



Department
for Education

Working together to deliver post-16 pathway reforms

Sector webinar led by the Minister for Skills
Hosted by the Further Education Commissioner

12 October 2026

Contents

- Welcome and introduction from Ellen Thinnesen, Further Education Commissioner
- Opening remarks from the Minister for Skills
- Implementation timeline and transition arrangements
- Qualification Pioneer perspective
- T Level Ambassador perspective
- Support available and next steps
- Questions and answers

Implementation of Post-16 Pathways

Today: commitment, clarity and action

Commitment

- We are committed to the current reform timetable
- We should work together to maintain momentum towards first teaching from 2027

Clarity

- We will explain changes from 2027
- We will set out the latest transition decisions
- We will share what provider plans tell us

Action

- To use the transition period to plan for change
- To engage with available support

**OCCUPATIONAL
CERTIFICATES**



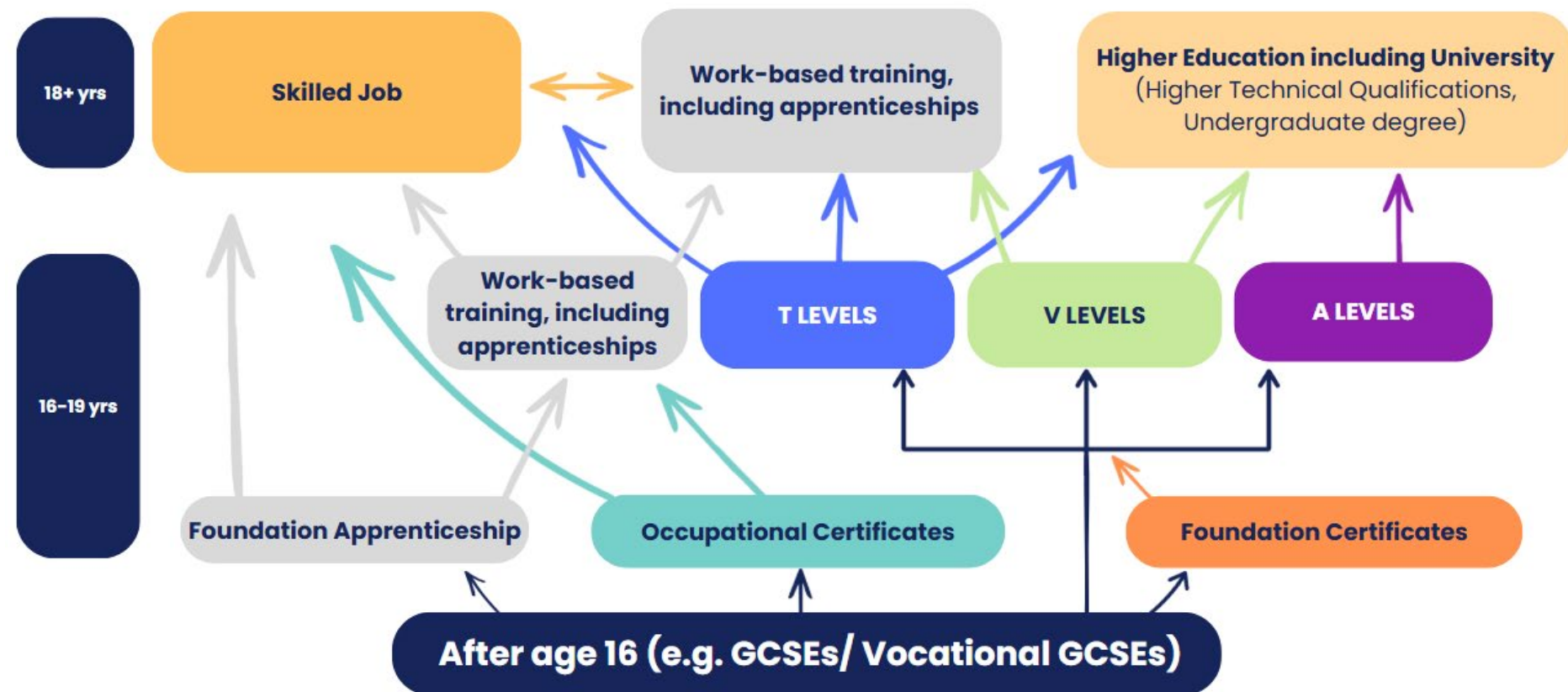
**FOUNDATION
CERTIFICATES**

T-LEVELS

V-LEVELS

A clearer post-16 system

Progression options at age 16



TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

We have set out our Implementation Plan, updated on 17 September

The implementation plan will continue to be updated through the four-year reform period

