Frontline

Year 2 participant Programme handbook 2024-25

About this handbook

This handbook follows on from the Frontline Year 1 Programme Handbook and is designed to give you information about year 2 of the Frontline programme.

The handbook primarily focuses upon the 60 credit MSc module in Advanced relational research-minded social work practice (FLSW915), as this route is followed by most participants and is endorsed by Frontline. Within the handbook, we outline in detail the module's aims, learning outcomes and resources, teaching details, learning and assessment strategy and information pertaining to being a student at Lancaster University (i.e. student privileges and additional support).

We also provide general information to participants who have chosen to withdraw from the academic element of year 2, but who remain on the Frontline programme and are continuing with their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE). Variations between the two different routes are demarcated within separate sections of the handbook so that you are clear on what privileges and support you have access to, which will vary dependent on your student status.

Please note that the information in this handbook is provided in good faith but may be subject to change; please contact your dissertation supervisor or line manager in the first instance with any queries. The contents of this handbook will be made available through Lancaster University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), known as Moodle.

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Introduction to Year 2

1.1 Welcome

The Frontline Programme is an innovative two-year social work programme designed to equip you with the skills to bring about change alongside children and families. You will be working towards a Master's in Advanced Relationship Based Social Work Practice with Children and Families, with 120 credits completed in year 1 and the final 60 credits in year 2.

Having completed year 1, it is worth taking some time to reflect on how much you have accomplished in your social work journey so far. You have immersed yourself in a new professional world, absorbed numerous theories and practice skills and been asked to examine your own values and experiences. At this point it is important for you to reflect on what you have discovered about your approach to learning, and the support systems you will need throughout year 2.

Year 2 of the Frontline programme consists of one 60 credit module (FLSW915) – Advanced relational research-minded social work practice. Upon successful completion of the FLSW915 module, you will have achieved the 180 academic credits that are required to obtain the MSc in Advanced Relationship Based Social Work Practice with Children and Families. You are already two-thirds of the way there!

Along with this, you will also be completing your Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) (see section 8.2). Upon completion of year 2, you will become a member of the Fellowship, our Frontline alumni.

1.2 Regulatory commitments

The Frontline Programme is a professional programme that complies with the following regulations and standards:

- The Professional Capabilities Framework (BASW 2018)
- The Quality Assurance Agency's Subject Benchmark Statement Social Work (QAA 2019)
- The Professional Standards (SWE)
- The Education and Training Standards (SWE 2021)

As an employee of your local authority, you will also be expected to adhere to your local authority's policies and procedures.

1.3 The participant charter

Our participant charter is the foundation on which the programme community sits. It sets out expectations that are anchored to social work values and behaviours outlined by the regulator, Social Work England, and linked to the Professional Capabilities Framework. It is not a legally binding contract, but we expect you to live out its principles throughout your Frontline journey, as we believe that it will help foster an outstanding experience for **all** participants.

It is underpinned by four key principles:

- We treat one another with dignity and respect.
- We work together to create social change for children who do not have a safe or stable home, by developing excellent social work practice and leadership.
- We are open and inclusive to difference; to people, to ideas, to places and methods.
- We will inspire and enable our own learning and that of others.

As participants of an inclusive and welcoming community, we expect you to commit to:

1. Taking an anti-racist approach, valuing diversity and challenging discrimination.

2. Acting ethically and transparently, making use of fair and open means to deal with concerns and grievances and learning from them.

3. Taking responsibility for your own learning by being an active participant.

4. Being a reliable and committed participant, turning up on time for children and families and recall days and handing work in on the deadlines specified.

5. Adopting a scholarly approach to your work and upholding academic integrity.

6. Engaging in feedback processes to help improve the quality of teaching and learning.

7. Reflecting on feedback before making a judgement of its value or worth.

8. Communicating with each other in ways that are clear, accurate, timely and relevant.

9. Accepting your responsibilities to each other at all times and working together to ensure everyone can live and study free from discrimination and harassment.

10. Upholding the Professional Standards as set out by Social Work England and the Professional Capabilities Framework as set out by the British Association of Social Work (BASW).

11. Taking responsibility for managing your health and wellbeing and asking for support and help when needed.

12. Taking responsibility to complete learning and reflection during the programme to develop skills and characteristics of an impactful fellow.

If conduct falls short of the above principles, participants may be referred to the appropriate programme policy, all of which are available to [read here](#).

1.4 Frontline team

The year 2 Frontline programme team comprises a module teaching team (module leaders, practice tutors, dissertation supervisors) and other key contacts that you will liaise with regularly. Please see [Annex 2](#) for more information on these key staff and contact details.

Module Information: Advanced relational research-minded social work practice (FLSW915)

The following section is only applicable to participants who are completing the 60 credit FLSW915 Dissertation module.

2.1 Aims

As you will now be aware, social workers need to be perceptive, ethical, self-aware, adaptable, knowledgeable, and skilled to offer effective support to families. These attributes require constant iteration and development throughout your social work career.

The FLSW915 module aims to support you in developing the required skills to **critically examine practice** in your immediate context, **identify required changes** and then plan or **implement and evaluate these adaptations**. Therefore, teaching and learning in this module focuses on supporting you to conduct research into your own practice, through conducting either action research or a literature review. You will explore the contexts which inform and sustain your current practice and then plan or evaluate any adaptations made, as well as thinking about how to share this learning with others. We hope that by supporting you to develop these research and evaluation skills, you will be well equipped to refine and improve your social work practice both now and throughout your career.

The aims of this module are:

1. To develop students' knowledge of and skills in the critical appraisal of research, literature, and theory to develop their own social work practice.

2. To develop students' skills and knowledge of specific empirical research methodologies which can be utilized to enhance their practice knowledge and skills.

3. To support students to plan, design and conduct a research project by way of action research or a literature review for the enhancement of their own social work practice and knowledge.

4. To enable advanced understanding of ethical issues in relation to social work practice and conducting research in social work settings and be able to work within these ethical constraints.

5. To provide students with opportunities to embed and develop knowledge and skills in the relational practice models taught in year one of the programme, enabling them to utilise these models in the more complex and demanding contexts of their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

This module particularly focuses on the development of your abilities in the following areas:

Enquiry	Participants will identify, plan and execute an independent research project, to learn about and adapt their practice in relation to a practice dilemma
Contextual understanding	The process of identifying and researching an area of practice enables participants to examine in great depth the multiple contexts which influence their thinking, feelings and behaviours in-situ with families. This includes identifying personal, family, professional and public policy discourses that shape what social workers do in the relative privacy of practice with vulnerable groups
Ethics	Participants will deepen their knowledge and understanding of how to critically apply professional and research-focused ethics to decision-making. More specifically, the module will consider how to make ethical decisions in planning and undertaking a research project. Participants undertaking action research will be required to obtain ethical approval from both the Frontline and their local authority for their project. Participants undertaking a literature review will be required to submit a research proposal. Drawing on Social Work England's Professional Standards and the BASW Code of Ethics, all participants will be assessed on their ability to conduct an ethically sound research project and to reflect on the influence of their own values on their professional practice
Collaboration	As part of the data gathering element of their project, where appropriate, participants will seek feedback from families, colleagues and an MSc peer reflexive group. They will also offer observations and support to others in their reflexive group, as they undertake studies of their own practice.
Enterprise	Participants are encouraged to identify a practice issue of importance to them, taking into consideration the practicability and feasibility of the scope of their research project. They will be encouraged to disseminate

Current Research and Knowledge	learning with confidence in the relevance and importance of practice-based evidence to the wider field of child and family social work. The assessed tasks will investigate and critically evaluate relevant knowledge in social work and related fields. Participants will demonstrate a confident understanding of knowledge that informs their social work practice

2.2 Learning and teaching strategy

This final module of the Frontline programme places a greater obligation on you as participants to direct your own learning and development. Core content will be delivered through a combination of interactive lectures and workshops which take place during **8 Teaching Days**. You will also be supported through **supervisory meetings with your dissertation supervisor**. The module comprises of primarily online teaching, although the final teaching day will be in person. Teaching will be supplemented with directed reading of key texts.

Over the course of the year, you will develop and execute your **research project** using either an action research method or undertaking a literature review. Peer-led **reflexive groups,** organised by you, will meet regularly and provide an opportunity for you to extend your skills in self-reflexivity and research mindedness as you examine episodes of practice or literature in depth.

This module contributes to the MSc in Advanced Relationship Based Social Work Practice with Children and Families. It is a 60-credit module, representing a total of 600 hours in a combination of teaching and self-directed learning.

This module runs from November 2024 to August 2025. Please see the table below for a breakdown of indicative learning hours - please note that these times are approximate and may vary subject to participant needs.

Indicative Learning Hours			
Teaching Days	**Tutorials with dissertation supervisor** (N.B. this does not include informal contact e.g. emails)	**Reflexive Groups**	**Independent Study** (to include completion of academic assignment & research activities)
52 hours	10 hours (approx.)	10 hours (approx.)	528 hours (approx.)

2.3 Intended learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, you will be able to evidence the following:

Subject Specific: Knowledge, understanding and skills

1. Independently devise and execute a comprehensive piece of research relevant to their own practice, with a clear research question, and appropriate aims and objectives.

2. Demonstrate the ability to identify, contextualise, synthesise and critically evaluate literature from a range of sources.

3. Critically evaluate their own practice, demonstrating breadth and depth of knowledge in pertinent social work theory and research and their own research findings, drawing on at least one of the Frontline approaches to practice: systemic social work, motivational interviewing and trauma-informed parenting interventions and support.

4. Recognise, analyse and respond to the complexity of ethical issues relevant to their practice and research project.

5. Analyse, interpret and evaluate data collected and communicate findings clearly using a logical and coherent argument.

6. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of multiple contexts that shape and maintain current practice, making explicit reference to issues of power, privilege and prejudice and including anti-racist, anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice.

7. Critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of their research project and draw conclusions about the potential significance of their research for themselves, others and the field of knowledge more generally, clearly identifying areas for further development and dissemination.

General: Knowledge, understanding and skills

8. Evidence advanced academic skills, including critical analysis and research mindedness.

9. Evidence self-management skills as autonomous and reflexive learners.

10. Communicate arguments clearly and coherently, supported by appropriate evidence from a range of sources.

11. Communicate and collaborate effectively with others to reflect on and critically evaluate their own practice and research.

You will be assessed against these learning outcomes within your dissertation submission.

2.4 Choosing a methodology

On your first teaching day you will be introduced to both action research and literature review research methodologies. Before the second teaching day, you are required to meet with your dissertation supervisor to discuss which methodology you plan to use for your research. Your choice will determine which elements of the teaching days you attend when cohorts are split to receive specialist teaching on either action research or literature reviews. The cohort will be split on Teaching days 4 and 5. On all other days, teaching will be delivered to the whole cohort.

When choosing your methodology, the following similarities and differences will be useful to hold in mind.

Similarities:

- For both action research projects and literature reviews, you will need to select an area of your own practice (a practice pattern/dilemma) that you want to focus on
- For both methodologies, you will need to consider literature from at least one of the Frontline practice models concerning your practice pattern/dilemma
- For both methodologies you will outline your plans for implementing the learning from your research into your practice, as well as your plans for sharing your learning

Differences:

- For action research projects you will be required to apply for ethical approval from Frontline and your local authority (see sections 2.13-2.15 below). This is a lengthy process and can take several months.
- For literature reviews you will be required to submit a research proposal (see section 2.12 below)
- When completing action research, once you have received ethical approval from Frontline and your local authority, you will recruit research participants (this can be families, professionals or colleagues that you work with) and seek their consent to change your practice and gather their feedback
- When completing a literature review you will carry out a comprehensive and critically informed review of contemporary research and literature relating to your practice pattern/dilemma. You will then outline clear plans to integrate your learning into your practice in the future.

You will have to formally confirm your methodology choice. You will be advised to complete a choice form from 4th December 2025 (teaching day 3). This needs to be completed by 20th December 2024. The infographic below illustrates the steps required.

Should you not submit your confirmed choice by 20th December 2024, it will be assumed you will be completing the literature review option.
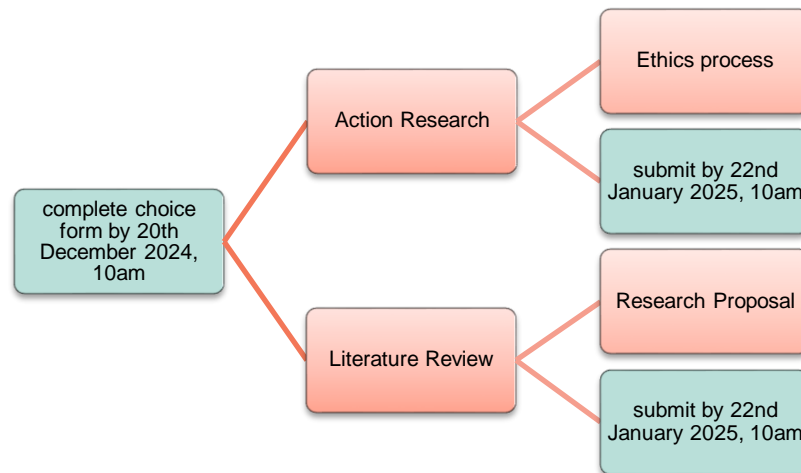
2.5 Syllabus

This module explores the following:

- Critical evaluation and application of evidence-based interventions in practice, including the Frontline practice models.
- Situating practice within a value-based and ethical framework.
- Developing reflexivity by undertaking research into one's own practice patterns and planning or implementing evidence-based changes.
- Working collaboratively with others (peers, colleagues and families) to reflect on and critically evaluate own practice.
- Developing a critical awareness of research methods and research mindedness.
- Synthesising and applying learning from literature review to enhance practice.
- Professional authority and relational social work.

2.6 Module bibliography

Annex 3 provides participants with a concise bibliography for this module. This list is not exhaustive, and participants are advised to review the reading list for this module and conduct independent reading, in addition to completing Teaching Day reading.

2.7 Year at a glance

Please see table below for an outline of how learning activities should be scheduled throughout the year. This table combines learning activities for which dates are fixed (teaching days, submission deadlines) and others for which the dates are advisory only: it offers a suggested schedule for completion of these learning activities throughout the year.

