

Recruitment and admissions policy

Policy owner	Director of Programmes
Policy version number	2026.01
Date	Applicable from August 2026
Next review date	June 2027

Table of contents

Section 1: Overview 3

1.1 Purpose 3

1.2 Scope 3

1.3 Responsibilities..... 3

1.4 Definitions 4

Section 2: Policy and procedures 5

2.1 General principles..... 5

2.2 Approach Social Work competencies 7

2.3 Entry requirements 7

2.4 Registering to apply 8

2.5 The selection process..... 11

2.6 The assessment centre 12

2.7 Conditional offers..... 13

2.8 The onboarding process: eligibility checks..... 14

2.9 The onboarding process: suitability checks 17

2.10 The placement process 19

2.11 Shadowing days 20

2.12 Conditional offers & registration with university partner 20



2.13	Concurrent registration.....	22
2.14	Withdrawals and deferrals	22
2.15	Conduct throughout the process	24
2.16	Appeals and Complaints.....	25
Section 3: Relevant references.....		25
3.1	Laws and regulations.....	25
3.2	Frontline policies and documents.....	25



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 Approach Social Work 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 Approach Social Work, 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, eligibility, suitability and placement process and, where appropriate, make changes to this policy.

1.2 Scope

- 1.2.1 This policy applies to applicants and prospective applicants of Approach Social Work.
- 1.2.2 The policy is available on Frontline's website.

1.3 Responsibilities

- 1.3.1 The director of programmes is responsible for this policy and its implementation.
- 1.3.2 Frontline's selection, admissions and support and partnerships 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 prospective 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

Approach Social Work	Approach Social Work is a three-year social work training programme delivered by Frontline. Year One: Participants are registered as students of our university partner Lancaster University and will undertake a Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work. At the end of the year, participants who are eligible will qualify as a social worker and register with Social Work England. Year Two: As newly qualified social workers, participants will complete their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and receive continued support from Frontline. During this year participants will not be completing any academic studies, so will not be registered students of Lancaster University. Year Three: Participants who are eligible to progress from year two will again be registered students of Lancaster University and will complete their Master's qualification, the MA in Advanced Relationship Based Social Work Practice with Children and Families.
Approach Social Work 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 Approach Social Work and has not yet commenced study
Participant	Someone who has commenced study on Approach Social Work.
Selection process	The stages of the application process starting from submitting an application form
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 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 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 Approach Social Work is at Frontline's discretion, and is based on the reasonable expectation that the person is able to:
- demonstrate the programme competencies, thus evidencing the potential to become an outstanding social worker;
 - complete the objectives of the programme academic course;
 - achieve the standard required for the academic award;
 - demonstrate that they meet the social work regulator's professional standards.
- 2.1.2 Approach Social Work recruitment process includes several stages, which assess the extent to which an applicant meets the programme competencies. All applicants must (i) pass the selection process; and (ii) 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 2.14 at any stage of the process at its own discretion, for example 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 the non-disclosure of relevant information calls into question the applicant's suitability for the programme.
- 2.1.4 Frontline similarly reserves the right to withdraw a participant from the programme who is subsequently found to have gained admission by providing false or misleading information or by non-disclosure of information during the application process. Any potential breaches of terms and conditions that may arise will be dealt with via the appropriate policies.



- 2.1.5 Frontline reserves the right to withdraw applications, or to rescind an offer of a placement, where the applicant is found to have previously been a participant on Approach Social Work (formally known as the Frontline programme). This decision will be at Frontline's discretion and applies to previous participants who have either been withdrawn from the programme by Frontline, or who have withdrawn voluntarily.
- 2.1.6 An applicant can only apply once per cohort recruitment year. Frontline will withdraw any application where an applicant is found to have already applied.
- 2.1.7 The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion underpin all Frontline processes and the criteria and assessments undertaken during the 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.
- 2.1.8 Frontline arranges for applicants and participants with disabilities, health conditions or learning needs 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 strongly encouraged to declare any disabilities or learning needs 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 encouraged to provide detailed information in relation to their health and are encouraged to review our suitability for professional training policy for more detailed information on how support is assessed in advance of the start of the programme so that it can be provided on the programme.
- 2.1.9 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. Applicants can select 'prefer not to say' if they choose not to answer a question. 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, unless applicants opt in to allow us to use the information as part of our contextual recruitment process.



