



Department  
for Education

# **T Level Action Plan 2023 to 2024**

**April 2024**

# Contents

Foreword by the Minister of State for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education	2
Document Summary	4
Who this publication is for	4
Main points	4
Summary	5
T Level Students	8
Supporting student access	8
Developments to date	8
Next steps	10
Supporting student retention	11
Developments to date	11
Next steps	11
Supporting student progression	12
Developments to date	12
Next steps	14
T Level Qualification	16
Technical qualification landscape	16
T Level rollout	16
Developments to date	16
Next steps	17
Supporting Providers to Deliver	19
Developments to date	19
Next steps	20
T Level Foundation Year	24
T Level Foundation Year starts	24
Developments to date	24
Next steps	25
Employer Engagement and Industry Placements	27
Developments to date	27
Next steps	28

# Foreword by the Minister of State for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education

As the new Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education, I have the privilege of overseeing the development and rollout of T Levels.

I am delighted to see that T Levels are fast becoming a route to success for young people. Now in their fourth year of delivery, over 16,000 students started a T Level course from September 2023 – almost as many students as in the first three cohorts combined. Our second cohort of T Level students achieved a fantastic pass rate of over 90% in summer 2023, a real testament to both their hard work and the great teaching they have received. These students are moving on to excellent pathways including degree apprenticeships, Higher Technical Qualifications, university courses, or straight into employment. I have already met some incredible T Level students and I look forward to meeting many more and hearing about their experiences.

T Levels are delivering for employers, too. Employers are central to both the design and delivery of T Levels, so I'm heartened to see more employers now offering significant numbers of industry placements, including Lloyds Banking Group, which began its T Level journey with six industry placement students in the 2021/22 academic year and now hosts an impressive 120 students, and University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, which is this year delivering over 130 industry placements. I'm also delighted that almost a third of the first cohort of T Level students that progressed into employment and apprenticeships are employed by their industry placement organisation, proving the value of T Levels for employers looking to develop their talent pipeline.<sup>1</sup> I encourage all employers, whether large or small, to start or continue growing their industry placement offer, to help shape the future skills pipeline for their business.

We will be introducing three new T Levels in September 2024, taking the number on offer across the country to 21. For the first time, young people will be able to take a T Level in Animal Care and Management; Craft and Design; and Media, Broadcasting and Production. To support the continued expansion of new and existing T Levels we recently delivered another round of equipment funding, taking the total amount of capital funding allocated to support T Level delivery to over £500 million since 2020. We have also extended the 10% uplift to T Level per student funding for 24/25. This Action Plan now sets out further measures we are taking over the year ahead to support providers and employers to continue to grow their T Level programme to support even more young people across the country. Looking further ahead, the development of the Advanced

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<sup>1</sup> [Technical Education Learner Survey](#)

British Standard will build on our T Level offer, ensuring that future generations have access to high-quality technical and academic education of equal standing.

I want to extend my thanks to all staff supporting T Levels within providers and employers- the programme continues to grow and strengthen under your stewardship. Your support is invaluable as we work to realise the ambition for all young people in England to have access to high-quality technical education, setting them up for long-term success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, connected strokes that form a stylized representation of the name 'Luke Hall'.

**Luke Hall MP**

**Minister for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education**

# Document Summary

## Who this publication is for

This 2023/24 Action Plan is primarily for:

- Further and higher education providers, training providers, and their representative bodies.
- Industry, employers and their representative bodies.
- School leaders, school staff and governing bodies in all maintained schools, academies, free schools, studio schools and University Technical Colleges.
- Local authorities, Mayoral Combined Authorities, Skills Advisory Panels, and other local partners.

## Main points

This Action Plan contains information on:

- Supporting access to and retention on T Levels – and progression from T Levels.
- Progress on T Level rollout and next steps.
- Supporting providers to deliver.
- Progress on T Level Foundation Year rollout and next steps.
- Progress on employer engagement and industry placements, and next steps.

## Summary

T Levels were implemented in 2020 to raise the quality and prestige of technical education following the publication of the [Post-16 Skills Plan in 2016](#). T Levels are our flagship two-year technical qualifications for 16–19-year-olds. They offer students practical and knowledge-based learning at a school or college and on-the-job experience through an industry placement of at least 315 hours – approximately 45 days. They are based on content developed by employers, ensuring that the qualifications meet the needs of industry and give students a head-start in their chosen career.

T Levels are now in their fourth year of delivery. Providers have worked closely with employers to grow T Levels - student starts increased by 58% between September 2022 and September 2023, to over 16,000 - almost as many than the first three cohorts combined. Provider numbers are up 55% to over 250, with many more due to start delivery in September 2024.

The number of T Levels on offer also continues to grow. As of September 2023, which saw the introduction of two more T Level routes (Legal Services and Agriculture, Land Management and Production), there are now 18 T Levels available. In September 2024 T Levels in Media, Broadcast and Production; Craft and Design; and Animal Care and Management are being rolled out. The Marketing T Level will go live in September 2025 and bring the total number of T Levels to 22.

T Levels are part of wider reforms designed to ensure that England has a high-quality and streamlined technical education system. These reforms are underpinned by the key principles of quality, purpose, necessity, and progression as part of building an employer-led skills system.

We will remove public funding from qualifications that overlap with T Levels, beginning in August 2024. This will help to simplify the market and ensure as many 16–19-year-olds as possible benefit from the high-quality education offered by T Levels. Each phase of reform has and will be carefully and rigorously carried out. This involves consultation with experts from relevant employers, the education sector, and awarding organisations. We expect T Level student numbers to grow as funding is removed from overlapping technical qualifications and additional T Level subjects are rolled out. Our reforms also include changes to qualifications at level 2. These reforms will ensure all qualifications at this level are high-quality, have a clear purpose and lead to better outcomes for students, whether progression to level 3 study or directly into skilled employment at level 2. While we would like as many students as possible to progress to level 3, we also want to improve outcomes for those students who leave education at level 2. Technical qualifications at level 2 will, in future, be aligned to employer-led occupational standards to make sure they equip students with the knowledge, skills and behaviours employers value.

