

Dear Candidate,

I am delighted that you are interested in learning more about the role of **Consultant Social Worker** and the Frontline programme.

At least half a million children in England don't have a safe or stable home. These children and their families face some of the worst life chances, but we know that great social work has the power to change this. That's why Frontline was set up as a charity in 2013.

Frontline develops outstanding social workers to transform the lives of the most vulnerable children and families. We recruit high potential graduates and career changers into children's social work, and offer them excellent academic and on-the-job training with a focus on quality of practice. Frontline draws on a unit-based delivery model, based on systemic practice and other evidence-based social work approaches. In 2019 we will be working with around 75 local authorities across six regions of the country.

The Consultant Social Worker plays a pivotal role in this pioneering approach to developing the next generation of outstanding social workers. The Consultant Social Worker's role is to lead four 'participants', supervising and developing these individuals to give them a rich practice learning experience. The Consultant Social Worker must therefore be first and foremost an outstanding child and family social worker themselves, with the knowledge and skills to build purposeful and productive relationships and to use effective social work approaches to help families change. In addition, they must possess the leadership qualities required to tackle the challenges of exposing four participants to the realities of practice in a way that makes them highly effective professionals. We are looking for those individuals who understand good practice and who want to see social work transformed to achieve the best outcomes for children and families.

Whilst candidates must have experience of frontline child protection social work, commitment to and confidence in their own practice is more important than length of experience. Candidates that apply for this role do not need to be trained in the evidence based approaches that form the basis of Frontline's approach. The successful candidate will undertake the Consultant Social Worker Practice Leadership training, which is a bespoke training programme devised for this role.

If you are interested in this role please look through this applicant pack which contains further details of the role and person specification, the training opportunity offered, and how to apply. If you require further information please speak to (name of Frontline Lead in LA) or (name of RDM for LA).

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



**Josh MacAlister**  
Chief Executive

## Consultant Social Worker

### Background

Our mission is to transform the lives of vulnerable children by recruiting and developing outstanding individuals to be leaders in social work and broader society. We want to see a country where children's life chances are not determined by social or family circumstance and we know that social work is at the forefront of the effort to realise this.

### Frontline programme

Participants undertake a two year programme which comprises an intensive Summer Institute (a five week course teaching the theory and foundational skills underpinning good social work), two years in a local authority frontline social work team, and leadership development throughout. The Consultant Social Worker role is pivotal to the participants' first year on the programme.

Following the Summer Institute, participants will be placed in units of four ("participant units") in child in need /child protection services. Each participant unit will be led by a Consultant Social Worker. It is this formative experience of frontline social work that will shape the practice of these participants. It is therefore the crucial role of the Consultant Social Worker to model good practice and lead participants in their learning. The Consultant Social Worker also plays a role in assessing and grading practice. At the end of the first year the participants will be ready to qualify as social workers with a Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work. At this point participants join social work teams as employees in the same local authority as newly qualified social workers. During their ASYE stage they undertake a master's degree.

The first cohort of over 100 participants started the programme in July 2014 working in Greater London and Greater Manchester. We are now in our fifth year of running the programme, and 340 participants started this summer, working across London and the South East, North West, North East and the Midlands.

### The opportunity

The CSW role requires you to work systemically with families and coordinate the work of four Frontline participants to develop them into outstanding social workers who will affect positive change for children. The role is made up of the following core components:



### Practice expert

- Consistently model good and outstanding social work practice and skill to participants on the programme.
- Consistently model high quality social work by: identifying and managing risk, being curious and analytical, hypothesising, building strong relationships and using evidence-based interventions to help families change.
- Be the named case holder of all cases assigned to the unit and responsible for ensuring statutory requirements of the unit's cases are complied with.
- Provide ongoing support and guidance to participants on their cases, being the main point of contact for participants in the unit, answering questions they have.
- Take responsibility for decisions in case work (in accordance with your line management responsibility). This includes consistently demonstrating confidence in being able to explain to participants your decisions and the way these have been made.
- Support participants to develop leadership qualities in practice, building on their leadership training, encouraging participants to set a vision with families, coordinating professional networks toward a common goal, and working effectively with conflict.

### Practice educator

- Create good learning opportunities for participants by identifying appropriate cases for the unit throughout the year.
- Use your judgment to expose participants to increasingly complex and varied casework at the appropriate level, increasing their autonomy as they demonstrate progress.
- Support the participants to apply the practice models they have learnt (systemic approach; social learning theory and motivational interviewing) in case discussions and work with children and families.
- Regularly observe the participants in their direct work with families, giving developmental feedback. At specific observation points in the year, you will assess and grade the practice observed.
- Prepare progress review reports on each participants in January and July each year, providing evidence and analysis of each participant's progress through the programme.