Month	Teaching Day	Reflexive Group	Supervisory Meeting with Dissertation Supervisor	Advised Independent Learning	Submissions	Coaching (optional)
November 2024	1 2 3	**Focus:** Exploring practice patterns/dilemmas **Task**: Agree future meeting dates	**Suggested focus**: Initial discussion around research aims, objectives and methodology. Discuss Ethical Approval (action research)/ Research proposal (literature review) **Task:** Complete Dissertation Supervision Contract (see Annex 5 for proforma)	Teaching Day reading lists and independent reading Ethical Approval application/ Research Proposal Reflexive journal entries	Confirmation of methodology option to be submitted by Friday 20th December 2024, at 10am	1x 30-minute introductory session plus 6 coaching sessions undertaken throughout the year
December 2024						
January 2025	4	**Focus:** Ethical approval process and documentation And/or Further exploration of practice focus and findings from independent learning	**Suggested focus:** Ethical approval/ Research proposal documentation Planning workload/ research schedule Discuss literature review/findings **Task:** Complete Dissertation Supervision Record with agreed tasks/timescales (see Annex 6 for proforma)	Teaching Day reading lists and independent reading Reflexive journal entries Literature review Identify research participants for data collection – discuss consent (action research)	**Ethical Approval application (action research)/ Research proposal (literature review) to be submitted by Wednesday 22 January 2025 at 10am**	
February 2025	5					
March 2025		**Focus:** Progress update 1-2 participants present episode of practice/data/literature	**Suggested focus:** Research methodology Review of agreed timescales/tasks Discussion of literature findings **Task:** Complete Dissertation Supervision Record with agreed tasks/timescales	Teaching Day reading lists and independent reading Methodology section Reflexive journal entries Data collection		

April 2025	6	N/A	N/A	N/A		
May 2025	7	**Focus**: Progress update	**Suggested focus:** Discuss data collection analysis	Teaching Day reading lists and independent reading		
June 2025	8	1-2 participants present episode of practice/data/literature	Review of agreed timescales/tasks Discussion of literature findings **Task:** Complete Dissertation Supervision Record with agreed tasks/timescales	Draft dissertation chapter/s Reflexive journal entries Data collection Data analysis		
July 2025		**Focus**: Dissertation writing – share learning and strategies 1-2 participants present episode of practice/data/literature	**Suggested focus:** Discuss write up of dissertation Review of agreed timescales/tasks **Task:** Complete Dissertation Supervision Record with agreed tasks/timescales	Teaching Day reading lists and independent reading Reflexive journal entries Data analysis Writing up dissertation		
August 2025		N/A	N/A	N/A	**Dissertation Submission: Wednesday 20th August 2025 by 10am**	

2.8 Delivery dates and format

Teaching days are delivered online, with the exception of Day 8 which is delivered in-person. Where teaching days are online, these are delivered to the whole cohort. The in-person teaching day will be delivered in each of our key regions: London, Midlands, North West, North East and South West.

In the unlikely event of changes to a planned teaching day date or delivery mode, we will always communicate this to you via an announcement on Moodle.

Day	Title	Delivery mode	Delivery date
1	What is social work research? Understanding key concepts and principles of research for social work practice	Online	Wednesday 6th November 2024
2	Ethics, aims and the reflexive researcher	Online	Wednesday 20th November 2024
3	Developing your research question plan and proposal	Online	Wednesday 4th December 2024
4	Collecting your data: Action and appraisal	Online	Wednesday 29th January 2025
5	Analysing findings	Online	Wednesday 26th February 2025
6	Claims to knowledge and linking learning to practice	Online	Wednesday 16th April 2025
7	Writing up and reviewing	Online	Wednesday 28th May 2025
8	Sharing learning and next steps	In person	Wednesday 25th June 2025

2.9 Reflexive groups

Reflexive groups are peer led meetings (usually 4-6 participants) in which participants are given the opportunity to share an 'episode' of practice or a piece of literature, related to their research topic, with their peers for reflection. Participants are responsible for setting up their reflexive groups and arranging **at least** 5 group meetings across the year (suggested dates are included in section 2.7). Reflexive group meetings usually last between 1.5 - 2.5 hours.

Reflexive groups can be helpful in inviting different perspectives on your chosen practice pattern or dilemma and provide useful data/information for subsequent inclusion in your dissertation. There are many similarities with the 'Unit Meeting' model in that they encourage practitioners to remain curious about behaviours, emotions and differing perspectives whilst offering useful guidance pointers. Reflexive groups are also a peer-support mechanism, which is a valuable resource as your responsibilities and expectations shift throughout the year.

In our most recent bi-annual survey (September 2023 – Jan 2024) 87% of year 2 respondents found that reflexive groups were a helpful contribution for their learning.

Reflexive group members and meeting dates should be confirmed on Day 1 or Day 2 of teaching on year 2. Each participant will be required to 'present' on a minimum of two occasions throughout the year and it is helpful to devise a rota for presenting, to enable you to plan ahead and identify a suitable 'practice episode' or piece of literature.

Dissertation supervisors should be sent a schedule of your reflexive group dates and will aim to attend at least one reflexive group, dependent on availability.

Time for reflexive practice groups is part of the Local Authority partnership agreement with Frontline. They should be prioritised as you would a teaching day. If there are any difficulties with this, please speak with your dissertation supervisor in the first instance. Guidance on running a reflexive group can be found in Annex 7.

2.10 Supervisory meetings with dissertation supervisor

Wherever possible, the same practice tutor that has supported you through year 1 of the programme will continue to support you through year 2 as your dissertation supervisor. Their role is to guide you through the research process, offering advice and providing encouragement at each stage.

Participants are entitled to 5 supervisory meetings throughout the year and are responsible for arranging these with their dissertation supervisor. Supervisory meetings can be held online or in person.

The responsibilities of the supervisor are as follows:

- To approve the initial choice of topic
- To discuss and guide you on your dissertation plan
- To discuss and guide you on research ethics and research proposals
- To support/advise you with any difficulties which arise in preparing the dissertation
- To read and comment on a chapter/plan of work (no more than 1500 words) – Feedback will be provided within a supervisory meeting and timing of submission and feedback must be agreed with the supervisor in advance
- Supervisors do not read full drafts of dissertations

The supervisor does not, however, have any responsibility for the preparation of the dissertation itself, for the ideas and material that it includes, or for the standard that it attains. The dissertation must be entirely your own work.

The participant's responsibilities and how to make the most of your supervisory meetings:

- To initiate and maintain contact with your supervisor
- To keep a record of what has been agreed at each supervisory meeting
- To make the most of your supervision, you should submit material for discussion in advance of each meeting. This could be agreed with the supervisor at the end of each supervisory meeting.
- You should set the agenda and inform your supervisor of what you wish to discuss. Supervisory meetings are for your benefit. It is, therefore, to your advantage if you take the lead on how to plan each supervisory meeting.

Please note, engagement with your dissertation supervisor is an important part of your academic study. Participants who utilise this support effectively are likely to be better prepared for the

completion of their dissertation due to the increased focus on planning, discussion of ideas and troubleshooting any concerns related to their research project. **You are strongly advised to be proactive in arranging and attending all five of your supervisory meetings** and to contact your dissertation supervisor via email if you have any queries that need to be addressed outside of these meetings.

2.11 Independent learning

Your independent learning hours should be used to undertake and write up your action research project or literature review as your dissertation and will include any reading that you will use to inform your research. Important information about how to complete your research will be provided during Teaching Days; therefore, you must attend these and complete the essential reading for each day.

2.12 Literature review research proposals

This section is only applicable to participants choosing literature review as their methodology. If you are completing action research, please skip to the next section.

Those participants completing a literature review will be required to submit a research proposal by **Wednesday 22 January 2025** at **10am**. Teaching will be provided on teaching days 2 and 3 to support participants in the preparation of their proposals. You are required to discuss the content of your research proposal with your dissertation supervisor prior to submission, to ensure it is appropriate and feasible, but they do not need to have seen your final version before you submit it.

The research proposal proforma can be found on the FLSW915 Moodle page.

If you are unable to submit your research proposal by the above date, we strongly encourage participants to let us know by submitting an extension request via our online form. Applying for Exceptional Circumstances enables us to provide any support you need. You can contact academic.support@thefrontline.org.uk if you need any support or advice about this.

Review

Your research proposal will be reviewed by your dissertation supervisor. Proposals that were submitted by the deadline will receive notification of the supervisor's feedback no later than **Wednesday 5 March 2025** at **5pm**. Supervisors' feedback will be uploaded on Moodle, and you are advised to check back regularly to see if your application has been reviewed before this date.

Unlike ethical approval for action research, there are no formal outcomes for the research proposal. Dissertation supervisors will write formative feedback aimed at guiding you on how you can improve your project. However, please consider all guidance carefully so that you achieve the module aims and assignment specifications when you eventually complete your dissertation.

This includes ethical considerations throughout your project. It is expected that you continue to review your planning and progress through supervision sessions with your dissertation supervisor.

Participants have no right of appeal against the supervisor's feedback.

2.13 Ethical issues and good research practice

The next few sections (2.13 to 2.16) are only applicable to participants choosing action research as their methodology. If you are completing a literature review, please skip to section 2.17.

You will be provided with information regarding research ethics during Teaching Days 2 and 3, in addition to receiving support from your dissertation supervisor.

Participants completing action research are required to obtain ethical approval before starting their research. **You will require approval from both Frontline and your local authority and it is your responsibility to obtain these in a timely fashion**. Frontline will assess the ethical suitability of your study and the local authority is responsible for approving research being undertaken in the work setting.

You should carefully consider any ethical issues arising from the dissertation in all cases. Work on sensitive topics in particular must be discussed with your dissertation supervisor to ensure high ethical standards in research activities. It is also pertinent to plan how long this process will take. It is a lengthy process requiring two sets of approval which may take several months. You must factor this into your project timeline and discuss it with your dissertation supervisor.

Frontline participants are required to adhere to Lancaster University's code of ethical practice, which you must read carefully before preparing your ethical approval documentation. If there is anything you do not understand, please speak to your dissertation supervisor.

- You can find the Code of Practice at this link: Code of Practice.
- A quick reference document to the Code of Practice is also available using this link: Quick Reference Document.
- You are also required to read and adhere to Frontline's 'Data protection, confidentiality and consent requirements for Year 2 participants', which will be made available on Moodle and Frontline's 'Research Privacy Notice' at this link: Research Privacy Notice

2.14 How to apply for action research ethical approval – Frontline

Submission

Applications for ethical approval from Frontline should be submitted via the designated Moodle submission link **no later** than **Wednesday 22 January 2025** at **10am**. Please note, you are encouraged to submit your ethics application earlier than this date if it is ready. The deadline for

submission should be adhered to strictly in order to ensure all applications can be considered in a timely fashion. Ethics applications submitted after this date may be subject to significant delay in obtaining approval and consequently this is likely to impede your ability to start your research.

If you are unable to submit your ethical approval form by the above date, we strongly encourage participants to let us know by submitting an extension request via our online form. Although the ethical approval form is not an assessment element, and the formal policy on Exceptional Circumstances therefore does not apply, using the online form to notify us when you need an extension enables us to provide any support you need and to ensure the later ethical approval does not delay your research unduly. You can contact academic.support@thefrontline.org.uk if you need any support or advice about this.

You are required to discuss the content of your ethical approval application with your dissertation supervisor prior to submission, to ensure it is appropriate and feasible.

Applications will not be considered unless they include:

- Completed Frontline Ethics Form (Proforma can be found on the FLSW915 Moodle page)
- Copy of the Participant Information Sheet (examples can be found on the FLSW15 Moodle page)
- Copy of unsigned Consent Form (examples can be found on the FLSW915 Moodle page)
- Signature from your dissertation supervisor

Review

Your ethical approval application will be reviewed by the Frontline Ethics Committee. Applications that were submitted by the deadline will receive notification of the committee's decision no later than **Wednesday 5th March 2025** at **5pm**. The decision of the committee will be uploaded on Moodle, and you are advised to check back regularly to see if your application has been reviewed before this date.

The length of time required for each review is related to the complexity of ethical issues raised by your planned study. It is crucial that your project carefully considers and respects ethical practice in working with children, families, and colleagues generally and specifically to your research focus. Furthermore, it depends on the quality of your application e.g., have you explained clearly and in lay terms what the project aims to do. Taking time to do this part of your project is essential. It is common for participants to re-submit several times to achieve a sound ethical basis to their research. Ethical approvers are seeking to make sure your research is not harmful in any way for you and the people you work with and may spot things you didn't consider. Please factor this possibility into your project planning.

The ethics committee have six weeks to review your application from date of submission. They will explore whether you have attended to all ethical and methodological aspects of your project aims, objectives and design. This includes all information sheets and that the consent form

matches the approved version (found on Moodle). Please attend carefully to the guidance provided including on Moodle, during teaching days and in the ethics application form itself.

Plagiarism at this stage is taken very seriously as it indicates a lack of ethical consideration within your research approach. Do not copy others' work or exemplars from previous years. Outcomes of the review include the following options:

- Approval
- Further information and/or revisions required
- Not approved: the application is seriously flawed and requires major revisions before it can be considered; applicants in this category should prepare a new application.

Participants have no right of appeal against the committee's decision.

Once you receive an outcome from the Frontline Ethics Committee

- **If you received approval for your ethical approval application:** You should now seek formal approval from your local authority before commencing research activities. Please refer to section 2.15 for further information on local authority approval.
- **If you have been advised that further information or revisions are required:** It is common for applications to be returned for further revisions or information. You should carefully consider the feedback provided for your initial submission to ensure that these have been addressed within your resubmission. Your dissertation supervisor will need to sign amended documentation prior to submission. Your amended ethics application should be resubmitted within two weeks, via Moodle.
- **If your application has not been approved:** You are advised to discuss the feedback with your dissertation supervisor as a priority as significant issues will have been identified with your proposed project. You will need to amend the scope, aims or methods of your research to ensure it meets ethical standards. Your dissertation supervisor will need to sign amended documentation prior to submission. Your amended ethics application should be resubmitted within four weeks, via Moodle.

A diagram of the Frontline ethical approval process is included below for ease of reference:
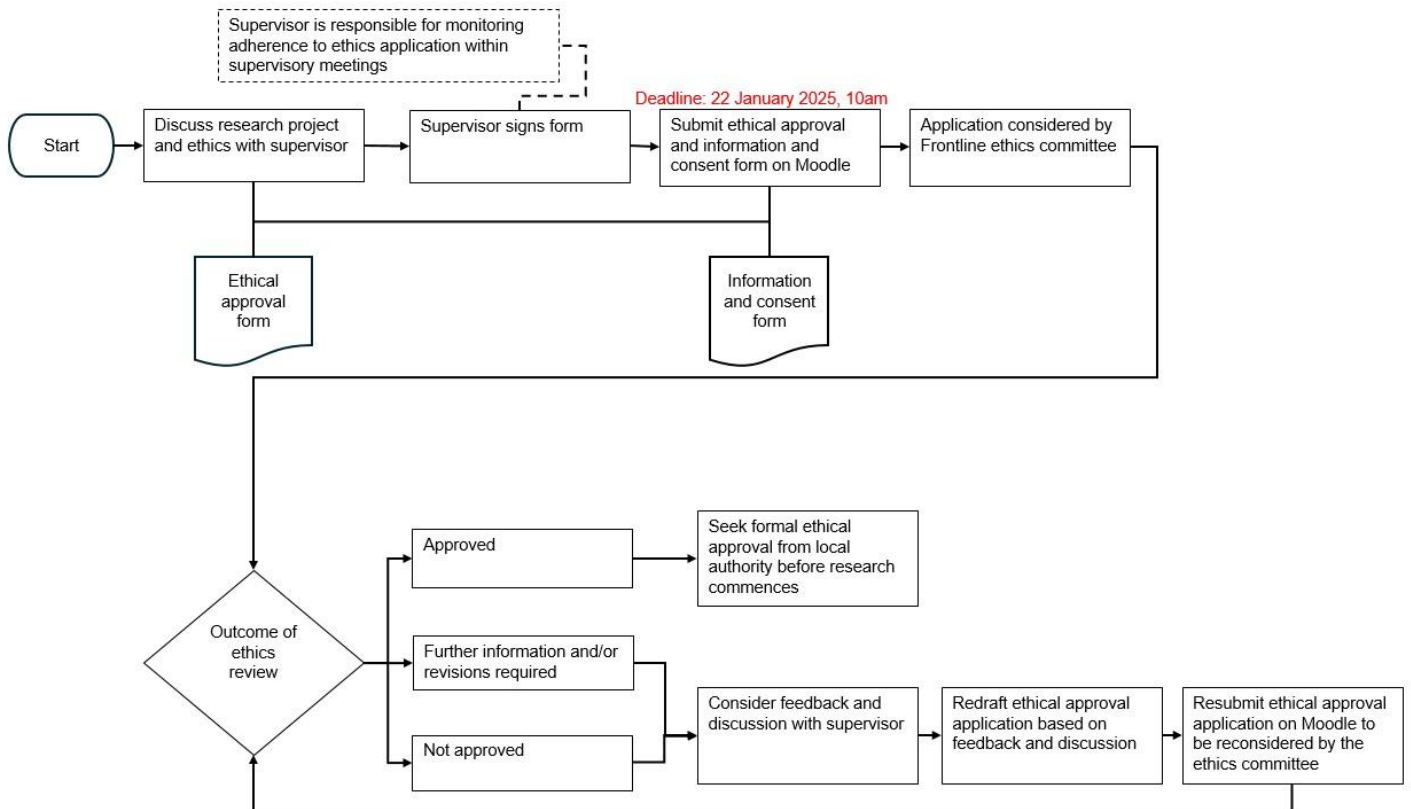
2.15 Action research ethical approval – Local authority

As stated above, it is imperative that you receive ethical approval from **both** Frontline and your local authority before commencing research activities if you are completing action research. It is up to the local authority whether they require ethics applications to go through its own full formal ethics procedures or whether management sign off is sufficient. You are strongly advised to discuss this with your manager at your earliest opportunity to clarify what the process is within your local authority. Procedures and timescales regarding ethical approval can vary significantly between local authorities and you will need to take this into consideration when planning your research project as it could add significant delay.