The department continues to value and act on feedback from providers and employers to support delivery of T Levels and the T Level Foundation Year (TLFY). This document outlines the support available to students, providers, and employers. It sets out how we want to improve access, uptake and quality of T Levels, and our plans to continue to work with all involved with delivery as we continue to roll out this new and ambitious programme. We are taking a number of new actions to build upon our existing support:

- In 2024, we have already taken action to **support the costs of delivering T Levels** for providers by distributing £50 million more capital equipment funding and extending the 10% per student funding uplift for 2024/25.
- To further **support teachers in the classroom** we have extended the T Level professional development (TLPD) programme, delivered by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), for two additional years until summer 2026. We have evolved this and other support programmes to facilitate the dissemination of growing T Level expertise and experience through additional resources, networks and mentoring activities. We are also building a [one-stop-shop website](#) to make it easy for teachers to access resources produced by different organisations.
- **To support access and retention** we are undertaking a route-by-route review of T Level content and assessment. Where appropriate, and without compromising the rigour of T Levels, the breadth of content and burden of assessment may be changed to ensure it is manageable at scale and continues to support student access to T Levels. Separately, following the conclusions of this review, we will explore the existing requirement to sit all core exam papers together, and consider flexibilities, including the feasibility of allowing providers to balance their curriculum delivery across the two years.
- We are **supporting providers to recruit students** with a new 2024 'Skills for Life' national communications campaign featuring cinema, TV, and billboard advertising, including spotlighting of T Levels. We can also confirm that this year's national T Level Celebration Week will be held from Monday 2 to Friday 6 December 2024 – providing an opportunity to promote and celebrate T Levels across the country.
- **We know how important clear progression routes are**, which is why we are supporting more accelerated apprenticeships and pathways from T Levels. Over 160 higher education providers already accept T Level students onto at least one course. We will continue to work with universities to develop their understanding of T Levels, so they recognise the value and rigour of the qualification, opening up larger and larger numbers of higher education courses to T Level students.
- To enable the **scale up of industry placements** we are further stepping up our communications to employers on the benefits of T Levels. Our new 'Skills for Life' campaign has a significant employer strand promoting the value of investing in skills. We are complementing this with a new contact centre campaign in Spring 2024 reaching up to 39,000 SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises), and embedding T Level awards into the high profile, business facing, National Apprenticeships Awards. New resources from the Strategic Development Network

(SDN) will support easier engagement between providers and employers, learning from what has worked well in the first years of T Level roll out.

This commitment to world-class technical education and the work being done to implement and embed T Levels in the sector continues with the introduction of the Advanced British Standard (ABS) qualification framework. The ABS will take the best of T Levels and A levels and bring them together into a single, unified structure, ensuring technical and academic education are placed on an equal footing. T Levels and the T Level Foundation Year will continue to be on offer for students aged 16-19-years-old until the ABS is rolled out, with additional subjects being rolled out over the coming academic years. Removal of funding from overlapping technical qualifications is also continuing as planned. We will continue grow and iterate T Levels as part of the path to the ABS over the next decade, ensuring students receive the very best technical education which enables them to progress successfully into high-quality, long-term jobs and careers.

## T Level Students

Over 30,000 students have enrolled in a T Level since 2020, with an overall pass rate of over 90% for students receiving their results in summer 2023.<sup>2</sup> We are now starting to see how students are benefiting from these flagship technical qualifications by progressing into successful employment, apprenticeships or higher-level education. The department has featured some of these success stories in video case studies, such as former Digital T Level student [Tom](#) from Fareham College who was hired by the company he worked with on his industry placement, and [Alec](#) from Derby College who is now a construction apprentice.

As we increase uptake over the coming years, we will continue to raise awareness of the opportunities that T Levels provide to young people who want to get on in life. Alongside, work continues with providers and employers to support young people to access, complete, and progress from their T Level courses into successful and sustainable long-term jobs and careers.

## Supporting student access

We know that building awareness is a big challenge in establishing any new qualification and supporting uptake. The department has consistently and widely invested in T Level awareness-raising and information, advice and guidance, and this is bearing fruit. Understanding and awareness of T Levels is building among parents, teachers, and potential students, and increasing young people's consideration of T Levels. The Parent, Pupil and Learner Panel survey, conducted in June 2023, showed around half of parents (47%) and half of pupils (50%) were aware of T Levels.<sup>3</sup> This is up from 11% of parents and 8% of pupils when surveyed in July 2019, two months prior to the delivery of the first T Levels. Awareness of T Levels amongst teachers has also increased from 52% in June 2021 to 86% in June 2023. But we know there is more to do to translate that awareness into active consideration and, in parallel, to make sure that wider barriers to accessing T Levels are addressed, while ensuring they continue as rigorous and high-quality qualifications.

## Developments to date

The department's ongoing national communications campaigns have been designed both to raise awareness of the importance of skills generally and increase awareness of T Levels specifically. This is complemented by a range of partnership activities with education organisations and influencers to spotlight T Levels on social media, and PR

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<sup>2</sup> [Provisional T Level Results Academic Year 2022/23](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Parent, pupil and learner panel omnibus surveys for 2022 to 2023](#)

work to feature T Levels in national press and broadcast channels. This has included content on BBC Bitesize, Snapchat and the Sun Online - examples of this coverage can be found [here](#).

National communications on T Levels are supported by local activity directly with pre-16 students and schools so that students and parents actively consider T Levels. Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge (ASK) Programme advisers provide information on T Levels to schools, supported by a range of [resources](#) to explain the benefits of T Levels to students and teachers.

We have also strengthened provider access legislation to ensure all secondary pupils have access to independent and impartial careers guidance and can hear directly from a range of providers, including those offering technical education and apprenticeships. The Careers and Enterprise Company's network of Careers Hubs will continue to support the promotion of T Levels and other technical routes in line with this legislation. In addition, providers received up to £10,000 to fund innovative careers guidance activities for prospective students in financial year 2023-24.

As the programme continues to grow it is important to take time to celebrate success. In October 2023 we held the second annual national T Levels Week, and on 8 February 2024 we held T Level Thursday as part of the wider annual National Apprenticeships Week. This saw over 50 events held across the country delivered by providers and employers including Amazon, Nash Squared and Lloyds Banking Group. Providers shared their student stories on social media and T Level Ambassadors attended events to promote T Levels, including the opening of a new construction and engineering centre at York College. T Level providers are supported with communications toolkits to help them promote T Levels at these key points.

