

Pathways
programme



**Social Work Leadership
Pathways programme**

Pathway 4

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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



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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 4: practice leaders

Who is Pathway 4 for?

This pathway will empower practice leaders to lead, champion and continuously improve multiple services.

This pathway is for:

- In-role practice leaders: Assistant directors (or equivalent role e.g. Director for Family Services) with 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.
- Aspirant practice leaders: experienced heads of service (or equivalent) who are motivated to develop their leadership skills and progress into a practice leader role.

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 materials for leaders to select from, the core content for Pathway 4 is shown on the following page.



Expanding capacity

- Learn how to build organisational resilience and implement changes to improve your services.
- Explore how to lead and champion innovation across service areas and become a vocal advocate for system change.
- Develop political astuteness to manage external pressures, maximise influence and impact to advocate for the community at large.

Maintaining curiosity

- Develop understanding of great leadership: establishing clarity of your values and motivations, centred on children and families to connect the big picture with the reality of direct work.
- Listen to children, families and the wider community.
- Review the latest research and monitor best practice to identify emerging risks and opportunities that apply to your context.

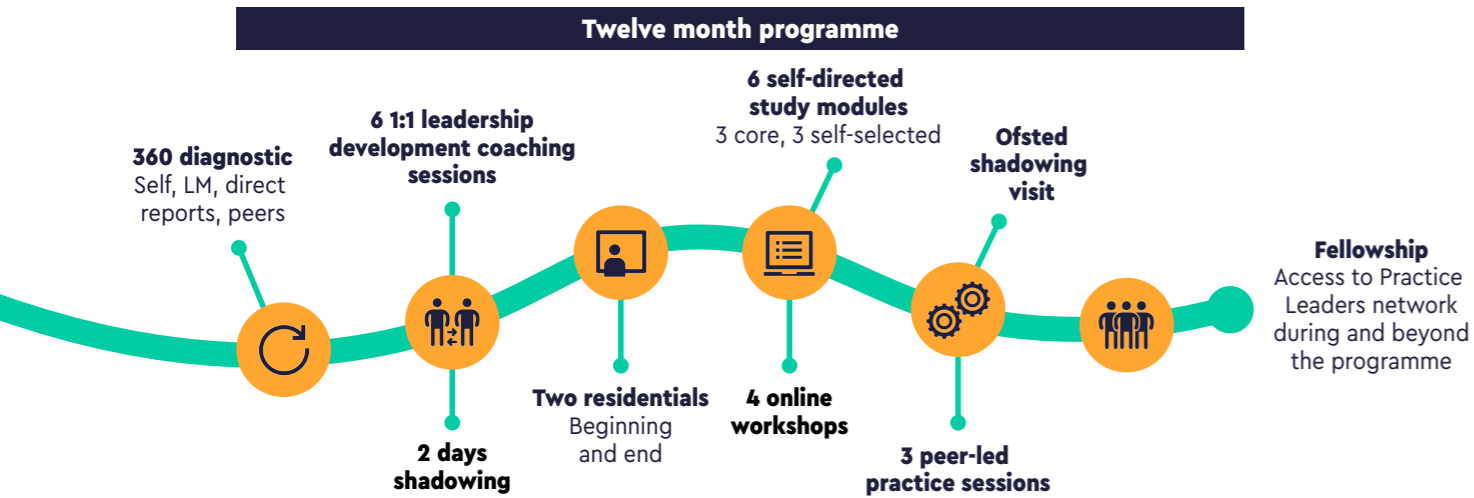


Managing complexity

- Develop the tools and strategies to effectively prioritise and manage competing demands and allocate budget and resource as a practice leader.
- Learn how to take an analytical approach to data and evaluation, and use it to safely manage risk.
- Plan how to lead cultural and organisational change to drive impact and improvement; minimising bureaucracy and maximising time for direct work and reflective case discussion.
- Learn how to navigate turbulent external circumstances and narratives, responding calmly and effectively to crises.

Providing clarity

- Identify and implement opportunities for relational, strengths-based leadership in every interaction and at every level of your service.
- Ensure services are informed by the latest research and best practice.
- Develop the tools to create inclusive, enabling conditions for excellent social work practice, including embedding anti-racist, anti-oppressive practices across services and the wider system.



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	December-January 2023	1:1 leadership development coaching session 4	
Self-directed study 1	January	Self-directed study 4	August
Peer-led practice session 1		Self-directed study 5	September
Shadowing	February	1:1 leadership development coaching session 5	
Online workshop 1		Peer led practice group 3	
Self-directed study 2	March	Online workshop 4	October
1:1 leadership development coaching session 2		Shadowing	
Online workshop 2	April	Self-directed study 6	November
Ofsted shadowing visit	May	360 Diagnostic	
1:1 leadership development coaching session 3	May-June	1:1 leadership development coaching session 6	
Self-directed study 3	June	Residential 2	
		2 days, 2 nights	

What will be gained on completion of Pathway 4?

- A certificate of programme completion which can contribute towards CPD hours for social work registration.
- Pathways leaders will have 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 will prepare you for promotion to practice leader roles and completion of the in-role pathway will prepare you for accessing the UPON programme for directors of children's services.

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 4 is a 12-month programme with a time commitment of approximately 11 days, including two residentials (2 days / 2 nights).



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 how you ensure that the staff in your service are clear and united in a vision which keeps children at the heart of decision-making?
 2. Explain your approach to engaging and enabling your service to manage complexity. How do you support staff to deal with uncertainty this might bring?
 3. Describe a situation when you have challenged traditional ways of working and introduced an innovative idea. How did this enable your workforce to work more effectively with children and families?

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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