A clear timetable

- First V Levels, Occupational Certificates and Foundation Certificates taught from September 2027
- Further qualifications introduced in phases
- Updated milestones through the transition period

Managed transition

- Qualifications that overlap with T Levels removed from 2027
- 720 guided learning hour qualifications maintained for 2027-28
- Smaller qualifications, and level 2 qualifications, only removed where V Levels/ reformed level 2 are introduced
- No rules of combination

Practical support

- Professional development and planning resources
- Provider toolkit, including progression maps and communications materials to support open days
- Targeted provider follow-up informed by provider plans

Implementation: what happens next for 2027 first teach



A phased, route-by-route rollout for future years

	AY 2027 to 2028	AY 2028 to 2029	AY 2029 to 2030	AY2030 to 2031
Occupational Certificates	• Education and Early Years: Early years practitioner • Catering and Hospitality: Culinary Skills; Hospitality (Food and Beverage Team and Accommodation Team)	• Business and Finance: Accounts and Finance Assistant; Assistant Administrator; Digital Administration • Health and Care Services: Adult Care Worker; Healthcare Support Worker • Construction (On-site): Bricklayer; Carpentry and Joinery • Construction (Finishing Trades): Floor Layer; Painter and Decorator; Plasterer; Wall and Floor Tiler • Engineering and Manufacturing: Autocare Technician; Engineering Operative; Welder • Sports and Leisure: Community sport and leisure operations	• Construction: Domestic Plumber • Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care: Animal Care; Dog Groomer; Equine Groom; General Farm Worker; Land-based Service Engineer • Horticulture and Floristry: Floristry; Forestry and Arboriculture; Horticulture or Landscape; Construction Operative	• Creative and Design: CAD Technician (2D Design) • Hair and Beauty: Barbering Professional; Beauty Therapist; Hairdressing; Nail Services Technician
Foundation Certificates	• Digital Systems and Data • Education	• Business, Administration and Law • Construction and the Built Environment • Engineering and Manufacturing • Health and Care Services • Science • Sport, Fitness and Exercise Science	• Agriculture, Land Management and Animal Care • Hospitality and catering • Protective Services	• Creative Media and Design • Travel and Tourism • Hair, Beauty and Aesthetics • Performing Arts
V Levels	• Accounting and Finance • Digital Systems and Data • Education	• Construction Design • Engineering Design • Engineering and Manufacturing • Health • Healthcare Science and Technology • Legal Services • Science Research and Technology • Sport and Exercise Science • Business Management, and Supply Chains • Marketing and Retail • Social Care	• Agriculture and Land Management • Animal Care and Management • Protective Services	• Art and Performing Arts • Creative Media and Design • Travel and Tourism
T Levels	Current T Levels	• Social Care • Sport Physical Activity and Health	• Catering and Hospitality • Expansion of Agriculture, • Environment and Animal Care • Protective Services	• Art, Performing Arts, Creative and Design • Hair and Beauty • Travel and Tourism

Possible V Level subject combinations in 2028

Applied Science	Health and Social care	Business
• Science research and technology • Healthcare science and technology • Sport and exercise science	• Health • Social care • Healthcare science and technology	• Business management and supply chains • Accounting and finance • Marketing and retail

Illustrative V Level programmes - not prescribed combinations.

There will be no national rules of combination: providers can build coherent programmes around learners and their intended destinations.

Ofqual consultation response: Regulating post-16 vocational and technical qualifications at levels 2 and 3

Ofqual Regulatory Conditions:

- V Level Grading - Ofqual set a 7-point grading scale for V Levels, A* to E, plus P and U. The P grade is a pass and is intended to recognise achievement at a level below the A*-E.
- First V Levels – 40% timetabled assessment, 60% other forms of assessment.
- The new framework sets clear expectations for how awarding organisations must design, assess, grade and maintain standards across V Levels, Foundation Certificates and Occupations Certificates.

UCAS Tariff Points:

On 17 September UCAS confirmed the V Level tariff points. These are equal to those for A Levels at A* -E.