Local authorities will usually require sight of Frontline approval before granting permission to conduct your research in the local authority. It may also be helpful to share the Lancaster University Research Code of Practice with them to illustrate the standards you will be adhering to.

Please note that you will be required to evidence your local authority ethical approval in the appendices of your dissertation, so ensure that you keep written confirmation stored safely.

2.16 Management of research data for action research projects

Participants completing action research may be required to handle sensitive or personal data in the course of your research activities. **Data must be kept confidential and handled in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and GDPR.** You must also read and adhere to Frontline's 'Data protection, confidentiality and consent requirements for year 2 participants' document, which will be made available on Moodle.

You must keep all empirical materials such as interview transcripts and signed consent forms until after you have been awarded your degree. You will all have access to a Microsoft 365 and cloud-based storage through your Lancaster University account and should use this to store any empirical materials that will not be stored securely on your local authority systems (see section 4.4).

Data retention requirements are as follows:

a) Participants who have their awards ratified and are not going to appeal - data to be deleted within a reasonable period (i.e., 6 months following confirmation of award).

b) Participants who have failed or do not agree with their grade and plan to appeal - data to be deleted once the re-assessment and appeals process is finalised, including completion of any involvement of the Office of Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

Since the dissertation is substantially longer than an essay, it is particularly important for you to take notes accurately and file them carefully, in order to keep a record of your work. You should back up your work and use the University's cloud-based storage wherever possible to do so.

Lancaster University's website has a wealth of information about how to store data safely, as follows:

- Information about storing data on the University Cloud (including required levels of encryption) is available here.
- Information about data security (including to classifications of information, precautions needed for sharing and storing information and disposal of information) is available at here.
- Information about file storage (including a FAQ section and training e.g. managing files within Microsoft OneDrive) is available here.
- Further information about required levels of encryption is available here.

The relevant Data Protection and GDPR policies are linked below for reference:

- The Lancaster University **Data Protection Policy**
- The Lancaster University **Information Security Policy and Procedures**
- The Lancaster University **'Information Classifications'** information page

Data Breaches

If you are aware of any data breaches, they should be reported immediately to the Module Lead (contact details available in Annex 2), as well as your local authority information officer where relevant. Further details about Lancaster University's **'Data Security Breach Procedure**' is available here.

2.17 Research misconduct

Frontline takes concerns of research misconduct very seriously to ensure that the academic integrity and the value and basis of the awards are upheld. Therefore, if any concerns are raised in relation to research misconduct, Frontline reserves the right to investigate and progress the matter under the relevant policy.

Assessment for FLSW915

The following section is only applicable to participants who are completing the 60 credit FLSW915 module.

3.1 Formative feedback and summative assessment

Reflection and reflexivity are an essential component of social work practice, and so formative assessment and feedback is woven throughout this module. A range of Frontline teaching staff and peers will provide **formative feedback** in this module using a variety of methods including, but not limited to, individual supervisory meetings and summary group feedback. Peer feedback and self-assessment will also be utilised to help you develop critical thinking, reflection, and reflexivity.

The action research ethics application and literature review research proposal are key formative assessments for the FLSW915 module. You can find their respective assignment briefs on Moodle.

The purpose of summative assessment is to ensure that participants have met the module learning outcomes and that participant work is at the appropriate academic level.

There is **one** summative assessment element in this module, which is the dissertation (60 credits). To successfully complete the FLSW915 module, you **must** pass the dissertation. Listed below is the submission deadline, weighting, and feedback release date for this assessment.

You will be provided with developmental feedback on the summative assessment to aid your future learning and development.

Summative assessment element	Weighting	Submission deadline	Feedback release date (NB. mark is provisional until ratified at Exam Board)
11-13,000 word action research dissertation OR 11-13,000 word literature review	100%	10am – Wednesday 20 August 2025	5pm – Wednesday 1 October 2025

3.2 Marking, moderation, and grade ratification process

All academic summative assessments will be marked against the Lancaster University Postgraduate Level Social Work marking matrix ([see Annex 4](#)), with the pass mark all for Level 7 assessment set at **50%. Please note that for the dissertation, an enhanced version of the marking criteria is used, which will be shared with you via Moodle.**

Each participant's dissertation is marked by their dissertation supervisor where possible. It is also double marked by a second marker who does not see the mark assigned by the first marker beforehand. Moderation and discussion take place between the two markers to agree the final mark. If the grade difference is more than 10% and cannot be resolved in discussion, the submission is 'third-marked' by a different marker who will not see the marks assigned by the first and second marker beforehand.

Moderation Reports are shared with our External Examiners and the Lancaster University Director of Studies for Frontline or their nominee. A sample of assessments is shared with our External Examiners for an additional, external check that the feedback and submitted work is at the required academic level. Further moderation is carried out by the Lancaster University Director of Studies for Frontline or their nominee. **All marks are provisional until they are ratified by the joint Frontline-Lancaster University Exam Board.**

3.3. Return of feedback

In year 2, your **provisional** assessment results and feedback will be returned to you within six weeks of submission (excluding public holidays). As stated above, all marks are provisional until they are ratified by the joint Frontline-Lancaster University Exam Board.

In rare occurrences where Frontline is unable to return your assessments within the agreed marking period due to an unforeseen circumstance (e.g., if one of the markers is unexpectedly unavailable for a significant period and no replacement can be found), you will be informed as soon as possible of a firm date by which you can expect the work to be returned.

3.4 Word limits

The limit for this assessment is 11-13,000 words. A range gives participants a broader target to aim for and allows greater flexibility when making any final edits on an assessment. As well as the upper boundary of the range providing a maximum length, the lower boundary of the range allows us to indicate to participants what we see as the optimum length in order to meet the marking criteria and learning outcomes. Participants are encouraged to aim for any point between the lower and the upper end of the range.

There will be no penalty for under-length work, but it is important to note that work which is seriously under the prescribed length is likely to be awarded a lower mark on grounds of inadequate content.

For an over-length piece of coursework where the word limit has been exceeded by 20% or less, the coursework will initially be marked in full. After an initial mark has been assigned for the full piece of work, only then will a suitable penalty be applied, if applicable. For an over-length piece of coursework where the word limit has been exceeded by more than 20%, the part of the coursework beyond the excess 20% will not be marked.

Where penalties are being applied for a piece of over-long coursework, a sliding scale of penalties, rather than a flat rate penalty will be used. When applying a sliding-scale penalty, the deduction will depend on how much the word limit has been exceeded. When using percentage points, a typical sliding scale would be:

Amount over the word limit	Deduction using percentage points
0 to 10%	5%
10.1% to 20%	10%

What is counted within a word limit?

The normal approach is that the word count will include the main body of the assessment (including in-text references, footnotes, tables and diagrams) but will not include administrative information (such as the participant name, programme of study, etc.), the assessment title or question, the appendices, or the bibliography. Appendices must not be used to extend your work beyond the word limit, nor contain information that is essential for the basic comprehension of the work. If appendices are used inappropriately, academic judgement will be applied when deciding on a mark that best reflects the extent to which the main body of the work satisfies the marking criteria.

Abstracts, contents tables, appendices, diagrams, acknowledgements, title/front page and references are not included in the word count.

Monitoring word/time ranges

Participants are required to provide an accurate statement of length as part of the submission of their work. Word counts should be recorded on the front page of your dissertation when submitting your work. If you experience problems with meeting the required word length, please speak in the first instance to your dissertation supervisor.

3.5. Assessment marking criteria

Specific assessment guidance for the dissertation is provided on Moodle. The dissertation assessment guidance provides detailed information about what should be submitted in this

assessment and the criteria it will be marked against, as well as suggested reading. **You must read this assessment guidance before starting the dissertation.**

3.6. Submission format

You will submit your dissertation electronically via Moodle as a word document (either .doc or .docx). You must include a coversheet. If you are a participant with an Inclusive Learning Support Plan and it has been agreed that you are eligible to submit a Disability and Inclusive Practice Service Student Assessment Coversheet with your submissions this will be automatically uploaded with your submission unless you have opted out of this (please see section 5.5 for further information).

The following formatting conventions should be applied:

- Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial font
- minimum 11-point main text size
- margins of at least 2.5 cm at the top, bottom, left and right of the page
- portrait layout, unless you have specific elements (e.g. large tables) that are easier to read in landscape
- Numbering on all pages
- The main text should be 1.5 or double-spaced; acknowledgments, references and can be single-spaced
- Text can be either left-aligned or justified

When uploading your dissertation, please ensure that you are submitting all relevant components into the correct file submission area by following the instructions provided. It is your responsibility to check that you have made your submission in the correct format and place, and that it can be read: failure to do so may lead to failure of the assessment.

3.7 Anonymisation

To maintain the confidentiality of any participants and organisations cited within your academic work, please ensure that all references and identifiable data used are anonymised. Further detail is provided in the 'Data protection, confidentiality, and consent requirements for year 2 participants' document, which you are required to read and adhere to (available on Moodle in Programme pages, Policies and Academic Regulations).

Failure to adhere to these requirements may result in a reduction of the grade awarded, and in the most serious and/or repeated cases, to failure and/or referral to Fitness to Practise procedures.

3.8 References

The purpose of adding references to an assessment is to show where you have obtained particular data or ideas, and to acknowledge the sources of quotations from other writings. The Frontline Programme uses Lancaster University's version of the Harvard referencing system, details of which are available via the VLE and through the university's main portal.

3.9 Academic integrity and plagiarism

Frontline uses plagiarism detection systems to check the integrity of assessed work. This searches the internet and an extensive database of reference material, including other participants' work, to identify any duplication within the work submitted. More information about Lancaster University's plagiarism framework can be found here and Frontline's academic integrity policy is available here.

Plagiarism includes *"the commissioning or use of work by the participant which is not their own and representing it as if it were."* This includes the use of text which has been generated or improved by artificial intelligence systems such as Chat-GPT. We accept that participants may wish to use some AI software (such as the free-to-use basic version of Grammarly) for the purposes of spell-checking and grammar-checking only. Participants **MUST** explicitly state that they have used this software for these purposes only, at the start or end of their coursework submissions. The use of AI to generate text (such as ChatGPT and its variants), to translate text (using DeepL or other software) or to enhance text (using Grammarly Premium, for example) is a breach of Frontline's Academic Integrity policy (see extract below) and will be treated as academic malpractice.

> *"1.3.3* **False Authorship***: This is a form of plagiarism where the participant has deliberately engaged with a third party and/or software tool to complete an assessment, either in part or whole. This engagement can be direct or through an intermediary. This may include work produced by another individual, an essay mill, a tutoring service, or through the use of Artificial Intelligence software. As it is the authorship of the work that is contested, there is no requirement to prove that the work has been purchased. The submission of underdeclared work which is generated and/or improved by language model software for the purposes of gaining marks will be regarded as False Authorship and seen as an attempt to gain an intentional unfair academic advantage."*

Because of the dual nature of the social work course (i.e., it is a professional and academic award) and the SWE requirement that qualifying participants are deemed fit for registration as qualified social workers, plagiarism, cheating and the fabrication of information are taken particularly seriously. In the case of a proven academic offence, in addition to the academic malpractice process, fitness to practise procedures may be invoked.

3.10 Exceptional circumstances

You are advised to complete and submit your work well in advance of the deadline to avoid last minute delays. However, Frontline acknowledges that sometimes you may experience a personal or significant event which is unexpected and unpreventable and has an adverse effect on your ability to complete an assessment within the usual timeframe. i.e., serious illness or a bereavement. In such instances, you may be able to receive additional time and/or consideration. The Exceptional Circumstances Policy outlines the processes and parameters in full. You must use the Exceptional Circumstances Form if you wish to request an extension to your dissertation submission deadline.

If you are unable to submit your ethical approval form or research proposal by 22 January 2025, we strongly encourage participants to let us know by submitting an extension request via the same online form. Although the ethical approval form is not an assessment element, and the formal policy on Exceptional Circumstances therefore does not apply, using the online form to notify us when you need an extension enables us to provide any support you need and to ensure the later ethical approval does not delay your research unduly. You can contact academic.support@thefrontline.org.uk if you need any support or advice about this.

Advice on all matters relating to extensions and exceptional circumstances can be sought from Academic Registry via academic.support@thefrontline.org.uk.

We encourage you to raise issues as early as you can with your dissertation supervisor, and to be aware that if your circumstances do not meet the necessary criteria, as set out in the Exceptional Circumstances policy that your application will be declined. The policy sets out areas in which the panel has discretion, including the consideration of applications beyond the usual deadlines.

Participants are asked to bear in mind that extensions of more than a couple of weeks to the dissertation submission date may mean that marking is not completed in time for the October 2025 exam board which is the deadline for making awards which will be conferred at the Lancaster University winter graduation ceremonies. Participants who complete and are awarded the MSc after this date will be invited to attend a graduation ceremony in the following year (winter 2026).

3.11 Penalties for late work

Work submitted up to three days late without an agreed extension will receive a penalty of 10 percentage points (for example, a mark of 62% would become 52%) and zero (non-submission) thereafter. Saturdays and Sundays are included as days in this regulation. However, where the third day falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or Bank Holiday, students will have until 10.00 a.m. on the first working day to hand in without receiving further penalty. Where the application of a late submission penalty results in a fail mark, the assessment will be treated according to the standard procedures for failed work.

3.12 Academic regulations

The Frontline programme will follow Lancaster University's [Manual of Academic Regulations and Procedures (MARP)](#), except in regard to variations which have been agreed and approved through the appropriate Lancaster University academic governance process, [which can be found here.](#)

MARP and Frontline's agreed MARP variations are the definitive source of authority for all regulatory information and supersede all other documentation where a discrepancy is noted.

Please therefore ensure you have read and understood these [variations](#) outlined on Lancaster University's website, as this is only summarised briefly in the below sections.