As well as students knowing about and wanting to study T Levels, we also know that students' prior attainment – particularly achievement in English and maths at GCSE or Functional Skills Qualifications (FSQs) – is something providers consider in their entry requirements for T Levels. The government is committed to supporting students to achieve grade 4 or higher in maths and English at GCSE or FSQ level 2. This is why, in February 2024, the department announced a package of changes to support student progress in English and maths for 16-19-year-olds across the country, backed by £300 million across 2024-26. Moreover, the levelling up premium payments for early career teachers is supporting the recruitment and retention of maths teachers in schools and colleges. Nevertheless, recognising how challenging it is to support all students to achieve GCSE grade 4+ or FSQ level 2, the department is working with the sector to consider further ways we can overcome barriers to English and maths achievement. As set out later in this document, the T Level Foundation Year (TLFY) is helping students to become ready to study a T Level.

## Next steps

In January 2024 the department launched the new [Skills for Life “It all starts with skills” campaign](#). This national campaign underpins our wider work to increase engagement in T Levels by raising awareness of wider skills offers and opportunities across the country. It includes TV and cinema advertising tailored to young people and employers, and eye-catching billboards and posters. The campaign will continue into at least 2025, with further partnership work and advertising, to spotlight T Levels alongside other key skills offers for 14-19-year-olds.

We will build on this with a range of targeted activity to encourage young people to consider T Levels and to celebrate the achievements of current T Level students. Particular highlights will include T Level Results Day on 15 August and **T Level Celebration Week**, which this year will be held on **Monday 2 to Friday 6 December**. We will build on the success of last year’s T Level Celebration Week, which saw a student case study broadcast during primetime slots to millions on local radio, among many other great examples of how T Levels are supporting students to progress. For the first time this year, T Level awards will also feature as part of the National Apprenticeship and Skills Awards 2024, helping to raise the profile of T Levels with employers.

Parents and guardians are a significant influence on their child’s education and career decisions. The [Gatsby Foundation’s campaign](#) aimed at parents will continue to raise the profile of T Levels, showcasing former students and their parents to demonstrate their learning journeys. We will build on this by working with careers organisations to promote the new [Parents’ Guide to T Levels](#) alongside a wider update of existing resources to showcase T Level student progression stories. This will help us further raise the profile of T Levels with careers professionals and support them to raise awareness of the benefits of T Levels and the TLFY with students as part of their wider careers options.

We want to support everyone who aspires to do a T Level to be able to do so. So, we will work with awarding organisations to review how they recommend entry requirements in their support materials, and support providers to share teaching and learning good practice. We will continue to work closely with providers delivering T Levels and the TLFY to encourage them to use the new funding announced in February to support English and maths teaching for their T Level and TLFY students.

Furthermore, the T Level route-by-route reviews, explained on page 17, will identify if T Level content and/or assessment can be amended to support both delivery at scale and access to T Levels.

## Supporting student retention

For the first time the department is publishing data on T Level student retention in this Action Plan. While this shows that retention in T Levels is slightly lower than in comparable larger vocational technical qualifications (VTQs) we know that new qualifications take time to bed in as the curriculum is delivered and assessments are taken for the first time. These factors will continue to affect retention in the coming years until experience and familiarity help retention rates to stabilise and improve.

### Developments to date

The department has worked with providers to explore the reasons why some students leave their T Level before completion. We have also reviewed feedback in the Technical Education Learner Survey (TELS) to understand the perspective of students.

Some students reported that they left their T Level before completion because they had changed their mind about what they wanted to study, and others reported that their experience of studying a T Level was not what they expected. Some providers and students also told us that a reason for low retention was the way in which T Levels are assessed. While it is quite normal for some students to change their minds about a programme of study (for example, 1 in 5 students withdrew from large VTQs before completion in the 2021 cohort), we want to make sure that students make informed decisions about their 16-19 programme and that careers guidance about T Levels is as effective as possible.

We also know that some students left programmes early to take up employment or apprenticeships in their field of study. Where T Levels support students to move to a job or apprenticeship in their preferred field we recognise this may be a positive outcome for the student.

### Next steps

The department will improve awareness and careers advice on T Levels; see page 10 which sets out our plans for this. We will work closely with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) and awarding organisations to monitor retention on T Levels and ensure that teaching and learning materials are supportive. The route-by-route review of content and assessment will continue to ensure that T Levels are manageable at scale and will help retention; see page 17 which sets out this work.

We are confident that retention on T Levels will improve as providers become more familiar in delivering them; see pages 19 to 22 which sets out the many ways we are supporting providers in their delivery of T Levels, such as the [one-stop-shop website](#), teacher CPD, and a new buddying system.

## Supporting student progression

3,448 students received T Level results in 2023, which was the second year of awarding. 90.5% (3,119) of students passed their T Level, with 69.2% (2,387) achieving a Merit or above<sup>4</sup>. This is a fantastic achievement for these young people who have worked so hard during the two years of their course, supported by their schools/colleges and industry placement employers.

When surveyed in 2023, almost all of the first cohort of T Level completers were in education or employment. The most common destinations were employment – either paid work or an apprenticeship – or higher study including university study. Three-quarters of T Level completers had remained in the general field of their T Level, including almost all of those who were currently undertaking further study. Over half of students had remained within their T Level occupational specialism.

## Developments to date

As more T Levels become available and more students add their T Level to their CV, we want to make sure that students, parents, and employers are clear about the range of progression opportunities they provide. IfATE has worked with employers, providers and industry experts to identify the progression options available to students; [the published profiles can be found on their website](#). While the profiles indicate some of the pathways that are available, they are not exhaustive.

## Apprenticeships

Among T Level completers from the first T Level cohort who are now doing an apprenticeship, almost three quarters had progressed to a Higher or Degree apprenticeship.<sup>5</sup> This is higher than the rate for all level 3 students, suggesting that T Level programmes have enabled high rates of progression to higher-level apprenticeships.

We are supporting employers to recognise apprenticeship standards that allow T Level students to complete apprenticeships more quickly due to recognition of prior learning (RPL). This includes exploring accelerated pathways from T Levels into construction and engineering occupations. We are working with The Gatsby Foundation and The Electrotechnical Skills Partnership (TESP) to support the development of an accelerated apprenticeship, providing T Level graduates with a quicker route to become fully qualified

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<sup>4</sup> [Provisional T Level Results Academic Year 2022/23](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Technical Education Learner Survey](#)

electricians. T Level providers who would like to be part of the project can contact TESP at <https://www.the-esp.org.uk/contact-form/>.

