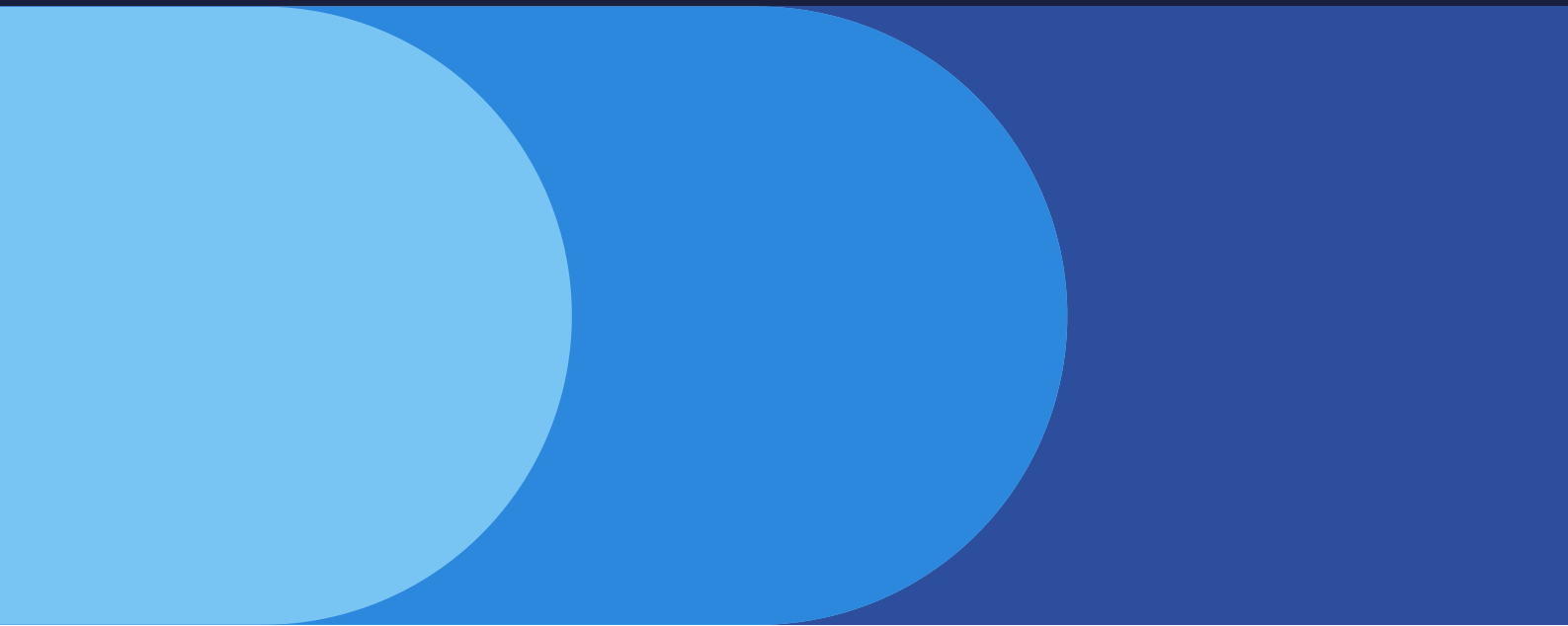


T Levels in health and care

August 2023



About us

NHS Employers is the employers' organisation for the NHS in England. We support workforce leaders and represent employers to develop a sustainable workforce and be the best employers they can be. We also manage the relationships with NHS trade unions on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

What are T Levels

T Levels are delivered by many schools and colleges. They are taught full time and include an industry placement, with up to three employers, for a minimum of 315 hours (approximately 45 days). This can include up to 35 hours of work taster activities, delivered in an employment setting.

Although students will complete their industry placement in an employment setting, they will not be an employee and are not required to be paid, though some employers choose to pay their students and/or offer them a supplementary bank role for paid employment.

There is a full range of T Level courses available which will support the NHS including: health, science, business services, childcare, digital, facilities management and HR. View the full list of T Levels and the occupations they can lead to on completion.



