

Suitability for professional training policy

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Section 1: Overview

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 Frontline recruits and develops outstanding individuals to become social workers and leaders to transform the lives of the most vulnerable children and families. As such, safeguarding is at the heart of what it does. Our ultimate aim is to protect and promote the welfare of children and families. Frontline also strives to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our staff, participants, partners, and all those who come into contact with the charity and make every encounter with Frontline a positive one.
- 1.1.2 Approach Social Work is both an academic and professional programme and incorporates two awards from our university partner. The first is a PG Diploma in Social Work, undertaken in Year 1, which is both an academic and professional award. Upon successful completion of the PG Dip in Social Work participants are eligible and required to apply to register with Social Work England (SWE), England's current social work regulator. This is a requirement for Year 2 when a participant begins their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) as an employee of the local authority. In Year 3 participants return to academic study and complete the academic award of an MA in Advanced Relationship Based Social Work Practice with Children and Families. As such, Approach Social Work, like all approved social work programmes, is required to assess both the academic capability *and* suitability of participants both prior to their registration and throughout the programme to ensure they are able to meet the social work regulator's professional standards.
- 1.1.3 This policy and procedure exists to ensure that all those recruited onto Approach Social Work are of appropriate suitability to train to become a social worker and are able to interact safely with children, their families and carers. It also exists to ensure that applicants and provisionally registered participants will be able to take part in the programme safely and effectively, given any health conditions and disabilities, and meet the social work regulator's professional standards for registration upon completion of their qualifying year.

1.2 Scope

- 1.2.1 This policy and procedure applies to applicants up to the point of their official full registration with Lancaster University. Applicants who have not met all entry requirements, will normally be permitted to provisionally register with Lancaster and commence the readiness for practice stage whilst the process of meeting the remainder of the entry criteria takes place. Provisionally registered participants will therefore also be considered under this policy. Once participants are fully registered with Lancaster University, the supported study and fitness to study and/or fitness to practise policy becomes applicable in place of this policy. Each provisionally registered participant will be required to have met all entry requirements by the first exam board of the academic year, in order to become fully registered and continue with the programme.
- 1.2.2 This policy is available on the [Frontline website](#).



1.3 Responsibilities

- 1.3.1 The chief social worker is accountable for this policy and ensuring its implementation across the organisation.
- 1.3.2 The head of admissions is responsible for this policy and ensuring its implementation across the organisation.
- 1.3.3 The head of admissions, suitability advisors and suitability officer are responsible for enacting the procedures.
- 1.3.4 Applicants, provisionally registered participants and fully registered participants are responsible for maintaining their suitability for professional training and practice by adhering to the social work regulator's current standards and guidance (see section 3.1).
- 1.3.5 Applicants and provisionally registered participants are responsible for informing the admissions & support team of any changes to their circumstances that may have an impact on their suitability or fitness to practise. Fully registered participants should notify a member of the delivery team. This may include but is not limited to:
- the acceptance/acquisition of any cautions or convictions and/or involvement in/with any other relevant criminal matters (including any new/current/ongoing investigations);
 - unprofessional behaviour/misconduct;
 - any contact with social work services regarding concerns raised about any child or children whilst they were in your care/household or involvement in an adult protection/safeguarding case as a carer/responsible adult;
 - relevant changes to their physical and/or mental health/wellbeing;
 - relevant diagnoses or changes to medication;
 - Any information available in the public domain that may bring into question their suitability for the programme.

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.

