

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 recruitment and registration onto the programme. It details the relevant procedures, clearly outlining Frontline's expectations to support applicants to make an informed choice about applying to the programme. Frontline will regularly review and monitor matters relating to the selection, admissions, suitability and placement process and, where appropriate, make changes to this policy.

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, admissions, suitability and partnerships and placement teams are responsible for the day to day enactment of the policy.

1.3.3 Applicants are responsible for checking that they meet the entry requirements as set out on the website and in this document and reading the relevant policies before submitting their application. At the point 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.

1.4 Definitions

Frontline programme competencies	the qualities that an applicant with the potential to be an outstanding social worker must possess and be able to demonstrate
Applicant	someone who has submitted an application for the Frontline programme and has not yet commenced
Participant	someone who has commenced the Frontline programme
Selection process	the stages of the application process starting from submitting an application form for the Frontline programme through to the assessment centre
Conditional offer	Given to applicants who are successful at an assessment centre and, therefore, have passed all the stages of the selection process
Eligibility checks	Requirements pertaining to the academic qualifications, right to work, residency and references needed to commence the Frontline programme
Suitability checks	Requirements pertaining to an applicant's health, conduct and criminal convictions that need to be reviewed and cleared in order to commence the Frontline programme

Section 2: Policy and procedures

2.1 General principles

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

- demonstrate the Frontline programme competencies, thus evidencing the potential to become an outstanding social worker;
- complete the objectives of the Frontline programme academic course;

- achieve the standard required for the academic award;
- demonstrate the social work regulator's standards of proficiency

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

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

2.1.4 Frontline similarly reserves the right to withdraw a participant on the Frontline programme 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. Any potential breaches of terms and conditions that may arise will be dealt with via the fitness to practice policy, participants discipline policy or fitness to study policy as appropriate.

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

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

2.1.7 Frontline arranges for applicants and participants with disabilities, health conditions and/or learning difficulties to be supported and assessed as appropriate and makes reasonable adjustments as required to enable disabled applicants to be assessed in a fair and supported way. Applicants are encouraged to declare any disabilities or learning difficulties on their application form or as soon as possible thereafter, to ensure they are well positioned to receive the full offer of support. Any disabilities declared on an application form will be considered in relation to the assessment stages only. Following a conditional offer, applicants will be required to provide detailed information in relation to their health and are encouraged to review our Suitability policy for more information on reasonable adjustments on the programme.

Frontline operates an equal opportunities policy. At the point of application, all applicants complete an anonymous diversity survey on which they answer equal opportunities data questions. This information enables Frontline to monitor implementation of the policy and contributes to improving the overall recruitment process. Data collected is used solely for this purpose and this information is not visible and used towards any decisions made on an individual's application to the programme. Applicants can select 'prefer not to say' if they choose not to answer a question. Please see section 2.5 which outlines the contextual admissions process.

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

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

2.2 Frontline's programme competencies

2.2.1 Frontline's programme competencies are:

- **motivation:**
- **self-awareness:**
- **resilience:**

- **effective communication:**
- **empathy and relationships:**
- **analysis and adaptability:**
- **leadership**

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

2.2.2 Throughout the selection process, applicants will be required to demonstrate competence in a range of areas. Frontline has developed the Frontline programme competencies with social work experts including the views of young people with experience of social work and care.

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

2.2.4 Applicants will be assessed against these competencies at all stages of the selection process and must demonstrate they have met the Frontline programme competencies along with passing all eligibility and suitability checks in order to commence training on the programme.