V Level Grade	UCAS Tariff Point
A*	56
A	48
B	40
C	32
D	24
E	16
P	12

STPS findings

Preparing for new qualifications

Response rate

1,944 providers responded, covering about **90%** of 16–19 students.

T Level delivery is set to grow

Providers expect to expand T Level delivery by 2027/28, with the strongest projected growth in Business and Digital routes.

General FE leads planned delivery

General further education colleges remain the provider type most likely to offer T Levels, with **98%** planning delivery in 2027/28.

Planned delivery by provider type

General FE colleges

Sixth-form colleges

School sixth forms

V Levels

70% of general FE colleges, **85%** of sixth-form colleges and **39%** of school sixth forms plan to deliver.

General FE

Sixth form

School sixth forms

70%

85%

39%

Foundation Certificates

88% of general FE colleges, **64%** of sixth-form colleges and **11%** of school sixth forms plan to deliver.

General FE

Sixth form

School sixth forms

88%

64%

11%

Occupational Certificates

87% of general FE colleges, **18%** of sixth-form colleges and **6%** of school sixth forms plan to deliver.

General FE

Sixth form

School sixth forms

87%

18%

6%

We will keep working closely with providers and representative bodies to monitor readiness, identify emerging risks and target support where it is needed most.

What providers can do now

Practical actions for the 2026 to 2027 planning year:

- 1 Review your future years' strategic curriculum approach
- 2 Map learner demand and progression routes
- 3 Identify the delivery barriers where you may need further support
- 4 Use draft specifications and published progression materials as they become available
- 5 Use the new T Level industry-placement framework to widen employer participation
- 6 Involve governors and boards, leaders, careers colleagues, MSAs and local partners

Sector engagement and delivery support

Working with the sector

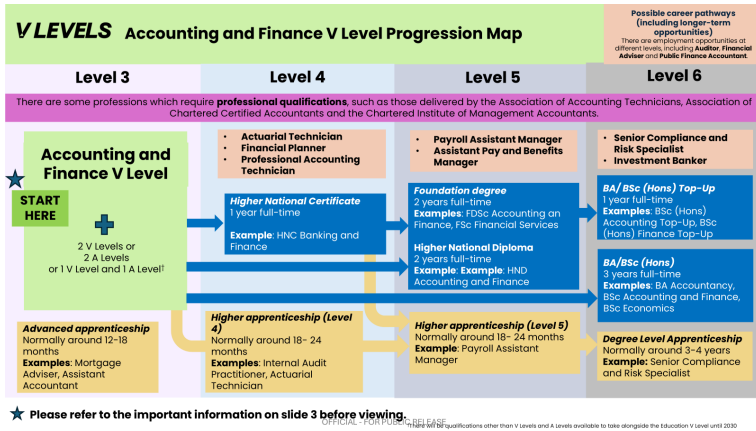
- Qualification Pioneers and provider networks
- TVQ Stakeholder Steering Group
- Subject Development and Review Groups
- T Level Delivery Group
- Level 2 and Below Systems Design Working Group
- Technical and Vocational Qualifications (TVQ) HE Network
- Creative Qualifications policy group
- Regional engagement to capture local insight

Support for delivery

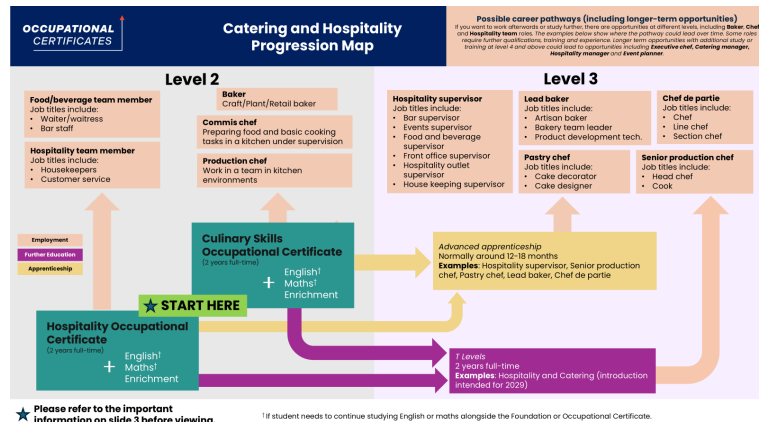
- Post-16 pathways Implementation plan
- Post-16 pathways support pack and progression maps
- Technical and Vocational Professional Development (TVPD)
- DfE Post-16 SEND In-House Training Materials
- Targeted support informed by STPS findings
- Awarding organisation materials