Applicant	An individual who has applied to Approach Social Work and been offered a conditional place, but who is yet to complete the necessary pre-programme admissions and/or suitability checks and is not yet at the point of formal registration with Lancaster University.
Provisionally registered participant	An individual who is still undergoing or has outstanding pre-programme eligibility and/or suitability checks, but who has commenced study on Approach Social Work and completed Lancaster University's online pre-registration process. Full registration and confirmation of student status with Lancaster University will only be confirmed once all outstanding checks have been completed and the necessary admissions and/or suitability criteria have been met.
Fully registered participant	An individual who has successfully met all the necessary pre-programme eligibility and suitability checks, completed Lancaster University's online pre-registration process, and for whom Lancaster University has officially registered on the programme and confirmed student status.
Spent conviction or caution	The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA, 1974) enables some criminal convictions to become 'spent' after a 'rehabilitation period'. However, social work is exempt from the provisions of this Act, therefore, information relating to criminal matters may need to be disclosed, even if they would otherwise be considered 'spent'.
Relevant criminal matters	For the purpose of this policy, relevant criminal matters include convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings which would be disclosed as part of an enhanced DBS check as well as any others criminal matters that could impact upon a person's suitability to undertake the programme (e.g., community resolution, public order notices).
Filtered conviction or caution	Filtering is the term that the DBS use to describe the process which will identify and remove cautions and convictions from the disclosure certificate that should no longer be disclosed due to changes to legislation. A filtered caution or conviction is one that would not appear on a DBS check and should not be disclosed. For more information on this please check the Gov.uk website.
Specified offences	Specified offences are those that are exempt from the filtering process. Any offence that is included in this list will never be filtered and should always be disclosed.
Fitness to practise	Having the skills, knowledge, character and health to practise social work safely and effectively.



Placeability	Whether a suitable practice learning experience placement can be found for an individual.
Qualifying programmes	Programmes that enable students to apply to the social work regulator for registration as a qualified social worker.
Qualifying year	Upon successful completion of Year 1 you are required to apply to register with Social Work England (SWE), England's current social work regulator. We refer to this as your 'qualifying year', as this is when you will become professionally qualified as a social worker.

Section 2: Policy and procedures

2.1 General principles

- 2.1.1 Suitability for professional practice is governed by the social work regulator and all applicants must satisfy certain criteria before enrolling onto the programme.
- 2.1.2 The suitability process is designed to consider information pertaining to an applicant's character and conduct, including relevant criminal matters, misconduct, involvement with social work services, health conditions and disabilities.
- 2.1.3 If a suitability check or third-party information (i.e., an employer reference) raises a concern about an applicant's or provisionally registered participant's suitability for social work training or their ability to meet the social work regulator's professional standards, the suitability procedures outlined in section 2.4 to 2.6 will be followed as appropriate.
- 2.1.4 All applicants and provisionally registered participants will be treated respectfully and fairly throughout the suitability checks and procedures. Frontline believes applicants from all backgrounds bring strength and uniqueness to its programme and recognises that experiences do not exist in isolation. For more information on this, please view our [diversity and inclusion page](#).
- 2.1.5 Frontline has a duty to comply with the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that the procedures outlined in this document are both relevant and proportionate, and that reasonable adjustments are considered for disabled applicants and participants to ensure that they are not disadvantaged in accessing the programme.
- 2.1.6 Where health conditions, disabilities or learning needs are disclosed that do not prevent the meeting of SWE's Professional Standards, Frontline is committed to ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made to enable access to the programme.
- 2.1.7 Frontline may review the use of medication and substances at the point of declaration in line with both our university partner's relevant [policy](#) and informed by any relevant NICE/NHS guidelines. Where there is potential risk of impairment or adverse side effects, we will seek further information and advice from your GP or prescribing medical professional. Please note that local authority partners may have their own employment policies relating to medication and substance use, therefore you may additionally need to declare any relevant prescribed



medication to them directly upon starting placement.

- 2.1.8 All offers remain conditional until all suitability checks are completed and deemed satisfactory or decisions regarding necessary actions have been agreed, prior to which only provisional registration for Approach Social Work is permitted.
- 2.1.9 Applicants who withdraw and re-apply to the programme or defer the qualifying year are required to complete the suitability checks again, even if their circumstances regarding suitability have not changed.
- 2.1.10 Where an applicant or provisionally registered participant fails to disclose relevant or accurate information that is later revealed (e.g., through a professional body/employer reference/health care professional or DBS) further assessment may be required. This further assessment may result in a deferral or withdrawal, at Frontline's discretion.

