

Recruitment and admissions policy and procedure

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Section 1: Overview

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 Frontline's mission and core values drive the organisation to provide fair and equal access to the Frontline programme to applicants of diverse and wide-ranging backgrounds. Frontline's selection process identifies those that share our values and have the potential to succeed and become outstanding social workers.

1.1.2 This policy is written to inform applicants and staff of the procedures relevant to applying for the Frontline programme and participant recruitment and enrollment onto the programme. It details the relevant procedures, clearly outlining Frontline's expectations to support applicants to make an informed choice about applying to the programme.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 This policy applies to applicants and potential applicants of the Frontline programme.

1.2.2 The policy is available on Frontline's website.

1.3 Responsibilities

1.3.1 The recruitment director is responsible for this policy and its implementation.

1.3.2 Frontline's selection and admissions teams are responsible for the day to day enactment.

1.3.3 Applicants are responsible for complying with the requirements detailed in the policy.

1.4 Definitions

Frontline competencies	the qualities that an applicant with the potential to be an outstanding social worker must possess and be able to demonstrate
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Section 2: Policy and procedures

2.1 General principles

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

- demonstrate the Frontline competencies, thus evidencing the potential to become an outstanding social worker;
- complete the objectives of the Frontline programme academic courses;
- achieve the standard required for the academic awards;
- demonstrate the social work regulator's standards of proficiency

2.1.2 Frontline's recruitment process includes several stages, which assess the extent to which an applicant meets Frontline's competencies. All applicants must meet expected levels and eligibility requirements before receiving a conditional offer of a place on the programme.

2.1.3 Applicants are required to disclose any information which might be relevant to their eligibility for the programme. Frontline reserves the right to withdraw an application or rescind a conditional offer (see section 2.10) of admission to the Frontline programme should it come to light that false or misleading information has been given by the applicant at any stage of the process (for example incorrect details about experience or qualifications), or by the non-disclosure of relevant information that calls into question the applicant's suitability for the programme. This is at Frontline's discretion.

2.1.4 Frontline similarly reserves the right to 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.

2.1.5 An applicant can make one written application per cohort recruitment year. Frontline reserves the right to cancel any application where an applicant is found to have already made a written application.

2.1.6 The principles of equality, diversity and integrity underpin all Frontline processes and the criteria and assessments undertaken during the Frontline recruitment and selection processes are designed to ensure equal opportunities. Frontline welcomes applications from individuals with the appropriate skills and qualifications from a diverse range of backgrounds.

2.1.7 Frontline arranges for applicants and participants with disabilities to be supported and assessed as appropriate and makes reasonable adjustments as required to enable disabled applicants to be assessed in a fair and supported way. Applicants are encouraged to declare any disabilities on their application form or as soon as possible thereafter, to ensure they are well positioned to receive the full offer of support.

2.1.8 Frontline operates an equal opportunities policy. At the point of application, all applicants complete an anonymous diversity survey on which they answer equal opportunities data questions. This information enables Frontline to monitor implementation of the policy and contributes to improving the application process. Data collected is used solely for this purpose and does not form part of the selection process. This information is not visible at any point in the recruitment process and applicants can select 'prefer not to say' if they choose not to answer a question. Please see section 4.1.3 which outlines the contextual admissions process.

2.2 Frontline's values and competencies

2.2.1 Frontline's values are:

- **be brave:** be prepared to challenge and do not always reach for the easy answer;
- **show respect:** recognize and value the contribution 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

2.2.2 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.

2.2.3 Applicants will be assessed against these competencies at all stages of the recruitment process and must demonstrate they have met the Frontline competencies and pass eligibility checks in order to receive a conditional offer of a place on the programme.

2.2.4 The Frontline competencies map directly to the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) issued by the British Association of Social Workers, meaning that applicants must meet the domains of the PCF at entry level to be offered a place on the Frontline programme.

2.2.5 Details about the Frontline competencies can be found on [Frontline's website](#).

2.3 Entry requirements

2.3.1 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 qualification – higher qualifications will not be accepted in lieu of GCSEs);
- a 2.1 (or equivalent) or higher in an undergraduate honours degree (predicted or obtained) OR a 2.2 (or equivalent) in an undergraduate honours degree (predicted or obtained) plus a level 7 qualification (i.e. Master's degree);
- be eligible to reside and study in the UK for the duration of the programme (including access to public funds);
- be resident in England for the duration of the Frontline programme;
- competence in spoken and written English;
- willingness to undertake an enhanced level DBS check with barred lists 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

2.3.2 Applicants educated outside of the UK must hold qualifications which are equivalent to those noted in the criteria above. International qualifications must be confirmed as equivalent by the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARC).

