

Year three coaching participant handbook

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About coaching

Why do we have coaching?

Coaching is a fantastic tool, to support you during year three of the programme. It is separate from academic teaching and your placement, allowing you the space to think about your growth as a social worker. You can use your coaching sessions to focus on specific development goals that will help you become a better social worker.

Coaching is an important part of your development journey as a social worker. In your role you will be working with a line manager to support you with your day-to-day work commitments. Coaching differs by offering you a confidential space to reflect and talk with an independent person outside of Frontline and your Local Authority to help you develop skills, self-reflection and support well-being as you grow as a leader in the field of social work.

What's in it for me?

You will have access to **four x 1-hour, one to one, confidential online sessions** between October and August. Coaching is not always accessible due to the cost, but these are provided to you during year three of the programme.

The coach, through a range of systemic and reflective techniques, helps you increase self-awareness and reflectivity; assess your personal development needs and develop your leadership skills. Coaching is a collaborative relationship where you and your coach work together to consider options, any barriers and make informed choices to achieve sustainable change.

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

- Managing changes as you adapt to year three
- Handling a heavy case load and studying at the same time
- Navigating the complexity of the system you operate in
- Challenges and goals you want to focus on to help build confidence in your ability
- Knowing and using your strengths in work with families and other professionals
- Building relationships and influencing colleagues with a different approach

- Handling difficult conversations or conflict situations.

Coaching sessions

In September, you will be invited by your coach to join an optional 30-minute introductory session, which we encourage you to attend. The coach will facilitate a group session for all participants who they will be coaching with the aim of:

- Building rapport before the start of the first session
- Helping you connect with your coach and coaching itself
- Prepare you for your first session
- Understand confidentiality and contracting
- How to use the development and leadership framework in your sessions
- Raise any questions or concerns you may have

Coaching sessions should occur during the workday. If you are not able to attend a session, please let your coach know as soon as possible. If the session needs to be cancelled or rescheduled, you must provide at least one business days' notice. If this is done within less than one business days' notice your session will count as a 'spent' session and will not be reinstated.

The recommended coaching session windows over the year will be:

- Session one: October – December
- Session two: February – March
- Session three: May – June
- Session four: July – August

Responsibilities throughout the coaching process

Participant	Coach
Prepare any development objectives	Help you to identify, prioritise and plan how to meet your development needs

Complete the development and leadership framework questionnaire	Help you to work things out for yourself, establish what help you want/need
Make the time for coaching	Actively listen and help you explore ideas without imposing their own
Be honest and open in your conversations	
Give a minimum of one business days' notice of cancellation/rescheduling	

Attendance and engagement

Year three coaching is a non-compulsory element of the programme however, when participants opt-in to coaching they are expected to attend all scheduled sessions. It is required that you provide a minimum of one business days' notice for session cancellations or changes, otherwise, the session is considered 'spent'. Spent sessions are charged to Frontline at £103 and will not be rescheduled.

If a late cancellation is unavoidable due to exceptional circumstances (sickness, bereavement or Ofsted visit), we will consider whether a session can be reinstated on a case-by-case basis. Reinstated sessions must take place before the end of the current programme year.

Frontline can withdraw the remaining coaching sessions if two sessions are 'spent' without exceptional circumstances.

Frontline is responsible for:

- Tracking and monitoring of attendance
- Following up with participants where necessary
- Informing your dissertation supervisor and / or your coach on engagement.

Participants are responsible for:

- Providing a minimum of one business days' notice for session cancellations or changes
- Providing written confirmation that they will be attending their next sessions if a session is missed

- Reaching out to the coaching team if a cancellation is unavoidable due to exceptional circumstances (sickness, bereavement or Ofsted visit), to consider whether we can reinstate the sessions
- Communicating to the coaching team if they do not wish to continue with coaching.

Confidentiality

It is important that the coaching relationship is built on trust and confidentiality. Your line manager should be aware of the purpose of coaching if they attended the training provided by Frontline. However, the content of all discussions will remain confidential between you and your coach (except in the unlikely event that the coach is concerned that necessary steps are not being taken to ensure your own physical or emotional wellbeing, or that of a client in your protections; in which case the coaching manager will be contacted in the first instance).