Our work with The Gatsby Foundation also covers a pilot scheme with The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)<sup>6</sup> for high achieving T Level graduates in Carpentry & Joinery. The pilot allows students to demonstrate full occupational competence at level 3, through an assessment equivalent to the apprenticeship End Point Assessment (EPA) within their first 12 months of employment. CITB are working with Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) to ensure that once the T Level graduates are in employment and have completed the assessment, they would be eligible for the appropriate CSCS competency card. Students who graduated this year that would like to take part in the pilot or seek more information about the scheme can contact CITB at [standards.qualifications@citb.co.uk](mailto:standards.qualifications@citb.co.uk).

## Higher Education

The department has published a list of over 160 higher education (HE) providers<sup>7</sup> that have now confirmed they accept T Levels on at least one course. We are pleased that last year 97% of T Level students who applied for undergraduate study through UCAS received at least one offer.<sup>8</sup> Students secured places on a range of courses such as Midwifery, Computer Science and Architecture at a range of institutions.

HE providers are autonomous institutions and are responsible for determining their own entry requirements. While more and more providers are now recognising T Levels, we know that some do not have a clear T Level admissions policy or are asking for additional qualifications of T Level graduates. We are working with HE providers to ensure they understand the high-quality content of T Levels and their suitability for progression to HE. In January, Minister Halfon sent a letter to University Vice Chancellors to emphasise the quality and rigour of T Levels. He encouraged them to include T Levels in their admissions policies and to make their T Level entry requirements clear.

The department has also published a range of [resources to help HE providers understand the content and quality of T Levels](#), as well as [resources for T Level providers](#) who wish to support their students who are considering progressing into HE.

## Higher Technical Education (HTE)

The department introduced [Higher Technical Qualifications \(HTQs\)](#) as quality marked qualifications at levels 4 and 5 that are alternative progression routes to apprenticeships

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<sup>6</sup> [On-site T Level Competency Pilot – CITB](#)

<sup>7</sup> [List of higher education providers that accept T Levels for entry - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> [What do we know about progression for the second cohort of students with T Levels? | Undergraduate, Apprenticeships, 16-18 Choices | UCAS](#)

or degrees. They are based, like T Levels, on employer-led occupational standards. Qualifications in Digital, Construction and the Built Environment, and Health and Science are being taught now. In September 2024, additional HTQs will be available in Engineering and Manufacturing, Business Administration, Education and Early Years, Legal, Finance and Accounting.

HTQs are a particularly suitable progression option for T Level graduates, who can continue to develop knowledge and skills in the same technical route. As more T Levels and HTQs are rolled out, we expect to see increasing numbers of T Level graduates progress to HTQs and on to successful technical careers. We published [new case studies](#) as part of our employer support offer to illustrate students' successful progression from one of the first T Levels into an HTQ.

## Next steps

The department will continue to ensure that T Level students are able to access a wide range of options for employment and further study. This will include working with the Association of Colleges (AoC) to support T Level providers with information and guidance that will help them advise their students on their options for progression.

To maintain a clear route to employment and apprenticeships, we will continue to promote T Levels at events with employers and sector bodies. As more T Levels students graduate, we are committed to working with employers to highlight the quality of T Levels, so they feel confident offering opportunities to students at the appropriate level. This includes developing their understanding of T Level components, including technical qualification content and assessment, to clearly illustrate the stretch and rigour of the qualification, and the calibre of graduates.

To support progression to HE we will continue to regularly engage with sector stakeholders including UCAS, Universities UK and T Level awarding organisations to discuss their understanding of T Levels and where further support could be useful. Additionally, we are working with the Royal Academy of Engineering to better understand HE admissions for Engineering and Manufacturing T Level students.

For progression to HTQs, the department is engaging in a behavioural insights project exploring interventions designed to increase awareness of HTQs with young students, including T Level graduates, to encourage more students to choose HTQs as they become available. We will also provide supporting information and guidance (IAG) materials for schools and colleges to help their students understand HTQs. This includes lesson plans, parent support material, and an explainer video. The Apprenticeship Support & Knowledge programme (ASK) will continue to disseminate information about HTQs to schools and colleges.

Importantly, and for the first time, we will include T Level attainment in the school and college performance data for students completing 16-18 study in 2023/24, with

subsequent destinations data for that cohort reported in the destination measures statistical release that follows two years later. When available we will use this, alongside growing numbers of case studies of T Level success, to showcase T Level opportunities to pre-16 students and their parents.

# T Level Qualification

## Technical qualification landscape

The department is reforming and streamlining the existing technical education system, strengthening the links between qualifications and jobs in the economy. T Levels are the cornerstone of these reforms. They are our flagship technical qualification for 16–19-year-olds. Based on content developed by employers, T Levels meet the needs of industry and give students a head-start in their chosen career. The Technical Qualification within the T Level – which forms the classroom component alongside the industry placement – consists of a Core and an Occupational Specialism.

## T Level rollout

The introduction of T Levels in Agriculture, Land Management and Production; and Legal Services in September 2023 marks the successful roll out of a total of 18 T Levels. There are more than [50 occupational specialist routes](#) on offer for students.

T Levels in Animal Care and Management, Craft and Design, and Media, Broadcast and Production are on track for delivery from September 2024. The T Level in Marketing is on course to be delivered from September 2025. This will bring the portfolio of T Levels to 21 from September 2024, and 22 from September 2025.

Following engagement with representatives of the Hair and Beauty sectors, the government announced in January that we will no longer be rolling out a combined T Level in Hairdressing, Barbering and Beauty Therapy. This followed employer feedback that apprenticeships and level 2 qualifications were excellent routes into the Hair sector. A T Level option retains support in the Beauty sector. As such the government is exploring introducing a T Level focussing on the Beauty sector, and we will update the sector on this in due course. In March 2023 the government delayed the T Level in Catering to beyond 2024 to ensure that it meets the needs of the sector. We will update providers on plans for delivery of this T Level before the summer.