2.3.3 Non-UK, citizens are able to apply as long as they are eligible to work and study 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, 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.

2.3.4 An applicant must have already achieved certain educational levels and/or qualifications prior to attending an assessment centre for the Frontline programme, with exception to a pending undergraduate degree where an applicant may not receive the qualification until June/July of the Summer Institute year. A conditional offer given in this instance is based on the expectation that the individual will be awarded one of the following:

- a 2.1 honours degree
- a 2.2 honours degree (for applicants who hold a level 7 qualification)

2.3.5 Applicants' entry qualifications are verified prior to being made a conditional offer of a place on the programme.

2.3.6 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.

2.3.7 Frontline clearly communicates all qualifications required for admission to the Frontline Programme on its website and this is updated annually - <https://thefrontline.org.uk/our-programmes/frontline-programme/eligibility-requirements/>.

2.3.8 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 individual must declare that they meet the minimum requirements as described. The Frontline programme does not allow for open access.

2.4 Document checking

2.4.1 Applicants are required to bring the following hard copy, original documents to the assessment centre:

- original certification of GCSE English and Maths (Grade C or above) or equivalent (provisional results will not be accepted);
- original certificate or transcript of an undergraduate honours degree outcome: where the degree was awarded (2.1 or 2.2);
- original certificate or transcript of a level 7 qualification (i.e. Masters) where a 2.2 undergraduate honours degree was obtained (if applicable);
- proof of right to work in the UK (e.g. passport or full birth certificate along with a HMRC document confirming national insurance number));
- original certification of English Language proficiency, for example IELTS (if applicable);
- original certification of proof of name change (if applicable);

2.4.2 If any eligibility document does not match the applicant's current name, the applicant will be required to provide hard copy proof of name change.

2.4.3 Letters from schools/colleges/universities will not be accepted in lieu of official certificates and transcripts.

2.4.4 In some cases, documents submitted at the assessment centre will be required to be re-checked at a later date for further confirmation of validity or equivalency by Frontline and/or Frontline's university partner. Failure to comply with these timeframes may result in the conditional offer being withheld or an application being withdrawn by Frontline.

2.4.5 It is the responsibility of the applicant to bring **all** documents to the assessment centre. If an applicant does not provide the relevant documents at assessment centre, Frontline reserves the right to cancel the assessment centre booking, which may result in an application being withdrawn.

2.4.6 In rare, exceptional circumstances, Frontline may permit applicants to attend an assessment centre without their documents. Applicants will need to have written permission from Frontline before attending an assessment centre without documents. In these circumstances, successful applicants will need to send their documents to Frontline

within two weeks of being informed that they have passed the assessment centre. It will be the applicant's responsibility to send the documents by post (they will be responsible for the cost of postage to send and also to return the documents). Frontline recommends using special delivery for sending and returning documents. Failure to comply with the timeframes set by Frontline may result in an application being withdrawn.

- 2.4.7** 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** booking their attendance at the assessment centre.

2.5 Pre-programme checks: references

- 2.5.1** Applicants who meet the entry requirements set out in section 2.3 and successfully pass the assessment centre will be required to submit satisfactory references before receiving a conditional offer for the programme.

- 2.5.2** To be considered a 'satisfactory reference', the reference must be on the Frontline template, all competency questions must have scores of 'satisfactory' 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.

- 2.5.3** 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 who have employment or voluntary experience with children within the last 5 years will be asked to provide an additional reference from this experience.

- 2.5.4** Where an applicant has a period of 1 month or more in which they were not working, volunteering or studying, they will be required to provide a character reference for the relevant period.

- 2.5.5** Applicants who do not initially provide a current employer reference will be required to sign a declaration indicating there will be no issues raised by their current employer. A satisfactory current employer reference must be provided before an applicant can

commence their shadowing days with their local authority placement.

- 2.5.6 Further information on Frontline's reference requirements can be found in the reference guidance.

2.6 Pre-programme checks: disclosures

- 2.6.1 It is important that applicants and participants do not pose an undue risk to the vulnerable children, families and adults with whom they will work. Applicants are required to make declarations about criminal convictions, conduct, and health conditions that may affect their suitability for professional training and practice.
- 2.6.2 Applicants must be aware when applying and making self-declarations that they will have to undertake an enhanced DBS check and health check, and an occupational health check where necessary, which are carried out if the applicant is successful in the assessment process.

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.