Please note that your coach will ask you permission to record a session together. These recordings are for the coaches' development, in the same way that social workers are observed. These recordings will only be reviewed by our Lead Coach.

Evaluation of the process

Your coach will seek ongoing feedback from you, and it is important for you to be honest which may include explaining what isn't working for you and being constructive in suggesting what could helpfully be different. You will agree on how you want to evaluate the coaching with your coach.

To monitor the coaching experience for participants and the types of challenges being presented within coaching, you will be asked to complete a survey on your coaching experience.

Coaches will also complete a form. This is a group form where they comment on all their participants in one form to protect participants anonymity. These will only capture general themes and enable the recording of any issues of concern. Please refer to [Frontline's Privacy Statement](#) to learn more about how we collect and process your data.

For any queries, please contact the coaching team on coachingsessions@thefrontline.org.uk.

Development and leadership framework

The Development and Leadership (D&L) framework is intended to outline the skills and attributes that reflect effective leadership in social work, post ASYE, which lead to improved outcomes for children and families. The D&L framework was developed from:

- [Seven Features of Practice and Seven Outcomes](#)
- PQS for Practice Supervisors & KSS for Practice Leaders
- Frontline research and experience.

The framework is intended to be used by leaders in social work to understand their leadership direction and journey through coaching. Engagement in the framework process will not impact your Master's or success on the programme, it is solely a tool to help with your leadership development.

Ahead of your first coaching session, you will complete a questionnaire assessing your leadership skills using this framework (see Appendix A). You can also invite your manager and other colleagues to complete this to get a more robust and rounded view of your skills. Using the framework to its full capacity in this way also provides you with insights into how you perceive your leadership skills compared to how they are perceived by others. You will receive a report outlining your areas of strength and which areas you could develop on. We would recommend you use this report throughout your coaching to reflect on your leadership skills. You, your manager and colleagues will then complete the questionnaire a second time towards the end of the academic year, where you will receive a report not only outlining your skills at that time but also your progress since the first.

If you have any questions about the framework, contact the evaluation team on evaluation@thefrontline.org.uk.

Appendix A: Development and leadership framework questionnaire

The development and leadership framework questionnaire is designed to assess your leadership capabilities. You are encouraged to get others to complete it as well as completing it yourself, so you can compare whether your perceived strengths are the same as those of your colleagues, and where there are differences / areas for development, these can be discussed with your coach.

The questionnaire uses the following scale, designed to see each individual leadership skill as a journey from not using it at all to being an expert.

Nascent	Emerging	Established	Advanced	Mastery
Unaware or recently made aware of this skill, with little or no evidence of it in my practice	Aware of this as a tool in my practice and beginning to implement it. There is still room for improvement.	Regularly show evidence of this in my practice, but expertise could be built further.	Show impressive understanding of and ability to apply the capability across my practice.	An expert at the skill with the ability to deliver learnings on it to others

When you (and your manager/colleagues) have completed the questionnaire, you will receive a report outlining where you have placed for each skill along the scale. When you complete the report a second time before your last coaching session, the report will show you how much you have improved in each skill.

Skills within the framework are grouped into the following categories, which we often refer to as the '4 Cs'. These encapsulate the key skill domains required from good social work leaders:

Maintaining Curiosity

Maintain a curious approach to understanding yourself, others and the context in which you work in order to remain aligned to your values, build effective relationships and advocate for children and families' best interests.

Providing Clarity

Sustain an unwavering vision of what good outcomes look like for children and families; know what is needed to achieve this both within and beyond your service, providing clarity on the role you and others play in this.

Managing Complexity

Critically engage with the systems you inhabit, applying creative, evidence-informed approaches and harnessing these to prioritise activities which are meaningful, proactive and centred around the needs of children and families.

Expanding Capacity

Through learning and innovation, expand what can be achieved by influencing others – improve systems, maximise relationships and create greater capacity for change that impacts positively on the lives of children and families.