Progression maps

V Levels

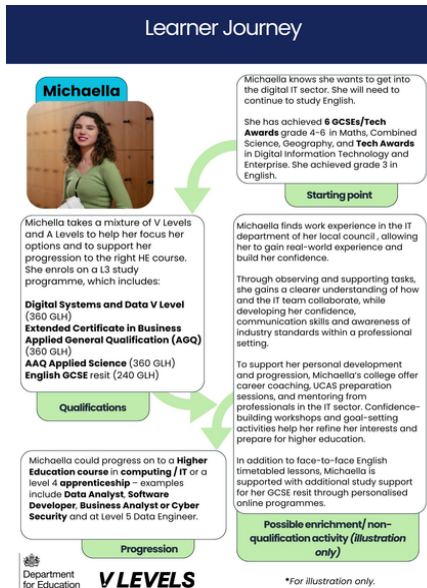


Level 2 pathways

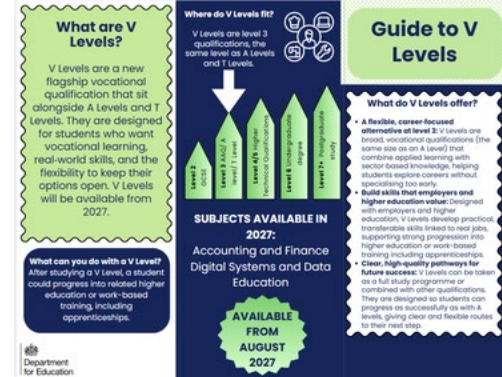


Post-16 Support pack

Learner journeys



Explainers



Posters



T Levels

**Sophie Pinn: Deputy
Director DfE T Levels**

Scaling up T Levels

- Continued expansion of high-quality T Level delivery
- Ongoing work to support manageability and scale-up through streamlining of content and assessment
- Implementing Ofqual's change to allow retakes of individual Core exam papers rather than the full set
- Greater flexibility under the updated industry placement guidance
- Practical examples from providers delivering placements at scale
- Partnership with employers and public services to expand opportunities
- T Level Delivery Group providing valuable advice on measures to strengthen the deliverability and appeal of T Levels
- Support available to help providers plan and deliver placements

The new industry placement delivery framework allows placements to be fully tailored to their local context

All industry placements must still be:

- Overseen by an employer, or employers
- Last a minimum of 315 hours (or 750 for Early Years Educator OS)
- Allow students to develop relevant technical and employability skills

But beyond these requirements, providers can **make case-by-case decisions on how placements are delivered**, considering the needs, abilities and aspirations of their students and the working practices and capacity of their local employers.

73% of providers surveyed said the new industry-placement framework would have some or a great deal of impact on employer involvement; a further 11% expected an impact in some sectors or routes.

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust

Small-team projects let first-year Health T Level students work on employer-set patient scenarios before entering clinical settings. A three-student pilot is expected to grow to around 100 participants this year.

Tech Cornwall

A lead-employer model coordinated placements for 18 Digital T Level students, with SMEs supplying live web and app projects. Students worked with several clients, while small employers could participate with less administration.

There is no requirement for work experience in V Levels, although work experience remains an important part of 16-19 study programmes and is encouraged.

All limits on placement delivery approaches have been removed

APPROACH	HOURS	DESCRIPTION
Work taster activities	Recommend up to 35 hours	Short-term activities like shadowing, site visits, or team meetings.
Pathway or route-level	All placement hours	Placement can cover broader areas across the T level, not just the student's occupational specialism.
Part-time work	All placement hours	Allows students to count part-time work relevant to their T level learning outcomes.
Multiple employers	All placement hours	Placement hours can be split between multiple employers. We recommend no more than two unless the student would benefit or it suits working practice of a sector.
Hybrid (remote)	Typically, 20%	More than 20% can be used if aligned with sector practices. Student must have a suitable environment at home or work from provider's site.
Small Team Projects /Skills Hub	Up to a third of hours is the recommended maximum time, although this is not capped	Students' complete activities in small teams or work in simulated environments under employer supervision.
Using the provider's site	Can be used for any student if the work is relevant, not supervised by their course tutor and outside their normal learning environment.	

Qualification Pioneer T Level Ambassador

FROM REFORM TO IMPLEMENTATION

Practical reflections from NSCG for 16–19 provider leaders.

