



Homecare Association

Homecare Association consultation response

Our replies are in black below.

T Level in social care content consultation – deadline 9 August 2026

[Post 16 Pathways – T Level Outline Content - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#)

Annex A: Consultation questions for online survey portal

Section A: About You

1. Name

Carole Broughton

2. Email address

policy@homecareassociation.org.uk

3. Are you responding as an individual or part of an organisation

- Individual
- Organisation

Organisation

4. If you are responding as an individual, how would you describe yourself?

- Student
- Teacher
- Parent
- Academic
- Other – If other, please specify here

5. If you are responding for an organisation, what type of organisation is this?

- School
- FE College

- Sixth Form College
- University
- Awarding Organisation
- Sector Body
- Employer
- Other - If other, please specify here

Business representative organisation. The Homecare Association is the UK's leading membership body for homecare providers. We represent 2,100 homecare providers of varying sizes. Our mission is to ensure society values and invests in homecare, so we can all live well at home and flourish in our communities. We act as a trusted voice, taking a lead in shaping homecare in collaboration with partners across the care sector and providing hands-on support and practical tools for our members. The Homecare Association's members agree to abide by the Association's Code of Practice.

6. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, what is the name of your organisation?

Homecare Association

7. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, what is your role within the organisation?

Policy Specialist

Section B: Which T Level

Which qualification would you like to respond to?

This questionnaire is seeking views on the proposed outline content for new T Levels in

Sport and Social Care.

You do not need to respond to both. Please focus on the one that is most relevant to your expertise or interests.

If you do wish to respond to both, please return to the start to complete a new form for the other qualification.

8. Which T Level are you responding to? [Select one]

- Sport T Level
- Social Care T Level

Section C (if applicable): Sport T Level – not applicable

Section D (if applicable): Social Care T Level

This page gathers views on the outline content for the Social Care T Level. Please use the outline content document to inform your responses.

17. To what extent does the proposed outline content enable students to achieve the aims of the qualification?

- Fully
- Mostly
- Partly
- Not at all
- Unsure

Follow-on question to all answers: Please explain your answer.

Our understanding is the Social Care T Level aims to impart the key knowledge, concepts, and practical skills needed by the social care industry, along with the ability to apply these in real contexts, so students are ready for entry into skilled employment, an apprenticeship, or related technical study through further or higher education.

As Skills for Care report, the growth of the social care workforce depends largely on international recruitment, with a declining number of British nationals in the workforce, no obvious drivers of new domestic recruitment, and falling qualification levels when care roles are becoming more complex (note 1).

In 2024/25, there were around 575,000 filled posts in Care Quality Commission-regulated independent homecare providers in England, including about 500,000 direct care-providing filled posts (note 1). Although the vacancy rate for homecare has decreased from a peak of 13.1% in March 2022 to 9.1% in March 2026, this is still more than double the care home vacancy rate, which stands at around 4 % (note 2). Monthly tracking data suggest the turnover rate for directly employed staff in homecare was 25.3% in June 2026 (note 3). The under 25 age group is an important part of the adult social care workforce, particularly in direct care roles. Workers aged 24 or younger fill about 9% of careworker posts (note 4).

Notes:

1. Skills for Care (2025) [The 'State of' report](#) (figures from the filter under the 'Employment Overview' tab).
2. Skills for Care (2026) [The size and structure of the adult social care sector and workforce in England Workforce supply and demand trends 2025/26](#)
3. Skills for Care (2026) [Recruitment and retention](#)
4. Skills for Care (2025). ['The state of the adult social care sector and workforce in England, 2025'](#), page 88.

With funding for existing Level 3 Health and Social Care qualifications for 16–19-year-olds ceasing, and the Health T Level focused mainly on the health sector, the new T Level in Social Care is potentially very important to provide a route into social care for young people of 16-19, and those under 25 who do not have a Level 3 qualification who wish to work in social care.

We therefore welcome the Social Care T Level as the main classroom-based course in social care for 16–19-year-olds from September 2028 (complementing the Health T Level) and plans to extend it to young adults who do not already have a level 3 qualification. We believe it is essential the homecare sector can attract and retain younger people in the workforce, and that they are appropriately trained, to prepare for a career in care. We note the Rt Hon Alan Milburn's [interim report](#) into Young People and Work, published on 28 May 2026, found that nearly one million young people aged 16 to 24 in the UK are not in education, employment or training, a figure that could reach 1.25 million within five years without reform. This situation strengthens the case for attractive vocational routes such as this T Level. We support efforts to encourage young people to undertake the Social Care T Level, to start a career in social care.

To achieve its aim, it is essential that this T level presents a balanced and current view of the social care sector in England, including care delivered in the home by homecare providers, in care homes and by supported living and other specialist services. The proposed outline content provides a satisfactory introduction but is missing key content and is out of date in several respects, as detailed below.