- 2.1.10 In order to promote social mobility and diversity, and to support applicants from underrepresented groups, Frontline employs a contextualised recruitment approach. This means that applications are assessed in the context of the applicant's background, based on information gathered at the registration stage, such as socio-economic background. It is not compulsory for applicants to share such information. However, if an applicant consents, the information provided will be used within the selection process when assessing performance.
- 2.1.11 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.
- 2.1.12 Frontline clearly communicates all qualifications required to meet the [eligibility criteria for Approach Social Work on its website](#), which is updated annually.

2.2 Approach Social Work competencies

- 2.2.1
- 2.2.2 Throughout the selection process, applicants will be required to demonstrate competence in a range of areas. Frontline has developed the programme competencies with social work experts with input from people with experience of social work and care. Further details about the programme competencies can be found on [Frontline's website](#).
- 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 programme.
- 2.2.4 Applicants will be assessed against these competencies throughout the selection process and must demonstrate they have met the 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 programme, **all** applicants **must** have:



- Met level 2 English requirements (GCSE English language at grade C / level 4 or above or accepted equivalent). A UK undergraduate honours degree will normally be accepted in lieu of the level 2 certificate evidence (see section 2.8.7 and the Frontline website)
- A predicted or obtained 2.2 or higher in an undergraduate honours degree (or international equivalent);
- 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 (and provide evidence of this where requested);
- Not already be a qualified social worker (including overseas social work qualifications that Social Work England accept for their register);
- Provided satisfactory references, as requested by Frontline, in support of their application;
- Advised of any conduct issues and had these assessed by Frontline;
- Advised of any publicly available information that might bring into question their suitability for the programme and had these assessed by Frontline;
- Advised of any health needs that that could place others at risk, and had these assessed by Frontline;
- Completed a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check initiated by Frontline;
- Had a suitable local authority placement identified for them by Frontline;
- Completed preparation for programme placement (e.g. shadowing days with a local authority).

Please note that for the degree requirement only, while a predicted degree grade can be accepted for application and offer for Approach Social Work, a final grade must be received by the date communicated by Frontline. All other documents must be received in advance of a conditional offer being made.

2.4 Registering to apply

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

- Met level 2 English requirements (GCSE English language at grade C / level 4 or above or accepted equivalent).UK undergraduate honours degree will normally be accepted in lieu of the level 2 certificate evidence (see section 2.8.7 and the Frontline website)



- Have a predicted or obtained 2.2 or higher in an undergraduate honours degree (or international equivalent) - higher qualifications will not be accepted in lieu of an honours 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 programme (and show evidence of this if requested);
- Not be a qualified social worker or be currently studying a degree to become a social worker (including overseas social work qualifications that Social Work England accept for their register).

- 2.4.2 With the exception of 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. Final year undergraduate applicants must provide evidence of their undergraduate award and classification in advance of programme start by a date to be communicated by Frontline. If grade classifications are delayed or retakes are required, the conditional offer will usually be withdrawn as the applicant is considered ineligible.
- 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 strongly 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 or accredit any prior (experiential) learning with regards to Approach Social Work. Any prior (experiential) learning cannot be accepted as contributing to any of the eligibility criteria nor can it replace or be accredited against any of the academic modules and elements of the programme.



- 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 38 months or longer where studies are interrupted for any reason). Non-UK citizens must also have access to public funds. Frontline is unable to support work visa applications. Eligibility to work in the UK for the duration of the three-year programme is governed by an individual's visa conditions, which need to meet the UK Government requirements. Further information can be found on [government](#) and [home office](#) websites.
- 2.4.7 Applicants should ensure they have evidence of their qualifications and right to work in the UK before they submit their application. This will include providing identity documentation and a UK government share code. Frontline cannot delay applications or offers based on predicted changes to right to work status.
- 2.4.8 Frontline will accept clear, colour uploads of qualifications in most cases, in order to satisfy the eligibility requirements for the programme. Frontline reserves the right to request hard copy evidence of qualifications if the uploads are not satisfactory or to confirm the validity of a qualification. If required, hard copy evidence would be requested as part of the conditional offer process. Applicants joining the programme on an accepted visa will always be required to show hard copy versions of their qualifications.
- 2.4.9 Normally only official final certificates will be accepted as proof of meeting the English 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. At the discretion of Frontline, alternative documentation may be accepted in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.4.10 Applicants with international qualifications will need to provide their original certificates and transcripts of their qualifications, not translated copies.
- 2.4.11 A British or Irish 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. Non-UK applicants will also be required to provide a UK government share code.