01**LEARNER**

Understand
our learners

02**PLAN**

Design the
whole programme

03**TEST**

Stress-test
delivery

04**DELIVER**

Build readiness
now

Shelley Brown | Deputy Principal, NSCG

DfE Qualification Pioneer | 12 October 2026 | Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group

NSCG CONTRIBUTING TO REFORM READINESS



DfE
Qualification Pioneer



FE Commissioner
Quality Group



Subject Content
Panellists



Secondment of staff
to DfE



Assessment Reform
Panel Groups



West Midlands Technical &
Vocational Education Hub (TVE)

02 | LOCAL CONTEXT

Mapping the Reform: Understanding Our Learners and Future Pathways

Using our existing provision and learner profiles to identify future pathways, progression opportunities and potential gaps.

01 | MAP

Our current L2/L3 programmes against the 2027–30 reform and funding timeline.

c11,500
learners

02 | PROFILE

Learner volumes, starting points, English and maths, outcomes, barriers and destinations.

7,442
aged 16–18

03 | REFRAME

From replacing BTECs to designing the whole programme around each learner.

69%
with a barrier to learning

04 | PRIORITISE

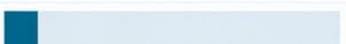
High-volume areas, pathway gaps, workforce pressures and placements.

38.8%
English and/or maths resit profile

LEVEL 2 | 1,340 learners (18% of 16–18 cohort)

Average GCSE points on entry

3.1

Need English and/or maths resits		72.4% (c970 learners)
Don't have 2+ sciences		86.1% (c1,154 learners)
From bottom 20% IMD		26.2% (c351 learners)
Receive bursary		23.7% (c317 learners)
Have an EHCP		6.3% (c85 learners)

c60%

of Level 2 learners currently progress to Level 3 vocational courses.

Reform changes both ends of the pathway.

LEVEL 3 VOCATIONAL | 3,489 learners (47% of 16–18 cohort)

Average GCSE points on entry

A Level		6.4
T Level		4.9
L3 Vocational		4.2

Need English and/or maths resits

A Level		0.4%
T Level		6.3%
L3 Vocational		27.9%

Don't have 2+ sciences

A Level		10.9%
T Level		36.5%
L3 Vocational		60.0%

One transition plan — and a practical view of readiness

Curriculum leads the design; the wider organisation tests delivery, with SMT and Corporation oversight.

GOVERNANCE | Oversight • Assurance • Strategic alignment

CURRICULUM
Future offer • learner fit • entry • progression

FINANCE + MIS
Volumes • viability • funding • evidence

WORKFORCE
Expertise • CPD • recruitment • deployment

TIMETABLING + ESTATES
GLH • combinations • rooms • capacity

ADMISSIONS + CAREERS
Pathway fit • interviews • IAG • destinations

STUDENT SUPPORT
SEND • barriers • English/maths • transition

MARKETING + SCHOOLS
Prospectus • events • school briefings

EMPLOYERS + HE
Relevance • placements • recognition • progression

READINESS HEATMAP (illustrative)

Area	Path	Learner	Staff	Finance	Employer	Estate	IAG	Overall
Health	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Engineering	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Business	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Digital / IT	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Education	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

RED PRIORITIES → ACTION LOG

Health: learner fit	Model future L2 / T / V routes	Director	Dec 26
Health: placements	Agree capacity plan with employers	Director / EE	Jan 27
Engineering: workforce	Workforce and CPD plan	VP / HR	Jan 27

04 | WHAT TO DO THIS TERM

If you do five things this term, do these

By January 2027, providers should know their exposure, priorities, owners, dependencies and next decisions.

1 | OWN

| Executive lead | Board visibility | One transition plan | Issues log

2 | MAP

| Transition map | Whole L2/L3 offer | Learner overlay | Reform timeline

3 | PRIORITISE

| RAG readiness | 3–5 highest-risk areas | Latest decision points

4 | CREATE CAPACITY

| Protected planning days | Finance | HR | MIS | Timetabling | Careers | Support

5 | LOOK OUTWARD

| Schools | Careers advisers | Employers | HE | Awarding organisations

NSCG is already doing this through curriculum planning days, school/CEIAG work, employer engagement and cross-college implementation planning.

Lessons from scaling T Levels for future delivery

What moving from 24 to c825 learners has taught NSCG about scaling technical education.

