

Upscaling and developing the T Level industry placement offer

November 2025

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.

As an employer using T Level industry placements as part of the early-career domestic talent pipeline, this guide provides insights and reflections on how to expand and develop your offer.

Introduction

This guide is designed for employers who have already piloted or offer a small number of T Level industry placements. It provides practical advice on scaling up delivery into new areas and potentially new T Level subjects. The guide outlines sectors suitable for T Level industry placements, example placement structures, explains key flexibilities and shares strategies for maximising the opportunities that placements offer.

For employers new to offering T Level industry placements, we have developed a guide with advice on making those first steps. These guides form part of our NHS Employers T Level hub, which includes an extensive FAQ section.

When expanding your T Level industry placement offer into new areas, it's important to build understanding and support among senior leaders. NHS Employers has created a presentation pack that provides a concise overview of what industry placements are and the benefits they bring both for students and your organisation.

This resource is designed for colleagues to share internally, making it easier to communicate how placements can strengthen your workforce and create a sustainable talent pipeline for the future.

Where can students go on placement

During their industry placement, T Level students should be offered the opportunity to experience some of the many career opportunities in the health and care sector, whilst ensuring they have time to embed fully into a team, learning valuable team working, communication and clinical skills.

Recent updates to industry placement delivery guidance now allow placements to be undertaken at pathway or route level, rather than occupational specialism level. This allows students to experience a broader range of content. While this provides more variety in placement settings, employers should be mindful of the student's intended career pathway. For example, a student who is confident that they want to pursue nursing could spend more of their industry placement in a nursing environment.

Whereas, others who are not sure of the area in which they want to work could expand their understanding of the breadth of careers by rotating through a number of different areas.

The list below highlights just a few potential options to consider. Whilst not all aspects of these areas will be suitable for students, most contain elements that are appropriate for industry placements:

Frailty wards

Theatres

Speech and language therapy

Audiology

Outpatient services

Physiotherapy

Midwifery

Community nursing teams

Elderly care wards

Radiography

Pharmacy

Mental health nursing teams

Case study

East Coast Community Healthcare CIC (ECCH) offers Health T Level students hands-on, multidisciplinary placements across Norfolk and Suffolk, working in occupational therapy, physiotherapy, pharmacy and nursing teams. It has found industry placements to be an effective way to build future workforce supply in a rural area by facilitating exposure to a range of different roles. [Read the full case study.](#)

Example placement structures

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay

The trust organises industry placements into three blocks of three weeks over the two-year qualification period. During the first two blocks, students rotate through different areas, such as urgent treatment centres, pharmacy and the frailty ward, allowing them to integrate into the team over three weeks. For the third block students have the option to choose a new area or return to one of their previous placements. This model is developed in collaboration with other employers, which allows students to spend one of these blocks in social care, for example.

Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

The trust has developed a structured industry placement offer designed to give students meaningful, progressive experience in healthcare settings. The offer includes three placement blocks scheduled during periods of lower service demand.

- Block 1 (March–May, Year 1): Focuses on introducing students to the healthcare environment. Placements take place in outpatient departments, essential services, and alongside allied health professionals, providing broad exposure to clinical practice.
- Blocks 2 and 3 (Year 2): Designed to embed students within multidisciplinary teams and involve direct patient care. These placements span a range of acute clinical settings, including adult, paediatric, and midwifery wards, offering hands-on experience in diverse care environments.

Before starting any placement, students must complete mandatory training delivered in person by the clinical education

team. Education providers will complete DBS and occupational checks prior to the first placement and deliver manual handling and basic life support training to ensure readiness for clinical practice. The trust also supports students in completing the care certificate whilst on industry placement.

NHS Sussex Integrated Care System

The integrated care system has a model agreed with employers across the system that works as a hybrid model where students spend three days a week on industry placement for blocks of three to five weeks. These placement blocks avoid academic breaks and times of high demand, such as the resident doctor changeover. Their system wide placement model ensures consistency across organisations, providing clarity to both employers and providers and reducing administrative pressure.

