



Pathways
programme

**Social Work Leadership
Pathways programme**

Pathway 3

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Welcome to the Social Work Leadership Pathways programme

The Social Work Leadership Pathways programme is a national practice leadership development programme for social workers, created by social work charity Frontline, funded by the Department for Education and delivered in partnership with North Yorkshire County Council and What Works for Children's Social Care, and with the support of Hertfordshire County Council.

The Pathways programme will replace the Practice Supervisors Development Programme (PSDP), Firstline programme, Headline programme and Practice Leaders Development Programme (PLDP), consolidating all leadership development for these levels of leadership into one cohesive offer.

Frontline recognises the significant strength and impact that these programmes have had on social work practice over many years, so will be learning from and building on this within the Pathways programme.

Funded by



Department
for Education

Delivered in partnership

Frontline



Frontline's commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression

As with all our programme cohorts, we will also work to ensure they are from a diverse range of backgrounds and ethnicities.

As a charity striving to bring about social change for children and families through excellent social work practice, leadership and innovation, we are focused on ensuring that we are a genuinely anti-racist and anti-oppressive organisation and that we have diverse cohorts across all the programmes we deliver.

We fully recognise the value that such diversity brings to social work practice – we cannot develop excellent social work practice and leadership without including a wide variety of voices, experiences and backgrounds.

What is the Pathways programme?

The Pathways programme consists of multiple bespoke pathways for four levels of social worker role.

- **Practice supervisors** – primary responsibility is to supervise the practice and decision-making of child and family practitioners and to develop the skills of individuals and teams.
- **Middle managers** – leading and supervising a team of social workers including managing practice supervisors; they have operational and management responsibilities.
- **Heads of service** – leading a whole children's service area with multiple teams of social workers, having both operational and strategic responsibility. Also referred to as a service manager.
- **Practice leaders** – qualified social workers with the day-to-day operational responsibility across the whole local system for child and family social work practice, ensuring it operates correctly and overseeing child and family frontline practitioners and leaders. Most usually, this is referred to as the assistant director of children's social care or director of family services or an equivalent position.

Throughout their pathway, leaders will participate in a range of learning experiences, all embedded in the 4C leadership capability framework, that provide opportunities for shared learning as well as access to bespoke content for their experience level and particular needs.

Pathway 3: heads of service

Who is Pathway 3 for?

This pathway will empower heads of service to lead outstanding provision, working through multiple teams and partnerships.

This pathway is for:

- In-role: heads of service and service managers: responsible for the strategic leadership and effective delivery of services through management of multiple social work teams and interagency partnerships.
- Aspirant: experienced middle managers (e.g. team managers) who are motivated to develop their leadership skills and develop into a service manager/head of service.

What are the aims and outcomes of this pathway?

The Pathways programme curriculum will centre around developing knowledge, skills and expertise against the 4C leadership capability framework. This has been designed with the ['Seven features of practice and seven outcomes'](#) firmly embedded in it and has been mapped against the KSS for practice leaders and PQS for practice supervisors.

In addition to a range of self-directed material for leaders to select from, the core content for Pathway 3 is shown on the following page.



Expanding capacity

- Develop knowledge and skills in fostering creativity and innovation to maximise resource and drive improvement of services.
- Understand influencing in a political context and enhance political astuteness to maximise influence and impact.
- Learn and practice strategies for supporting staff resilience and wellbeing at scale in order to create a stable workforce who can provide effective support and consistency to children and families.

Maintaining curiosity

- Develop your understanding of great leadership through defining your individual values and motivations, centred on children and families.
- Explore personal biases and put equity, diversity and inclusion at the heart of strategy.
- Strengthen supervision strategies to effectively maintain a holistic view of service, while focusing on the reality for frontline workers, children and families.