01

PLAN FOR SCALE

Forecast demand before recruitment. Placement capacity must shape curriculum planning.

02

ONE EMPLOYER MODEL

Employer Partnership Officers develop strategic relationships across T Levels, apprenticeships and wider provision.

03

DEDICATED LEARNER SUPPORT

Learner Industry Placement Officers prepare, match, monitor and support learners; professional preparation starts early.

04

FLEXIBLE INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Block placements, day release and appropriate multi-employer models. MoD Engineering: five block weeks.

05

PROGRESSION, NOT JUST HOURS

Build technical confidence, employer networks and routes into apprenticeships, jobs and higher education.

THE LESSON FOR 2027: Scale curriculum, employer capacity and learner support together — quality first.

What support do colleges and schools need to move from planning to confident delivery?

Our experience shows that successful delivery depends on clear national support, practical tools and investment in people and partnerships.



CLEARER TIMELINES & GUIDANCE

- Qualification timelines
- Specifications & assessment
- Funding & transition



PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

- Curriculum mapping templates
- Worked delivery models
- Readiness & governance tools



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Subject-specific CPD
- Assessment & industry updating
- Specialist recruitment support



EMPLOYER CAPACITY

- National employer engagement
- Placement capacity & SMEs
- Flexible placement models



CEIAG & PROGRESSION

- Consistent pathway messages
- Clear progression routes
- Impartial careers guidance



PEER LEARNING & PRACTICE

- Test & share approaches
- Pioneers & TVE Hubs
- Provider case studies

OUR CONCLUSION:

Timely guidance, practical support and shared learning will help providers move from planning to delivery.



**Bristol, North Somerset
and South Gloucestershire**
Integrated Care Board



Gloucestershire
Integrated Care Board



The Employer Perspective

Simon Bone: MSc. Chartered MCIPD
Strategic Workforce Lead.

Chair. DfE T Level Ambassador Network (South Region)

October 2026

From Curriculum Qualification to Workforce Pipeline

Why the BNSSG ICB chose as a system to engage with T Levels



Help shape our future skills need through curriculum influence



Helps students understand the breadth of clinical and non-clinical careers



Collective responsibility to develop skills and workplace readiness



Gives our HSC employers early access to diverse local talent



Linking placement to career pathways through apprenticeships, employment and further study



Utilised Workforce Data and LMI to inform conversations

Successful placements are built through partnership

What employers need from providers

- One clear point of contact and ongoing communication
- Early notice of numbers, dates and placement modelling- shared ownership
- Clear explanation of student learning outcomes and readiness
- Well managed and clear expectations of all stakeholders
- Agreed roles for safeguarding, induction, supervision and reviews
- Realistic matching between the student, curriculum and workplace
- Responsive support when circumstances change

What has worked in BNSSG

- System-wide coordination rather than separate employer approaches
- Curriculum co-design and placement sequencing
- Shared preparation, induction and placement arrangements
- Communities of practice for joint problem-solving
- Clear communication before, during and after placement
- Flexible models, including blocks, day release, multiple settings and small team projects
- The BNSSG model was developed collaboratively over an extended period before the first clinical placements were hosted, with curriculum co-design, sequencing and clear support arrangements identified as important enablers.
- Ongoing CoP established and enabling sustainability across partners

Scale through simplicity, flexibility and shared ownership

Common barriers

- Operational pressure and limited supervisory capacity
- Concern about age, risk, safeguarding and confidentiality
- Short lead-in times or unclear expectations
- Difficulty identifying suitable activities- quality over quantity
- Placements seen as belonging only to HR or education teams
- Limited connection between placements and real progression opportunities

Advice to provider leaders- Start small, design well, demonstrate impact, then scale

- Lead with the employer's workforce need, not the qualification
- Make the first conversation simple and sector-specific
- Offer a menu of placement models and meaningful activities
- Prepare students to be "workplace ready"
- Build relationships with operational managers, not only senior leaders
- Capture student and employer stories to build internal confidence
- Use T level ambassadors and network to open new doors