T Level programmes provide students with broad knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary for employment in an occupation or industry related to their field of study. In the second year students will study an occupational specialism, a deep-dive into one area of their chosen T Level, beyond the core competencies they have developed. For example in health, this could be supporting the adult nursing team, dental nursing, supporting the therapy teams, amongst others. Students will also have the chance to further develop relevant maths, English and digital skills.

T Levels will provide a progression pathway to skilled employment, higher or degree-level apprenticeships and higher education. For those students who wish to go onto higher education UCAS points are awarded, with T Levels being accepted by many universities.

UCAS Points

On completion of a T Level course, UCAS points will be awarded. The table below shows the points and grade equivalents.

UCAS Tariff Points	T Level grade	A Level equivalent grade
168	Distinction* (A* on the core and distinction in the occupational specialism)	3 A*s at A Level
144	Distinction	3 As at A Level
120	Merit	3 Bs at A Level
96	Pass	3 Cs at A Level
72	Pass	3 Ds or Es at A Level

BTEC defunding

The Department for Education (DfE) has published the outcomes of the recent Review of Qualifications Reform, centred around proposed defunding of BTECs and additional Level 3 qualifications.

The original proposal to defund was made based on the need for simplification of the Level 3 offer, and the significant overlap with T Levels. A change in government saw the proposal paused.

DfE have concluded that several Level 3 qualifications on the health and science route will be permitted to continue to be taught until July 2026, at which point the outcome of a longer-term review will be determined.

A full list of those extended or defunded can be [found here](#). The following qualifications, most relevant to health and care employers, have had funding extended to 2026:

- NCFE CACHE Technical Level 3 Extended Diploma in Health and Social Care
- NCFE CACHE Level 3 Extended Diploma in Health and Social Care
- NCFE CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care
- OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Extended Diploma in Health
- OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Diploma in Health and Social Care

- Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Health and Social Care
- Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Health and Social Care
- iCQ Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care
- TQUK Level 3 Certificate in Understanding Mental Health (RQF)

Providers can appeal defunded qualifications until the 24th of January 2025.

The DfE believes that by 2026 a combination of A Levels, T Levels and new qualifications that are developed from the above will be suitable for the range of learners studying health and care qualifications.

Further information of the outcomes of the 2024 Review of Qualifications Reform is available on the [Gov.Uk website](#).

For those not ready to go directly onto a level three T Level qualification, a one-year T Level foundation programme is available for those students who have finished their GCSEs. Find out more about the [foundation programme](#).

Career pathways

The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education has developed a number of occupational maps for T Level programmes which show the skills, behaviours and core competencies required for industry roles. However, T Level students do not achieve full occupational competency through their industry placement in the same way that they would if they completed an apprenticeship. The industry placement is designed to provide a taster of the variety of roles available within a subject area.

T Level industry placements explored

Industry placements are intended to provide a practical insight into a learner's chosen sector and should offer the young person a chance to embed their knowledge and skills learned in the education setting. For you as an employer, industry placements provide the opportunity to engage with a new talent pipeline and showcase the variety of roles available in health and social care.

A T Level industry placement can be formed in a variety of different ways. It can:

- be a continuous block of working days or a number of days each week, or a combination of both models.
- be distributed across the first and/or second years of the T Level course
- include work taster activities of up to 35 hours
- be hosted by a maximum of two employers for further understanding of the industry. For example, some providers may wish for students to spend some time in their first year in a social care setting, moving to a hospital setting in the second year
- be hosted by three employers who are part of a network, such as an integrated care system, with one employer acting as the lead employer
- employers can choose to interview the students who are coming onto placement, or ask the provider to select suitable students

- be gained by paid, part time employment aligned to their chosen T Level subject.
- 20 percent of the industry placement can be offered virtually, increasing to 50 percent for the Digital T Level. This should be in a suitable setting, unlikely to be the student's home
- a third of placement hours can be spent either on a small team project or in a skills hub or training centre.

Further information on industry placement flexibilities can be found in the Department for Education's [T Level industry placements delivery guidance](#), last updated in January 2025.

The Department for Education have developed a video exploring the recent changes to T Level industry placement delivery.

A work taster activity is an opportunity for a student to gain an understanding of the working environment prior to starting their placement.