Following the assessment centre

- 2.6.3 All applicants successful at assessment centre stage are required to complete an applicant suitability self-declaration form which must be completed and uploaded to Frontline Connect, the applicant portal (details of which are sent to successful applicants).
- 2.6.4 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.
- 2.6.5 All successful applicants will be required to complete an enhanced DBS check. The fees for the enhanced DBS check will be covered by Frontline.

- 2.6.6** 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 only. 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.
- 2.6.7** 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.
- 2.6.8** Applicants are required to complete checks in a timely fashion within the timeframes set out in communication from Frontline and the university partner. Failure to carry out the required actions within the timeframes given may result in a conditional offer being rescinded.
- 2.6.9** Further information about pre-programme suitability checks can be found in Frontline's policy and procedure relating to suitability for professional practice.
- 2.6.10** All offers remain conditional until satisfactory completion of suitability checks and processes.

2.7 Offers and allocation

- 2.7.1** Those applicants who successfully pass through the selection process and eligibility checks will be made a conditional offer of a place on the Frontline programme. Conditions of the offer include abiding by the Frontline expectations, successfully fulfilling all qualification checks and suitability processes (including DBS, health checks and, if necessary, an occupational health check, as outlined above), completing the shadowing days and obtaining any predicted grades required.
- 2.7.2** 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 admissions 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.

- 2.7.3** All offers are conditional upon applicants continuing to comply with the social work regulator's guidance on conduct and ethics for students and Frontline's code of conduct. Failure to comply with either of these codes may result in an offer being rescinded prior to commencement of the programme. In these cases, the relevant procedures that apply to applicants will be followed.
- 2.7.4** All applicants must read and complete an offer letter and statement of understanding in order to confirm their offer of a place. Applicants must take responsibility for reading and signing these documents.
- 2.7.5** Applicants will not be allocated to a local authority until they have completed their eligibility checks (excluding, where applicable, a current employer reference) and have signed both their offer letter and statement of understanding.
- 2.7.6** 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 considered where possible 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.
- 2.7.7** Applicants are expected to show flexibility in accepting the region and local authority to which they are allocated.
- 2.7.8** Frontline reserves the right to move applicants or participants to another local authority or between units in one local authority at any time, including after commencement of the programme, 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.

2.7.9 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.

2.7.10 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 then it is their responsibility to meet these requirements, which could mean purchasing a car or learning to drive.

2.7.11 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. This could happen before or after applicants/participants have started the Frontline programme.

2.7.12 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.

2.7.13 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.

2.7.14 All successful applicants who are not able to join the cohort will automatically be deferred to the following year's cohort.

2.7.15 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.

2.8 Shadowing

2.8.1 Successful 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. This gives applicants the opportunity to become familiar with their host local authority and meet their consultant social worker and other key members of staff.

2.8.2 Any offer of a place on the Frontline programme is conditional on the applicant completing these two days of shadowing.

2.8.3 Successful 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.

2.8.4 Successful 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.

2.9 Deferrals

2.9.1 Applicants can only request to defer once they have received a conditional offer. If an applicant requests to defer, this will be considered on a case by case basis at Frontline's discretion. Requests for deferrals will only be considered under exceptional circumstances. Frontline's criteria for deciding whether an applicant can defer could include but are not limited to:

- medical conditions;
- significant change in personal circumstances beyond the applicant's control.

2.9.2 All deferral requests are considered by the Frontline selection manager, who reserves the right to refuse deferral requests if they do not meet Frontline's criteria for deferral. Applicants may only request one deferral (i.e. for one year) and may not request a deferral if their place has already been deferred by Frontline or if they have already been placed in a local authority, unless personal circumstances have significantly changed.

2.9.3 For applicants successful in their deferral request. Frontline reserves the right to request additional information before a deferred conditional offer is confirmed, including but not limited to; assessing motivation, additional reference checks and new suitability checks (health and DBS).

2.10 Rescinding offers

2.10.1 Frontline reserves the right to withdraw applicants who have successfully passed the assessment centre or rescind conditional offers to join the Frontline programme if they do not meet the conditions required.

2.10.2 Frontline also reserves the right to rescind conditional offers if successful applicants do not complete and return all documentation on time, or do not complete their mandatory shadowing days within the timeframes given.

2.10.3 Frontline reserves the right to withdraw applicants or 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 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.

2.10.4 Frontline reserves the right to withdraw applicants or rescind a conditional offer should a successful applicant not meet the standards set out in section 2.12 of this policy 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 generally be subject to Frontline's misconduct procedures, which can also result in an offer being rescinded.

