

# Developing quality T Level industry placements in health and care settings: a toolkit for employers

Gatsby Charitable Foundation



May 2026

# 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.

**We are part of The NHS Alliance.**

# Introduction

This toolkit has been developed to support health and care employers in delivering high-quality T Level industry placements. These placements are a vital component of T Level qualifications, giving students meaningful, hands-on experience in real health and care settings. By participating, employers play a crucial role in shaping the future workforce and helping students gain the practical skills and confidence they need to succeed in their careers.

This resource has been created in response to feedback from employer partners and education providers who asked for clear, practical guidance on how to structure and manage placements effectively. Building on existing best practice and lessons learned, this toolkit offers easy-to-follow steps, templates, and tips designed to make the process straightforward and rewarding for everyone involved.

The toolkit is intended for health and care employers, including hospitals, care homes, community health services, and other providers, who are considering or already offering T Level industry placements. It will also be useful for education providers looking to strengthen collaboration with employers.

This resource was developed by members of the Integrated Care System (ICS) Industry Placement Network, which is facilitated by the Department for Education (DfE), Gatsby Charitable Foundation and NHS Employers.

The ICS Industry Placement Network was established in 2023. It is an employer network that supports health and care organisations to provide high-quality industry placements. Network members formed a working group to identify the elements they felt were needed for a high-quality industry placement, and they form the basis of this toolkit.

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# Key elements of industry placement networks

High-quality industry placements will have:

1

## Agreed objectives and criteria

Educational outcomes that meet employer needs ensure that classroom learning prepares students for work in the health and care sectors. The education provider and employer agreeing on specific objectives for the industry placement means that both the student and the placement team understand what the student needs to achieve. Clear criteria for what the industry placement will include and suggestions for activities mean that both parties know how it will be achieved.

2

## Strong collaboration between education and healthcare providers

Students, education providers and the employers hosting industry placements need to understand what is expected of them. This starts with the T Level provider and the employer building a strong partnership.

The industry placement agreement supports both organisations to do this.

3

## On-placement support for students

Creating a supportive environment means students feel comfortable to ask questions and seek guidance. Supervision and mentorship make sure that every student is supported and encouraged to actively engage in the delivery of patient care, which is the crucial hands-on experience that enables their learning. Supervision also means they can experience a diverse range of cases and clinical settings; this broadens learning and helps them adapt to different situations.

# 4

## Regular evaluation and constructive feedback

Industry placements include regular feedback meetings at identified points during the placement to enable continuous improvement. Mentors play a big role in these meetings and the student-mentor relationship is key to the success of industry placements. Mentors guide a student's learning and support them to understand what progress they have made and what they need to work on.

For staff who want to take on this role, there is support for industry placement mentors. This training also suggests ways mentors can support students during feedback meetings, including using a model such as GROW (goal, reality, options, way forward).

Below are some questions to help mentors guide feedback sessions:

### Questions to help mentors guide feedback sessions



#### Questions to ask

- How would you like to approach today's meeting?
  - What have you achieved since we last spoke?
  - Is there anything you would like to share that you are proud of?
  - Have you had any issues you want to share?
  - Are there any tasks you would like more support with?
  - Let's have a look at your progress.
  - What are your current priorities?
  - What are your areas for improvement/development?
  - Which of your learning goals should we focus on?
- What is the key aim?



#### Points to discuss

- Learning goals/action points.
- Are there any safeguarding or wellbeing issues?
- Arrange the next session.

[Download questions \(PDF\)](#).

# 5

## Adherence to health and safety regulations and industry standards

Work taster activities can be designed with the employer to highlight workplace regulations and industry standards, such as infection prevention and control, uniform requirements and mobile phone usage. The employer's governance structure must also support hosting T Level students on industry placement, so it should consider updating or putting in place a young person policy, work experience policy and risk assessments to include T Level industry placements.

These five elements make sure students have meaningful practical experiences that prepare them for careers in health and care, but they also ensure that employers benefit from the students' contributions during their placements.

# Quality assurance resources

Using a student checklist helps assure the quality of the industry placement. The checklist template below sets out the tasks students can carry out in a clinical setting under supervision. They align with the Health T Level specification and are actual examples of what students are already doing in health and care organisations. The checklist also has space for the supervisor/mentor feedback and for students to reflect on the tasks.

[Download student checklist \(Word\)](#).

The assessment of student employability skills focuses on the soft skills students need to develop and it provides mentors and supervisors with a framework for giving constructive feedback to students, using criteria set by the [Education and Skills Funding Agency](#).

[Download student employability skills assessment \(Word\)](#).

## Monitoring quality

It is important that every element of the industry placement continues to meet the expectations of the student, the employer and the education provider. To monitor this, it is essential to use feedback loops with those involved (student, mentor, supervisor). For example, gathering feedback from students to improve the experience for future cohorts can be done by asking two questions:

- What went well?
- What could have made the experience better?

The feedback should be reviewed to evaluate whether anything needs to be improved and any identified improvements must be implemented and monitored.

# Guidance for providing a health and care sector industry placement

Many of the health and care employers that have hosted T Level industry placements have developed guidance. It is useful for both students and staff and it clearly sets out what the placement will involve and what is expected of the student and the employer.

## An introduction to the organisation

Sharing an introduction to the organisation helps student feel prepared and confident when they arrive for their placement. You may wish to include information such as:

- location, transport and parking
- key phone numbers and email addresses
- accessibility for those with additional needs
- support resources
- local amenities.

## Organisation values and policies

Outline the organisation values, culture and expectations to help students integrate smoothly into the workplace.