3.13 Criteria for awards

To gain the MSc in Advanced Relationship Based Social Work Practice with Children and Families, you will need to complete all six Frontline programme modules. You completed the first five modules in year 1 (totalling 120 Master's level credits), and the final module is completed in year 2 (60 Master's level credits).

At Lancaster University, the pass mark for taught Level 7 Master's degrees is **50%**. All assessment elements must be passed in each module. A module cannot be passed with a failed assessment element, even if the aggregated (weighted average) mar is above 50%. Condonation of failed modules is not permitted on the programme.

Your award classification will be based on the full 180 credits you will have completed within years 1 and 2 of the programme.

There will be three classes of awards: distinction, merit and pass. Where the overall average, calculated to one decimal place, falls within one of the following ranges, the exam boards will recommend the award stated:

Percentage	Award classification
70.0%+	Distinction
60.0 - 69.9%	Merit
50.0 - 59.9%	Pass
Below 50.0%	Fail

For all students whose overall average mark falls into a borderline range, the higher award should be given if half or more of the credits (from across the programme) are in the higher class.

3.14 Examination boards

The work that you submit for assessment will be reviewed and ratified by the board of examiners. The board of examiners includes internal examiners: (academic staff from Frontline and Lancaster University) and external examiners. The examination board for this module is held in October 2025. Reassessment submissions (following a fail) and submissions which have been delayed due to exceptional circumstances will be reviewed at the next exam board, the following March.

Following on from the exam board, your award and classification are ratified by the Lancaster University Classification and Assessment Review Board (CARB). Once CARB has met, you will be notified about your ratified module result and your final award classification. Any marks shared prior to the exam board will be provisional until ratified by the exam board. Any final award classification shared will be provisional until ratified by CARB.

Following the formal publication of results, an examination board transparency report will be made available via Moodle which will provide information considered by the board when making decisions. This may include: average module marks; whether any scaling was undertaken (or proposed); any other contextual information specific to individual modules considered by the board. Additionally, you can ask for a results appraisal if you do not understand how your results were determined. If you would like to request a results appraisal, then please contact Frontline registry (academic.support@thefrontline.org.uk) and they will liaise with Lancaster University so that a results appraisal can be provided to you. A request for a results appraisal will not affect your right to submit an academic appeal.

3.15 Principles and parameters of reassessment

In this module, the assessment element is compulsory. This means that the assessment must be passed.

Therefore, reassessment is compulsory for any assessment mark below 50%. If you fail the assessment, you will have one opportunity for reassessment. Reassessment is not permitted where an assessment mark is a pass (mark of 50% or above).

Submission deadlines for reassessment are set by exam boards and you will usually receive a minimum of twelve weeks' notice of the date.

You do not need to wait for notification of the submission deadline to start work on your resubmission. Should you pass the reassessment, if the module percentage mark after reassessment is an improvement on the original mark, the new percentage mark will count subject to a cap of 50%; otherwise the original percentage mark stands as your result for the module. The resulting percentage mark will count towards the overall average for the programme. You cannot

pass the programme or be awarded the qualification (MSc) if you have failed this (or any module) after your one reassessment opportunity.

3.16 Exit award

If you fail to meet the requirements of the programme having exhausted your reassessment opportunity, or you choose to withdraw from the academic module (FLSW915) prematurely, you will be awarded an exit award of Postgraduate Diploma for the 120 credits you passed in year 1, and which permitted your progression into year 2.

Exit awards are considered and confirmed by Lancaster University and must follow the formal process for confirmation and publication of ratified awards; this means that there may be several months delay between your decision to withdraw from the programme and the award of an exit qualification.

Learning Resources for FLSW915

The following section is only applicable to participants who are completing the 60 credit FLSW915 module. If you have withdrawn from this element of the Frontline programme, you will not be able to access the following learning resources.

4.1 Virtual Learning Environment: Moodle

Moodle is where you will find all key documentation and resources (e.g., teaching schedules, lecture slides, learning resources, policies, recordings of some taught days, assessment guidelines, hand-in dates etc.). It also is where you will be expected to submit your dissertation.

The module area on Moodle will be populated on an ongoing basis as we work through the module syllabus. It is important to regularly check your Lancaster email account and Moodle announcements as module staff (and others from Frontline) will contact you via email and Moodle with information and announcements etc.

If you experience issues with accessing/navigating elements of the Virtual Learning Environment (e.g. not being able to access Moodle content, assignment submission support) please contact our Digital Learning Team on digital.learning@thefrontline.org.uk.

For general IT queries (e.g., LU registration issues, queries around your LU email, library access) please refer to section 7.9 of the handbook 'Lancaster University IT related support' for further information on how to resolve issues with Moodle.

4.2 Lancaster University library resources and services

You will have access to Lancaster University's library via Moodle and physically on its campus. Prescribed and suggested reading lists will be provided by the Curriculum Team.

You can access Lancaster's library via the following link: https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/library/ Access is also available directly from the student portal on Moodle when logged in.

The library provides a wide range of resources to support your studies including eBooks, eJournals, databases and streaming video collections. A good place to start exploring the materials available is the subject guide for Social Work with its focused information and content. Use the discovery tool OneSearch to find and access the Library's online collections.

If you need help with finding and using Library resources, get in touch with your Faculty Librarians, Ciara Murray and Paul Newnham, by email at facultylibrarians@lancaster.ac.uk or book an online appointment. You can also use the Library chat service for general enquiries and consult the guide for distance learners for information about further tailored support.

4.3 SCONUL access

SCONUL Access is a scheme which allows many university library users to access study spaces or books and journals at other libraries which belong to the scheme. Some library users may be able to borrow print books from other libraries too.

To obtain SCONUL access, you should apply online at https://www.sconul.ac.uk/ This will prompt a verification process which will require Lancaster University's library team to verify that you are a fully registered student with Lancaster University. All libraries in the scheme will have different requirements about what a student will need to do/demonstrate the first time they want to access their site, so this will differ between institutions.

4.4 Office 365 and other software

As a registered Lancaster University student, you will be able to access Office 365. Office 365 can be accessed online at www.office.com. You will be redirected to the LU portal where you enter your personal LU institution email address. Alternatively, you can access Office 365 via the LU Student Portal.

Additionally, as a minimum you will be able to access the following software:

- Nvivo: a qualitative data analysis computer software package, which can support qualitative researchers to organise and analyse data (e.g. interviews, open-ended survey responses, journal articles and web content).
- SAS: a Statistical Analysis Software suite for data management, advanced analytics, multivariate analysis, business intelligence and predictive analytics.

- **Maple:** a symbolic and numeric computing environment, as well as a multi-paradigm programming language. It covers several areas such as symbolic mathematics, numerical analysis, data processing, visualisation and others.
- **Leximancer:** a computer software that conducts quantitative content analysis using a machine learning technique.
- **SPSS:** a software package used for statistical analysis.
- **SPSS Amos:** a structural equation modelling software.
- **OriginPro:** a computer programme for interactive scientific graphing and data analysis.
- **LibreOffice:** an office productivity software suite.
- **R & R Studio:** a programming language and software environment for statistical computing and graphics, widely used among statisticians.
- **Audacity:** a digital audio editor and recording application software.
- Any open-source software available on **AppsAnywhere** (an 'app store' for accessing software).

Participants should consult the ISS information pages for more information about how to access these.

Support for participants completing FLSW915

The following section is only applicable to participants who are completing the 60 credit FLSW915 module. If you have withdrawn from this element of the Frontline programme, you will not be able to access the below support functions as they are provided by Lancaster University.

5.1 The emotional impact of the curriculum

Although incredibly rewarding, you will be aware that undertaking a professional qualifying social work course is emotionally and intellectually challenging. In completing the first year of the programme, you will have developed strategies and utilised your support network to help you deal with these challenges. Frontline's integrated 'emotional curriculum' (Grant and Kinman: 2012), helps participants build emotional literacy and reflective abilities, so that they can be successful on the programme, develop skills required to manage the emotional demands of practice, and build the emotional resilience necessary for their future career, whilst acknowledging that sometimes it is 'ok, not to be ok'.

We will, where appropriate, provide 'content warnings' to highlight topics that may be distressing. Please note these are not intended to censor teaching material or content. We recognise that it is not always possible to anticipate, and alert participants to, all potentially distressing material and recognise that on occasions participants may, because of a recent or historical personal event or experience, find particular scenarios or lectures distressing. You should inform the relevant teaching staff if you do not feel able to take part or possibly need to withdraw from an element of

the teaching for personal reasons and seek support through your dissertation supervisor where necessary.

Year 2 of the programme will bring new challenges, both emotional and academic. For this reason, Frontline and Lancaster University offer a range of support structures, both formal and informal. Please note that if you are a participant who has withdrawn from the 60 credit element of year 2, you will not have access to any of the support noted in section 5, except for sub-section 5.2.

5.2 Peer support

Peer relationships are an important source of support on the Frontline programme model, and you are encouraged to support one another's learning and development throughout year 2. You may find it helpful to set up a communication channel with peers in your reflexive group using phone, email and/or MS Teams (which is available to you as part of your Lancaster University Office 365 access) to maintain regular contact and support one another when required.

5.3 Mental health and wellbeing

Frontline aims to foster independence, self-awareness, and personal responsibility among all participants. It is also important that participants take an active part in the process and take suitable action to manage their own health and wellbeing in order to fulfil their academic potential, as is outlined within Frontline's Supported Study & Fitness to Study policy. There may be times however where you require additional support.

Whilst registered on the Frontline programme and as a student of Lancaster University, you will have access to mental health and wellbeing support via the **Student Assistance Programme (SAP).**

Where you have initial or emerging concerns about your wellbeing or mental health, participants are encouraged to seek advice from SAP, as well as directly from NHS services.

The SAP wellbeing and mental health advice line is run for Lancaster University in partnership with Health Assured. The counsellors on the helpline can provide you with help and advice for a range of issues including:

- Mental health
- Stress and anxiety
- Bereavement
- Relationship advice
- Family issues
- Tenancy and housing concerns
- Alcohol and drug issues.

We know it can be difficult to take those first steps to seek support, the qualified and experienced staff are on hand to give you that help when you feel ready to access it. The mental health and wellbeing line is available 24/7, 365 days, so help is always available at a time that suits you.

Speak to the team by calling:

+44(0)8000 283 766 (if calling from the UK)

+44(0)2070 524 617 (for international based calls, charges may apply)

Participants also have access to an online self-help programme, SilverCloud which is based on cognitive behavioural therapy techniques. There are different programmes available covering issues such as stress, anxiety, depression, resilience, mindfulness, money worries, alcohol, sleep and body image. To access SilverCloud, please register on their website with your Lancaster University e-mail address and follow SilverCloud's instructions to create an account and get started.

5.4 Academic support with disabilities and Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)

As a participant on the Frontline programme, completing the dissertation module, you will have access to Lancaster University's Disability Support service, who can provide study support to you within the following academic settings: Year 2 teaching days, and home/personal settings.

We will not provide adjustments unless you have explicitly disclosed to us that you require them, as well as providing the relevant medical evidence.

If you believe that you may have an undiagnosed disability and/or a support need, or your previous support needs have changed since year 1, you should contact the following Lancaster University's Disability and Inclusive Practice Service via their email address: disability@lancaster.ac.uk.

Where you disclose a disability, long-term condition and/or SpLD to a member of staff at your local authority who is not associated with Frontline, Lancaster University will not know about this and therefore will not be able to support you. It is therefore paramount that where you choose to disclose, you notify Lancaster University's Disability and Inclusive Practice Service: disability@lancaster.ac.uk. We advise you to also notify your dissertation supervisor of any issues that you are experiencing so that they can support you through this process, where required.

If you inform Lancaster University of a disability or long-term condition but later decide to decline support, you will be contacted to complete a 'Non-Disclosure Form' which states you did not wish to access disability support or reasonable adjustments. For more information about this you can email disability@lancaster.ac.uk.

Please note, that a full educational psychologist assessment will be required for you to get any study support as a result of an SpLD. If it is identified that you may require an assessment with an Educational Psychologist, Frontline will subsidise part of the cost of your assessment. If you decide you would like an assessment, please contact disability@lancaster.ac.uk for details of current costs and booking procedures.

5.5 Specific Learning Disabilities (SpLD) Student Coursework Coversheet

If it is noted within your Inclusive Learning Support Plan (ILSP) that you are eligible for a SpLD Student Coursework Coversheet alongside your assessments, this will be **automatically** added to all your submitted assessments on Moodle. If you do not wish your SpLD Student Coursework Coversheet to be automatically uploaded, then you can choose to opt out.

Please note that if you had an SpLD Student Coursework in year 1 and chose to opt out then this decision will be carried over into year 2.

If you change your mind either way you should contact Lancaster University's Disability and Inclusive Practice Service who will update your preferences.

The upload of your coversheet means that the academic marker of your work will take into consideration the marking guidelines for students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SpLDs), where this is appropriate (i.e., for issues outside of defined competence standards).

Please note that if you opt-out of having the coversheet automatically attached to your work, the marker will be unaware of your needs and submissions will not be remarked solely on the basis of absence of a cover sheet.

5.6 Disabled Students' Allowance

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is funding provided by the government for disabled students that can be applied for through Student Finance England (SFE). DSA may cover any extra study-related costs you incur due to your impairment, mental health condition, or learning difficulty. It is neither a benefit nor a loan, so it doesn't need repaying. The amount you'll receive depends on your individual needs not on your income, nor that of your parents or partner. DSAs are typically used for things such as software, hardware or human non-medical support/helpers.

If you are a participant who disclosed a disability/SpLD to us in year 1, you will likely have also applied to Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) to receive extra funding for specialist equipment allowance, non-medical helper allowance and/or a general disability allowance. You will need to apply for each year of your study.

We have been advised by SFE that participants are able to apply for and receive DSA funding during the first year of the programme. SFE are unclear about whether a year 2 participant can

receive DSA. We suggest that if you require DSA support in year 2 you apply to SFE, but we cannot guarantee that your will receive the support for which you apply.

For further information on how you can apply for DSA and its eligibility requirements, please refer to the government's DSA guidance.

In instances where you were provided with equipment through DSA and/or Frontline last year, it would be expected that this equipment will have been retained and will continue to support you during year 2 of your studies. For non-medical help/human support, such as a Study Skills Tutor or a Mentor, please refer the information in the paragraph above about DSA support in year 2.

For more information about support applying for DSA, please see the Lancaster University Disability and Inclusion Service webpage for Frontline participants.

If you have any specific questions in relation to your DSA application for the Frontline programme, then we would recommend that you speak to a Lancaster University Disability and Inclusive Practice Advisor for more details about the application process. Please email disability@lancaster.ac.uk if you have any queries.

If there are items that you no longer receive from DSA (e.g., non-medical helpers) that are vital to your study, please contact Lancaster University's Disability and Inclusive Practice Service (disability@lancaster.ac.uk).

5.7 Learning development support

Frontline participants have access to a Learning Developer, Dr Harriet Newnes, who is part of the Learning Development Team at Lancaster University. Learning development aims to help participants reach their potential, regardless of current or previous attainment.

Learning development provision includes one-to-one tutorials, where participants and the Learning Developer meet to discuss strategies for developing writing, criticality and analysis. It is usually helpful if you can bring a piece of work with you to a tutorial, either something that you are currently working on or a previous piece assessment to use as an example.

Tutorials will be held via Microsoft Teams; however, if anyone is local to Lancaster and prefers to meet in-person, the Learning Developer can meet with you at the Lancaster University campus.