## Developments to date

We are now in the fourth year of delivering T Levels. We have seen evidence of strong student performance within early cohorts, with a pass rate of over 90% in both 2022 and 2023. We recognise that, as new qualifications, there will always be room for continuous improvement to ensure the design of the technical qualification is rigorous and high-quality, meets the needs of students and providers, and continues to meet the needs of employers. We are aware that, in some T Levels, providers have indicated that the volume of content and assessment may lead to challenges in delivering T Levels at scale. Providers have also told us that the administration associated with some assessment can be unduly burdensome and presents a barrier to delivery at scale.

Following the last Action Plan we have made changes to T Level policy to enable students studying the T Level core to take their exams and employer set project assessments in different series if they wish. This change means that providers have more freedom to structure their curriculum design and delivery and manage the assessment demands on students. Changes to the [Health T Level specification](#) were introduced from September 2023, to adjust the level of science content to better meet the needs of students and employers.

## Next steps

The department remains committed to the shape, structure, and purpose of T Levels as our gold standard technical education qualification with a core, specialism and industry placement forming the composite parts. Likewise, the purpose of T Levels remains providing a high-quality employer led offer, equipping students to progress into employment, apprenticeships, or further study.

As we continue to roll out the programme we are committed to learning from delivery and improving the qualifications so that they work as well as possible for students, employers, and providers, while remaining rigorous and of high-quality. Over the next 12 months the department and IfATE, in conjunction with Ofqual, will oversee a route-by-route review of the content and assessment of all T Levels on an individual basis.

The reviews will involve:

- IfATE, in conjunction with Ofqual, reviewing specifications and content to identify any areas of possible duplication, or content that could be better delivered in alternative parts of the T Level. IfATE will work with awarding organisations on any potential changes.
- The department bringing together Curriculum Reference Groups including colleagues teaching the T Levels and industry experts, to suggest improvements to T Levels and form a sounding board for potential changes.
- IfATE and awarding organisations, in conjunction with Ofqual, exploring opportunities to reduce the administrative burden (including around assessments) through standardisation of processes where possible.

Whilst we know that the change to allow the employer set project (ESP) and core exams to be sat separately was widely welcomed, we also know that there may be some scope to go further. Following the conclusion of the T Level route-by-route review, where there is more than one exam paper, we will explore the feasibility of allowing students to take core exam papers at different points and enable providers to structure the course more flexibly. It could also allow students who may have found one paper more challenging than the other to retake one paper, without having to retake both.

This work will be carried out in the order of T Level rollout in order to align with any future procurement. The reviews of T Levels covering Education, Digital, Construction, and Health and Science pathways are starting first and concluding by Summer 2024. Subsequent reviews will be carried out over the following months. Once completed, the outcome of the reviews will be included in the guidance for successful awarding organisations developing and delivering T Levels from 2025.

## Supporting Providers to Deliver

Providers are key to the success of delivering T Levels and the TLFY. From working with a very small group of providers in the very early stages of delivery in 2020, there are now over 250 schools and colleges offering T Levels, from Bodmin to Blackburn and Colchester to Cumbria. Without schools, colleges, and other providers it would not be possible to deliver these important reforms to technical qualifications across England, so we want to thank all T Level providers for their investment and engagement with T Levels to date.

T Levels are different to other level 3 qualifications in terms of size, rigour, and the industry placement. This requires providers to approach their planning and teaching in a different way for successful delivery. We are pleased to see so many providers delivering high-quality provision but acknowledge the ongoing challenges, and we will continue to help address these through an ongoing comprehensive package of support. To complement this, Ofsted completed their [thematic review of T Levels](#) in July 2023, informing the wider actions we are taking to continue to drive up quality as detailed in our [published response](#). Going forward, T Levels are now part of the core inspection regime for schools and colleges.

## Developments to date

To date, the department has supported T Level providers through capital funding to ensure students can learn in great facilities, professional development support to help teachers upskill to deliver the new structure of T Levels (including teaching resources), and support to engage with employers to deliver their industry placements. We have:

- **Awarded over £500 million in T Level capital funding, including over £50 million of specialist equipment funding allocated in March 2024**, to ensure providers have buildings fit for high-quality delivery and that T Level students can access industry standard specialist equipment, e.g. large machinery for Engineering and Construction, virtual reality equipment for Digital and mock hospital wards for Health.
- **Invested in providers to engage with employers, including the £250 million Capacity and Delivery Fund** to support providers to build capacity to deliver industry placements and create networks with employers.
- **Funded £550 per student for the industry placement element of the T Level programme**. This funding helps providers to fund staff time for sourcing industry placements and other related costs such as IT software to manage placements. The [16-19 discretionary bursary funds](#) can also be used to cover travel and subsistence, to ensure students are not financially disadvantaged by undertaking their placements. We make explicit provision for travel costs to industry placements via the bursary fund and encourage providers to make use of this funding to support travel to and from industry placements.

- **Invested nearly £40 million in the T Level Professional Development Programme** which has supported over 25,500 teachers, completing at least 48,500 continuing professional development activities, alongside **national and regional events delivered by the AoC** designed to share best practice amongst providers to develop their approach to deliver T Levels.
- We are also **supporting providers to develop strategies to engage with employers** through the contracted support currently delivered by the SDN.

## Next steps

The department is pleased to see providers of all types and sizes now delivering T Levels – this is a crucial part of broadening their reach. As we move forward with delivery, we are keen to continue to diversify the pool of providers delivering. We acknowledge that providers coming on board now will have different challenges to work through compared with providers who began delivering in 2020; however, we know that the early adopters have valuable knowledge and best practice to help newer providers navigate those challenges.

In this context, we will continue to develop our approach to support a growing number and variety of provider types to deliver T Levels for the first time, as well as supporting the scale-up of provision in existing providers. To help with that we will a) take an increasingly flexible approach through our support contracts; and b) encourage more providers to build self-sustaining networks that facilitate collaborative relationships between providers (particularly newer providers) to ensure that they can benefit from one another's experience of delivery, on top of our continuing core offer of support. We will continue to listen to feedback and act on this, so that it informs future developments of our support offer.

Our **core support** offer for all T Level providers to support high-quality preparation and delivery includes:

### Financial support

On 13 February we published the [16-19 funding rates for academic year 2024/25](#). As part of this we confirmed that we will **continue to uplift T Level funding rates by 10% for annual year 2024/25, worth up to an additional £42 million to the sector. This means that a student on a mid-size T Level attracts over 35% percent more funding than a student on a study programme.** The uplift also mirrors the approach we took in AY 2023/24 and reflects our commitment to support providers to transition from study programmes to T Levels and expand the number of T Levels offered/students enrolled. This uplift is reflected in the published T Level funding bands.