2.3 Entry requirements

2.3.1 To commence training on the Frontline programme, **all** applicants **must**:

- Have obtained at least a grade C in GCSE English
- Have obtained at least a grade C in GCSE Maths
- Have obtained a 2.1 or higher in an undergraduate honours degree (or international equivalent) OR have obtained a 2.2 or higher in an undergraduate honours degree (or international equivalent) **plus** a level 7 qualification (e.g. Master's degree)
- Possess the right to work and study in the UK (including access to public funds for the duration of the programme)
- Be resident in England for the duration of the programme
- Not already be a qualified social worker

- Have received at least two satisfactory references received in support of their application
- Have had a satisfactory health check via Frontline's procedures
- Have had a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check initiated by Frontline
- Have had a suitable local authority placement identified for them by Frontline
- Have completed preparation for programme placement (e.g. shadowing days with a local authority)

2.4 Registering to apply

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

- Have obtained at least a grade C in both GCSE English language and GCSE (or **equivalent** qualification – higher qualifications will not be accepted in lieu of GCSEs);
- Have a 2.1 (predicted or obtained) or higher in an undergraduate honours degree (or international equivalent)) OR have a 2.2 predicted or obtained) in an undergraduate honours degree (or international equivalent) **plus** a level 7 qualification (e.g. Master's degree);
- Possess the right to work and study in the UK for the duration of the programme (including access to public funds);
- Intend on being resident in England for the duration of the Frontline programme;
- NOT be a qualified social worker or be currently studying a degree to become a social worker

2.4.2 With the exception to a pending undergraduate degree, where an applicant will not receive their qualification until the summer of the entry year, applicants must have obtained all qualifications required to meet the eligibility criteria at the point of application.

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

- 2.4.4** All international qualifications must meet the minimum academic level as agreed with our university partner, Lancaster University.
- 2.4.5** Frontline cannot recognise prior (experiential) learning with regards to the Frontline programme. The specific content and mode of delivery of the programme means that accreditation of prior learning is not suitable therefore it cannot be accepted as contributing to any of the eligibility criteria. All participants, on the Frontline programme, will be required to successfully complete every element regardless of their prior experience of academic study.
- 2.4.6** Non-UK, citizens are able to apply as long as they are eligible to work in the UK for the duration of the programme (from mid-July for 27 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.
- 2.4.7** Applicants should ensure they have evidence of their qualifications and right to work in the UK before they submit their application.
- 2.4.8** Frontline will need to see hardcopy evidence of documentation in order to satisfy the eligibility requirements for the Frontline programme.
- 2.4.9** Only official final certificates and transcripts will be accepted as proof of meeting the GCSE and degree criteria. Where original copies are no longer available, official replacements will be accepted provided they have been issued by the relevant awarding body. Letters from schools, colleges and universities will not be accepted nor will provisional results slips or certificates.
- 2.4.10** Applicants with international qualifications will need to provide their original certificates and transcripts of their qualifications, not translated copies. Where original copies are no longer available, replacements will be accepted provided they have been issued by the

relevant awarding body. Letters from schools, colleges and universities will not be accepted nor will provisional results slips or certificates.

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

2.5 The selection process

- 2.5.1** The selection process is made up of 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.

- **Registration:** Applicants register online and are asked to confirm they meet the minimum eligibility requirements.
- **Application form:** Those who meet the minimum eligibility requirements are then invited to complete an 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 in line with the Frontline programme competencies.
- **Online test:** All 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. Those applicants who meet the required standard will have their application form screened.
- **Video interview:** Applicants who successfully pass through the application and online test stage are invited to a 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. The submitted responses are reviewed by Frontline screeners in order to identify whether the responses meet the required standard in the competency being assessed.
- **Assessment centre:** The last stage of the selection process. Detailed information about the assessment centre can be found in 2.6.

2.5.2 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. Applications are screened taking into consideration the extent they meet the Frontline competencies in their written answers,

- 2.5.3** Frontline employs contextualised recruitment which means an applicant's academic and other achievements are assessed in the context of their socio-economic background at the application stage. 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.
- 2.5.4** Language and writing skills are also assessed at application stage and the application is reviewed to ensure all academic criteria, required to meet to satisfy the eligibility criteria, are met.
- 2.5.5** Those whose applications meet the required standards will be invited to video interview.
- 2.5.6** The completed video interviews are screened against the Frontline programme competencies.
- 2.5.7** 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.
- 2.5.8** Frontline will provide email correspondence at every stage of the selection process, using the email address provided by the applicant upon registration. Emails will provide detail on how to complete the upcoming selection stage and the deadline set. It is the responsibility of the applicant to regularly check for email correspondence and to adhere to deadlines provided.