The Frontline Learning Developer provision is a finite resource (0.2FTE). Please bear in mind that your e-mail may not be responded to immediately and that the support may be fully booked, at times.

Please contact the Learning Developer, Dr Harriet Newnes (see contact details in Annex 2) for further information and to arrange a time to meet. This provision includes some daytime and some evening hours.

5.8 Additional funding and loans

If you are experiencing financial hardship during year 2 of the programme, you are eligible to apply to two of Lancaster University's funding support pools: Lancaster's Opportunity and Access Fund (LOAF), and the emergency loan.

Please ensure that prior to applying for extra financial support, please ensure that you read the supporting terms and conditions for each support option and be aware of the following:

- There is an expectation that all postgraduate students will have secured appropriate funding to cover their costs, for the duration of their programme, prior to commencing their study. The LOAF grant is only intended for those who experience significant and unexpected changes to their incomes stream /funding during their studies. As Frontline participants receive a bursary/salary and do not pay tuition fees it is less likely that you will be eligible unless there is a sudden and unexpected change in circumstance.

In 2021 the Student Loans Company confirmed that Frontline participants are not eligible for a post-graduate loan.

Frontline cannot advise on whether individual Participants will be eligible for addition government support such as Universal Credit. Please visit https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit for further information on what you are eligible for.

General participant support

For both participants completing the 60 credit FLSW915 module and participants who are completing the ASYE only (see 7.15 for information on this), you will have access to the following general support functions:

6.1 Inclusion passport

An Inclusion Passport is a working document that records and details the support you need, and agreements made with your line manage around how these supports will be achieved to enable you to meet the requirements of your role.

The inclusion passport is for all participants. The passport can be for disabled people or people with a long-term health condition. However, it may also be helpful for someone who requires adjustments to their working or learning environment as a result of other aspects of their identity such as language and communication support, or adaptations to the working environment to meet religious or gender needs.

The inclusion passport is designed to complement other forms of support you may have. As the passport does not require medical evidence, it is intended to act as a tool to generate conversations about need, embed discussing need and support as a strengths-based activity and

expectation with regards to healthy work environments, as well as reduce stigma, shame and other barriers to seeking support in the work profession.

6.2 Peer support

Peer relationships are an important source of support on the Frontline programme model, and you are encouraged to support one another's learning and development throughout year 2. You may find it helpful to set up a communication channel with peers in your reflexive group using phone, email and/or MS Teams (available to Lancaster University students as part of their Lancaster University Office 365 access) to maintain regular contact and support one another when required.

6.3 Support for disabled participants: Access to Work and adjustments in the workplace

During your Assessed and Support Year in Employment (ASYE), you may be eligible to receive funding through the government's Access to Work scheme if you have a disability or health condition.

Access to Work supports individuals in employment to get the help they need at work where it is not covered through their employer's reasonable adjustments. Access to Work applications are submitted via the Access to Work website.

Please note that Frontline cannot provide guidance around Access to Work, as this is an employment-related scheme. All queries therefore should be directed to Access to Work, your line manager or your employer, which in year 2 is your local authority.

6.4 Support for participants from racialised minority backgrounds: promoting inclusion and countering exclusion

As part of Frontline's Racial Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan we are committed to anti-racism and promoting and valuing racial diversity and inclusion. Frontline is committed to a diverse participant community on all of our programmes and all the benefits and value such diversity brings. In addition, we have a Frontline Participant Charter.

If the conduct of a fellow participant falls below the conduct and behaviour expectations outlined in the charter, you should report this in the first instance to your dissertation supervisor (or another member of Frontline staff, as listed on the 'Participant support' page of Moodle), who will be able to refer it to the appropriate policy and offer you any support you need.

The programme offers a range of support structures, both formal and informal, to ensure you are enabled to be successful on the programme. However, we recognise it is crucial to align Frontline's support offer with our diverse participant community and to recognise some of the additional barriers and challenges that participants from a racialised minority background face. So, in addition to our formal policies, processes, and support offer, we have also introduced several additional elements to promote racial diversity and inclusivity and counter exclusion. Of course, this list is not exhaustive, and we are open to feedback about how we can further and better support participants from racialised minority backgrounds.

6.4.1 Language

At Frontline, we prefer the terms "racialised minority group" or "from racialised minority backgrounds", unless the person being addressed has communicated a preferred alternative.

We prefer this term because it offers that race is a social construct. This social construct has historically been used, and is still used today, to justify and perpetuate oppression and discrimination of people racialised as minority groups.

6.4.2 List of Frontline staff from racialised minority backgrounds as a point of contact

It is recognised that due to experiences of racialisation and discrimination for some participants, it might be difficult to raise and discuss instances of discrimination or racism on the programme with white staff members. If you would therefore prefer your point of contact to be a Frontline member of staff from a racialised minority group, please contact one of the below individual:

Name	Role	Email address
TBC	TBC	The named contact is still to be confirmed, in the meanwhile please contact frontline@ops@thefrontline.org.uk

6.4.3 Participant community spaces for participants from racialised minority backgrounds

This is a principled community space where participants from racialised minority groups feel able to access and develop strong networks of support, a sense of belonging and find support to deal with racism and/ or discrimination in placements or on the programme. This will take place virtually and will be facilitated by Frontline members of staff.

6.5 Community spaces

6.5.1 Where you can find Frontline's community spaces

To find out further information about all the community spaces we run, please visit the 'Participant support page' on Moodle, where you will find a link to our 'community space and Frontline led affinity page'.

We currently run the following Community spaces
Participants from racialised minority backgrounds
- LGBTQIA+
- Neurodivergence
- Lived experience of Social Work
- Disability

6.6 Coaching

During year 2 of the programme, you will be given the opportunity to engage in 6 voluntary coaching sessions with an independent coach to support you in developing leadership skills.

In our most recent year 2 bi-annual survey (Sept 2023 – Jan 2024) **81%** of respondents cited that coaching had helped to develop their practice leadership skills.

Coaching will be available to all year 2 participants, including those who decide to withdraw from the final 60 credit academic component and continue only with their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment.

Leadership Skills Framework

When you enrol for coaching you will be prompted to review your own leadership skills through a platform called Lumus. This is an easy to use, interactive tool that will give you a report highlighting your strength and development areas. You are also encouraged to invite those you work with to provide you with feedback, such as your line manager or other colleagues. This can be easily done on the Lumus platform. Your report will give you unique insights about your skills, for example your hidden strengths (those that your manager or peers believe you to be performing better in than you think - see example below). The areas of strengths and developments that you identify through this framework can help guide your discussions with your coach.
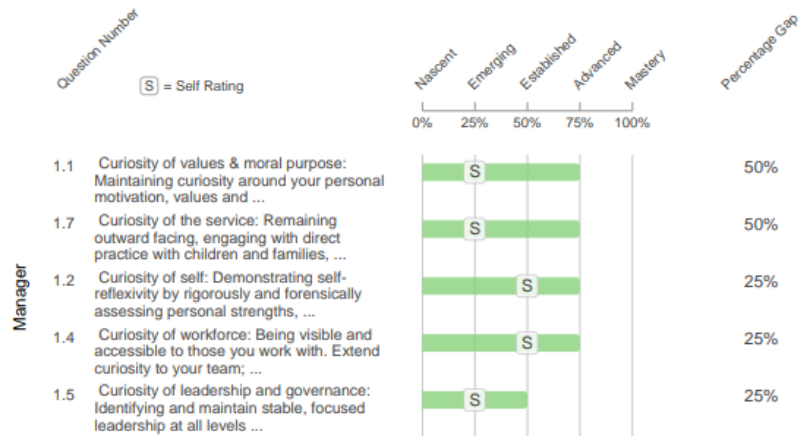
Hidden strengths and blind spots

Hidden Strengths

Below are behaviours that your respondents see/perceive you do more frequently than you think. Your own ratings (shown with an 'S') are provided for comparison.

The difference in ratings may indicate that you are stronger in that area than you give yourself credit for or you appear to be better than you actually are.

Question Number		Nascent / Emerging / Established / Advanced / Mastery	Percentage Gap
	S = Self Rating	0% 25% 50% 75% 100%	
1.1	Curiosity of values & moral purpose: Maintaining curiosity around your personal motivation, values and ...	[S]	50%
1.7	Curiosity of the service: Remaining outward facing, engaging with direct practice with children and families, ...	[S]	50%
1.2	Curiosity of self: Demonstrating self-reflexivity by rigorously and forensically assessing personal strengths, ...	[S]	25%
1.4	Curiosity of workforce: Being visible and accessible to those you work with. Extend curiosity to your team; ...	[S]	25%
1.5	Curiosity of leadership and governance: Identifying and maintain stable, focused leadership at all levels ...	[S]	25%

(Manager)

Here are some examples of the types of issues you might work on with your coach:

- managing yourself and your resilience as you adapt to the changes with Year 2;
- managing a heavy caseload and studying at the same time;
- navigating around the complexity of the system you operate in with your colleagues and senior managers;
- challenges and goals that you want to focus on to help you build confidence in your ability, court cases for example;
- knowing and using your strengths in work with families and other professionals;
- building relationships with others and influencing colleagues with a different approach;
- handling difficult conversations or conflict situations.

> *"I don't think I'd have got this far through the programme without my coach! They have helped me think about ways to build my resilience, make important decisions, and find motivation in my role."* **Participant, 2018 cohort**

All participants will be contacted by the coaching team to confirm whether they would like to undertake the coaching sessions. There has typically been a very high uptake for this offer and participants have reported that this was a key factor in helping them to successfully manage their transition into qualified practice.

Please note, that your coach will not be able to provide participants with academic support relating to their dissertation.

For further information, participants should refer to the 'Frontline Coaching Offer' document will be emailed to all participants and will also be made available on Moodle. For any queries, please contact the coaching team on coachingsessions@thefrontline.org.uk.

Additional information for participants completing FLSW915

The following section is only applicable to participants who are completing the 60 credit FLSW915 module.

7.1 Your relationship with Lancaster University

Frontline is responsible for designing and delivering the academic content of the Frontline programme, whilst Lancaster University is the awarding body for the qualification and has approved that Frontline can deliver the academic content of the programme. As a participant of the Frontline programme completing the 60 credit Advanced relational research-minded social work practice (FLSW915) module, you will continue to be a student, and will be a registered student of Lancaster University on a full-time basis.

7.2 Relevant policies

The handbook should be read and used alongside Frontline policies and procedures. Where participants are enrolled as a student of Lancaster University and completing their 60 credit module in Advanced relational research-minded social work practice (FLSW915), they should also refer to Lancaster University's Manual of Academic Regulations (MARP) and the Frontline supporting document available to all participants on Moodle. These are the academic regulations in place for the Frontline programme.

7.3 Teaching days

Your Local Authority has agreed for you to attend these days in full therefore you are expected to treat Teaching Days as study leave from the workplace, so you can participate and engage in the learning offered as fully as possible. This means you are not to engage in any work-related activity, including visits, meetings, emails or calls during each Teaching Day and must arrange any cover appropriate for your caseload. If there is a work-related issue that you must attend, as stipulated by your Local Authority, please contact your dissertation supervisor to discuss.

For 2024-2025, Days 1-7 will be online, with Day 8 will be in person.

We track participants' attendance of the MSc Teaching Days and their engagement with the module so that we can provide early intervention and support to those not meeting the expected threshold. For further information on Frontline's expectations surrounding attendance of taught elements, please refer to our Attendance and Engagement policy.

7.3.1 In-person teaching day venues

Please find below the venue information for each respective region.

Region	Venue	Address	Venue website
London	Resource for London	Resource for London 356 Holloway Road London N7 6PA	http://www.resourceforlondon.org.uk
Midlands	The Studio Birmingham	7 Cannon St, Birmingham B2 5EP	http://studiovenues.co.uk/venues/birmingham/map-directions/
North East	York CVS Priory Street Centre	15 Priory Street York YO1 6ET	Conference Venue York | Priory Street Centre
North West	Friends Meeting House	6 Mount Street Manchester M2 5NS	https://meetinghousemanchester.co.uk
South West	Future Inns	Future Inn Bristol Bond Street South Bristol BS1 3EN	http://www.futureinns.co.uk/bristol/

7.3.2 Teaching day start and finish times

Both online and in-person Teaching Days start at 10am and finish at 4:30pm. Please ensure you arrive on time, as we will start teaching promptly.

7.3.3 Monitoring your academic attendance

Frontline requires that all Frontline programme participants must meet a minimum of 80% attendance for all academic elements during year 2 of the programme, with absence limited to circumstances that are exceptional and meet the expectations set out in our attendance and engagement policy.

For **online teaching days,** Frontline will export participants' attendance via Zoom usage reports. We'll be able to identify you through the details you log into zoom with (your full name and Lancaster University email address).

For the **in-person teaching day**, Frontline will ask you to register your attendance via a QR code that will be provided and signposted to you.

7.3.4 Notifying us of an intended absence
All intended absences should be reported ahead of the day where practicable. An email should be sent to your Regional inbox for your regional coordinator (southregion@thefrontline.org.uk

for London, home counties and the South West, and northregion@thefrontline.org.uk for the Midlands, North East and North West) and you should also notify your dissertation supervisor. Where applicable, you may be asked to provide evidence alongside your absence request.

Should you be unwell on the day and not able to attend a planned recall day, please contact your Regional Coordinator by **9am** on the morning of the recall day so that your workshop leader is aware.

7.3.5 Catching up on missed learning

Where participants are absent from teaching days, they must catch up on missed learning. They should do this via the resources available on Moodle, and through watching any video recordings of the missed day that are available.

In instances where you are noted as having missed a teaching day, you will need to fill in and submit a catch-up form to us. A link to this form will be added to Moodle. As part of this submission, you will be required to reflect on the missed learning. Once submitted, you will receive receipt of your submission.

7.3.6 Teaching day materials and recordings

Year 2 Teaching Day materials will normally be available on Moodle 1 week prior to the Teaching Day.

Where you have not been able to attend a recall day due to an exceptional circumstance, you will be expected to catch up on learning retrospectively through the available keynote lecture and learning materials on Moodle.

7.3.7 Online engagement and camera usage
Both for you and the Frontline teaching team, the expectation is that you keep your cameras on during teaching days. When teaching, non-verbal cues such as smiles, frowns, head nods, or even looks of confusion help us to evaluate teaching in real-time and adjust accordingly to improve learning. For participants, it is also important that you can see one another on screen to help build trust and rapport with your workshop.

We appreciate however that there are always a range of reasons why someone may have their camera off, so if there is a reason why you are not able to have your camera on, please email the regional inbox (northregion@thefrontline.org.uk or southregion@thefrontline.org.uk) and copy in your dissertation supervisor.

7.4 Study leave

Your local authority has agreed to provide you with 10 study days to attend the year 2 teaching days and study groups, dates of which have been provided in this handbook. Therefore, you can

attend these formal taught sessions, reflexive peer groups, tutorials, and leadership coaching sessions without having to take annual leave. All other study activities will be in your own time.

You should consult the schedule for teaching days and **avoid** booking annual leave that coincides with these days.

Be prepared to do work in your own time to complete the research required on this programme. You will be expected to read extensively. You will need to put aside regular time in the evenings and/or weekends throughout the year to work on your research project.