2.2 Disclosure process

- 2.2.1 Where applicants are offered a conditional place on the programme, the conditions of the offer include satisfying several checks associated with an applicant's conduct, character, and health and disability to ensure their suitability for professional training and practice. Some matters (e.g. criminal history) may also have implications for the practice learning opportunities available to an applicant, which also necessitates consideration of placeability.
- 2.2.2 Suitability checks are started as early as possible following successful completion of the assessment centre. This means that on occasion, suitability processes may take place before information relating to an applicant's eligibility (e.g. qualifications and references) has been received and considered by Frontline. In such cases any decision to proceed with a conditional offer is always provisional on the successful completion of eligibility processes, which take precedence over suitability processes at this stage.
- 2.2.3 Where eligibility checks highlight a concern that calls into question an applicant's suitability for the programme (i.e. a reference from a former employer indicates that the applicant may be unsuitable to work with children and families), this may consequently become an issue of suitability for professional practice. If it does, suitability procedures will be followed as outlined in sections 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6.
- 2.2.4 Suitability checks are normally conducted by means of self-declaration, alongside official verification of the information provided (e.g. through DBS).
- 2.2.5 Those accepting a conditional offer of a place on the programme are required to:
 - complete a self-declaration form and
 - submit an application for an enhanced DBS check including barred lists (and undergo overseas police checks/criminal record certification where applicable).
- 2.2.6 Where applicable, applicants are also strongly encouraged to complete a Lancaster University Disability and Inclusive Practice registration form in order to access reasonable adjustments to



support academic learning during years 1 and 3 of the programme, via an Inclusive Learning and Support Plan (ILSP) where eligible.

Suitability Self-Declaration form

2.2.7 The self-declaration form requires disclosure of information relating to:

- relevant criminal matters
- inclusion on any barred lists;
- unprofessional behaviour or misconduct (such as disciplinary findings, warnings or reprimands)
- sanctions or restrictions imposed by a university or other education/training provider, employer and/or regulatory body)
- disclosure of any information available in the public domain that may bring into question their suitability for the programme
- prior unfinished social work training
- relevant involvement with social work services; and
- relevant health conditions and disabilities.

DBS check

2.2.8 Applicants who have lived outside the UK within the 5 years prior to DBS forms being sent out will be required to obtain a criminal record certificate ('letter of good conduct') from every country in which they lived for a period of 6 months or longer within the last 5 years. This applies to periods when the applicant was aged 18 or over only. Any costs associated with obtaining such certificates are the responsibility of the applicant. In the exceptional case of a country not having a procedure to issue such certificates, Frontline will carry out further checks, such as requesting additional references to cover the time spent overseas. The decision to accept these alternative checks in lieu of a formal police certificate rests with the local authority and may affect placement opportunities.

2.2.9 All applicants must present their DBS certificate to the consultant social worker (CSW) within their allocated local authority prior to commencing the practice learning element of the programme. Applicants or participants who are reallocated to a different local authority or unit must present their DBS certificate to the CSW within their newly allocated local authority or hub prior to commencing or continuing their practice learning. Frontline does not hold copies of the DBS certificates, and it is the applicant's responsibility to maintain this. Frontline will not cover the cost for lost or damaged DBS certificates.

2.2.10 Some local authorities may require a new DBS check to be undertaken for that particular practice learning setting. Where this is a requirement, the local authority will normally bear the cost of this, and commencement of the practice learning experience may be delayed until this further clearance is received. In some rare cases, this may also apply to contrasting learning experience (CLE) settings.

2.2.11 Local authorities may share a participant's DBS information with contrasting learning experience settings on a 'need to know' basis as dictated by the needs of the service and its client group.

2.2.12 Frontline will always complete new enhanced DBS checks for applicants with Frontline's



chosen provider, and does not accept previous checks or those on the DBS update service. Some local authorities may require applicants to be on the DBS update service, and this will be communicated directly.

Health disclosure form

2.2.13 In cases where a relevant health condition or disability is disclosed, some applicants may be asked to seek a GP verified health disclosure form or undergo an occupational health (OH) assessment. The purpose of the occupational health assessment is to provide advice on:

- An individual's current suitability and fitness for professional social work training via the Approach Social Work programme and;
- to advise on adjustments that may be recommended or required to enable an individual to practice safely and effectively in meeting SWE's professional standards.

