North West, Midlands, London, South East, South West, East Anglia and East of England. We are continuing to expand our programmes.
Our two-year leadership development programme trains and qualifies high potential career changers and graduates as child protection social workers.

**How Our Programmes Work**

**FRONTLINE**

Each year we run comprehensive recruitment campaigns targeting career changers and university campuses across the country.

We apply a rigorous approach to the selection of candidates, assessing them on their intellectual abilities and personal qualities. Applications are consistently oversubscribed – on average one in ten applicants are offered a place.

We provide directly relevant experience through practice-based learning and intensive practical and academic training. Participants undergo a five-week residential training programme where they begin to develop their knowledge of the evidence-based practice models of motivational interviewing, systemic practice and parenting interventions.

Throughout the two year programme, participants spend their time working in a statutory child protection setting, developing their practice skills and knowledge whilst working directly with children and their families.

Receive an £18k grant per unit to cover set up and ongoing costs.
Participants receive a comprehensive, well-rounded academic programme of learning, based upon a systemic model of social work, which supports their in-unit learning over the course of the programme. I have been privileged to hear from families who have felt the difference in the approach of the unit. Comments, such as ‘it’s brought my family together’, have cemented my view that relationship based practice is vital for effective children’s safeguarding.”

Consultant social worker, Midlands

During the first year participants work in a local authority setting. They are supported by a consultant social worker (an expert practitioner) who leads a unit of four participants. The consultant social worker models effective work with children and families, whilst mentoring, managing and coaching participants. They provide training, supervision and guidance to their unit.

Throughout year one participants also attend regular ‘recall’ days, during which they receive tailored academic teaching. This combination of activity and the real-time application of concepts and techniques accelerates learning.

The second year is participants’ assessed and supported year of employment (ASYE). During the year they work as newly qualified social workers accountable and professionally responsible for their own caseload. They complete an action research master’s qualification. Learning in this way provides participants the opportunity, support and challenge to focus on understanding their own practice in depth, which improves their ability to work effectively with children and families.

Across the two year programme, participants receive regular academic input on practice and the latest developments in research from visiting practice tutors. In the second year participants are offered individual coaching and receive support and advice from their relationship and development manager.
A tailored, intensive ten month training programme, developing outstanding leaders to even more effectively support their teams and influence their social work systems.

**Firstline**

We work with children’s services partners to identify social work managers who are eager to develop their leadership skill and willing to challenge themselves to become more effective leaders.

Our intensive, social work specific, leadership development programme helps Firstline leaders generate different ways of thinking, ensuring they can identify and meet challenges in new and effective ways.

The Firstline diagnostics is a tool we have developed that enables Firstline leaders to collect 360º feedback from colleagues at the beginning and end of the programme. This enables them to better understand their leadership strengths, increases their awareness of their impact on others and helps them identify areas for further development to work on with their leadership development advisor.

**Residential**

Three, two-day residentials bring together managers from all of our local authority partners. Facilitated by experts, the residentials introduce innovative leadership skills, tools and techniques and allow space for Firstline leaders to practise and hone these skills.

**Leadership sessions**

Six, two-hour individual leadership sessions focus the development of Firstline leaders into tangible and achievable goals. These are delivered by a group of exceptional leadership development advisors who are either systemic practitioners, professional coaches or have senior leadership experience in children’s social care.

**Group sessions**

Leadership development advisors facilitate four group practice sessions which enable Firstline leaders to practice skills such as challenging conversations, learn from their peers and implement wider system change.
More men, Frontline is bringing a significantly higher proportion of men (up to 24%) into what is a predominantly female workforce, to ensure the profession better represents the communities we work with.

87% remain in children’s social work six months after completing the Frontline programme.

A ratio of 10:1 applicants per place. Establishing social work as a competitive career choice for career changers and graduates with the right skills and commitment.

Frontline participants have considerably higher practice skills than those undertaking traditional undergraduate routes. (DfE report 2016)

We are proactively working to make our cohorts more diverse. 55% of the 2018 Cohort of the Frontline programme were the first in their families to go to university and 18% were BAME.

13,000+ families supported by Frontline participants to date.

We have been listed in The Times Top 100 Graduate Employers for five years – the first social work organisation to feature.
35,000+ families are supported through Firstline leaders.

81% of Firstline leaders reported a positive change in their ability to impact and influence between the beginning and end of the programme.

Direct reports of Firstline leaders reported an increase in the extent to which the team feel inspired and encouraged to be in social work between the beginning and end of the programme.