2.6 The assessment centre

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

- 2.6.2 Applicants are responsible for making their own travel arrangements to the assessment centre and for arriving promptly as outlined in their assessment centre invitation letter.
- 2.6.3 Reasonable travel expenses, prioritising standard class public transport, for attendance at assessment centres are reimbursed by Frontline.
- 2.6.4 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 is the right career choice for them and specifically why Frontline is the right programme in which to train as a social worker. It is also an opportunity 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.
- 2.6.5 All applicants are required to take part in an assessment centre as the final stage of the selection process. The assessment centre activities have been devised through a consultative process with leading social work academics and practicing social workers, directors of children's services and occupational psychologists, as well as young people and adults with experience of social work and social care. The blend of activities is designed to assess the applicant against the Frontline programme competencies through tasks that simulate the experiences of a social worker. Assessment centres also allow

applicants to make a judgement about the role of a social worker and their own suitability and willingness for that role.

2.6.6 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 suitability checks.

2.6.7 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.

2.6.8 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.

2.7 Conditional offers

2.7.1 Applicants, who successfully pass all stages of the selection process and appear to have met the relevant eligibility criteria required at that stage, will be made a conditional offer for the Frontline Programme. Offers will be conditional on applicants meeting both Frontline's eligibility and suitability requirements, Frontline identifying a suitable local authority placement and applicants completing shadowing days and preparation for placement within their local authority (if identified).

2.7.2 An applicant's place on the programme will remain conditional and they will be unable to commence study on the programme and fully register with our university partner, Lancaster University, until they have met all conditions of their offer.

2.7.3 Frontline expects applicants to respond to requests for information and complete required tasks within the timeframes communicated and reserves the right to rescind a conditional offer if these are not met. In these instances, applicants will have their application withdrawn and will not be permitted to re-apply for the same cohort.

- 2.7.4 Frontline reserves the right to rescind any offer made to an applicant that fails to comply with its policies and procedures.
- 2.7.5 Frontline reserves the right to rescind any offer made to an applicant who fails to comply with [Social Work England's professional standards](#) at any point prior to commencing the summer institute.
- 2.7.6 Applicants who are subsequently found to be ineligible and not possess the required qualifications or right to work status declared will have their offer rescinded and will be required to re-apply for a future cohort. Ineligible applicants will not be offered the opportunity to defer.
- 2.7.7 Applicants who do not meet the suitability requirements for the programme will have their offer rescinded and may be required to re-apply for a future cohort.
- 2.7.8 Should anything change in relation to an applicant's eligibility or suitability, applicants are required to inform Frontline as soon as possible.
- 2.7.9 The terms set out in any offer letters will remain binding until an applicant fully registers with Lancaster University where they will be bound by the relevant policies pertaining to a Frontline programme participants and Lancaster University student.
- 2.7.10 Frontline shall have no liability in respect of loss of a chance or opportunity, loss of profits or income or other consequential losses, and its liability in relation to any claim or series of claims arising under or in connection with the terms of any offer and any agreement it may reach with an applicant shall be limited to £1000 in total.

2.8 The onboarding process: eligibility checks

- 2.8.1 The eligibility criteria for the Frontline programme has been agreed in partnership with our university partner and is also agreed in line with our approval from the Department for Education (DfE) and the social work regulator Social Work England (SWE).

2.8.2 Frontline are unable to adjust the eligibility criteria on an applicant by applicant bases and our requirements are fixed therefore, applicants who do not meet these will be considered ineligible to apply.