2.2.14 If an occupational health assessment is required, the suitability advisor or officer will discuss this with an applicant and make the necessary referral to facilitate this.

2.2.15 Applicants who choose not to complete an OH assessment, or who do not attend their assessment without adequate prior notice, will have their offer rescinded. Non-attendance to OH assessments will only be accepted in the case of significant extenuating circumstances.

Third party referral

2.2.16 Information relating to the suitability of applicants and provisionally registered participants can also be provided by third parties (such as the police, members of the public, Frontline, and/or other participants). This may or may not be in the form of a complaint.

2.2.17 Any academic or employment references that contain information pertaining to suitability matters (e.g. disciplinary findings) will be passed to the head of admissions for consideration.

2.2.18 In such instances, this information would be responded to as outlined in 2.4.

2.3 Applicants and provisionally registered participants with disabilities

2.3.1 Frontline will consider adjustments for disabled applicants and provisionally registered participants:

- All applicants will be asked to declare any adjustments they may require in order to be able to participate on the programme,;
- Applicants who have advised they have a health condition or disability may be offered an occupational health assessment;
- Applicants who have advised they have a health condition or disability may be requested to provide a GP verified health declaration form;
- Referrals for occupational health assessments will be discussed with applicants and agreed upon with their suitability advisor where appropriate;
- In some cases, a second occupational health assessment to assess your suitability for the programme is required after a period of time which is outlined in the first assessment. If there is insufficient time to allow for this time period and undertaking the new assessment, the applicant



will be deferred to the following cohort (as long as they have not previously been deferred;

- The admissions and support officer, suitability advisors or the panel chair will discuss with applicants whether they require adjustments to any aspects of the suitability for professional training process and whether these adjustments are reasonable considering the nature and context of the programme;
- Panel chairs will ask attendees if they require any adjustments in order to participate in a suitability panel.

2.4 Review of disclosures and referrals

Investigation

- 2.4.1 Where applicants and provisionally registered participants make any kind of relevant suitability-related disclosure or such information is revealed during the verification process or by a third party, this will initially be considered by the suitability advisor (a qualified social worker). They may contact the applicant to determine its relevance and/or ask them to submit further reflective or contextual information.
- 2.4.2 Depending on the nature of the information that is disclosed or referred, the suitability advisor may also seek further information or assessment from other agencies (such as former/current university or other education/training provider or employers, social work agencies, police, GP, occupational health provider or third party).
- 2.4.3 If Frontline is concerned that a criminal offence may have been committed, it may refer the matter to the police.

Assessment

- 2.4.4 After review of the disclosure or referral and any other available information, the suitability advisor will assess whether anything has been identified that may have an impact on the applicant or provisionally registered participant's suitability for professional training. If it has, suitability procedures will be followed as outlined in [section 2.5](#) (stage one: early resolution) and [section 2.6](#) (stage two: suitability panel). If it is deemed that no further action is necessary, the information will be recorded but not normally shared with delivery colleagues. There may be occasions where no further action results are shared, at the discretion of the head of admissions.
- 2.4.5 In cases where relevant criminal matters are disclosed before being fully registered with Lancaster University as a participant, the applicant or provisionally registered participant may be asked to attend a suitability panel (see [section 2.6](#)).
- 2.4.6 In cases where the conduct matter is so serious in terms of the risk that may be posed to others or the risk cannot be fully assessed (e.g. due to an ongoing investigation that has not reached a conclusion), an applicant's offer or a provisionally registered participant's offer on the programme may be deferred or rescinded, without recourse to a suitability panel. Such outcomes will require agreement by the head of admissions and approval by the chief social worker.
- 2.4.7 In cases where the information disclosed relates to unprofessional behaviour/misconduct, relevant experience of social work and health or disability needs, the suitability advisor or officer (in consultation with the head of admissions or nominated senior manager) will consider the information that has been provided in order to establish if any further action is needed and



whether this can be addressed through stage one (early resolution - see 2.5) or requires implementation of stage two (suitability panel – see [section 2.6](#)).