- 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 reserves 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 name change.
- 2.4.14 Frontline reserves the right to request and verify the above documentation at any stage of the selection or eligibility 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 can 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 a number of stages assessing our competencies.. For full details of the stages, please visit our [website](#).
- 2.5.2 Through each selection stage, applicant performance will be reviewed, and applicants must meet a score threshold in order to pass the stage. These thresholds are carefully considered and determined by the success of applicants from previous recruitment seasons. Applicants that pass the thresholds proceed to the next selection stage.
- 2.5.3 If successful in the earlier stages, applicants will be considered for an assessment centre space. Those who do not meet the standards will be advised they have not been successful at this stage. We run a limited number of assessment centres and cannot guarantee spaces. Invitations to an assessment centre will be prioritised based on a number of factors such as local authority spaces.



2.5.4 Applicants must provide eligibility documentation including GCSE, right to work and degree documents prior to being considered for an assessment centre space (see section 2.4.1 for details).

2.5.5 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 based on availability at the point of invitation. If an applicant does not attend an assessment centre to which they have committed, Frontline cannot guarantee an invitation to another date. Applicants must contact Frontline in advance of the assessment centre date to notify Frontline of any changes or difficulties in attending to be considered for another assessment centre date. Frontline will not be obliged to invite the applicant to another assessment centre.

2.6.2 Applicants will be given a reasonable timeframe to book on to an assessment centre from the point of invitation. This will be clearly communicated via email. If an applicant does not sign up to attend in the timeframe provided, Frontline reserves the right to rescind their invitation, and cannot guarantee another chance to attend.

2.6.3 Applicants are responsible for ensuring they arrive promptly to the assessment centre, and to all activities throughout the day.

2.6.4 The assessment centre comprises a number of activities that all applicants must complete. This full list of activities can be found on the [Frontline website](#), all of which may be observed or assessed at Frontline's discretion, including the self-reflection exercises.

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



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 reassess 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 are confirmed to have met the relevant eligibility criteria required at that stage, will be made a conditional offer for Approach Social Work. Offers will be conditional on applicants meeting 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 to start the PG Diploma in Social Work undertaken in year one, until they have met all conditions of their offer (see section 2.12 for further guidance on registration).
- 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 At any time, 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 Frontline's competencies or [Social Work England's professional standards](#) at any point prior to commencing the programme. This will be managed through the suitability for professional training policy.
- 2.7.6 Applicants who are subsequently found to be ineligible and not possess the required qualifications, residency, references or right to work status declared will have their offer rescinded and will be required to re-apply for a future cohort, if they later become eligible. Ineligible applicants will not be offered the opportunity to defer.
- 2.7.7 Should anything change in relation to an applicant's eligibility or suitability, applicants are required to inform Frontline as soon as possible. Failure to do so may conflict with the requirements under the suitability for professional training policy.
- 2.7.8 The terms set out in any offer letters will remain binding until an applicant commences Approach Social Work and fully registers with Lancaster University for the PG Diploma in Social Work Practice. Once on programme, they will be bound by the relevant policies pertaining to programme participants and, in years one and three, to Lancaster University students. For the avoidance of doubt all Frontline policies remain applicable to participants until they complete the programme.
- 2.7.9 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 Approach Social Work has been agreed in partnership with our university partner, Lancaster University, 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 basis 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:**
- Met level 2 English requirements (GCSE English language at grade C / level 4 or above or accepted equivalent). A UK undergraduate honours degree will normally be accepted in lieu of the level 2 certificate evidence (see section 2.8.7 and the Frontline website)A predicted or obtained 2.2 or higher grade in an undergraduate honours degree (or international equivalent - higher qualifications will not be accepted in lieu of an honours 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 provided satisfactory references, as requested by Frontline, in support of their application.
- 2.8.4 Frontline reserves the right to request hardcopy evidence of qualifications in order to satisfy the eligibility requirements, where appropriate.
- 2.8.5 Applicants in their final year of their undergraduate studies will be required to obtain a 2.2 classification, proof of which will be required before they can fully register with Lancaster University. Official certificates will be collected during the first four weeks of the programme. Applicants who discover that they will not learn of their final grade until after the deadline to be communicated, must notify Frontline immediately. This information will normally result in withdrawal.
- 2.8.6 All qualifications obtained outside of the UK must be confirmed as the UK equivalent by the UK National Information Centre (UK ENIC) for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills. All international qualifications must meet the minimum academic level as agreed with our university partner, Lancaster University.