Core outline content for T Level in social care

Core Knowledge for social care

Element: Foundations of social care

Knowledge: Social care

Bullet point: Models of social care provision

This section does not give students a sufficient sense of the size and relative proportions of the social care sector, with its mix of different types of services and providers who may be in the public, private and voluntary sectors. We suggest there should be a separate bullet point on size and structure of the social care market, drawing on Skills for Care and Care Quality Commission data. The content should explain the interrelationship with healthcare, for example, how Integrated Care Systems and Integrated Care Boards operate and how the Neighbourhood Health framework will fit in. The content should also recognise that social care services, including homecare, are essential to ensure the prompt discharge of people from hospital, and properly trained careworkers are increasingly carrying out delegated health tasks, in people's homes, under the supervision of healthcare professionals.

Knowledge: Social care funding (England)

Bullet point: Funding pressures

This needs to include 'Inadequate local authority and health commissioning rates', which is the major funding pressure in social care. Local authorities and the NHS purchase approximately 80% of homecare but routinely pay rates far below what homecare providers need to meet their legal obligations. In 2025/26, 29% of councils and HSC Trusts paid average rates below the direct employment costs of careworkers at the National Living Wage (Homecare Association (2025), [The-Homecare-Deficit-2025 report](#)).

Bullet point: External influences on funding stability

This needs to include 'Economic and political influences'. For example, increasing petrol and diesel prices caused by disruption to shipping in the Strait of Hormuz have affected the homecare sector, as the homecare workforce is highly mobile and travels many miles going from visit to visit to provide care.

Bullet point: 'Public trust and confidence'

This needs to include 'Lack of public awareness of care services, eligibility and costs'. People commonly do not realise that publicly provided social care is subject to strict eligibility conditions that only assist the neediest cases, and is means-tested rather than free, like the NHS.

Knowledge: Multi-agency working

This needs an additional bullet point for 'Neighbourhood health teams'.

Knowledge: Whistleblowing and complaints

This needs to include the 'Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman', and care providers' 'Duty of Candour'.

Knowledge: Roles, duties, and scope of practice

Bullet point: Roles within care and support services

This could include a bullet point for 'Care Co-ordinator', an important role in homecare, which leads on the allocation of care staff and rostering of home visits.

Bullet point: Duties and responsibilities

This could include bullet points for: 'Observing Code of Conduct for support workers. For more, see Code of Conduct' and 'Treating everyone supported with dignity and respect, and not discriminating against any person receiving care on any protected ground'.

Knowledge: Legislation and regulation

Add bullet point: Employment Rights Act 2025.

This section should include regulations made under the individual Acts, together with case law and guidance interpreting the legislation.

Knowledge: Communication in social care

This should include a bullet point for 'Communicating with legal representatives and advocates'.

Knowledge: Teamwork and partnership working

This needs to include a bullet point for 'Delegated healthcare' and 'private sector' in the list of organisations following 'external partnership working'.

Knowledge: Lifespan development

This needs to include a bullet point on 'Gender and gender identity'.

Knowledge: Nutrition and hydration

This needs a bullet point for 'Swallowing and PEG feeding'.

Knowledge: Evidence-based practice

This needs the addition of 'Complaints and reporting procedures'. Please note the term 'service user' is no longer used in social care. Expressions like 'person receiving care' or 'person supported' are preferable.

Knowledge: Cyber security and digital safety

This needs a bullet point for 'Bring Your Own Device policies for mobile phone use'.

Knowledge: Record keeping

This needs a bullet point for 'Principles of medication recording'.

Knowledge: Using information to support care

Suggest add 'Support shared care' to the list under 'Using information to'.

Knowledge: Legal and ethical frameworks

This needs a bullet point for 'Care regulatory requirements'.

Occupational specialism outline content for T Level in social care (adult social care).

Performance outcome 1: gather, record and share information to support assessment and review processes

Person centred and strengths-based care

Skills

Suggest add a bullet point for 'Understand the principles of delegated healthcare'.

Knowledge: Data and information

Bullet point Quantitate (should this read 'Quantitative?'): Please add 'and medication' after 'medical'.

Knowledge: Legislation, regulations, ethics, policies, codes of conduct

Suggest add 'Health and Social Care Act 2008' to the list of legislation. Strictly, the list of legislation should include regulations made under the individual Acts, and associated caselaw and guidance.

Knowledge: Communication

Suggest add 'culture', after 'language' in third bullet point.

Performance outcome 3: support team members by assisting with routine care tasks, following instructions, and promoting positive working relationships

Knowledge: Principles of teamwork/collaborative working

This needs a bullet point 'Personal safety' after 'Lone working and dispersed team contexts'.