7.5 Lancaster University graduation ceremony

As a student of Lancaster University, when you complete your Master's degree you will be able to attend a graduation ceremony should you wish to. Postgraduates on taught courses (MSc, PG Diplomas) are invited to attend Lancaster University's Winter Graduation in the year they complete their degree. Your place at Graduation is subject to your degree being approved by the end of year 2 exam board in October, and confirmed by Lancaster University's Classification and Assessment Review Board on behalf of its Senate. Details about the dates of the graduation ceremonies and how to register to attend will be sent to you in the months before you are due to complete your academic programme of study. If you complete your qualification after October (either by passing your dissertation module, or by withdrawing from the dissertation module in order to be considered for an exit award (PG Diploma), you will be invited to the Winter Graduation ceremony in the year following the exam board at which this is ratified.

If you decide to withdraw from the year 2 academic element (dissertation module), after completing year 1 successfully, and follow the process set out in the Withdrawal Policy to do so formally, you will be eligible for a Post Graduate Diploma as an exit award (see section 3.16 for details). Exit awards must be confirmed by an examination board and ratified by Lancaster University's Classification and Assessment Review Board on behalf of Senate, before they can be awarded at a graduation ceremony, and there may be several months' delay between you informing Frontline of your decision to withdraw and confirmation of the award. As Lancaster University graduation ceremonies are held only once a year, participants whose withdrawal request is received after 17 October 2024 will not be invited to a graduation ceremony until a full year later.

7.6 Lancaster University Students' Union (LUSU)

Your membership of Lancaster University Students' Union (LUSU) will continue into Year 2 of the programme. Information about LUSU is available via the following link: https://lancastersu.co.uk/.

Information about how to seek advice from LUSU is available via the following link: https://lancastersu.co.uk/advice.

7.7 Lancaster University's Graduate College

Lancaster University is proud to be one of only a handful of UK universities to have a collegiate system and as part of being a student of Lancaster University you will be a member of Graduate College. Graduate College is the dedicated college for all postgraduate students.

Your membership with Lancaster University's Graduate College will continue into Year 2 of the programme. The college's role is to enhance your experience at Lancaster through academic-related, and non-academic activities and events. They can also help you to navigate your way through university life. There is a team of staff based at the College, also available remotely via phone, email and Teams. Find out who's who on the college webpages: College Staff.

Whilst College members usually pay a membership fee of £12, this is not charged to distance learners so you will not be expected to pay for your Graduate College membership.

7.8 VLE support

If you experience issues with accessing/navigating elements of the Virtual Learning Environment (e.g. not being able to access Moodle content, assignment submission support) please contact our Digital Learning Team on digital.learning@thefrontline.org.uk.

7.9 Lancaster University IT related support

For general IT queries (e.g., LU registration issues, queries around your LU email, library access) please refer Lancaster University's Information Systems Services webpages: https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/iss/.

Information about IT help and support is available online: https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/iss/help-and-support/.

7.9.1   ASK: (virtual) student information desk

Lancaster University have a team called ASK (Advice, Support and Knowledge) who provide specialist student support and advice helping students to access information and signposting them to other services where needed. You can contact them at ask@lancaster.ac.uk

A virtual 'Student Information Desk' webpage offers live online chat for queries (9am-5pm Mon-Fri), links to Connect Lancaster and highlights key services such as IT Support.

Staff on the desk will also be able to direct students to Connect Lancaster to deal with queries that would normally be handled by their department/college.

7.10 Appeals

There are some circumstances in which you may wish to appeal an assessment decision through Lancaster University. The [University Appeals procedure](#) which relates to issues of assessment, and is detailed here: https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/student-based-services/exams-and-assessment/student-appeals/. Participants should be aware that academic appeal via Lancaster University is an option, if valid grounds exist, only after all opportunities for reassessment have been exhausted, and an exam board has ratified the decision that a participant has failed the programme and cannot continue. Before you make an appeal, you are strongly advised to refer to a copy of the Transparency Report from the exam board that considered your results (see [3.14](#) for further information on Transparency Reports).

Please note that appeals can take a number of weeks to resolve. Where academic appeals are upheld and further opportunities for reassessment are awarded later in the year, Frontline and Lancaster University will aim to consider your reassessment at the earliest opportunity.

7.11 Time away from studies

Circumstances may arise which lead to you wishing to interrupt your studies and join the subsequent cohort, meaning that you will cease to participate in the programme for that period. For further information about the parameters and implications of time away from studies on your studies, please refer to Frontline's [intercalation policy or pregnancy and parenting policy](#).

As stated in Frontline's [Intercalation Policy](#), time away from studies via intercalation will normally be for both the practice and academic elements of the programme, therefore in year 2 the request for intercalation must be agreed by the Local Authority as well as Frontline. Due to the practice focus of this module, you will not be able to continue with the academic element of the programme if you have intercalated the ASYE element of the programme.

7.12 Using your Lancaster University email account

You can expect to be contacted via your Lancaster University email account. We also expect you to contact us via this email account throughout completion of the dissertation module.

We wish to stress the importance of regularly logging in to your Lancaster University email and Moodle account, as this is where you will receive important updates around areas such as programme changes, financial assistance and wellbeing, and key messages from Frontline's senior leadership team. Lancaster University will also communicate to you via this email address.

7.13 Digital Lancaster University Student ID cards

Lancaster University will provide LU Student ID cards for Frontline participants in a digital format via the iLancaster app. Information about the iLancaster app can be found at https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/iss/itpi/mobile.The iLancaster app can be downloaded from the Apple/Android app stores and will require LU username and password to sign in. After signing in, the digital ID is accessed by clicking the person icon in the top left-hand corner of the app. Further guidance is available via Lancaster Answers webpage which gives advice on installing, customising and accessing app features (including the digital ID card).

In the event of any significant technical error with digital ID cards via the app, participants may request a physical ID card once they are fully registered on the programme. To request a physical ID card, students should email frontlineparticipants@lancaster.ac.uk including their full name and Lancaster ID number. Participants should allow up to 30 days for a request for a physical card to be processed and posted to them.

Participants should be aware that the Lancaster Student ID card does not indicate a validity period and therefore may not be accepted by all retailers offering a student discount. Participants are advised to sign up to UniDays or NUS Totum if student ID is required for retail discount purposes (see next section).

7.14 Student discounts

Participants who are completing the dissertation module (FLSW915) and are registered as students of Lancaster University can register for the following schemes to prove their eligibility for some student discounts:

UniDays:
To obtain UniDays membership (discount on a number of popular retail stores and food outlets), you can apply online at www.myunidays.com once you have **provisionally** or **fully registered** with Lancaster University as a student and have a personal LU institution email address (you do not require your student ID card to confirm your student status). Signing up is optional, however the process is free to complete.

NUS Totum card:

To obtain a NUS Totum card, participant should apply online at www.totum.com. A student ID card is not required to submit an online application; however, you will require a personal LU institution email address. Signing up is optional and there is an attached cost to this membership, however you will be provided with a number of student discounts.

For information on eligibility, costs and available brand discounts, please refer to the website www.totum.com

Student Beans:

Student Beans is also free: https://www.studentbeans.com/uk. Participants will need to sign-up with their Lancaster e-mail to receive Student Beans discounts.

7.15 Withdrawing from FLSW915

During year 2, a minority of participants decide that due to personal exceptional circumstances, they are no longer able to continue with the 60 credit FLSW915 module and they therefore consequently withdraw from this. They do however often wish to continue with their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

If you decide that you wish to withdraw from the 60 credit FLSW915 module, you will need to follow the process outlined within Frontline's Withdrawal Policy.

Please be aware, that where you withdraw from the academic element of the year 2 programme, that you will no longer be classified as a university student, and you will therefore lose access to the items listed in sections 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 of this handbook.

Please note that where you are struggling with keeping up with the academic elements of the year 2 course, there are a number of support mechanisms and early intervention processes that can support you in completing. You therefore should notify your dissertation supervisor at the earliest opportunity if you are struggling, as we may be able to support your full completion of the course without you needing to withdraw.

7.16 Lancaster University Careers Service

As a student of Lancaster University, you will be able to access its Careers Service. We know you are doing the Frontline programme to start and build your career as a social worker and the careers team can help you with this. Once you have registered you will automatically get access to TARGETconnect, the careers system. This will give you access to the career appointment booking portal, events calendar and jobs board. Please see the careers webpages for more information: https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/careers/.

7.17 Registration on concurrent courses

As per the Study Regulations found within Lancaster University's Manual of Academic Regulation and Procedures (MARP), no student shall normally be allowed to register concurrently for more than the equivalent of one full-time higher or further education scheme of study.

General Information

The section below should be read by both participants completing the 60 credit FLSW915 module and participants who are completing the ASYE only (see 7.15 for information on this).

8.1 Getting in touch with Frontline

There are several ways you can get in touch with us at Frontline. Please refer to the below table to ensure you contact the right team:

	When you should contact:	Email address:
Dissertation supervisor	As your primary link between Frontline and the local authority, you dissertation supervisor will generally be your first point of contact for: • Academic and work-based learning • Pastoral care/support • Progress reviews • Attendance and engagement	To be shared with you by region, normally at the start of your second programme year.
Principal Practice Tutor or Head of Delivery	High-level regional issues/queries that cannot be answered/resolved by your dissertation supervisor and/or through other channels listed	southregion@thefrontline.org.uk northregion@thefrontline.org.uk
Academic Registry Team	• Advice on academic procedures, regulations, and policy • Submission of appeals and complaints • Your request for an extended deadline or for mitigation	Academic.support@thefrontline.org.uk
Digital Learning Team	For queries relating to: • Access to Zoom • Digital technology • Digital accessibility • Moodle • Technical issues uploading assignments •	Digital.learning@thefrontline.org.uk
Suitability support Team	For queries relating to: • DBS • Overseas checks • Suitability panels • Self-declaration forms • Occupational health	suitabilitysupport@thefrontline.org.uk

		Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)	
Regional inbox		For queries relating to: • Absences at recall days • General low-risk region-related queries • Hardship fund	southregion@thefrontline.org.uk northregion@thefrontline.org.uk
Frontline staff from racialised minority background		Due to experiences of racialisation and discrimination for some participants, it might be difficult to raise and discuss instances of discrimination or racism on the programme with white staff members. To contact a Frontline member of staff from a racialised minority group, please contact one of the following individual:	TBC, in the meanwhile please contact frontlineops@thefrontline.org.uk
Whistleblowing		• Where you need to disclose a matter of serious concern or concern of public interest. For full definitions please refer to Frontline's whistleblowing policy.	whistleblowing@thefrontline.org.uk
Complaints		• Where concern or complaint is about any service provided by Frontline or provided by an organisation Frontline is in partnership with, including Lancaster University. • Where informal resolution is not appropriate or has been unsuccessful	complaints@thefrontline.org.uk
Bi-annual surveys		• Opportunity to provide feedback through Frontline's bi-annual surveys	Emailed directly to you twice a year
Participant representatives		• Where you wish to feed in your thoughts to our participant rep meetings that happen on a quarterly basis	Participant representatives' Lancaster University email addresses will be shared with individuals within their region to contact where required.

8.2 Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)

The ASYE is a programme that gives newly qualified social workers extra support during their first year of employment. The programme aims to develop their skills, knowledge, and professional confidence.

Frontline is not involved directly in your ASYE programme, as this is arranged within your local authority, however, you may find that where you are completing the 60 credit Advanced relational research-minded social work practice (FLSW915) module, some of the work that you complete can also be used as evidence for your ASYE. Your progress in evidencing the ASYE standards will be assessed by your LA during the year. A mapping document will be made available via Moodle, which outlines how the academic components of year 2 can be used to complete your ASYE critical reflection log.

8.3 Progression to year 2

Progression to year 2 is dependent on the successful completion of all modules in year 1 and registration with the statutory regulator, Social Work England (SWE). Once you have received confirmation of passing year 1, you will be eligible to apply to register as a social worker with SWE and begin your Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) with your local authority. You can find out further information about registering with SWE on their website.

8.4 Year 2 employment status

Once you have successfully registered with SWE, you will be employed full-time as a newly qualified social worker (NQSW) within your local authority. As you will be receiving a salary from your placement local authority during year 2 of the programme, you will not receive a bursary from Frontline.

8.5 Year 2 working patterns

Participants during year 2 of the programme will normally work full time at their local authority. However, participants are employees of the local authority in year 2, and as such they may discuss their working patterns with the local authority.

Where participants agree with their local authority to move to part time working during year 2, the programme requirement to complete the equivalent of 24-months of full-time attendance in the local authority must still be fulfilled, and therefore takes longer to achieve.

Participants are normally expected to complete the academic element of year 2 within the same expected timescales of a participant working full time in their local authority.

8.6 Holiday

You are an employee of your local authority in year 2 and therefore all annual leave must be arranged in line with your local authority's policies and procedures. You should avoid booking leave which clashes with module Teaching Days.

8.7 Participant feedback

Receiving feedback from our participants is integral to helping us assess the effectiveness of the programme and its many parts. The evaluation of this feedback enables ongoing reflection and improvement, which is vital for the continuing evolution of the programme. You will therefore be expected to provide Frontline with regular feedback throughout the programme, particularly through Frontline's bi-annual participant surveys and your participant representatives, and in return Frontline will address key findings in a response to participants via Moodle.

Bi-annual surveys (mandatory completion):

- Twice yearly we release a survey to understand a variety of aspects of programme experience for our participants
- This allows us to report on the impact of our programme and is vital for the ongoing success of the programme and securing funding.
- Completion required by all Frontline participants

Month:	Feedback method / response point
October	**Participant Rep Meeting** Organised and facilitated by regional teams. Urgent issues responded to locally. Long-term themes fed into mid-year review.
January	**Participant Rep Meeting** Organised and facilitated by regional teams. Urgent issues responded to locally. Long-term themes fed into mid-year review.
February	**Bi-annual survey 1** Survey to be completed by all participants about their experience of the first half of year 2 (September to January).
April	**Participant Rep Meeting** Organised and facilitated by regional teams. Urgent issues responded to locally. Long-term themes fed into end of year review.
May	**Mid-year review** Frontline review all feedback provided through first-half of the year to identify areas of strength and development. Summary of feedback with any changes or responses will be communicated to participants via Moodle.
July	**Participant Rep Meeting** Organised and facilitated by regional teams. Urgent issues responded to locally. Long-term themes fed into end of year review.
June/July	**Bi-annual survey 2** Survey to be completed by all participants about their experience of the second half of year 2 (January to June)

October	**End of year review**
	Frontline review all feedback provided through second-half of the year to identify areas of strength and development. Summary of feedback with any changes or responses will be communicated via the Fellowship communication channels

8.8 Participant representatives

Participant representatives are normally elected regionally by fellow participants. The role of a participant representative is to collate feedback from their peers, and present this to their regions through quarterly meetings. The participant representatives are expected to provide feedback on the collective regional experience of the Frontline programme, and be informed in how this feedback has been used by the delivery, curriculum, and programme management teams to enhance the participant experience of the programme.

Core responsibilities of a participant representative:

- Seek out the views and opinions of all participants in their region on matters affecting their education and pastoral experiences, using a variety of different communication methods
- Liaise with other representatives to gain support and share thoughts and ideas
- Feedback and discuss issues raised at staff-participant meetings with their fellow participants.

Lancaster University Students' Union will offer training to the Frontline participant representatives. The Student Union will work with participant representatives to ensure they are aware of the steps needed to ensure that are supported and are able to get the views of the wider participant population and have the tools and knowledge on how to present feedback to their peers.

If you are a participant who previously was a participant representative during Year 1 of the programme, you can re-apply for the participant representative role where interested.