2.8.7 Applicants in their final year of a UK undergraduate degree, applicants who obtained their degree outside of the UK or applicants who did not have their level 2 English language qualification checked at point of university entry will be required to provide proof of level 2 English language qualification in order to be eligible. Full details and a list of accepted level 2 English language qualifications can be found on the Frontline website.

2.8.8 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 commence Approach Social Work and fully register with Lancaster University on the PG Diploma in Social Work Practice.

2.8.9 All final year undergraduate applicants will be required to provide a reference from their academic tutor who can comment on their likelihood to obtain a 2.2. classification in their undergraduate degree. If their academic tutor or institution is unable to confirm the final classification, Frontline may accept previous transcripts as evidence.

2.8.10 If a local authority placement is identified, all applicants will be required to provide satisfactory references, decided by Frontline, before they can commence their shadowing days.

2.8.11 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 is imperative applicants undergo thorough checks before commencing the programme. Frontline, therefore, reserves the right to request additional references or details, when required.

2.8.12 Further information on Frontline's reference requirements can be found in the reference guidance which will be made available to applicants who are made a conditional offer.



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 Approach Social Work competencies, the expected academic standards for Frontline and Lancaster University as our awarding body, 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 Approach Social Work, applicants **must**:
- Have had a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, including both children and adults barred lists;
 - Have disclosed any conduct issues, previous incomplete social work training, relevant involvement with social care as a responsible adult;
 - Have disclosed any information available in the public domain that may bring into question their suitability for the programme.
 - Have disclosed any disability or health needs that could place themselves or others at risk of harm;
- 2.9.4 Applicants may also be required to undergo the following suitability checks:
- A satisfactory overseas police check;
 - An occupational health assessment;
 - A GP health declaration form
 - 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 may be asked to attend a suitability panel, during which its members will come to an informed and considered decision as to their current suitability to commence 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 an Approach Social Work participant (with or without reasonable adjustments), then Frontline may be unable to progress with an offer. Please refer to the [suitability for professional training policy](#) for further details, and for information regarding when withdrawals or deferrals will be issued in lieu of a panel.

- 2.9.6 Applicants may be required to complete a health disclosure form. Once completed, Frontline may seek to request further information from a GP or health professional.
- 2.9.7 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 their assigned local authority. Frontline will be responsible for the cost of the initial DBS check. Applicants will be required to cover any costs incurred when sending evidence to the DBS provider, as well as costs related to replacing lost or damaged certificates.
- 2.9.8 The DBS process will be initiated by Frontline in the spring leading up to the start of the programme and all applicants will be required to obtain a DBS check via Frontline, even if they already hold a current DBS certificate. This process must be completed by the dates set by Frontline. These will be communicated with applicants in spring 2027.
- 2.9.9 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.
- 2.9.10 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.
- 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 local authority. Local authorities may also request additional information from an applicant where they feel there is a conflict of interest and this may result in an alternative placement being offered.
- 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 an applicant's location preference indicated within a placement survey but cannot guarantee that applicants will be placed in their preferred location.
- 2.10.5 Many of our local authority partners require participants to have a driving license. Any applicant applying for a local authority with a driving requirement must have a full valid UK driving license at the point of application. It will then be the applicant's responsibility to ensure they have access to a car by the start of the placement in September.
- 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 and introduced to their local authority.
- 2.10.7 Applicants who have been placed in a local authority are required to meet all eligibility and suitability requirements for Approach Social Work. 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 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 usually be offered a deferral to the following year's cohort (providing the following year's cohort has been approved and the applicant remains eligible). Exceptions may occur to this if the applicant is considered 'unplaceable' due to their commute from home address to hub address being either more than 45 minutes during rush hour or having an unsustainably high mileage, and therefore Frontline reserves the right to have their conditional offer withdrawn.

2.10.11 Though unlikely, a Hub may be disbanded following confirmation of a local authority placement. In this instance, an applicant would usually be offered a deferral to the following year's cohort (providing the following year's cohort has been approved) should another placement not be identified.

2.11 Shadowing days

2.11.1 Applicants who have been 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 adult's service. This gives applicants the opportunity to become familiar with their local authority and meet their consultant social worker and other key members of staff.