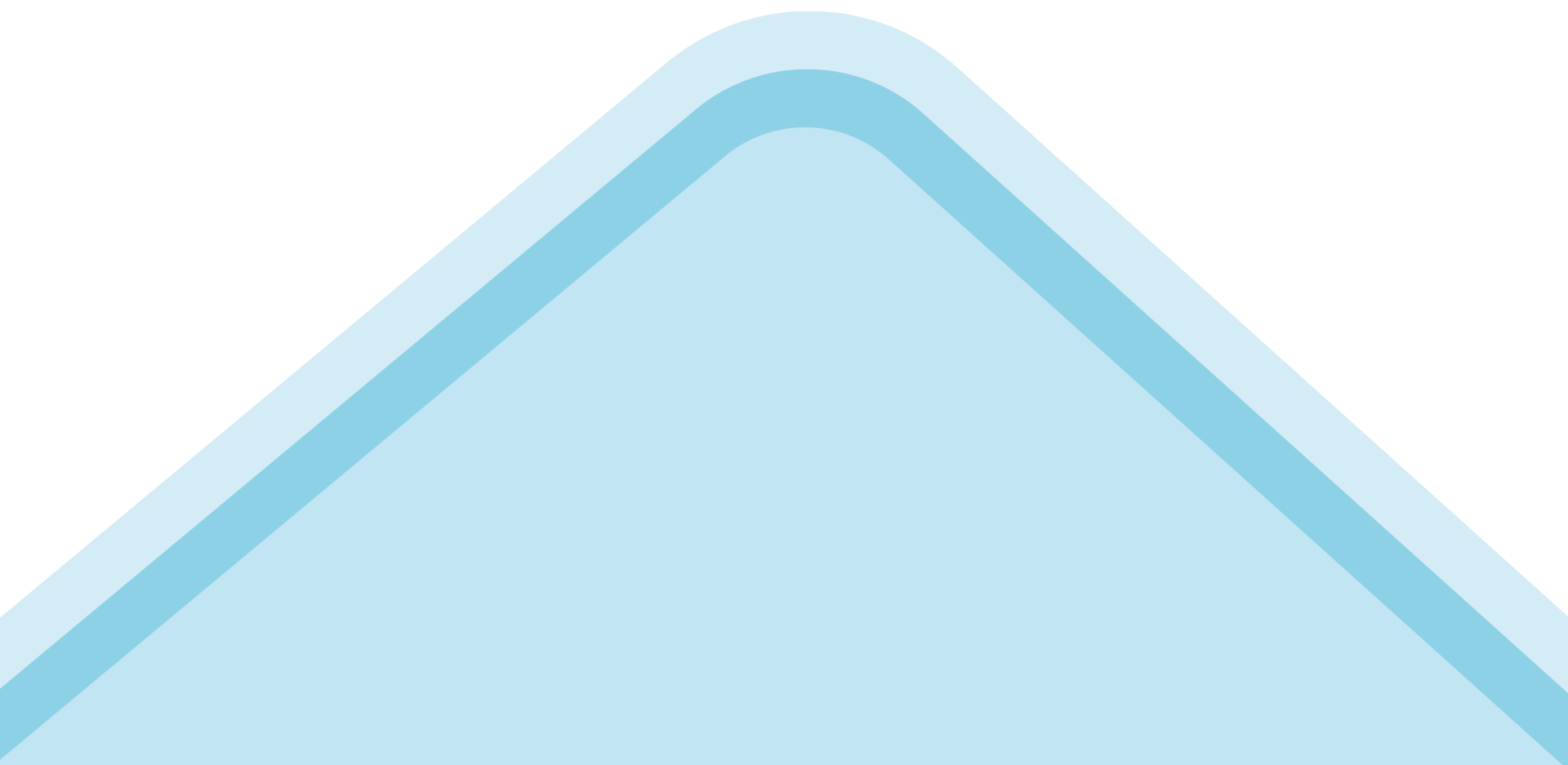
To conclude..

- **Utilise your most valuable assets. The students are the stars!**
- Make it easy for an employer to say yes, and worthwhile for them to say yes again.
- T Levels demonstrate what is possible when employers and education providers co-design talent pathways. The strategic challenge now is to scale those partnerships so that technical education becomes a cornerstone of workforce planning, economic growth and social mobility.
- The greatest opportunity is not the expansion of T Levels themselves, but the creation of a post 16 skills ecosystem where education and employers jointly shape future talent, align learning and skills to workforce need through good data, and take collective responsibility to build the workforce capacity required for long-term sustainability across all sectors.

[Join the T Level Ambassador Network](#)

[T Levels Week 19 to 23 October 2026](#)

Q&A



Department for Education

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