- 2.4.8 In cases concerning conduct-related suitability, the suitability advisor will also complete a risk assessment where relevant in respect of how the matters disclosed might interact with the nature of the training and requirements of the programme/social work regulator. This risk assessment will conclude with a recommendation to proceed with the offer, to rescind the offer, or to convene a suitability panel (see [section 2.6](#)). This will be passed to the senior suitability advisor or head of admissions, participant quality and support to endorse or amend before the next steps are taken. If a panel is required, the risk assessment is circulated to panel members and the applicant in advance.

2.5 Suitability procedures - stage one: early resolution

- 2.5.1 Following assessment of the information provided, the suitability advisor may conclude that the applicant is suitable for the programme providing that information is shared with:

- other individuals/teams either within Frontline (for example, delivery, partnerships and placements)
- the allocated local authority (for example, CSW).

This will include adjustments identified within an occupational health assessment report or inclusive learning support plan. This is referred to as 'early resolution'.

- 2.5.2 If following review of the information disclosed for suitability for professional training the concerns are deemed of such complexity, then the head of admissions can request initiation of stage two immediately.

2.6 Suitability procedures - stage two: suitability panel

- 2.6.1 If a suitability-related matter is not thought to be appropriate for early resolution, or is unable to be resolved through this process, a suitability panel will be convened.

- 2.6.2 The purpose of the panel is to determine an applicant's or provisionally registered participant's suitability for professional training and practice and their placeability within a local authority Children's Services team.

- 2.6.3 Applicants/provisionally registered participants will normally be given at least five working days' notice of the suitability panel. Applicants will be required to submit a reflective account and other supporting evidence prior to this taking place.

- 2.6.4 If the applicant is unable to or refuses to provide a reflective account and supporting information, their offer may be withdrawn at the discretion of Frontline.

- 2.6.5 Suitability panels are made up of representatives from Frontline and its partners. They will include a minimum of two people (in addition to a note taker). One must be from a local authority or trust and one from the delivery team within Frontline. The suitability panel will normally



include:

- 2.6.5.1 Chair (head of admissions or nominated representative)
- 2.6.5.2 Local authority representative
- 2.6.5.3 Head of delivery or principal practice tutor
- 2.6.5.4 Suitability advisor
- 2.6.5.5 Minute taker

- 2.6.6 The attendance of the applicant/provisionally registered participant is expected as their suitability cannot be fully considered in their absence. If the applicant/provisionally registered participant chooses not to attend, Frontline will rescind the offer.
- 2.6.7 The applicant has the option to request a representative, such as a friend or family member, to join them at the panel. See section 2.8.
- 2.6.8 The admissions and support officer will normally circulate at least five working days in advance of the suitability panel the necessary information to those attending the panel (including the participant). This information may include, but is not limited to, a reflective account, full occupational health report, other supporting information, and the suitability advisor's health summary or risk assessment.
- 2.6.9 Where possible, the members of the suitability panel will be from the region and local authority to which an applicant or provisionally registered participant is allocated. However, where this is not possible, the minutes of the panel will be shared with the allocated local authority/trust retrospectively.
- 2.6.10 The applicant will have the opportunity to present information in support of their case and panel members will be able to ask questions or seek further clarification that may be relevant to their suitability for professional training and practice.
- 2.6.11 Suitability panels will usually take place online but may be conducted in person if this is seen to be relevant to the applicant's disclosure. The format of panel will be at Frontline's discretion, and applicants who do not comply with this will have their offer rescinded. Where a suitability panel is conducted in person, Frontline will make all reasonable efforts to organise for the panel to be held at a suitable location, covering relevant costs for the applicant.
- 2.6.12 Frontline is committed to ensuring that any online or in-person panels are held in accessible venues/formats and discussion around an applicant's accessibility needs for such will be had prior to the panel.
- 2.6.13 In order to allow for appropriate timeframes for appeal, suitability panels will not take place after 31 May 2027. Should a relevant disclosure require a suitability panel after this date, the applicant will be deferred to the following cohort where the full suitability procedures can take place, providing they have not previously been deferred.