Include information like:

- mission and values
- professional behavior
- confidentiality
- uniform policy
- IT policy
- sickness and absence policies
- safeguarding.

## Working hours

Clear information about working hours, shift patterns, breaks, and holiday entitlement helps students plan their time effectively and understand what is expected of them during their placement.

Include details about:

- standard working hours
- shift patterns
- breaks
- flexible working
- holiday entitlement.

## Onboarding events with school/college

Accurately describe the industry experience being offered by:

- including what the student will be expected to do on this placement
- explaining what experience this placement does not offer.

## Application form

The application form helps students share their interests and goals, giving employers insight into how to make the placement meaningful and relevant.

Include prompts for:

- areas of interest
- motivation to explore these areas
- career aspirations
- learning objectives.

## Induction

A thorough induction helps students settle in quickly, understand workplace expectations, and feel confident in their new environment. It also ensures compliance with essential policies and training requirements.

During induction, you might want to include:

- an induction checklist as a record of what elements have been completed. The Department for Education (DfE) has produced a generic [industry placement logbook](#) for students which includes an induction checklist (see pages nine and ten) as part of their T Level support resources.
- an introduction to their mentor/workplace supervisor
- a tour of the workplace
- health and safety briefings
- how to access IT and systems
- an introduction to occupational health
- how to access to the mandatory training/e-learning they need to complete – these can be completed before the placement starts.

## Explanation of placement reviews

Regular reviews help students reflect on their progress, identify areas for improvement, and celebrate achievements. They also provide employers with an opportunity to give feedback and ensure the placement meets its objectives.

So the student is prepared, make sure they receive in advance:

- their review schedule - these should take place at both mid-point and end of placement
- an explanation of [reflective practice model](#)
- any reflective practice forms they might need to complete.

## Documentation

Clear documentation ensures that all parties understand their responsibilities and that placements are structured, safe, and compliant with agreed standards.

Parties may all benefit from having a copy of:

- a memorandum of understanding for industry placements as part of a collaboration for Health T Levels

[Download a template memorandum of understanding \(Word\)](#)

- a [Health T Level role description \(Word\)](#).
- an honorary contract – [access an honorary contract template](#)
- what a student can/cannot do in different settings - see the [student checklist – adult nursing example \(Word\)](#)
- an [assessment of student employability skills \(Word\)](#).

# Further resources and information

## Further resources

### Department for Education resources

The DfE provides authoritative guidance for employers offering industry placements:

- [Discover Your Future Workforce](#) - this website is the official T Levels employer hub, providing guidance, resources, and tools for businesses to understand T Levels, connect with local education providers, and learn how to offer industry placements for students.
- [T Level industry placements delivery guidance](#) - this guidance outlines the key roles and responsibilities for providers and employers in delivering a consistently high-quality industry placement experience at each stage of the process.
- Specific information about [industry placements for Health and Science T Levels](#) - detailed advice and best practices for employers in health and science sectors, including how to structure placements, support mentors, and scale opportunities across departments.

## Health Education England

Other resources that support the delivery of high-quality experiences in the workplace for young people are available. While not written specifically for T Level industry placements, they have useful information, templates and other resources that can be adapted by employers to support T Level students on industry placement.

These include:

- NHS England Workforce, Training and Education's [Work Experience Resource Toolkits for Health and Care Organisations](#) - downloadable templates and guidance from Health Education England to help health and care organisations design and deliver high-quality work experience programmes.
- [Work Experience Quality Standard Framework](#) - this is a helpful framework. However, because it is not specifically for T Level industry placements, NHS organisations cannot use it to benchmark themselves as 'gold', 'silver' or 'bronze' T Level employers.

## The ICS Industry Placement Network

The ICS Industry Placement Network is an employer network that supports those working in an ICS to provide T Level industry placements in the health and care system, as well as developing placement models for their areas. During quarterly network meetings and monthly lunch and learn webinars, employers and education providers share stories of best practice, highlight challenges and barriers, and troubleshoot issues collaboratively. Webinars have included an example of clinical placements in midwifery and hints and tips for working with under-18s.

The network also runs 'share and exchange' sessions alongside NHS Employers. Members submit questions or queries in advance but the sessions are free flowing conversations with participants.

The DfE supports the network with up-to-date policy information to help health and care organisations embed T Level industry placements and T Level graduates into future workforce strategies. The network also commissions research to gather evidence to support investment, for example reviewing the actual costs of hosting a placement, innovative placement models and progression opportunities.

For further information, please contact [icsindustryplacementnetwork@gatsby.org.uk](mailto:icsindustryplacementnetwork@gatsby.org.uk).

# Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the people and institutions listed below for sharing their time and knowledge to support this toolkit:

- Simon Bone, Industry Placement Coordinator, NHS Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire ICB
- Emma Gotz, T Level Strategic Lead, Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICS
- Tonia Anderson, Head of Practice Education, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth University Hospitals NHS Trust
- Julie Derbyshire, Head of Apprenticeships and Associate Professor in Nursing, Northumbria University, Newcastle
- Lisa Ferris, Apprenticeships and Careers Team Manager, Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Daniel Busby, Learning and Development Facilitator, Gateshead NHS Foundation Trust
- James O’Keefe, Head of Careers Education and Projects, Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust
- Fiona Lord, Industry Placement Coordinator, NHS North East London
- Nicki Wright, Industry Placement Coordinator, NHS Devon
- Nicola George, Learning in Practice Facilitator, University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust
- Kirandeep Kaur, Widening Participation and Apprenticeship Lead, University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust

We’d also like to thank all those not listed who shared documents with us which helped create the templates offered in the toolkit.

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