2.8.3 In order to meet the eligibility requirements of the programme, applicants **must:**

- Have provided official evidence of having obtained at least a grade C in GCSE English and GCSE Maths
- Have provided official evidence of having obtained at least a 2.1 undergraduate honours degree (or international equivalent) OR a 2,2, undergraduate honours degree (or international equivalent) plus a level 7 qualification (e.g. Master's degree)
- Have provided evidence of having the right to work and study in the UK (with recourse to public funds) for the duration of the programme
- Be resident in England by the time the programme commences and provided evidence of this, when requested
- Have provided evidence of any name changes, if applicable
- Have had at least two satisfactory references submitted in support of their application

2.8.4 All qualifications, proof of right to work, name change documentation and requested evidence of residency must be submitted to Frontline in hardcopy in order to satisfy the eligibility requirements.

2.8.5 Applicants in their final year of their undergraduate studies will be required to obtain a 2.1 classification (or 2.2. if they already possess a level 7 qualification) proof of which will be required before they can fully register with Lancaster University. Official certificates will be collected during the summer institute.

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

- 2.8.7** All applicants must be resident in **England** from the start of the programme for the full duration. The Department for Education's funding for fast-track social work education is underpinned by section [67\(4\)\(a\) of the Care Standards Act 2000](#). This allows the Secretary of State to:
- a) Make grants and pay travelling and other allowances to persons resident in England in order to secure their training in the work of social care workers;
 - b) Make grants to organisations providing training in the work of social care workers.

The Department for Education, therefore, has no powers to fund the training of social workers who are not resident in England. Applicants who reside outside of England, will need to provide evidence of their English residency in order to fully register with Lancaster University and commence the programme.

- 2.8.8** Every applicant, who has successfully passed the selection process, is required to submit *at least* two satisfactory references (covering the entirety of the two years prior to their assessment centre) in order to meet the eligibility requirements for the Frontline programme.
- 2.8.9** All applicants will also be asked to provide details for a character reference, in addition, to ensure any potential gaps between employment are covered.
- 2.8.10** All applicants will be required to provide a reference from their current or most recent employer
- 2.8.11** All final year applicants will be required to provide a reference from their academic tutor who can comment on their likelihood to obtain a 2.1. classification in their degree
- 2.8.12** 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. In cases where applicants have experiences across multiple roles, Frontline will determine which role and reference should be prioritised.
- 2.8.13** If a local authority placement is identified, all applicants will be required to provide a reference from their current employer before they can commence their shadowing days.

Where Frontline cannot request a reference from a current employer until this point, applicants will be required to sign a declaration indicating there will be no issues raised by their current employer.

2.8.14 Frontline has a duty to ensure the children and families we work with are kept safe and, due to the nature of social work, it's imperative applicants undergo through checks before commencing the programme. Frontline, therefore, reserves the right to request additional references or details, when required.

2.8.15 Frontline will rescind the conditional offer in the event there are any changes to an applicant's eligibility which make them ineligible for the Frontline programme.

2.8.16 Further information on Frontline's reference requirements can be found in the reference guidance which will be made available to applicants who successfully pass the assessment centre.

2.9 The onboarding process: suitability checks

2.9.1 Due to both the academic and professional focus of social work training, it is imperative that applicants meet our baseline suitability requirements. This is to ensure that applicants are likely to meet the programme's competence standards and the professional standards set by the regulator Social Work England: the professional body that our programme is bound by.

2.9.2 We assess an applicant's suitability for the programme through our suitability process which commences once an applicant has successfully passed the last stage of the selection process, the assessment centre. All applicants that have passed this stage, must complete Frontline's suitability checks.