Every provider that starts a new T Level route is allocated funding to purchase specialist equipment **to support the delivery of relevant T Levels.** For wave 6 of the T Level

Capital Fund we will be allocating further [Specialist Equipment Allocation](#) (SEA) funding to support providers delivering T Level routes for the first time in September 2025.

### **Contracted provider support**

The **department offers regular recap and refresher webinars** which are aimed at curriculum leads and employer engagement leads in new T Level providers, new staff in existing T Level providers, or anyone who would like a refresher on T Level policies. Alongside this, **there are various types of support that providers can access free of charge:**

#### ***T Level Professional Development (TLPD) programme***

- The TLPD programme, delivered by the ETF, supports teachers with the teaching skills, subject knowledge, and industry skills they need for successful T Level delivery. We will **extend the contract for TLPD for a further two years** until August 2026. This ensures all T Level providers – current and new – have access to the expert-led professional development support they need to deliver high-quality T Levels. As part of the contract extension, we will refocus the programme to ensure it remains accessible to all with a particular focus on smaller providers who may be new to technical education. We will also increase the support available for the TLFY for providers who are preparing to deliver this programme or are already in delivery.

#### ***Preparatory and in-delivery support***

- We are pleased to **continue funding for the AoC to work with all providers planning to deliver T Levels for the first time**. This support will help schools and colleges with planning, organisation and curriculum design throughout the preparation year and the first year of delivery of T Levels and/or the TLFY programme in either September 2024 or September 2025.
- The AoC's comprehensive support offer includes a dedicated AoC advisor, [webinars on key delivery challenges](#), the use of the T Level planner (which provides structure and focus, enabling providers to track their progress with curriculum planning, industry placements and professional readiness), [provider network events and insight days](#), in addition to a range of [guidance and resource documents](#). In 2023 we reprocurd the provider support package to put in place long term support structures for scaling up T Level delivery, including the mentoring programme and high-quality teaching resources which will be available for all providers going forward.

#### ***Industry placement support***

- We have **recently reprocurd our provider support package for industry placements from September 2023** – this is being delivered by the SDN. We will

roll out self-service materials to support providers with their employer engagement strategies and this package includes provider workshops, webinars, face to face events and one-to-one support designed to promote the sharing of best practice. We will also offer Continuous Professional Development training for those responsible for sourcing industry placements. More information can be [found on the AoC industry placement support page](#) and on the [T Levels support for schools and colleges website](#).

- The department is also supporting providers through the revised set of flexible industry placement [delivery approaches](#), to help them design placements that are suited to a particular student and employer – see the Employer Engagement and Industry Placements section on page 27 for more details.

We will flex this overall offer to **provide support that is more tailored to smaller providers** and for those who need the most support, as well as encouraging existing providers to **collaborate and share best practice to help them to scale up their existing offer**. This includes:

- A TLPD offer delivered by the ETF that is **tailored to smaller providers**, including schools and providers who have limited experience of delivering vocational and technical education and who may not have as strong links to employers or industry. The ETF will also **focus on building networks of providers to share knowledge and best practice** through more subject-specific sessions by T Level route.
- The introduction of a **mentoring scheme by the AoC, where providers will be matched with experienced providers according to support needs**. The mentoring will focus on sharing knowledge, setting goals, and developing plans and delivery objectives – providers will meet least once per month over a three-month period.
- Similarly, the **ETF will continue to deliver their in-house T Level mentoring programme, aimed at those involved with T Level operational leadership**. The mentoring is suitable for **providers** either in delivery or in the planning for delivery of one or multiple T Levels. Mentees will work with one of the ETF specialist mentors who will help providers grow their leadership and management skills through coaching and reflection, whilst exploring strengths and areas for development in relation to T Level preparation or delivery.
- In the coming months **the department will bring together all T Level resources into one place on the [T Level website](#)**, to be accessible for all providers. We are aware that **resources** such as example lesson plans, and PowerPoint presentation slides for specific topics can be helpful for teachers and curriculum leads who are preparing to or beginning delivery of T Levels for the first time. So, over the coming year, **we will work with the ETF and the AoC to provide more teaching resources, such as the ETF's Teacher Resource Improvement Projects (TRIPs)** which are co-designed with providers who have already started delivery and have used these resources in real teaching environments. The

Gatsby Foundation are also [producing support materials for T Level teachers](#). SDN will additionally be creating resources to help providers with employer engagement. More information on the any of the above support available to providers can be found on the [T Levels support for schools and colleges website](#).

## T Level Foundation Year

The T Level Foundation Year (TLFY – previously the T Level Transition Programme) was introduced in September 2020. Its implementation is being phased alongside T Levels. It is a one-year, level 2 study programme designed to provide a high-quality route onto T Levels for students who would benefit from the programme before they start their T Level. Students develop a broad range of knowledge, skills and behaviours to help them progress onto, and succeed on, their chosen T Level route.

### T Level Foundation Year starts

In total, over 16,000 students have started on the TLFY over the first four years. Starts are increasing each year as the programme rolls out (figures are rounded to the nearest 100):

- In 2020, 29 providers delivered the TLFY to c.800 entrants.
- In 2021, 59 providers delivered the TLFY to c.3,200 entrants.
- In 2022, 74 providers delivered the TLFY to c.5,200 entrants.
- In 2023, 85 providers are delivering the TLFY to c.7,000 entrants across eleven routes.

### Developments to date

Since its introduction in 2020 the department has refined the TLFY in collaboration with many early providers offering the programme, as well as employers, education specialists, and other stakeholders. Their input was essential to helping us design a strong, distinct programme that will support students to develop the knowledge, skills, and behaviours to prepare them well for a T Level in their chosen route. It also provides students with important transferable skills that employers look for.

In 2021 we developed national content for the programme – [national technical outcomes](#) (NTOs) – that aligns with, and provides a good foundation for, T Levels. Our revised national expectations for the programme, including coverage of the NTOs, came into effect from the 2022/23 academic year. They are set out in the [T Level Foundation Year Framework for Delivery](#).