8.9 Becoming a Fellow

In order to join the Frontline Fellowship at the end of year 2, you must

- remain in employment as a social worker, within the local authority in which you completed your year 1 practice learning experience (or in another local authority partnered with Frontline, where this transfer has been approved by Frontline)
- meet your employment obligations

You do not have to have completed your dissertation, or remained registered on the dissertation module (FLSW915), to become a Frontline Fellow; nor do you have to have completed your

ASYE. However, if you choose to withdraw from the programme at any stage prior to the end of year 2, or do not remain employed as a social worker within a Frontline-partnered local authority, you will not be eligible to join the Frontline Fellowship.

8.10 Changing your contact details

It is important that Frontline, and Lancaster have an accurate record of your name, contact details (including address) and your trusted contact for emergencies. You will provide these to Lancaster when you register with the University, and to Frontline during the programme application process. If the name you go by is different from the one on your legal documents, you will need to tell us both.

If any of your details change, you must notify Lancaster University **and** Frontline of this. You can update your details with Lancaster University via the Lancaster University Student Portal.

Accuracy of this information is particularly important during year 2, as the name with which you are registered at Lancaster University will be used on your award certification, and award certification will be sent to the address you are registered under.

On a bi-annual basis, Frontline will contact all active participants via email requesting for them to re-enter their contact and emergency contact details where these have changed. Where changes to your personal details occur in between these periods, you should contact your regional inbox via email (southregion@thefrontline.org.uk or northregion@thefrontline.org.uk). You can update your details with Lancaster University via the Lancaster University Student Portal.

8.11 Social media

You must be mindful of the use of social media whilst on the programme. Given that you will be representing the Frontline programme, your local authority, and the profession itself as a registered Social Worker, you must act professionally and respectfully at all times, and in accordance with the Social Work England Professional Standards. Where concerns about your professionalism online are raised, these may be brought to the attention of SWE.

It is essential that you are familiar with the expectations relating to conduct in the public domain, acting professionally and respectfully at all times, and in accordance with the BASW Professional Capabilities Framework and SWE Professional Standards. Please see the Frontline Participant discipline policy available here, for further guidance on the use of social media.

You can find further social media guidance in the Frontline Participant discipline policy, found on the Frontline website.

8.12 Complaints

Frontline has a robust approach to dealing with complaints, detailed in the [Complaints Policy & Procedure](#).

8.13 Professional Indemnity Insurance

All social work professionals require professional indemnity insurance either provided by their employer or independently through providers such as BASW. It is your responsibility to confirm with your Local Authority if they provide this. This insurance covers you for costs you might face if your work, service, or advice causes a (client/service user) to suffer a loss. This can take the form of:

- **Professional negligence**: If you give incorrect advice or make a mistake
- **Defamation**: If you produce or support untrue and harmful statements about your client
- **Breach of confidence**: If you share sensitive information without permission
- **Breach of copyright**: If you infringe on copyrights, trademarks or intellectual property
- **Lost or damaged documents**: If you lose or damage documents while they're in your care

Please note that research activities undertaken by year 2 participants are additionally covered by Lancaster University's research insurance. If you would like further information about this, then please speak to your dissertation supervisor in the first instance.

8.14 National railcards

Frontline participants under the age of 30 will be able to purchase either a 16-25 railcard or a 26-30 railcard independently. These railcards can be purchased online without any need for verification from Lancaster University. **For further instructions on this please see below.**

16-25 Railcard:

Participants **aged 25 and under** can apply online directly to national rail for a **16-25 railcard** https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/.

If you're between 16 and 25 years old, you're eligible. In this case, you can buy your Railcard online using a valid debit or credit card, a valid UK driving license or international passport, and a digital passport-style photo for uploading. It will then be delivered free within 5 working days.

Your 16-25 Railcard gets you 1/3 off Standard Anytime and Off-Peak fares, as well as Standard Advance and First Class Advance fares. Please note that there is a £30 fee attached to purchasing a railcard for one year, or where eligible, you can apply for a three-year railcard at the cost of £70. *26-30 Railcard:*

For the 26-30 Railcard, participants can apply online directly to national rail: https://www.26-30railcard.co.uk/. It is available to buy online and will be downloaded to the Railcard app on a smartphone.

16-25 Railcard for Mature Students:

The 16-25 railcard for mature students can only be issued for a period of one year, and will only be available to mature students in year 1 of the programme in order to comply with the terms and conditions outlined by National Rail.

8.15 Transport for London (TfL) Student Oyster photocard

Frontline participants are **not** able to apply for TfL's Student Oyster photocard at this time due to TfL's restrictions surrounding educational establishments outside of Greater London and their eligibility for the scheme.

Participants will however be able to link up their national railcards to their Oyster cards for a reduction on off-peak travel. For details on how to do this, please read TfL's guidance on National Railcard Discounts.

8.16 Student council tax exemption

Even if you are completing the dissertation module (FLSW915) and registered as a full-time student of Lancaster University, the module involves less than 21 hours per week study time, and Frontline participants are therefore not eligible for student council tax exemption.

8.17 Whistleblowing and safeguarding

Please note that if you have a safeguarding concern concerning a case you are handling as part of your practice learning experience or subsequent employment by the local authority, you should follow your local authority's policies and procedures on whistleblowing normally instead of Frontline's policies and procedures. You should also familiarise yourself with Frontline's Safeguarding policy.

If you wish to disclose a serious concern or matter of public interest related to the actions of Frontline or Lancaster University then you should follow the steps outlined in either Frontline's Whistleblowing Policy or Lancaster University's Whistleblowing policy. If you are uncertain whether the matter should be disclosed to Frontline or Lancaster University, then you should make the disclosure to Frontline in the first instance.

Annexure

Annex 1: Definitions

Academic module: The teaching and assessment of year two of the programme has one academic module. Information about this module is included within this handbook.

Aggregate: This is the process where the percentage marks for module elements are combined together according to their percentage weighting to produce the overall module percentage mark.

Assessment: Assessments are set pieces of work that must be completed as part of the academic modules. These will be both academic and practice focused pieces of work and will be graded.

ASYE: the assessed and supported year in employment is undertaken by all newly qualified social workers in a local authority. On the Frontline programme this is undertaken in year 2.

Moodle: The Virtual Learning environment (VLE) that Frontline use is Moodle. This is where all the resources are housed that will support your learning and development on the Programme.

Condonation: This is where a failed module can be 'excused' or condoned by an assessment board in confirming an award. Condonation of failed elements or modules is not permitted within the assessment regulations for the Frontline programme.

Dissertation: Your dissertation will be either an action research project or a literature review which requires you to explore and evaluate an element of your practice and disseminate your learning.

Formative assessment/feedback: Is an integrated and ongoing method of assessing individuals whilst learning is happening, rather than at the end of a module or sequence of learning. Formative assessment and feedback provide opportunities for you and teaching staff to assess your current level of understanding against the module learning outcomes and help provide guidance on how to close the gap between current and desired performance.

Fully registered participant: An individual who has successfully met all the necessary pre-programme admissions 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.

Intercalation: Means an extended break from the programme, only one request can be granted which will be for a maximum of one academic year.

Local Authority (LA): Practice learning will take place predominantly within a local authority. All local authorities' practice learning opportunities are audited and continually monitored by Frontline to ensure that they are of a high standard, consistently across authorities.

The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF): The PCF is a framework established to support learning, progression and development of all social workers. It sets capability statements of what is to be expected for all stages of a social worker's career from entry into training to the most advanced level of a

social work practitioner. Through the Frontline programme, participants will be expected to show how they meet the relevant level of the PCF, according to the stage they are at in the programme.

Provisionally Registered participant: An individual who is still undergoing or has outstanding pre-programme admissions and/or suitability checks, but who has commenced study on the Frontline programme and completed Lancaster University's online pre-registration process. Full registration and confirmation of student status with Lancaster University will only be confirmed subject to the individual completing their outstanding checks and meeting the necessary admissions and/or suitability criteria.

Summative Assessment: A measure of cumulative learning over a programme. Summative assessments are formal, in that they determine the grade you are awarded for the module.

Social Work England: the statutory regulator which protects the professional title 'social worker' in England. SWE:

- Regulates initial social work qualifying education and training by setting **Education and Training Standards,** which social work education and training course providers must meet These standards ensure that students who successfully complete a social work course can meet SWE's professional standards and can apply to be registered with Social Work England.
- Sets the **Professional Standards** which describe what a social worker should "know, understand and be able to do after completing their social education or work training". You must demonstrate these standards in order to pass the programme, and subsequently to register with the regulator.

Reflexive Group: Reflexive groups are peer led meetings (usually 4-6 participants) in which participants are given the opportunity to share an 'episode' of practice, related to their research topic, with their peers for reflection. It can also be used to support you as a researcher, in progressing through the various stages of your dissertation project.

Annex 2: Year 2 key staff, teams, and roles

Role	Details	Contact information
Advanced relational research-minded social work practice (FLSW915)		
Module leaders	The module leaders are responsible for overseeing the teaching and assessment activities for this module.	Kathleen Butler (Curriculum Lead): Kathleen.Butler@thefrontline.org.uk
Teaching team for teaching days	This module is delivered by a range of lecturers and facilitators, including practice tutors, guest speakers, curriculum team leads and experts by lived experience.	Teaching staff will be present on Teaching Days. If you want to contact a member of the teaching team directly then you should go through your dissertation supervisor to get their contact details.
Dissertation supervisor	Where possible, the practice tutor that was allocated to your unit in Year 1 will continue to supervise you in Year 2. Dissertation supervisors are your first point of contact for all matters relating to teaching and assessments in Year 2 and can be contacted via email.	If you are not sure who your Dissertation Supervisor is or how to contact them, please contact your regional coordinator.
Other points of contact		
Independent coaches	All Year 2 participants have the opportunity to engage in independent coaching sessions to support their personal and professional development.	For further information on coaching, please refer to the Coaching Handbook, available on Moodle.
Digital learning	Responsible for ensuring the VLE is accessible and holds high quality resources. Lead on troubleshooting for problems with online resources.	digital.learning@thefrontline.org.uk
Academic registry	Responsible for processes which support participants' academic journey, and which monitor the academic standards set by Frontline and Lancaster University.	academic.support@thefrontline.org.uk
Lancaster University Staff		

Director of studies	The Director of Studies is the academic lead for the programme and partnership within Lancaster University. They have responsibility for ensuring that the academic standards of the Frontline programme continue to meet Lancaster University's benchmark and relevant processes are monitored effectively.
Disability adviser	To provide support and specialist advice on disability, wellbeing, and mental health matters
Frontline programme administrator	To provide administrative support in updating and maintaining Frontline participants' student and academic records.
Frontline Learning Developer	To provide learning development support for Frontline participants. Aims to help participants achieve their full potential by supporting effective study and good academic writing practices. Please contact the Learning Developer, Harriet Newnes via learningdevelopmentfl@lancaster.ac.uk

Annex 3: FLSW915 module bibliography

This module is supported by the following core primary texts:

Action Research

Hedges, F. (2010) Reflexivity in therapeutic practice. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

McNiff, J. (2017) Action research: All you need to know. London: Sage Publications.

Literature review:

Aveyard, H. (2023). Doing a Literature Review in Health and Social Care: A Practical Guide. London: Open University Press.

Onwuegbuzie, A.J. & Frels, R. (2016) Seven steps to a comprehensive literature review: a multimodal and cultural approach. London: Sage

This module is supported by the following core secondary texts:

Coghlan, D. (2013) What Will I Do? Toward an Existential Ethics for First Person Action Research Practice. International Journal of Action Research, 9(3), 333–352.

Corbett, A., Francis, K. & Chapman, Y. (2007). Feminist-informed participatory action research: A methodology of choice for examining critical nursing issues. International Journal of Nursing Practice, 13, 81-88.

Coy, M. (2006) This Morning I'm A Researcher, This Afternoon I'm An Outreach Worker: Ethical Dilemmas in Practitioner Research. International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 9(5), 419–431.

Dickens, J., Taylor, J., Cook, L., Cossar, J., Garstang, J., Hallett, N., . . . Wade, R. (2022). *Learning for the future: Final analysis of serious case reviews, 2017-2019.* London: Department of Education.

Etherington, K. (2004). Becoming a Reflexive Researcher: Using Our Selves in Research. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Featherstone, B., White, S., Morris, K. & White, S. (2014) Re-imagining child protection: Towards humane social work with families. Bristol: Policy Press.

Featherstone, B., Gupta, A., Morris, K., & White, S. (2018). Protecting Children: A Social Model. Bristol: Policy Press.

Ferguson, H., Disney, T., Warwick, L., Leigh, J., Cooner, T. S., & Beddoe, L. (2021). Hostile relationships in social work practice: anxiety, hate and conflict in long-term work with involuntary service users. Journal of Social Work Practice, 19-37.

Flaskas, C., Mason, B. & Perlesz, A. (eds.) (2005) The Space Between: Experience, Context, and Process in the Therapeutic Relationship. London: Karnac Books Ltd.

Hingley-Jones, H., & Ruch, G. (2016). Stumbling through: Relationship-based social work in austere times. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 235-248.

Holian, R. & Coghlan, D. (2013) Ethical Issues and Role Duality in Insider Action Research: Challenges for Action Research Degree Programmes. Systemic Practice & Action Research, 26(5), 399–415.

Locke, T., Alcorn, N. & O'Neill, J. (2013) Ethical Issues in Collaborative Action Research. Educational Action Research, 21(1), 107–123.

Marshall, J. (2016). Integrating Action Research, Systemic Thinking and Attention to Issues of Power. In J. Marshall, *First Person Action Research: Living Life as Inquiry* (pp. 3-30). London: Sage.

Phelan, S. K., & Kinsella, E. A. (2013). Picture this: Safety, Dignity and Voice: Ethical Research with Children: Practical Considerations for Reflexive Researchers. *Qualitative Enquiry*, 81-90.

Rogers, J. (2012) Anti-Oppressive Social Work Research: Reflections on Power in the Creation of Knowledge, Social Work Education, 31(7), 866–879.

Roni, S. (2007) Anti-Oppressive Research in Social Work: A Preliminary Definition. The British Journal of Social Work, 37(5), 857.

Salami, M. (2020) Sensuous Knowledge. Zed Books, London.

Smith, L. (ed.) (2016) Clinical Practice at the Edge of Care. Developments in working with at-risk children and their families. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Smith, L. T. (2021). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples (3rd ed.)*. London, Bloomsbury Publishing. The European-American Collaborative Challenging Whiteness. (2005). When first-person inquiry is not enough: Challenging whiteness through first and second-person inquiry. *Action Research*, 245-261.

Walker, S. (2015). Literature Reviews: Generative and Transformative Textual Conversations. Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 1-13.

All students will be required to be familiar with the Professional Capabilities Framework (BASW, 2018) as these relate to their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

Annex 4: Assessment and marking guidance 2023/4

Assignment information, criteria and briefings will be available on Moodle

Your assessment will be marked according to the University of Lancaster Postgraduate Social Work marking criteria, which have been supplemented with additional specific marking descriptors for this assessment. You can use these to self-evaluate your work before you submit it.