2.9.3 In order to meet the suitability checks for the Frontline programme, applicants **must:**

- Have had a satisfactory health check by means of completing a self-declaration form and providing a GP-verified health form
- Have had a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, including both children and adults barred lists

- 2.9.4** Applicants may also be required to undergo the following suitability checks:
- A satisfactory overseas police check
 - An occupational health assessment
 - Other relevant checks such as those related to misconduct; disciplinary findings; sanctions; conduct-related matters during university, training, employment or professional practice; and contact with social work services
- 2.9.5** Where there are complex cases that mean an applicant may be unable to meet Social Work England's professional standards, applicants will be asked to attend a suitability panel, during which its members will come to an informed and considered decision as to their suitability for the programme. If, during the suitability panel, it is determined that the information disclosed makes it difficult or impossible for an applicant to safely and effectively perform the duties of a Frontline programme participant (with or without reasonable adjustments) then we may be unable to progress with an offer.
- 2.9.6** All applicants will be required to complete a suitability self-declaration form where they will be required to make declarations about criminal convictions, conduct, health conditions and contact with social services which may affect their suitability for professional training and practice. Any disclosures will not result in an offer automatically being rescinded. Frontline recognizes that there is no simple criterion of suitability and will consider and review all relevant information pertaining to each disclosure on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.9.7** Following submission of the self-declaration form, applicants will be required to download a health-disclosure form and complete it (this will be provided by Frontline to all applicants who have passed the assessment centre). Once completed, the information on the health-disclosure form will need to be confirmed by a GP
- 2.9.8** Health-disclosure forms will need to be signed and stamped before being returned back to Frontline.
- 2.9.9** Any charges imposed by GPs for this service will be an applicant's responsibility.

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

2.9.11 The DBS process will be initiated by Frontline in the spring leading up to the start of the summer institute and all applicants will be required to obtain a DBS check via Frontline,

2.9.12 If an applicant has lived or worked outside the UK within the last five years, they will be required to obtain a criminal record certificate (letter of good conduct) from every country in which they have lived for a period of six months or longer within the last five years. This only applies to periods where they were aged 18 or over. The Home Office guidance on [criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#) contains details on how to request these certificates. Alternatively, applicants may contact the embassy of the country in question. In some cases, the countries are unable to provide this documentation, in which case Frontline will carry out further checks, such as requesting additional references.

2.9.13 Frontline will rescind the conditional offer in the event there are any changes to an applicant's suitability which is found to make them unsuitable for the Frontline programme

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

2.10 The placement process

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

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

making the most informed decision regarding an applicant's placement to a region and local authority.

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

2.10.4 Frontline will make every effort to consider the regional preference indicated within a placement survey but cannot guarantee and applicant will be placed in their preferred region.

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

2.10.6 Frontline highly recommends that applicants who have successfully passed the assessment centre do not make any key decisions (i.e. hand in their notice or sign a tenancy agreement) until they have been formally notified of a local authority placement.

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

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

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

2.11 Preparation for placement

2.11.1 Applicants who have allocated a local authority placement, will be required to undertake preparation for placement activities which will include a period of shadowing in a local authority (usually in their host local authority if already allocated). This experience normally consists of two days, with one day in a children's service and one day in an 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.

2.11.2 Applicants must complete reflective learning logs about these activities and these will be used towards the readiness for practice assessment which takes place during the summer institute.

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

2.12 Final offer and registration with university partner

2.12.1 The final stage of the applicant journey 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 with the Frontline programme's university partner. Every applicant must complete registration and become a student at the Frontline programme's partner university in order to commence and ultimately complete the Frontline programme.

2.12.2 Applicants will only be issued with a final, unconditional offer once all eligibility checks and suitability checks have been satisfied and a local authority placement has been identified.

2.12.3 Applicants will be required to meet all conditions of their offer by a deadline, set by Frontline, in order to register with our university partner and commence study. Applicants who are unable to meet this deadline may have their offer rescinded.