Panel outcomes

- 2.6.14 The suitability panel will determine one of the following outcomes following the hearing:
 - To proceed with the conditional offer for Approach Social Work (with/without actions)



- To defer (providing the following year's cohort has been approved) the conditional offer for Approach Social Work (with/without actions or recourse to a further suitability panel)
- To rescind the conditional offer for Approach Social Work

2.6.15 Panel outcomes will be verbally provided within one working day, and in writing within ten working days. Applicants will also receive a written copy of the panel minutes.

2.7 Suitability procedures - stage three: review

2.7.1 If an applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of a suitability panel, they can request a review if they have evidence that:

2.7.1.1 there was material administrative error or irregularity in the conduct of the suitability process;

2.7.1.2 there was unfair treatment or discrimination in the decision of the suitability panel;

2.7.1.3 there is substantial new evidence that the suitability panel should consider and which was not, for good reason, previously available to the panel.

2.7.2 An intention to request a review by an applicant or provisionally registered participant must be submitted to the admissions and support team within ten working days of the receipt of the written outcome of the suitability panel.

2.7.3 If one of more of the criteria in 2.7.1 are met the chief social worker (or nominated representative) will consider the review.

2.7.4 The decision of the chief social worker (or nominated representative) will be final and consist of one of the following decisions:

- confirmation of the original decision(s); or
- referral back to a suitability panel (if the process has not been followed and/or if new evidence is made available).

2.8 Representation

2.8.1 Any applicant whose suitability is being considered under this procedure is entitled to representation and support throughout the process. This could be from someone such as a friend, colleague, or union representative.

2.8.2 The applicant will still be expected to answer questions about the suitability-related issues. Any representative present is there to support the participant during the hearing and will be able to address the panel or represent the participant.

2.8.3 Where the applicant or provisionally registered participant is to be accompanied by a legally qualified representative, they must inform Frontline within five working days prior to the hearing. Frontline reserves the right to have its own legal representative at the hearing.

2.9 Confidentiality

2.9.1 All health/disability related information that is disclosed, as well as further contextual information that is discussed with the admissions and support team and in occupational health reports, is routinely made available to the participant's allocated delivery teams. This will usually be to the head of delivery, principal practice tutor and practice tutor, along with any



recommendations/decisions that are based on this information (even if no further action is required). It may also be made available more widely (e.g. with an allocated CSW).

- 2.9.2 When a matter is referred to a suitability panel, all relevant information will be disclosed to the panel members.
- 2.9.3 In line with data protection legislation, applicants can request that their previously shared data be removed from our systems at any point. Applicants can contact dpo@thefrontline.org.uk directly and can consult our data protection policy.

2.10 Relationships

- 2.10.1 Applicants are required to complete a section in their placement survey disclosing any involvement they have with any local authority staff in their chosen area, so that Frontline can assess whether it is necessary to re-allocate or consider an alternative placement (e.g. designated social worker for themselves or family, relevant work experience, personal relationships etc.)
- 2.10.2 Failure to disclose such involvement may indicate a concern about an applicant or provisionally registered participant's suitability for professional practice and result in the instigation of the suitability or fitness to practise procedures.

Section 3: Relevant references

3.1 Social work regulator standards and guidance

- 3.1.1 The following guidance from both SWE has been consulted in developing this policy and procedure and must be read and adhered to by applicants, provisionally registered participants and fully registered participants:

- [SWE fitness to practise rules](#)
- [SWE professional standards](#)
- [SWE professional standards guidance](#)

3.2 [Frontline policies and documents](#)

- 3.2.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Frontline_policies and guidance:

- Recruitment and admissions
- Fitness to practise
- Participant discipline
- Supported study and fitness to study



Section 4: Annexes

4.1 SWE professional standards

4.1.1 SWE's standards of conduct, performance and ethics that applicants and participants are required to adhere to at all times are as follows:

1. Promote the rights, strengths and wellbeing of people, families and communities
2. Establish and maintain the trust and confidence of people
3. Be accountable for the quality of my practice and the decisions I make
4. Maintain my continuing professional development
5. Act safely, respectfully and with professional integrity
6. Promote ethical practice and report concerns

4.1.2 Further guidance on these standards is available at:

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/professional-standards/>

4.2 Examples of issues that might trigger investigation under this policy

4.2.1 Criminal or related matters

- Cautions and convictions for specified offences
- Cautions and convictions for certain non-specified offences (see current DBS filtering guidance for further information)
- Inclusion on any barring lists
- Public order offences
- Domestic circumstances and alleged offences where the police have been called, and/or where there are safeguarding concerns. This may include ongoing investigations or investigations that have not met a criminal threshold.