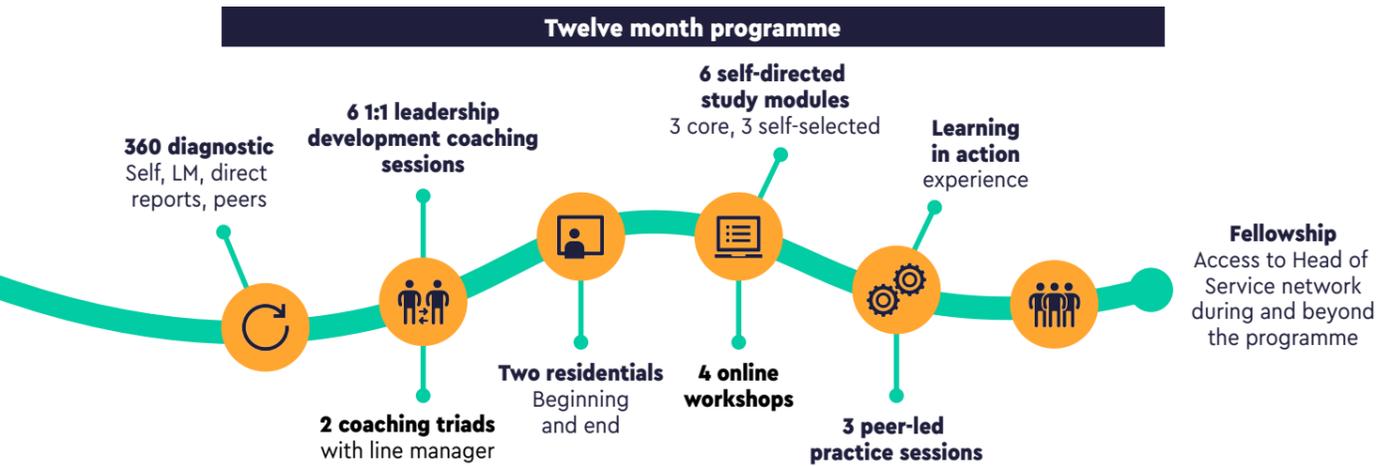
Managing complexity

- Develop skills in providing strategic, adaptive leadership to effectively prioritise and meet the competing demands of a service and collaborate with multi-agency partners.
- Enhance use of research and evidence in effective decision making and risk management at scale.
- Build skills and confidence in providing stability for teams and services, while managing change and driving improvement.

Providing clarity

- Develop an ambitious vision for your service centred on impact on children and families; learning strategies to galvanise your service around this.
- Learn to create an empowering culture across teams, services and systems, through modelling inclusive, anti-oppressive practice and relational, strengths-based leadership.
- Develop the tools to cultivate a shared purpose with multi-agency partners and strategies to influence across and beyond your service.

Pathway 3: delivery model



Dates of delivery 2022-23

360 diagnostic	November 2022	Peer-led practice group 2	June
Residential 1 2 days, 2 nights	December	Online workshop 3	July
1:1 leadership development coaching session 1 1.5 hours		1:1 leadership development coaching session 4 1.5 hours	
Self-directed study 1 1.5 hours	January 2023	Self-directed study 4 1.5 hours	August
Peer-led practice group 1 1.5 hours	February	Self-directed study 5 1.5 hours	September
Coaching triad 1 1.5 hours		1:1 leadership development coaching session 5 1.5 hours	
Online workshop 1 3 hours		Peer led practice group 3 1.5 hour	
Self-directed study 2 1.5 hours	March	Online workshop 4 3 hours	October
1:1 leadership development coaching session 2 1.5 hours	April	Coaching triad 2 1.5 hours	November
Online workshop 2 3 hours		Self-directed study 6 1.5 hours	
Experiential visit 1 day	May	360 Diagnostic	
1:1 leadership development coaching session 3 1.5 hours	May-June	1:1 leadership development coaching session 6 1.5 hours	
Self-directed study 3 1.5 hours	June	Residential 2 2 days, 2 nights	

What will be gained on completion of Pathway 3?

- A certificate of completion which can contribute towards CPD hours for social work registration.
- Access to exclusive leadership networks, including becoming part of the Frontline Fellowship (alumni network), a growing community of leaders who together are continuing to develop their skills, share excellent practice and turn their insight into innovations while advocating for children and families.
- Completion of the aspirant pathway prepares you for promotion to head of service roles and completion of the in-role pathway prepares you for accessing Pathway 4.

What is the cost and time commitment?

- The Pathways programme has been rigorously designed and developed to deliver high-quality content and coaching across all four pathways. The programme is fully funded by the Department of Education, so there is no charge to local authorities. However, it's vital that leaders are able to attend all sessions and are given sufficient time to complete the self-directed learning to ensure completion of all programmatic elements.
- Pathway 3 is a 12-month programme with a time commitment of approximately 13 days, including two 2-day, 2-night residentials.



How to apply

- Applications are open from July 2022.
 - Complete and submit the application form on our website.
 - In-role applicants: confirmation of line manager support will need to be provided in the application form to ensure full engagement and participation in all elements of the programme.
 - Aspirant applicants: as well as confirming line manager support, aspirant applicants will need to submit a 250-word response to each of the following three questions. Answers will be assessed against Frontline's 4C leadership capability framework to measure suitability for this pathway.
1. Describe a situation when you have effectively managed a challenging situation in a multi-agency context. How did you help to align others around a common goal?
 2. Describe a situation or challenge which you feel has most shaped your leadership. What happened, how did you respond and what you might have done differently.
 3. Describe a situation when you have implemented a significant change in your team or service which positively impacted workforce morale or effectiveness. What did you learn from this?

For further information including a more comprehensive list of FAQs please [visit our website](#).



About Frontline

At Frontline, everything we do aims to make life better for children who need a social worker, to help keep them safe from harm and to give them every possible chance to fulfil their potential.

We know that excellent social work leadership is one of the crucial elements to achieving this; strong leadership skills empower people at all levels to navigate their roles and contributes to creating a culture which prioritises children and families above all else.

That's why a focus on equipping social workers with the skills to deliver the best possible support and improved outcomes for children and families sits at the heart of the Pathways programme.

The aim is for 1,000 social work leaders to complete the Pathways programme each year. These leaders will be from local authorities across England, working within different contexts at different stages of their career.

Frontline

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The Frontline Organisation is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

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