To find out more about different placements structures the NHS Employers [What makes a great T Level industry placement page](#) and [T Level industry placements at a system level: reflections from industry placement coordinators publication](#) explore this in more detail.

We would recommend that employers speak to other employers offering T Level industry placement in their area, as this could be an opportunity to align placement structures or learn from other employers' challenges and successes.

Case study: implementing a T Level industry placement in a new area

Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust (NCA), part of Greater Manchester integrated care board (ICB), was keen to expand its T Level industry placement capacity by offering placements within midwifery. Here it reflects on its key drivers for success, including the importance of working with other stakeholders and system partners to anticipate and mitigate any pitfalls, and build on prior learning.

It cites the below key drivers behind the successful implementation of industry placements in maternity:

Early discussions

The NCA widening participation team had been engaging with trust colleagues about maternity placements for Health T Level students for some time, so some stakeholders were already warm to the idea.

Buy-in from education provider

The local college, already well connected with the trust and ICS, were enthusiastic about the opportunity to introduce a new pathway, with relatively low intake initially.

Myth-busting with evidence

One of the barriers to implementation of this pathway was the perception that students under 18 could not go on placement in

maternity spaces. Using nationally available resources and sharing learning from other employers who had successfully offered maternity industry placements reassured stakeholders.

Coordinated support

Strategic support at trust level, paired with active operational champions, helped shift the conversation from risk to opportunity. Broader system-wide awareness may also have influenced thinking.

Building the case for long-term investment

Reasoning around the future requirement for pipeline development from a workforce planning perspective was also helpful as midwifery is in the top five most at-risk professions in Greater Manchester. This provided an evidence-based argument for need.

System level support

The ICB has been undertaking a programme to leverage T Level placements across Greater Manchester, so was able to provide additional dedicated capacity to help facilitate discussions, coordination, and preparation.

Early steps towards scaling up

Giving opportunities for trust staff to engage with T Level learners has proven helpful to build confidence for future expansion. T Level students completed observational placements within midwifery at the end of Year 1, to familiarise themselves with staff and the department, before the launch of the new industry placements.

Next steps

As part of its ambitions across the system, NHS GM is reflecting on how best to scale the model and how to ensure the learning from this project is shared with other stakeholders. Its ambition is to share this learning both locally and nationally, achieved through ongoing meetings and a shared learning workshop which showcased national success case studies, local thinking for early adoption in Oldham, and open discussion and about potential logistics elsewhere. The workshops raised awareness for colleagues working in maternity in organisations across Greater Manchester and allowed them to anticipate many of the concerns that can develop into blockers to expansion.

The integrated care board is pleased with the programmes progress but see opportunities for further work to support industry placement expansion, both in areas with urgent workforce needs and across wider T Level delivery. Its suggested improvements include:

Communication

Making it easier for further education (FE) colleagues and relevant employer teams to stay connected, with clear contact points and ways to raise opportunities and issues quickly.

Preparation

Such as creating simple briefing packs or checklists so FE, placement staff and students know what to expect and feel prepared ahead of and during placement.

Empowering staff

Supporting trust staff to feel confident when working with students in busy or high-pressure settings.

To build on the momentum of the programme and support future delivery, NHS GM is exploring practical ways to strengthen and expand industry placements. The shared learning workshop

helped surface common challenges and creative solutions, offering valuable insights for teams considering similar approaches. These reflections have informed a set of top tips designed to support new areas of delivery, build staff confidence, and ensure placements are successful for learners, educators, and healthcare teams alike.

Messaging builds confidence

When supported by real-world examples from other areas, the messaging resonated with local managers and gave them the confidence to take a chance and see the benefits for themselves.

Creative solutions to supervision capacity

To ease time pressures on midwives, the team involved other maternity staff, like support workers and education leads, to structure and support placements. This reduced clinical burden while keeping students meaningfully engaged.