Last year we changed the national name of the programme to make it clearer that this is the first step on a three-year path to achieving a T Level for students who need it. Providers are expected to start using the new name from the 2024/25 academic year.

Several reports have now been published on early delivery of the programme – including the National Foundation for Education Research (see box below). These have already and will continue to inform ongoing development and delivery. We encourage TLFY providers to consider these as they develop and evolve their own programmes. We are pleased that students' overall satisfaction with the programme is high, and they feel it has

helped them develop a range of knowledge and skills (Technical Education Learner Survey [2021](#) and [2022](#)). Students are satisfied with various aspects of their programme, including the amount of programme content and skills covered relating to their subject area, and support from tutors or teachers, although there was least satisfaction with the amount of contact with employers. We also know what works well in terms of programme design and delivery. Ofsted found the best TLFY programmes included a relevant technical or vocational qualification. They also featured activities, including high-quality tailored work placements, that prepare students for an appropriate T Level pathway ([T Level thematic review](#)). The National Foundation for Education Research also identified a range of practices that early TLFY providers think worked well.

### **Key Lessons based on National Foundation for Education Research Report**

1. Building close links between both staff and students participating in T Level Transition Programmes and T Levels.
2. Deploying more extensive diagnostics than usual practice, in terms of time and scope, which assesses a range of skills.
3. Using a smaller, qualification (or non-qualification approach) to allow more flexibility in delivering the programme.
4. Allowing more time for English and maths (E&M), close links between technical and E&M staff, and working with employers to create industry-relevant tasks where students apply their E&M skills.
5. Using project-based work, particularly with employer involvement.
6. Using a variety of assessment methods to assess students' progress and prepare them for the T Level, including exam preparation.

### **Next steps**

The department is encouraged that the programme is supporting good progression to level 3 destinations in its first two years, compared with other level 2 courses. This is especially welcome given that the first two cohorts were impacted by the cancellation of summer GCSEs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall progression to level 3 for those who complete the programme was 54% for cohort 1 and 51% for cohort 2. This is higher than for students completing other classroom-based level 2 courses (47% and 44% respectively).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Since publishing last year's Action Plan, we have revised our methodology for identifying TLFY starters to be more consistent with that for T Levels. We have also revised our methodology for reporting progression outcomes, now calculated for TLFY completers and for identifying learners taking an alternative level 2 core aim for the purpose of comparison. These changes mean that the outcomes data here is not directly comparable to the cohort 1 data published in the previous Action Plan.

## **Supporting progression to T Levels**

Progression from the TLFY to T Levels was 15% for cohort 1 completers and 8% for cohort 2 – see the [‘T Level action plan: analytical annex’ document](#). A key priority for us is therefore to understand how we and providers can support more students to progress to T Levels as their level 3 choice. In the first half of 2024 we plan to talk with a number of TLFY providers to identify good practice and success factors to supporting progression to T Levels, including how to target the programme effectively. Providers are building their experience now – of delivering T Levels and the TLFY – and we want to further learn about what is working well. We are still in early rollout for the TLFY. We will continue to monitor outcomes as the programme continues to roll out and the level 3 qualification reforms that overlap with T Levels are defunded. We have no immediate plans to introduce accountability measures for the TLFY given its infancy and small scale but will consider this further as the programme scales up.

## **T Level Foundation Qualifications**

As part of the review of post-16 qualifications at level 2 and below, the department has already announced that we are introducing new T Level Foundation Qualifications. These will be designed to support progression to T Levels and based on the NTOs. Approved qualifications will be available for teaching from 2026. We will expect students to take these qualifications as part of their TLFY.

The department’s requirements for these qualifications were informed by a targeted consultation. We published our [consultation response](#) in July 2023, alongside revised [NTOs](#) that are clearer for awarding organisations to use when developing their qualifications. T Level Foundation Qualifications for most T Level routes will be approved in cycle 2 of the qualification reforms, which launched in November 2023, and awarding organisations have until early October 2024 to submit their qualifications for approval. Information on the funding approval criteria for these qualifications is in the [Qualifications Funding Approval Manual 2025 to 2026](#). Once work is completed on exploring a T Level focused on the Beauty sector and on ensuring the Catering T Level meets the needs of the sector, we will review the implications for T Level Foundation Qualifications in these routes.

## **National template for a certificate of participation**

Over 80% of students complete their Foundation Year programme. Providers have indicated support for certification for the programme. From the 2023/24 academic year, we are therefore introducing a national template that providers can use to issue certificates of participation to students who complete the TLFY. This will sit alongside any qualifications that students achieve on their programmes of study. We will also provide guidance for providers along with the national template.

## Employer Engagement and Industry Placements

T Levels are designed with employers to ensure young people have the skills necessary to meet future business need. The industry placement is a vital component of the T Level offer – giving students substantive experience in applying the skills they are learning in the classroom and developing the work-ready skills that are essential to employers. In August 2023 we were encouraged to see [94.9% of students](#) complete their industry placements.<sup>10</sup> Student feedback about their placement is also positive with 85% of students expressing satisfaction with their placement.<sup>11</sup>

Hosting students on their industry placement is also hugely beneficial to the employers themselves: from providing a pipeline of talent, bringing fresh perspectives and cutting-edge skills, to supporting the existing workforce to develop management experience. It is therefore critical that employers engage with T Levels as we grow the programme.

While providers are responsible for sourcing placements for T Level students, the department has listened carefully to feedback and recognise that there are challenges around hosting and scaling-up the number of industry placements. These include employer capacity; costs associated with hosting placements; changing work practices and a move to hybrid working; rural transport issues; perceived barriers around hosting under 18s; and health and safety implications.

To respond to these issues, we have set out the support we are making available to providers in the ‘Supporting Providers to deliver’ section above. We are also continuing with our extensive engagement with employers, to raise their awareness of industry placements and the value that placements can bring to their organisations. Over the last year we have developed a comprehensive package of support to help employers deliver industry placements.

## Developments to date

### Developed flexible industry placement delivery approaches

This year the department introduced a revised set of flexible industry placement [delivery approaches](#). While we remain committed to the core principles of a high-quality industry placement ([page 8 in our delivery guidance](#)) we also know that a great placement experience may look different for different students. These new approaches are giving

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<sup>10</sup> [Provisional T Level Results 2022/23](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Technical Education Learner Survey, 2021](#)

providers and employers greater flexibility to collaborate in designing placements that are suited to a particular student and employer.