### Management and leadership

- Have management responsibility for the unit, with management and day to day responsibility of the participants in the local authority.
  - Lead the weekly unit meetings which: incorporate systemic thinking about family cases, encourage the participants to hold multiple hypotheses, encourage peer challenge and critical reflection in decision making.
  - Hold regular one-to-one supervision sessions with participants, encouraging reflexive practice and self-awareness.
  - Where performance issues arise, you will address these in a professional way, holding high standards whilst supporting the participant to resolve issues.
  - Manage the workflow and allocation of case work coming into the unit.
  - In conjunction with Frontline, organise the logistics and planning required for the participant unit to operate smoothly.
  - Ensure all elements of the practice assessments are completed in a timely fashion and regular deadlines are met by participants throughout the year.
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- Contribute towards wider service planning within the local authority, thinking about how the Frontline unit can contribute towards developments in practice across the local authority.

### **Training and development**

This is a unique opportunity to be part of a pioneering programme that develops new social workers to transform the lives of vulnerable children and families. There is no requirement that you have a systemic qualification or prior systemic training. Similarly, you do not need to have been a practice educator or manager of social workers. The Consultant Social Worker position offers the opportunity to:

- Take on a management-level role without leaving practice.
- Access a high quality leadership development programme - a training package of 20 days over 18 months, delivered by top practice experts and systemic trainers.
- Train in motivational interviewing and social learning theory.
- Work towards a Postgraduate Certificate in Systemic Practice\*.
- Receive ongoing support and advice from a practice tutor who will regularly visit and deliver a bespoke curriculum based on the needs of your unit.
- Access one-to-one coaching and mentoring from a practice tutor providing you with additional space to think and reflect, and the opportunity to maximise your full potential.
- Influence and shape practice, and practice education across your local authority.
- Demonstrate through a portfolio of work that you meet the Practice Educator Professional Standards (Stage 2).
- Join a growing network of pioneering social workers shaping a new model of social work delivery and raising the profile of their local authorities at a regional and national level.

- \*cost may be incurred for qualification

## CSW person specification and competencies

Applicants must be HCPC registered social workers

Practice skill and knowledge	Analysis and decision making	Communication
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Demonstrates a high standard of practice skill in direct work with children in need and their families (including children in need of protection), with a track record in improving outcomes for children and families. This includes relationship building, communication skills and analysis.</li> <li>2. Has a thorough knowledge of statutory frameworks within children's social care.</li> <li>3. Has a good knowledge of theories, conceptual frameworks, practice models and research findings that underpin effective social work practice, including awareness of current issues and debates in the social work profession and in social work academia.</li> <li>4. Applies evidence-based models of social work into practice in a statutory children's social care setting.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is comfortable in managing risk in a high pressure, human services environment.</li> <li>2. Has confidence in their own decision making and ability to work autonomously, balanced with an ability to self-reflect and seek advice when necessary.</li> <li>3. Is able to critically evaluate information in the context of high complexity and risk, understanding the role of evidence and one's own intuition in decision making.</li> <li>4. Can critically evaluate and effectively manage risk in complex cases, recognising how bias and evidence influence risk management.</li> <li>5. Can develop multiple hypotheses about cases that make sense to families, and help people make decisions about what action to take.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Possesses high quality skills in written (e.g. reports), verbal and non-verbal communication with children and families.</li> <li>2. Able to provide clear and comprehensive analysis in both written and verbal form underpinning decisions, making sure the rationale for why and how decisions have been made is comprehensive and well expressed.</li> <li>3. Able to use their excellent communication skills to confidently provide analytical, constructive feedback to others to develop their practice.</li> </ol>

Developing and assessing practice	Supervision and leadership	Reflexivity	Organisation and planning
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to model professionalism through practice skill, personal presentation, behaviour and self-reflectivity.</li> <li>2. Is committed to shaping the learning of others and to developing outstanding social workers to lead change for families.</li> <li>3. Is able to observe, analyse and give feedback on practice, identifying areas of strengths and areas for development.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to create a supervisory relationship which provides an emotionally containing space for the supervisee, including being highly supportive and nurturing.</li> <li>2. Is able to adapt this relationship to be more enabling as the supervisee develops in competence and confidence.</li> <li>3. Able to monitor systematically the compliance of participants with the requirements of the programme, the policies and procedures of the local authority, and statutory and regulatory requirements and guidance.</li> <li>4. Is willing and able to challenge and address any non-compliance.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Can demonstrate confidence in having your own practice observed and scrutinised by others.</li> <li>2. Is self-reflective, aware of strengths and areas for development, and able to use critical feedback to improve own performance, taking responsibility for one's own professional development.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is organised and manages their own time effectively, planning ahead systematically well in advance.</li> <li>2. Able to organise and plan the arrangements and learning opportunities for four participants over the course of year.</li> <li>3. Able to ensure that all the requirements of the CSW role are delivered within required timescales.</li> <li>4. Able to support and organise the participants so that they deliver what is required within required time-scales.</li> </ol>