Clear, consistent guidance clears up misunderstandings

This works best when supported by consistent documents and safeguarding processes.

Co-design strengthens delivery

Working closely with education providers to co-design placement processes builds shared ownership, smoother roll-out and long-term sustainability.

If you would like to discover more about the process of introducing T Level industry placements in maternity, please contact: nhsgm.gm.workforce@nhs.net

Work taster activity

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.

Maximising the benefits of T Level industry placements

Supporting other organisations in the local area

As a major local employer, Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (LUHFT) aims to support other local NHS trusts in offering T Level industry placements. With four cohorts to date, it felt well placed to share its model and support others with establishing industry placements.

It has developed a model where students start in year one at LUHFT and, based on a student's interests, may move to another organisation in year two. Other local trusts are specialist organisations in neurology, mental health, children's, heart and chest, and cancer services.

The trust has developed a workbook, including task list, that is used by all organisations. As most of the preparation has been completed already, such as occupational health checks, DBS checks and references, as well as completing their healthcare support worker induction. This process ensures that colleagues in other organisations can be assured that they can easily and quickly support students on industry placement. There is a fixed placement structure across all organisations where a T level student will attend the same location one day a week for the whole college year. The workplace mentor will visit the student on a regular basis, providing support to the learner, ward staff and the educational provider.

To support smaller organisations, it has regular meetings to discuss challenges, share best practice, and explore collaborative

solutions. One example of this is agreeing to a shared uniform for T Level students across all sites

Integrating industry placements into the recruitment process with the Golden Ticket scheme

LUHFT has introduced the Golden Ticket scheme enabling the direct recruitment of T Level students after industry placements. If a vacancy exists, students receive a Golden Ticket, which is a hidden job link, to apply for roles in their placement area.

Students learn about the Golden Ticket scheme during the first year of their industry placement, along with bank work opportunities once they turn 18. It's made clear that these are not guaranteed and depend on available entry-level vacancies. If a vacancy arises outside a student's placement area, the pastoral support officer works with the area manager to identify suitable candidates. There may also be the opportunity for students to do a small supplementary placement to ensure they are the right fit for the opportunities available.

Case study

Thatcham Family Hub found that staff value the fresh perspectives and innovative ideas the students bring to the team. Many students have expertise with technology and combine this with creative ideas to develop practical solutions that improve the health support for the service users. Since hosting a T Level student, it has developed a new talent pipeline into the organisation. [Read the full case study.](#)

Future plans

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Exploring the small team project

The small team project offers flexibility in industry placements, allowing students to spend up to a third of their placement hours working with peers on a specific project under employer supervision. For health and care students, this may be an opportunity to introduce them to other careers in health and care with the opportunity to spend one-on-one time with a member of staff and experience an environment outside that of their other placements.

Kirsti Shaw, Senior Development Nurse at Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust Health and Care Academy piloted a small team project to offer interested students some insight into the work of a mental health, learning disability and neurodevelopmental trust. This project, focused on the interaction between physical health and mental health, was chosen to encourage students to think about the relationship between a patient's physical and mental health, developing their research skills, presentation skills and communication skills by discussing their work with Kirsti.

The project ran for fifty-four hours, with the students spending one day a week in a facilitated session with some additional independent learning. This independent study was an opportunity to use the hybrid working model, a recently added flexibility to industry placements, where students can work independently in locations like their college IT suite. The project concluded with students presenting their research to peers, tutors and a representative from the integrated care board. The trust is now exploring how this small team project could be developed to support more students.

Industry placements for students under 18

There is a common misconception that students under 18 cannot undertake industry placements in clinical settings. This is not the case. To support employers in hosting younger students, we have developed a dedicated resource. It includes guidance on creating a robust T Level policy, either as a standalone document or integrated with your existing work experience policy, to ensure colleagues feel confident that all risks have been appropriately considered.