This could involve a site visit, a chance to meet employees sharing information on their roles, completion of mandatory training or the opportunity to share expectations. Employers should reflect on how this time can be used effectively, for example bringing the entire cohort of students together for the training or integrating some elements of the taster activities with other staff groups, for example healthcare support worker inductions. This may also be used as an opportunity to explore some of the roles available in healthcare, potentially shaping later parts of the student's placement.

Benefits to offering T Level industry placements

- provide an opportunity to tap into new talent pipelines and showcase the NHS as a great place to work
- allow you to showcase the breadth and depth of roles available in the NHS, including shortage occupations and hard to fill roles
- provide a new supply route into a variety of professions using T Level pathways
- offers opportunities for existing staff to mentor and supervise T Level students aiding staff development and retention
- encouraging young people with skills and new ideas into the health service

- build relationships with further education and other providers in your local area.

The below video explores industry placements in the NHS:

Your organisation may wish to ask the student to sign an honorary contract prior to starting a placement, depending on local policies. This can be a good way of emulating some of the elements present when they join the workforce, including a contract with expectations and terms of employment.

NHS Employers have created an [honorary contract template](#) that can be used.

Getting started with industry placements

A key organisation which is assisting with industry placements is the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS). They are responsible for providing advice on T Level industry placements to employers. They can also provide a matching service which employers can use to find local education providers who are offering T Level programmes.

Alternatively, employers can use the [Gov.Uk website](#) to search for providers offering relevant T Levels in their area. You can search by town and postcode, and filter by T Level subject.

Funding T Level placements

All aspects of funding for T Level providers for the 2025/26 is yet to be finalised. However, employers may wish to understand how funding works for the T Level qualification, information on which can be found in the [T Level funding guide 2025 to 2026](#).

The below video showcases a student on an adult nursing industry placement in the NHS:

Placements for students under 18

There is a myth that students on industry placement who are under the age of 18 are unable to work in clinical settings. This is incorrect, and we have created a page to provide [guidance on good employment practice when employing people under the age of 18](#). This page includes links to case studies with Yeovil District Hospital NHS Trust and University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust. We have also spoken to [Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust](#) on how they have effectively supported students under 18.

Safeguarding students

T Level learners may be under 18. Under 18s can work in clinical and non-clinical settings, however employers must provide a safe working environment with safe working hours. Most placements will take place during regular daytime working hours, but in some placements, this may involve working outside normal working hours and should be evaluated to determine the necessity of working outside of these hours. Working patterns should be agreed with the training provider as part of the work plan discussion. Read more on the legal requirements as an employer on the [GOV.UK website](#).

Students must have the correct safeguarding in place to protect themselves and patients while on placement. Training providers hold overall responsibility for safeguarding and the welfare of the student on an industry placement. The training providers will check policies and procedures to make sure the workplace is a safe environment for the student, they may carry out a site visit before the placement starts.

Where necessary, the student must be provided with the relevant equipment to fulfil their duties, the cost of this can be claimed through the education provider.

A DBS check is not required for learners or the staff supervising the student, however, you can request your training provider undertakes a DBS check if this is necessary. The training provider may also ask that the line manager or supervisor to undergo a basic DBS check if they feel this is necessary. For more information, view the [NHS Employers DBS check eligibility tool](#) and the [GOV.UK T Levels web section](#).

T Level student working hours

In line with government guidance on working hours the following should be considered:

- Students cannot work more than eight hours a day, up to a maximum of 40 hours per week which includes two days of rest.
- They cannot work between 10pm and 6am, which can be changed to 11pm and 7am with provider and student agreement.
- There must be a 12-hour rest period between each working day.
- Students should be given a 30-minute break after working for more than four and a half hours.

Supporting young offenders and SEND students

T Levels and industry placements are available to young offenders and students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). These learners may receive additional adjustments to their course, including a maximum of 105 hours of the industry placement being delivered in the education setting, before completing the remainder of the industry placement in an industry setting. This is to help young offenders and SEND students prepare for a real-life work environment.

Further information

NHS Employers have [created a comprehensive T Levels FAQ](#) answering your questions on T Levels.

For more information, including guidance, tools and resources visit [employer industry placements](#).

The government website also has [a resource library with useful information and materials](#) to help employer engagement with T Levels, including campaign guidelines and an employer toolkit.

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