2.11 Registration with the university partner

2.11.1 The final stage of the recruitment and admissions process is registration. 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. Every participant must complete registration and become a student at Frontline's partner university in order to continue with and ultimately complete the Frontline programme.

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

2.11.3 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.

2.11.4 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.

2.12 Conduct throughout the process

2.12.1 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).

2.12.2 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.

2.12.3 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.

2.12.4 Throughout the application process, applicants are expected to follow the social work regulator's 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 the assessment centres. Behaviour outside of the formal selection elements includes, but is not limited to:

- social media activity;
- published articles online or in print;
- behaviour at induction/welcome events;
- behavior at informal evening events;

- general behaviour towards Frontline staff and fellow applicants in person or in communication by telephone or any form of electronic communication.

2.12.5 Applicants to the Frontline programme should be familiar with Frontline's code of conduct throughout the application process as well as once enrolled onto the programme. Applicant behaviour or actions that do not comply with this code or all relevant policies will result in the procedures outlined in those policies being applied.

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

2.12.7 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 to rescind any offer made to an applicant who fails to comply with the social work regulator's guidance on conduct and ethics for students at any point in the recruitment and admissions process.

2.13 Complaints

2.13.1 Where applicants have a complaint about any element of the admissions process, or any Frontline staff member, Frontline's complaints policy and procedure will be followed.

Section 3: Relevant references

3.1 Laws and regulations

3.1.1 This policy and the procedures described herein are written in line with the expectations about recruitment, selection and admissions to higher education as set down by the Quality Code (Ch. B2, QAA, 2016) and guidance issued by the social work regulator and the Higher Education Authority (2014).

3.2 Frontline policies and documents

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

- Bursary and financial
- Code of conduct
- Complaints

- Disability and health
- Reference
- Safeguarding
- Suitability for professional practice

3.2.2 Applicants should also be aware of the following guidance:

- HCPC Guidance on conduct and ethics for students <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/globalassets/resources/guidance/guidance-on-conduct-and-ethics-for-students.pdf>
- HCPC Guidance on health and character <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/globalassets/resources/guidance/guidance-on-health-and-character.pdf>
- Higher education Authority (HEA) (2014) Assessing the suitability of students to enter and remain on qualifying social work programmes 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

Section 4: Annexes

4.1 The selection process

4.1.1 The selection process is made up of the following distinct components:

- **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 by completing the online self-assessment questionnaire.
- **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 access 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, as well as demonstrating experience of working with people and their suitability for the role.
- **Online test:** Applicants who complete an application form will be invited to complete a combined situational judgment, verbal reasoning and verbal comprehension test. This test gives applicants the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to use logic to solve complex problems and their suitability for social work.
- **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 strict 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 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:** Detailed information about the assessment centre can be found in Annex 4.2.

- 4.1.2 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.
- 4.1.3 Frontline employs contextualised recruitment which means an 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 an applicant consents, 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.
- 4.1.4 Language and writing skills are also assessed at this stage and the application is reviewed to ensure all academic criteria are met.
- 4.1.5 Those whose applications meet the required standards will be invited to video interview.
- 4.1.6 The completed video interviews are screened against the Frontline competencies.
- 4.1.7 If successful at video interview applicants will be invited to attend an assessment centre. Those who do not meet the standards will be advised they have not been successful at this stage.

4.2 The assessment centre

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

4.2.2 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.

4.2.3 Reasonable travel expenses, prioritising standard class public transport, for attendance at assessment centres are reimbursed by Frontline.

4.2.4 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:** a competency-based interview gives applicants a chance to explain why social work and Frontline specifically is the right career choice for them and to share relevant experiences to demonstrate their suitability for the programme.
- **Written activity:** social workers need to be skilled in writing reports and analysing evidence. In this activity, applicants are required 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 part 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, applicants will be asked to reflect on their performance and demonstrate their learning through 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.

4.2.5 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. Assessment centres also allow applicants to make a judgement about the role of a social worker and their own suitability and willingness for that role.

- 4.2.6 Sometimes as a part of the process applicants disclose personal experiences or circumstances that Frontline may need to explore further in a second interview, or as part of checks, to ensure suitability.
- 4.2.7 Frontline is subject to mandatory reporting procedures. If, as part of the interview or any other part of the assessment centre, an applicant discloses anything which places either themselves or someone else at risk, Frontline has a duty to report it to the appropriate team within Frontline or external services in accordance with its safeguarding policy.
- 4.2.8 On occasion, Frontline may re-assess applicants, who obtained borderline scores at an assessment centre, within the same cohort recruitment year. This decision is taken at Frontline's discretion.