4.2.2 Conduct/behaviour

- Previous/current unprofessional behaviour or misconduct (such as disciplinary findings, sanctions or restrictions imposed by a university or other education/training provider, employer or regulatory body)
- Relevant previous/current experience of social work services (i.e. any concerns that have been raised about any child or children whilst they were in your care as a responsible adult or the household in which you live or have previously lived (whether they are your child/children or not); or any involvement in an adult protection/safeguarding)
- Falsification of academic records;
- Extensive or repeated plagiarism;



- Extensive or repeated attendance issues;
- Inappropriate use of social media;
- Employment in a role outside the programme that might compromise professional identity/reputation or self or the profession;
- Issues that cast doubt on an applicant or participant's honesty/integrity/ suitability for professional training;
- Inappropriate behaviours or actions including with other applicants, participants or staff (e.g. threatening behaviour, racist/sexist language, dishonesty);
- Non-disclosure of any personal or familial relationships with another participant or colleague in their allocated local authority or Frontline employee.
- Actions which might cause injury or put the health and safety of others at risk;
- Theft or misuse of property;
- Attending classes or entering any other learning environment whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs (including 'legal highs'). Where applicants or provisionally registered participants are taking prescribed medications that may affect their performance or conduct at any time during their dealings with Frontline or participation on Approach Social Work, this should be declared to a member of staff as soon as it is known and no later than 24 hours;
- The expression of any extremist views (or the provision of any material or encouragement or support for individuals or groups expressing extremist views) that have the potential to incite discrimination, harassment, bullying or violence towards others;
- Making false and/or malicious allegations regarding other individuals including a fellow applicant or participant, a Frontline member of staff or a member of staff within a local authority
- Information available in the public domain that might compromise professional identity/reputation of self, the social work profession or Frontline

4.2.3 Applicants and participants should be aware that their conduct in their private life may adversely impact on their standing as prospective social workers and may therefore be relevant for consideration under this suitability policy.

4.2.4 Health and disability

Health and/or disability issues where the applicant/participant is not able to adequately meet SWEs professional standards or manage their condition(s) such that their ability to practice safely is compromised.

4.3 Social media guidelines

4.3.1 As potential professionals with a unique social contract and obligation, applicants and participants must be aware of the public nature of social networking sites, online blogs and forums and the permanent nature of information posted to them.

4.3.2 While these sites offer potential to improve communication with friends and colleagues, they are also a potential forum for lapses of professional behaviour. These sites may



give the impression of privacy, but postings and other data should be considered in the public realm as visible to many people, even under the most stringent of privacy settings.

4.3.3 Frontline has adopted the following guidelines to assist applicants and participants in safely and responsibly using these sites and media. They should be followed when participating in social networks personally and professionally, whether using personal devices or devices in the workplace:

- Consider carefully whether to refer to your professional status on social media so as to avoid adverse responses to postings and any allegations of bringing the profession into disrepute;
- Check your privacy settings and restrict access where possible (advisable);
- Avoid endorsing or posting content that is unsuitable for trainees or qualified staff in the social work profession;
- Ensure your actions do not reflect poorly on the reputation of Frontline and your practice learning settings;
- Don't share your social media details with the children or families you meet through your practice learning settings and do not interact with them on social media;
- Don't use social media to voice opinions about peers, lecturers, any practice learning experience providers, children and families within a caseload or any professional with whom you may be working;
- Don't bully, harass or verbally abuse others through racist, sexist, homophobic or other offensive behaviour;
- Seek to speak on behalf of Frontline or your practice or contrasting learning experience provider.