

Department for Education Implementation of T Level Programmes

08 February 2018

London Youth
47-49 Pitfield Street
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About this consultation

On 8 February 2018, the Department for Education finished [consultation](#) on the implementation of its new T level programme.

Following the [Post-16 Skills Plan](#), T levels are a new form of technical qualification delivered by further education providers at level 3 (equivalent to A levels). The first pathways are in Digital, Construction, and Education and Childcare.

About London Youth

[London Youth](#) is a federation of over 400 community youth organisations in London. We are a youth charity on a mission to improve the lives of young people in London, challenging them to become the best they can. Young people need opportunities outside school to have fun with their friends, to learn new skills, to make a positive change in their communities and to shape the city they live in.

We deliver a broad range of meaningful benefits to our members, including funded opportunities, training and professional development, specialist member networks on issues affecting young people, Quality Mark accreditation, policy and influencing voice, and research that evidences the needs of the young people and the youth sector. With members and partners, we deliver sports, arts, and youth social action programmes, as well as the [Talent Match London](#) employability programme to young people in London.

We also run two residential centres, [Hindleap Warren](#) in East Sussex and [Woodrow High House](#) in Buckinghamshire, that help young people develop their skills and confidence through specialist outdoor education.

We directly develop the confidence, resilience and relationship skills of over 27,000 children and young people each year through our programmes and reach tens of thousands more through our membership network.

London Youth believes it is vital to connect those who make decisions with young people and the over 400 youth organisations in our membership. We are able to facilitate:

- Visits to community youth organisations;
- Consultation on specific issues or programmes with young people and youth professionals;
- Dissemination of opportunities or information to community youth organisations; and
- Young people and youth professionals attending and speaking at events.

Our response

Principles of the T level programme

5) Do you agree that the principles outlined above are the right ones on which to base a review of level 3 qualifications we should continue to fund in the new system, alongside T levels and A levels?

No.

We recommend the addition of a principle committing the Department for Education to a youth-led approach that seeks to represent the views and needs of the young people that T levels are primarily aimed at.

Work placements

5) Do you agree that the principles outlined above are the right ones on which to base a review of level 3 qualifications we should continue to fund in the new system, alongside T levels and A levels?

No.

11) Do you agree with the proposed approach integrating the work placement within the T level programme?

No.

We support greater access to work placements for young people through integration with the T level programme. However, we have the following concerns with the proposed approach:

- While we support the idea of meaningful work placements, we have concerns about the lack of mention of taster days or introductory sessions before the beginning of the compulsory 45-60 day work placement. We believe that the best results come from informed choices for young people.
- We support paying young people on work placements the London Living Wage (or National Living Wage). The chance to earn while learning is a major incentive to pursue the vocational or further education pathway.
- We believe that there needs to be more detailed principles about providing financial and other support to young people, as this is largely at the discretion of providers. We suggest principles such as addressing wider needs and committing to paying in advance.

12) Do you agree with the proposed method of appraising the student's performance on their work placement, including the Employer Reference?

Yes.

13) Do you agree with the proposed approach to quality assurance set out above?

No.

We consider that the provider should have responsibility for assessing the young people's wider needs and ensuring that these are met. This should include ensuring that issues such as travel

costs, mental health issues, child care, and living situation do not prevent a barrier to completion of a work placement.

We consider that there should also be particular consideration of inclusivity with potential employers and well-signposted support in cases of discrimination, including on age, race, and gender grounds.

14) What additional support or further modifications should be available to those with greater needs or special circumstances (such as caring responsibilities) during a work placement?

We suggest that all support should be adaptive to the unique needs of individual young people and take into account wider needs.

Support should be provided in such a way that it does not provide an additional barrier to attendance at or completion of a work placement. For example, financial support should be paid in advance, rather than arrears, so that young people are able to meet transport, clothing, or other work-related expenses.

We have seen the success of part-time arrangements in apprenticeships and support the same approach for work placements. These allow young people to meet the other commitments in their lives, such as childcare or other caring responsibilities. Young people should be given the option of maintaining similar hours during work placements as during other portions of the T level programme.

15) How can we support students to access work placements relevant to their course in areas where there are no employers to offer work placements nearby?

Through the partnership between Movement to Work and Talent Match London (our Big Lottery-funded employability programme), we have experience with work experience programmes.

One such programme that has been singled out for its effectiveness by young people is a 2 week Centrica/British Gas work experience scheme at the corporate headquarters. Young people were extremely positive about the fact that the programme covered all travel and accommodation costs. This allowed young people, many of whom were from areas with the highest deprivation in London, to attend an event that would have been otherwise outside of their reach.

16) Do you agree with our suggested approach to providing students with financial support whilst on a work placement?

Yes.

20) Would employers value a recognition in delivering work placements, for example through a form of 'kitemarking'?

We support accreditation or other recognition of employers delivering work placements. Accreditation is an important way of recognising good practice among employers working with

young people, and providing assurance to young people taking up an opportunity with an unfamiliar employer.

Along with Youth Employment UK and national Talent Match partners, London Youth was involved in the development and implementation of the Talent Match Mark accreditation scheme. The framework recognises and celebrates employers who support young people in their journeys to work.

Flexibility and progression in technical education

26) How can T levels be designed in a way that enables students to progress onto apprenticeships?

We suggest that for apprenticeships and T levels to be seen as a genuine alternative pathway to A-levels and university, they need to be given equivalent emphasis. For example, we have heard of young people being discouraged from pursuing apprenticeships by their families who see them as less attractive options.

Measures to increase the viability of the T level and apprenticeship pathway could include modifying school funding that incentivises university entrance and a UCAS-equivalent for the further education sector.

Meeting the needs of all learners

30) How should we adapt T levels for adults so that they meet the needs of adult learners?

We consider a focus on older young people (18-25 years old) to be of particular importance. This should focus on both outreach and support for older young people, particularly those re-entering the education or training after a hiatus.

Get in touch



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