### **Supported employers to engage with providers through national awareness-raising activity**

The department repurchased our Employer Support Package in September 2023. This support has been available since 2019 and provides online guidance materials, workshops and webinars, and direct, hands-on support to employers. Further information about the support in place can be found [here](#). Since 2019 over 4,000 employers have attended workshops and webinars and over 500 hours of one-to-one support has been offered to support employers plan and implement industry placements. The [T Levels and industry placement support for employers](#) website, which hosts the online features of this package, was accessed over 64,000 times in 2023, up from over 28,000 times in 2022.

We know that it is often smaller businesses who can struggle most with the capacity and support required to host industry placements. Through our national contact centre, we have already targeted over 76,000 SMEs through a bespoke communications campaign to help raise awareness of and engagement with T Levels. We also ran contracts with three SME growth partners in the Construction, Digital and Business Operations to broker T Level industry placements with SMEs. These contracts ran for two years and came to an end in March 2024, and we are now evaluating this support to agree next steps.

The department is leading by example within government and will continue to offer industry placements across the country for the Digital, and Business and Administration T Levels. We have also introduced a new commercial requirement to prioritise skills wherever possible (T Level industry placements and apprenticeships) in all new departmental contracts using the social value model. Additionally, the department construction contracts are mandated to provide industry placements based on a sliding scale of project value. We also work with departments across the Civil Service to grow the wider T Level industry placement offer.

### **Supporting the cost of industry placements for employers**

To support employers with the operational costs associated with industry placements, where these costs would otherwise have been a barrier to delivery, we made an employer support fund available for one year in financial year 2023-24. The fund came to a close on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and we will now evaluate its impact to help inform our ongoing support offer.

## **Next steps**

Industry placements continue to be highly valued by both students and employers as an essential component of the T level programme. Nevertheless, only 32% of employers

across the country were aware of T Levels in 2022<sup>12</sup>, up from 24% in 2021. As we support increasing growth in the programme, we will continue to focus on increasing employer awareness of and engagement in T Levels, alongside an increasing emphasis on supporting employers and providers to tackle regional and sectoral-specific barriers in scaling up their industry placement offer, to ensure that industry placement supply continues to match demand.

### **Increasing awareness of placements and different delivery approaches**

Our Skills Development Managers continue to deliver bespoke support to 1,200 large employers<sup>13</sup> to help them progress from having a good understanding of T Levels, to actively offering or growing the number of industry placements they can deliver. In spring 2024 we will also launch a new campaign to reach circa 39,000 SMEs about industry placements. Through this work we will particularly highlight the variety of delivery approaches available. This is underpinned by the Skills for Life campaign which includes employers as one of the key audiences<sup>14</sup>.

Our T Level ambassador network continues to grow and champion the T Level programme, with members sharing their experiences and passion for technical education. The network is made up of large businesses, SMEs, providers, universities, students, and other organisations including Local Enterprise Partnerships. Employer representatives recently joined from Mace, Galliford Try, NHS England and HMRC.

The department has recently refreshed the network's leadership as we look to more substantively scale-up the programme. As our chair and vice-chairs reach the end of their term and after a recruitment campaign, we are delighted to announce the new leadership team of **Jo Simovic from Amazon as Chair, Natalie Jones from National Highways as Vice Chair and Daniel Brett from ThinkMove as Vice Chair** (staying on in his current role). The new team will build on the success of the current team (Ray Olive, Danny Brett, and Dawn Helsby), who have overseen impressive growth of the network from just 31 members in 2021 to over 500 members in 2024.

More information about becoming a T Level ambassador and how you can help build understanding about T Levels among employers can be found [here](#).

### **Regional and Sectoral focus**

The department will continue to support local providers and employers to find each other with the digital [Connect service](#). Since its launch in November 2022, 150 unique

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<sup>12</sup> [Employer skills survey 2022 research report \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> DfE sourced using relationship management software (CRM)

<sup>14</sup> [Skills for Life: it all starts with skills | Skills for Careers \(education.gov.uk\)](#)

employers have registered 2,000 engagement opportunities and 200 providers have accessed the Connect service. To build on this we are further exploring the role that regional stakeholders can play in enabling scale-up of industry placements, and as part of this will work with employer representative bodies, responsible for Local Skills Improvement Plans, to foster a more collaborative approach to industry placements that meets local employer needs.

We are also aware of the need to develop improvements in the approaches for delivering industry placements in different sectors. We are working with the relevant sectors to prepare for new T Levels due to begin delivery in September 2024, making sure the right support is in place to make this a success. We are also providing bespoke support to some sectors with particular barriers, including funding a pilot co-ordinator programme in the NHS to help establish sustainable industry placement strategies that can be rolled out across Trusts around the country (see Box below).

We understand that delivering industry placements at scale will continue to be a key challenge and will continue working closely with providers and employers to share best practice and help overcome issues, so that T Levels can continue to provide a high-quality route into skilled, successful and sustainable employment for thousands more young people around the country.

## Spotlight on Health and Healthcare Science

We are aware of the barriers that make sourcing and delivery of Health and Healthcare Science industry placements challenging. We have listened to feedback and have put mitigations in place to help overcome these barriers. This includes:

**NHS ICS T Level Industry Placement Coordinators Pilot** - We are piloting a grant to fund seven T Level Industry Placement Coordinators within seven NHS Integrated Care Systems (ICSs). Coordinators are working in their local ICS to establish a sustainable operational strategy and grow T Level engagement with T Level providers.

**ICS Network** - In partnership with the Gatsby Foundation we have launched an ICS T Level Network to enable all ICSs to gain up-to-date policy information to support with the delivery of T Level placements.

**Gatsby Foundation** – In collaboration with the Gatsby Foundation we have published a range of case studies demonstrating how placements can work in healthcare settings.

**Case loading NHS trusts** – We have case loaded large NHS trusts and through regular conversations, we signpost healthcare employers to resources, support with making the case for the inclusion of T Levels into pipeline and workforce strategies and enable links between NHS Trusts.

**Strategic Development Network (SDN)** – We work with SDN to fund the creation of resources and case studies, webinars and 1-2-1 support for health and care employers.



Department  
for Education

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