90% of fellows remain in social work or other mission-aligned roles two years after completing the programme.

Fellows are supported to enhance their practice skills, influence policy and develop innovations in social work and related fields.

By 2020 there will be over 1,500 fellows.

Fellows are actively contributing to the system by connecting with others to deliver practice-related training. Others are focussing their activity on influencing policy change and contributing to policy discussions. A number are also developing ideas for new initiatives to address the needs of vulnerable children and families or the professionals who support them.
MEASURING OUR IMPACT ON CHILDREN’S SERVICES

We conduct monitoring and evaluation to ensure we are delivering quality programmes that have the greatest impact for children and families. We believe that sharing knowledge is invaluable to the social work profession too. As such we endeavour to share the findings from any internal or external research conducted with our partners. By drawing on a wealth of data and intelligence, we are well placed to contribute to practice improvement and evidence-informed, system-wide change.

FRONTLINE

We collect feedback about all elements of the programme from participants, consultant social workers and local authority partners. This data is integral to providing insight into how our programme is working, enabling us to implement evidence-based change and ultimately ensure we are designing a high quality programme that improves social work practice.

We recognise retention is a key issue in social work across the country. We work closely with partners to support higher retention across the profession.

- 87% of Frontline participants from the 2014/15 cohorts remained in children’s social work six months after the programme, compared to 69% of social work graduates in 2015/16 six months after graduation.

- Two years after the programme, 77% of fellows from the 2014 Cohort were working in social work or as HCPC-registered professionals.

- We are learning about how to improve local authority retention: 45% of the 2014 Cohort were still with the same local authority one year after completing the programme. This increased by 10% to 55% for the 2015 Cohort and we are continuing to use our learnings to reduce attrition.

Firstline

We collect feedback across different elements of the programme to help us understand what works well and what could be improved, using these learnings to improve teaching for future cohorts. This includes seeking direct feedback from local authorities on the programme and how we work with them.

Through our Firstline diagnostics we collect quantitative and qualitative data from colleagues of Firstline leaders at the beginning and end of the programme. This enables us to measure how the programme supports Firstline leaders to develop their leadership capabilities, and helps them reflect on their leadership skills.

We also conduct a survey at the end of the programme. This helps us assess the impact of the programme on Firstline leaders and the wider impact on their teams, local authorities and with children and families.

- 98% of Firstline leaders in the Autumn 2017 Cohort found the diagnostics helpful.

- 91% of Firstline leaders’ senior colleagues reported a positive change in at least one leadership capability between the beginning and end of the programme.
Measuring outcomes

Understanding our impact on outcomes for children and families is a key strategic priority. We are keen to explore how our programmes impact children on the frontline through direct social work practice and leadership skills, and ensure that they are enabling participants to work effectively with children and their families.

We want to take an approach that keeps social workers and families at the forefront and supports social workers in their development of effective relationships and high-quality, targeted interventions. We are currently considering how we work with other organisations, including local authorities, and consulting with children and families to ensure we are driven by expertise and direct experience.

“...I now manage a child protection and court locality and am responsible for six social work teams. The highlight for me is seeing the impact I am having in helping others to be able to do their job properly and making sure that our service runs in a way that is focussed on getting good outcomes for children.”

Richard, Frontline fellow
WHAT WE REQUIRE FROM YOU

Ensuring our partnership has maximum impact requires your full commitment throughout our programmes.

If you partner with Frontline we will ask you to:

— Ensure support from senior leadership and align with our social work practice models.
— Provide the right learning environment.
— Support participants to study alongside their work.
— Designate the appropriate people to work with us.
— Help us recruit consultant social workers and Firstline leaders.

This list identifies some of the core expectations of partnership. More comprehensive information is available should you wish to know more.
1. Get in touch to let us know you are interested in partnering.

2. An initial meeting with the relevant Frontline lead and your senior management team to discuss potential partnering on Frontline or Firstline.

3. Reach an agreement to explore partnership in more detail

4. Ensure partnership suitability half-day visits to you that include:
   - FRONTLINE meetings with key team members and a survey to staff.
   - FIRSTLINE meetings with senior managers and aspirant Firstline leaders.

5. Sign a partnership agreement

6. We work together
   - FRONTLINE to appoint consultant social worker(s).
   - FIRSTLINE to select Firstline leaders within your staff.

7. Frontline participants, Firstline leaders and consultant social workers start on their programmes.
Contact us to find out more information about the benefits of partnering with Frontline.

Firstline programme: firstlinepartners@thefrontline.org.uk

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