2.11.2 Applicants must use their learning from these days to complete the readiness for practice assessment which takes place during the readiness for practice stage.

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 Conditional offers & registration with university partner

2.12.1 Offers remain conditional until all conditions are met. This means applicants may still be considered to hold a conditional offer at the start of the programme. Once all enrolment checks and processes are satisfied, offers will become final. Separate final or unconditional offers are not provided.



- 2.12.2 All offers are dependent on 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.
- 2.12.3 The final stage of the applicant journey is registration with Frontline's university partner, Lancaster University on the PG Diploma in Social Work Practice, the academic award studied in year one of Approach Social Work. 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 Lancaster University for year one, registered on the PGDip in Social Work. Every applicant must complete registration in order to commence Approach Social Work. Part of the university registration process will involve providing proof of identity. If identification documents do not match the full name the applicant is being registered under 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 before registration can be confirmed.
- 2.12.4 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.
- 2.12.5 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 readiness for practice stage only. Such applicants will not be considered fully registered until they have met all conditions of their offer and passed all eligibility and suitability checks. Any such provisionally registered participants will be required to meet all final conditions by a deadline, set by Frontline, in advance of the commencement of their 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.
- 2.12.6 Those who are provisionally registered will not be permitted to commence their local authority placement.
- 2.12.7 Applicants will receive instructions from the university partner and must comply with any requirements within the timeframes given.



2.12.8 Participants who successfully complete years one and two of Approach Social Work and progress into year three will be required to re-register with Frontline's university partner to undertake year three and complete their Master's award.

2.13 Concurrent registration

2.13.1 No participant shall normally be allowed to register on Approach Social Work whilst being concurrently registered for any other 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 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. Applicants or participants may be requested to provide evidence of the requirements of their other scheme of study, or of their withdrawal from it, before commencing the programme.

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 at any time at its discretion if they 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, providing the following year's cohort has been approved and the applicant remains eligible. Requests will only be considered:

- a) Where there are exceptional 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 eligibility checks, as determined by Frontline.
- c) Where the deferral request has been received in good time, prior to the start of the readiness for practice stage.



- 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. Successful applicants re-joining the process shall be given similar information to that given to new applicants as part of the onboarding process, and will be required to indicate their intention to return and accept a new conditional offer within deadlines to be determined by Frontline.
- 2.14.8 Applicants deferred will not be guaranteed a place on the following year's cohort as this will be dependent on Frontline completing suitability and eligibility checks, as well as identifying a suitable placement (as noted in 2.14.7). Applicants who are deemed unable to start in the 2027 cohort will not be considered for deferral, and will need to withdraw (i.e., applicants who live far from all local authorities and do not wish to travel).
- 2.14.9 Entry requirements for the programme are reviewed year-on-year and are subject to change in line with our partner agreements. In accepting a deferral, applicants are in agreement with this process and understand that entry requirements and onboarding processes may change in their deferred year, and that if they no longer meet the changed entry requirements their application will be withdrawn.
- 2.14.10 Frontline are unable to offer deferrals at the point of application and will not consider requests from those who have yet to receive a conditional offer.



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, created through the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software, or any previously completed and submitted programme application (where applicable). Frontline reserves the right to withdraw applications at any stage where it is established that information has been plagiarised or created through the use of AI software.
- 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. Applicants who are unsure if their circumstances meet the requirements for sharing information should contact Frontline for guidance.
- 2.15.3 Throughout the application process, applicants are expected to follow the social work regulator's guidance on conduct and ethics for students and the 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 events;
 - behaviour at shadowing days
 - behavior at informal evening events;
 - general behaviour towards Frontline staff and fellow applicants in person or in any form of communication .
- 2.15.4 Applicants to Approach Social Work 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.
- 2.15.5 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 programme, Frontline does not provide feedback during the application process, except at the assessment centre stage. 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 processor 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 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
 - Complaints
 - Fitness to practice
 - Lancaster University Manual of Academic Regulations and Procedures
 - Participant discipline policy
 - Safeguarding
 - Suitability for professional training policy
 - Supported study and fitness to study
- 3.2.2 Applicants should also be aware of the following guidance:



- [Social Work England Professional standards guidance](#)
- [Social Work England Qualifying education and training standards guidance \(2021\)](#)
- [Fitness to Practise guidance](#)