Lancaster University Postgraduate Marking Matrix for Social Work

Distinction 80+			
LU primary verbal descriptors for attainment of intended learning outcomes:			
Exemplary range and depth of attainment of intended learning outcomes, secured by discriminating command of a comprehensive range of relevant materials and analyses, and by deployment of considered judgement relating to key issues, concepts and procedures.			
Social Work amplified descriptors:			
A piece of written work in the 80+ signals that it is a piece of outstanding quality, requiring an exceptionally high level of conceptual ability (for Master's level work) and an extremely thorough and conscientious approach to study. Work in this range will be of publishable quality and undoubtedly demonstrate the capacity to proceed to a higher research degree. It is distinguished by:			
Argument	*Understanding*	Style	*Marks within this classification may vary due to-*
•A very clearly expressed and convincing argument which is used to develop a highly coherent, original and logical framework within which to answer the question or address the topic. •A thorough grounding of the above in existing theory and research •A reasoned conclusion fully supported by the foregoing material. •A capacity to relate the theoretical and empirical material consistently to the conceptual framework.	A thorough understanding of action research or literature methodologies, the chosen practice pattern/dilemma and its implications for social work practice. •A very clear and consistent focus on the issues raised by the research question, including ethical issues. •Insightful understanding of theoretical literature, including the ability to identify points upon which to build as well as grasp and limitations	•Excellent grammar, punctuation, spelling and sentence construction. •Thorough and consistent use of conventions in referring to other people's work. •Excellent adherence to conventions of confidentiality and anonymity	•An original capacity to develop arguments, ideas and apply self-reflexivity •the extent to which empirical research has been conducted •The depth and sophistication of the conceptual argument. •The level of command of the theoretical and research literature.

•Substantial evidence of independent research. •The absence of irrelevant or extraneous material.	• An insightful argument showing signs of originality in ideas, argument and empirical research		

Distinction (70-79)			

LU primary verbal descriptors for attainment of intended learning outcomes:

Exemplary range and depth of attainment of intended learning outcomes, secured by discriminating

command of a comprehensive range of relevant materials and analyses, and by deployment of considered judgement relating to key issues, concepts and procedures.

Social Work amplified descriptors:

A piece of written work in the 70+ range is one of exceptional quality, requiring a high level of conceptual ability and an extremely thorough and conscientious approach to study. Work in this range will clearly demonstrate the capacity to proceed to a higher research degree.

It is distinguished by:

Argument	*Understanding*	Style	*Marks within this classification may vary due to-*
•A clearly expressed and convincing argument which is used to develop a coherent and logical framework to answer the research question at the centre of the completed action research project or literature review. The research is well grounded in at least one of the Frontline practice models and leads to a reasoned conclusion fully supported by the data gathered. •A capacity to consistently relate the theoretical and empirical	•A thorough understanding of action research or literature review as a methodological approach, the chosen practice pattern/dilemma and its implications for social work practice. •A clear and consistent focus on the issues raised by the research question, including ethical issues. • An insightful argument showing signs of originality in ideas and argument.	• Good to very good grammar, punctuation, spelling and sentence construction. • Thorough and consistent use of conventions of referring to other people's work. •Good and consistent adherence to conventions of confidentiality and anonymity	•The capacity to develop arguments beyond those available in the literature including clear evidence of self-reflexivity. •The depth and sophistication in conceptual argument. •The level of command of the theoretical and research literature.

material to the conceptual framework. •Strong evidence of independent research. •The absence of irrelevant or extraneous material.			

Merit (60-69)

LU primary verbal descriptors for attainment of intended learning outcomes:

Conclusive attainment of virtually all intended learning outcomes, clearly grounded on a close familiarity with a wide range of supporting evidence, constructively utilised to reveal appreciable depth of understanding.

Social Work amplified descriptors:

A piece of written work in this marking range is of a good to very good standard and will show clarity of thought and expression. It will display an ability to handle the relevant literature in an analytical manner. It will be more than a good description of the various theories and/or studies relevant to the question – it will demonstrate a marshalling of relevant information by means of analysis and interpretation. It will not necessarily have a water-tight argument, but it will be clearly structured, and its conclusions will not take the reader by surprise. Such a piece of work will generally show less independence of thought and mastery of detail than is required for a mark of 70 or over. There may be some errors or misjudgements with regard to issues which are not central to the argument. Work in this range will normally demonstrate the capacity to proceed to a higher research degree.

It is distinguished by:

Argument	*Understanding*	*Style*	*Marks within this classification may vary due to–*
A logical, coherent framework is used to answer the research question at the centre of action research or literature review completed. Consideration of one of the Frontline practice models is evident. •An ability to organise the data in a way that provides a clear and logical answer to posed research question. •A clearly expressed theme or argument developed from a critical	•A good understanding of the action research or literature review approach and identified practice pattern and implications for social work practice. •A good to very good familiarity with the relevant literature and empirical data. • A good command of theory and some analytical depth. •The avoidance of irrelevant or extraneous material.	•Good grammar, punctuation, spelling and sentence construction. •Good use of conventions of referring to other people's work •Good and consistent **a**dherence to conventions of confidentiality and anonymity	•The clarity and cogency of the overall argument. •The level of familiarity with the relevant literature and data. •The depth and coherence of the answer and the level of self-reflexivity.

consideration of relevant literature.	•Evaluation of competing arguments. •Conclusion supported by the body of the argument and evidence. •Some evidence of independent research. •Avoidance of unsubstantiated assertions.		

Pass (50-59)

LU primary verbal descriptors for attainment of intended learning outcomes:

Clear attainment of most of the intended learning outcomes, some more securely grasped than others, resting on a circumscribed range of evidence and displaying a variable depth of understanding.

Social Work amplified descriptors:

A piece of written work in this marking range is of a moderate to good standard. It will be descriptively strong. It is distinguished from the 60-69 piece by the level of analysis displayed and by the coherence with which the material is organised. There may be some significant errors, misjudgements or omissions of important details. A mark in this range would not normally demonstrate the capacity to proceed to a higher research degree.

It is characterised by:

Argument	*Understanding*	*Style*	*Marks within this classification may vary due to–*
•An attempt to answer the research question at the centre of action research or literature review completed. •A conclusion not entirely supported by data gathered and analysed or relevant to the body of the essay. •A failure to adequately organise an answer into a coherent whole.	•A reasonable understanding of action research or literature review approach and identified practice pattern and implications for social work practice. •A level of empirical knowledge and relevant reading which demonstrates a conscientious attempt to tackle the question/topic. •The use of some extraneous material. •A failure to grasp at least some relevant points or address some relevant literature. .	•Adequate grammar, punctuation, spelling and sentence construction. •Referencing that is incomplete or fails to observe some conventions for referring to other people's work. •Adequate adherence to conventions of confidentiality and anonymity	•The level of empirical and theoretical knowledge displayed •The seriousness with which an attempt has been made to answer the question or address the topic. •The number of major points that have been covered. •The coherence of the essay and level of self-reflexivity •The degree of unsubstantiated assertions. •Written style (grammar, spelling, punctuation and sentence construction).

Marginal Fail (40-49)

LU primary verbal descriptors for attainment of intended learning outcomes:

Attainment deficient in respect of specific intended learning outcomes, with mixed evidence as to the

depth of knowledge and weak deployment of arguments or deficient manipulations.

Social Work amplified descriptors:

A piece of written work in this category shows signs of engagement with the question or topic, but has inadequacies at Master's level. It signals a failure to give sufficient thought to the work in hand, displaying inconsistent argument, unsubstantiated assertions, and a patchy acquaintance with the relevant literature. It may lack a convincing conclusion and it is likely to include significant errors, omissions and misunderstandings.

It is characterised by:

Argument	*Understanding*	*Style*	*Marks within this classification may vary due to–*
•A failure to order this material so as to provide an adequate answer to the research question at the centre of action research or literature review completed •An ability to pick out some of the points required for a satisfactory answer. •Inadequate conclusion that is either lacking or at odds with the rest of the dissertation.	•Some knowledge of appropriate empirical material. •The intrusion of irrelevant material. •An inadequate familiarity with relevant literature.	•Sub-standard grammar, punctuation, spelling and sentence construction. •Inadequate use of conventions of referring to other people's work •Inadequate adherence to conventions of confidentiality and anonymity	•The level of empirical knowledge and self-reflexivity •The extent to which an effort has been made to answer the question or address the topic. •Evidence of conscientious effort. •The degree of unsubstantiated assertion. •Written style (grammar, punctuation, spelling and sentence construction).

Fail (30-39)

LU primary verbal descriptors for attainment of intended learning outcomes:

Attainment of intended learning outcomes appreciably deficient in critical respects, lacking secure basis in relevant factual and analytical dimensions.

Social Work amplified descriptors:

Marks in the 30 - 39 range indicate that the piece of written work is inadequate in every respect with pronounced errors and misunderstandings. It is characterised by:

•Some empirical knowledge.

•**Some evidence of study in the area concerned.** •**An inability to develop any but the flimsiest answer to the question.** •**Problematic conclusion.**
Poor Fail (20-29)
LU primary verbal descriptors for attainment of intended learning outcomes:
Attainment of intended learning outcomes appreciably deficient in respect of nearly all intended learning outcomes, with irrelevant use of materials and incomplete and flawed explanation.

Annex 5: Dissertation supervision contract

Dissertation supervision contract

Participants may find it helpful to know what they can expect from their dissertation supervisor. This contract summarises the expectations for both the supervisor and the participant. The general principle is that the participant is responsible for planning, completing the ethical approval from Frontline and the Local Authority and for carrying out the dissertation and the role of the supervisor is to advise.

Participants are entitled to 5 supervisory meetings throughout the year and are responsible for arranging these with their dissertation supervisor. Supervisory meetings can be held online or in person and it is best to arrange these in advance to account for annual leave and work commitments. These meetings can be backed up by email and 'phone support.

The responsibilities of the supervisor are as follows:

- To approve the initial choice of topic
- To approve the research proposal (literature review option)
- To discuss and guide the participant on their dissertation plan
- To discuss and guide the participant on research ethics
- To support/advise the participant with any difficulties which arise in preparing the dissertation
- To read and comment on a chapter/plan of work (no more than 1500 words) – Feedback will be provided within a supervisory meeting and timing of submission and feedback must be agreed with supervisor in advance.
- Supervisors do not read full drafts of dissertations or edit/proof read your work

The supervisor does not, however, have any responsibility for the preparation of the dissertation itself, for the ideas and material that it includes, or for the standard that it attains. The dissertation must be entirely your work, and the help given by the supervisor must necessarily be limited.

The participant's responsibilities and how to make the most of your supervision:

- To initiate and maintain contact with your supervisor
- To summarise each supervision meeting using the supervision record form
- To make the most of their supervision, participants should submit material for discussion in advance of each meeting. This could be agreed with the supervisor at the end of each supervision.
- Participants should set the agenda and inform the supervisor of what they wish to discuss. Supervisions are for your benefit; it is therefore to your advantage if you take the lead on how to plan each supervision meeting.

Key topics for discussion with your supervisor during the year usually include:

- Your original proposal and its feasibility
- Ethics, research design, methodology and analysis
- Relevant literature on the topic
- Progress
- Chapter plans and writing up

Areas to consider	
Is there anything specific you (the participant) want your dissertation supervisor to know about how you wish to be supported?	
Has a joint meeting been arranged with the line manager/coach to discuss support needs	
What date will you (the participant) send over your scheduled dates for reflexive groups?	
How will you work together to get back on track if a deadline has been missed?	
How will you let your dissertation supervisor know if you are struggling and/or need additional support?	
How often will you have contact with your dissertation supervisor (and how?)	
Any other info:	

Participant's signature:

Dissertation supervisor's signature:

Date:

Annex 6: Running a reflexive group

Before the session

An anonymised genogram or ecomap of the relational 'system' concerned e.g. professional network, family, organisation, should be provided to the group before the session. The role of peers is to enquire about the ethical positions, intentions, actions and effects of the social worker to enable reflexivity, research mindedness and continual development in the efficacy of their practice.

The 'presenter' should identify a 4-5 min excerpt from a recent episode of practice. Presenters are able to play a recording or share transcripts if the appropriate consent has been obtained from those involved.

The presenter should then identify a dilemma related to their own practice, which is illustrated by the practice excerpt.

What is a practice dilemma?

A 'practice dilemma' is any intervention, behaviour, patterned interaction or outcome that you wish to explore in further detail. The dilemma relates to your own actions and beliefs. It is focused on what you are doing and how you are developing your practice, rather than a case dilemma (which usually use family interactions as a starting point for consultation). Some examples are included below for your consideration:

- *You may notice that you dilute or minimise concerns when explaining these to a parent. Perhaps you become uncomfortable, anxious or hesitant in the conversation. You may offer lots of praise to a parent and then follow with a very big 'BUT', negating earlier comments. You may avoid raising concerns altogether and present a transcript showing an opportunity to do so that you subtly or too quickly diverted to another less challenging topic.*
- *You may find the voice of one agency is dominant, and you are unsure how to use your professional authority to invite in other perspectives.*
- *You find that you often privilege parent needs within your assessments and would like to explore how to bring in the voice of the child more effectively.*
- *You struggle to have difficult conversations with your manager or colleagues and would like to investigate ways of doing this more effectively.*
- *You are unsure how to move beyond empathy when upsetting or distressing information is shared by a family member (history of abuse as a child, loss associated with caring for a child with a disability approaching adulthood, isolation, depression and poverty which seem to have no resolution).*

During the consultation

Each consultation usually lasts no more than 35-40 minutes. You have 5 mins to introduce the dilemma in your practice and your initial ideas about how you find yourself in this position and any ideas you have about how to go forward. Brief your colleagues about the genogram/ecomap and your position in the system. Peers have 5 mins to read the transcript and ask clarifying questions.

Your colleagues will discuss the dilemma for 5-7 mins, offering hypothesis about your position and considering circular and reflexive questions to test their hypotheses with the aim of supporting you to construct new meanings about the practice dilemma. This discussion should be appreciative, curious and empathetic of each person's position. Research and theory should be used to inform their hypotheses about your dilemma.

A colleague will then interview you for 10 mins, informed by the discussion with a view to widening your understanding of the dilemma and choices for action. The other participants are observers. This should not be a group interview. Observers and interviewer should be mindful of the relational contribution to the usefulness of the interview – respectful, trusting and boundaried. Observers may wish to turn away from the interviewing pair to create a boundary and take up a listening position.

This is followed by a 5 min reflecting conversation by the observers, which is followed by thoughts from you about how the consultation has been useful, any impact on your thinking about the practice dilemma and what you might do differently as a result.

Summary of structure

- Introduction (by Participant/'You') – 5 min
- Reading and Clarifying Questions (peers) – 5 min
- Hypotheses and Interviewing Planning (peers only) – 5-7 min
- Interview (You interviewed by 1 peer) – 10 min
- Reflecting Conversation (observers only) – 5 min
- Debrief (You only) - 3 min

Suggestions for Reflexive Group Discussions on Literature Review Projects

A reflexive group may not sound like the most obvious place to support the completion of your literature review however it can offer an opportunity to reflect and explore the following:

- Formulating your research question
- Ethical considerations (types of literature reviewed, gaps in literature, whose voice is being prioritised etc)
- Insider researcher perspectives (your own reflexive position from reading different literature)
- Analysis and group perspectives on your data analysis approaches
- Sharing of literature sources
- Peer support through the research process

Suggestions for Reflexive Group Discussions on Action Research Projects

Similarly, reflexive groups can offer space to support the completion of your action research project. In addition to the suggestions for literature reviews, this may also include:

- Ethical considerations (participant recruitment, informed consent issues, whose voice is being prioritised etc)
- Insider researcher perspectives (your own reflexive position from involvement in practitioner action research)
- Navigating the action research process