The resource also features insights from Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust, who have adopted a collaborative approach to placements. Its model enables first-year students to complete observational placements, preparing them for hands-on experience in a variety of settings during their second year.

Our Recruiting under 18s into the NHS guidance looks at wider considerations when employing or hosting young people in the workplace. This page includes links to case studies with Yeovil District Hospital NHS Trust and University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust

Working with providers

An integral part to organising T Level industry placements is working with further education providers to implement placements and ensure the students are supported throughout. This may be the first time that employers are engaging with further education, or it may be that your organisation has worked with schools and colleges in other areas and for other qualifications. Below are some recommendations for considerations prior to starting to offer industry placements which can prevent challenges at a later date.

Making those first steps

Documentation and planning

- What support can providers offer.
- What documentation have they already developed to support T Level industry placements.
- Can they put you in contact with other organisations who are further along their industry placement journey.

Pre-placement preparation

- Are providers aware of your talent pipelines and workforce needs.
- It is important to share what opportunities exist for students after placement at this point, and in which areas of the workforce there are gaps.
- This is also an opportunity to discuss the providers' growth plans and mapping of future demand to understand how industry placements may develop.

Pastoral support

- How will the providers be ensuring they are supporting students pastorally during their placements.
- This is particularly important during block placements as students will spend limited time in the education setting.

Concerns and feedback

- Discuss with providers how best to escalate issues and how they will be seeking and sharing feedback from the students.
- It may be best to address concerns immediately on an ad hoc basis and then have the opportunity at a later date to reflect on resolution.

Student recruitment

- Share with providers how you might like to choose which students go on placement.
- Some employers want to be involved in an interview process; others are happy to let providers decide which students are more suited.

Destination data

- We recommend setting the expectation with providers from the beginning that they will provide destination data after each cohort as this can be crucial for workforce planning and understanding the organisational impact of hosting T Level industry students.

The above suggestions are not exhaustive but should provide a basis for having effective conversations when starting to work with new providers. You may wish to speak to colleagues working across the system to understand how they've approached the

relationship with providers which in some cases could be the same.

You can learn from peers who are actively engaged in this field by joining the Gatsby Foundation and Department for Education ICS Industry Placement Network.

"Working collaboratively through our community of practice with NHS Trusts, Social Care organisations and local colleges we have been able to provide over 120 T Level students placements in a range of specialities within our organisations. T Levels have enabled us to strengthen our recruitment pipeline and provide opportunities to young people from a wide range of backgrounds from our local community." - Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB) Integrated Care System

Working across the system

We have developed a resource, drawing on the knowledge and expertise of the seven Department for Education funded industry placement coordinators, exploring how collaboration between organisations can support the implementation and upscale of T Level industry placements. This resource contains practical advice and strategic guidance with links to further information. While the resource focuses on collaboration across integrated care systems, the insights are equally valuable for organisations working together informally or across wider regional partnerships.

Supporting young offenders and SEND students

T Levels and industry placements are available to 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 SEND students prepare for a real-life work environment.

Employers and providers should work together to identify how best to support students with additional needs including what reasonable adjustments may be appropriate for the learner.

Extensive resources are available to support employers and providers, including guidance on hosting students with special educational needs and disabilities and advice on hosting neurodiverse students.

Some early considerations could include:

- Whether the timing of the industry placement needs adjusting to support the student's needs.
- If the provider is offering a part of the industry placement in the education setting, when will this be and how will it affect the timings of the workplace industry placement.
- What areas in the organisation are most suited to industry placement for this person.
- Would the student benefit from a more in-depth induction period, perhaps involving multiple visits to the organisation and

time spent with their mentor prior to starting placement.

- Discuss with the education provider to ensure they visit this student more regularly to check on their wellbeing.

All young offenders studying T Levels within young offender institutions and other custodial settings can undertake their full placement hours in the institutions on-site facilities.



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