2.12.4 Applicants who have outstanding conditions of their offer will be provisionally registered with our university partner and will not be considered fully registered until they have met all conditions and passed all checks. At the discretion of Frontline and its university

partner, in certain instances, some applicants who have outstanding conditions of their offer may be provisionally registered with our university partner and permitted to commence the summer institute only. Any such provisionally registered participants will be required to meet all final conditions by a deadline, set by Frontline, in advance of the commence of placement with a local authority. Those who are unable to meet all final conditions by the agreed deadline will not be permitted to fully register and will have their application withdrawn.

2.12.5 Those who are provisionally registered will not have access to student/participant privileges nor will they be permitted to commence their local authority placement.

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

2.13 Concurrent registration

2.13.1 No participant shall normally be allowed to register on the Frontline programme whilst being concurrently registered for another equivalent of one full-time higher or further education scheme of study.

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

2.13.3 Whether a participant can be concurrently registered on more than one scheme of study will be at Frontline's discretion.

2.14 Withdrawals and deferrals

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

- 2.14.2** Frontline reserves the right to withdraw applicants if applicants do not meet the relevant deadlines or communicate with Frontline in a timely manner. Applicants who are subsequently withdrawn will be unable to re-apply for the same cohort year.
- 2.14.3** Deferral requests will be considered on a case by case basis at Frontline's discretion. Requests will only be considered:
- a) Where there are exception circumstances (e.g. medical conditions or a significant change in personal circumstances beyond an applicant's control)
 - b) Where an applicant has completed all the relevant checks, as determined by Frontline
- 2.14.4** Applicants who do not meet the criteria to be considered for a deferral, and cannot commence, will be required to withdraw their application and re-apply for a future cohort.
- 2.14.5** Whether a deferral request is approved will remain at Frontline's discretion.
- 2.14.6** Applicants may only be deferred once (i.e. for one recruitment year) and may not request a second deferral if they have previously been deferred. This is applicable to both applicants who requested to defer or were deferred by Frontline.
- 2.14.7** For applicants successful in their deferral request, Frontline reserves the right to request additional information including but not limited to; assessing motivation, additional reference checks and new suitability checks (health and DBS). Successful applicants, re-joining the process, shall be given similar information to that given to new applicants as part of the onboarding process.
- 2.14.8** Applicants deferred will not be guaranteed a place on the following year's cohort as this will be dependent on Frontline identifying a suitable placement as well as a number of checks that will need to be completed by an applicant (as noted in 2.14.7)
- 2.14.9** All deferral requests will be contingent on the Frontline programme being approved to recruit for the following year.

2.15 Conduct throughout the process

2.15.1 Applicants must ensure that all information provided to Frontline throughout the process is their own and has not been plagiarised, either from another person or any previously completed and submitted Frontline programme application (where applicable).

2.15.2 Applicants must ensure that all information provided to Frontline is accurate, true and complete, and that facts and material information have not been omitted when requested.

2.15.3 Applicants found to have fraudulent documents may be referred to the Frontline programme safeguarding and misconduct board and may subsequently have their offer rescinded as a result.

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

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

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

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

2.16 Appeals and Complaints

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

2.16.2 Frontline does not allow appeals by unsuccessful applicants who have not passed a stage of the application process and/or who have been found to be ineligible. However, if an applicant believes that their application has not been dealt with fairly in accordance with the Recruitment and Admissions Policy they can contact the relevant team manager in the first instance. Should the issue not be resolved and/or an applicant has an official complaint about any element of the recruitment process, or any Frontline staff member, Frontline's complaints policy and procedure will be followed.

Section 3: Relevant references

3.1 Laws and regulations

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

3.2 Frontline policies and documents

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

- Bursary and financial
- Code of conduct
- Complaints
- Disability and health
- Fitness to Practise
- Lancaster's Manual of Academic Regulations and Procedures
- Participant Discipline Policies
- Safeguarding
- Suitability for professional practice

3.2.2 Applicants should also be aware of the following guidance:

- Social Work England Professional standards guidance:
<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/standards-guidance/professional-standards-guidance/>

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

- Fitness to Practice Rules:
<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/about/what-we-do/publications/fitness-to-practise-rules/>