Performance outcome 4: apply sustainable practices when assisting with care activities

Knowledge: Strategies to reduce resource use in social care settings.

This needs a bullet point: 'Understand environmental and sustainability issues relating to working in people's own home'.

Performance outcome 5: assist in the review and evaluation of an individual's care needs and wellbeing for stakeholders

Skills

Suggest add a bullet point 'Determine the outcome sought by the person receiving care'.

18. How well does the proposed outline content support progression to employment, higher education or an apprenticeship?

- Very well
- Fairly well
- Not very well
- Not well at all
- Unsure

Follow-on question to all answers: What changes, if any, should be made to the content to strengthen progression?

The outline content could be stronger on how the social care sector operates from a business point of view, for example, the role of local and NHS authorities in commissioning care services from social care providers and how pricing affects the amount and quality of care delivered. It should also describe the balance between public, private, and voluntary sector-provided care, so students have a sense of the employment options and career pathways open to them.

19. To what extent do you think the outline content prepares students for progression into skilled employment (including apprenticeships) in the given sector?

- Very well
- Fairly well
- Not very well
- Not well at all
- Unsure

Follow-on question to all answers: What changes, if any, should be made to prepare students better.

Assuming the T Level course includes the Care Certificate, or its equivalent, then students who successfully complete the qualification will be prepared for employment at careworker level and ready to progress within the sector. Although the T Level is a

Level 3 qualification, mapped to Lead Adult Social Care Worker, in practice new recruits would start their careers at entry-level care work. Homecare sector employers rarely offer apprenticeships because new recruits can start work as careworkers, generally earning more than apprentices.

20. Is the outline content set at an appropriate level of demand for level 3 students?

- Too demanding
- Appropriate
- Not demanding enough
- Unsure

Follow-on question to all answers: What changes, if any, are needed to the content to ensure it meets the expected level of learner demand for a Level 3 qualification?

If you are referring to the academic demands on the student, we will leave education specialists to respond, as they are more familiar with the demands of equivalent qualifications.

21. Are there any issues associated with delivering any of this content that should be considered to ensure that the content is manageable for providers to deliver?

Free Text

Training providers delivering this content need to convey to students the business context in which most social care provision takes place. Independent and voluntary sector providers deliver the most homecare, working under contracts with statutory commissioners; a similar model operates in the care home sector.

Colleges also need to be aware of legal and policy changes underway in health and social care which mean this content will need updating before course delivery and kept up to date thereafter. For example, the rollout of the [Neighbourhood Health](#) policy in England and implementation of the Employment Rights Act 2025.

22. Is the content deliverable within the proposed size for the qualification (1080 GLH)?

- Yes

- No
- Don't Know

Follow on question to all answers: If No/Don't Know, please explain.

We will leave education specialists to respond to this question.

23. Is the title of the qualification appropriate?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

Follow on question to all answers: If No/Don't Know, what title do you suggest?

24. Does the content have the potential to have a disproportionate impact, positive or negative, on specific groups, in particular those who share a 'protected characteristic' (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) or those from lower socio-economic backgrounds?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

Follow on question to all answers: If Yes/Don't Know, please explain.

As well as our equality, diversity and inclusion suggestions above, we note the potential positive impact. A funded, classroom-based route into skilled employment may particularly benefit young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and a workforce in which women and people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are strongly represented. Some may need support with literacy before doing this.

25. Is there anything else about the outline content that you would like to provide feedback on?

The success of the T Level in producing potential recruits for the homecare sector will depend not only on course content, but the practicality for employers of being able to meet the work placement requirements.

Homecare employers have very specific requirements when providing work placements, to accompany this content, owing to work patterns in the sector and the vulnerability of people receiving care. Careworkers travel to people's homes to provide care, often visiting 8 – 10 people in a working day. Care is personal in nature, so client consent is always required before a student can accompany an experienced care worker on a home visit.

Much of the guidance and online material describing existing T Levels does not acknowledge that, in the homecare sector, work is mobile rather than taking place 'on site', nor are the sensitivities around providing care highlighted. Younger students would not perform personal care or demanding tasks such as moving and handling until they reach age 18. Students under 18 also cannot be left unsupervised with people receiving care. Homecare employers would need a considerable amount of flexibility to design workable work placements around non-personal care, care needs assessments and care administration. As many are small employers, they may wish to join with other employers like care homes or supported living, to give students experience in different settings and reduce the burden of providing and supervising a placement for the required duration. We suggest DfE work with sector bodies, including the Homecare Association, to produce homecare-specific industry placement guidance.

It would also be helpful if colleges and training providers familiarised themselves with the needs of homecare providers and linked with local employers. This would ensure they can help students to understand the expectations of our sector and assist employers to offer suitable work placements.

Submitted via online survey portal 3 August 2026