



Department  
for Education

# **T Level Professional Development programme**

**Evaluation research report**

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Social Research

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# Executive Summary

## The role of T Level Professional Development

The government are introducing new T Level qualifications that will meet the needs of industry and prepare students for entry into skilled employment, an apprenticeship or related technical study through further or higher education. They are two-year courses which are taken after GCSEs and are broadly equivalent to 3 A Levels. T Levels offer students a blend of practical and knowledge-based learning at a school or college plus a substantial industry placement.

The courses are available at selected colleges, schools and other providers across England. To help providers to prepare for these new qualifications the government have created and supported a range of programmes. One of these is the T Level Professional Development programme (TLPD). TLPD offers professional development opportunities, managed and delivered by the Education and Training Foundation (the ETF) in partnership with the Association of Colleges, Association of School and College Leaders, FutureLearn, AlphaPlus, Further Education Associates, Kings College London and Cognition.

T Levels have a phased rollout starting from September 2020. Wave 2 started in September 2021, when 62 providers were expected to offer ten different T Level qualifications across four routes: Construction, Digital, Education and Childcare, and Health and Science.

The TLPD programme is free to access and voluntary. It is designed to be accessible, with different delivery modes including 'bite-sized' webinars through to residentials, complementary to other provision available to providers, and tailored to the needs of different groups within the sector's workforce. Entry to the programme is guided through both an 'Organisational' and 'Individual' Training Needs Analysis (OTNA and ITNA), and supported by Area Relationship and Development Leads (ARDL) who promoted the programme and function as a point of contact. The programme presented diverse opportunities to the further education workforce: introductory modules (Understanding T Levels), training specific for teachers including route-specific support (Role and Route Specific Training), programmes for leaders to manage the introduction (Professional Development for Leaders), opportunities to learn from employers to improve subject and industry knowledge (Industry Insights), and opportunities for networking (Networks) and participation in action research (T Level Resource Improvement Projects – TRIPs). These are described in further detail in the report Introduction (Section 1).

This report presents an evaluation of the reach, engagement and effect of the second phase of TLPD, primarily focused on Wave 2 providers. The evaluation focused on Wave 2 providers in order to trace a cohort from a year pre-delivery through to nearly a full first year of delivery, and understand the role of TLPD throughout this journey. The evidence



used is drawn from monitoring and satisfaction/impact survey data provided by the ETF, results of three surveys with senior leaders (2020, 2021 and 2022) and two surveys with route leaders (2021 and 2022), and 71 case study interviews with eleven providers, six of which participated in interviews in both 2021 and 2022. The evaluation fieldwork only covered Wave 2 providers, whereas the ETF monitoring and survey data extended to all providers. The Wave 2 cohort were mostly General FE providers, and this is reflected in research participation with for example all of the case studies being General FE providers.. The methodology is presented in Appendix A.

## **Participation in TLPD**

Providers were aware that TLPD is available to them, and 61 out of 62 Wave 2 providers engaged with TLPD in some capacity, including 56 who fully completed their OTNA. TLPD is open to any staff from Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funded providers but targeted at T Level providers. Monitoring data recorded 13,853 individual instances of engagement by 8,776 identifiable individuals across the whole programme regardless of provider type or route. Among Wave 2 providers there were 5,358 instances of engagement (meaning for example individuals attended a workshop or network event, or undertook an online course). Because some individuals engage in more than one element there were 3,034 individuals from Wave 2 providers known to have participated in TLPD. Of the Wave 2 providers, the monitoring data shows:

- Teachers and advanced practitioners comprised 63% of participants
- Most individuals engaged just once (58%), while 21% engaged twice and 20% engaged between three and nine times
- 923 Wave 2 individuals completed an ITNA but did not then go on to participate in any other TLPD activities covered by the monitoring data (out of a total of 1,641 who completed an ITNA)
- The TLPD support that attracted the most repeat engagement were those that were specific to the T Level routes or that respondents felt were more tailored to their role
- Both senior leaders (66%) and route leaders (64%) reported that all or most of their teaching staff have engaged with TLPD.

However, this monitoring data only covers direct reach and so under-reports the full reach of TLPD. In the ETF satisfaction and impact surveys 90% of respondents said they intended to share their learning with colleagues. It was clear from the fieldwork that staff who had engaged with TLPD were disseminating learning, slide packs, resources and recordings of sessions (where available) with colleagues. This dissemination is happening both informally and formally. Thus the reach of TLPD is more extensive than the monitoring data reported above would suggest.

TLPD was not the only source of professional development. All providers surveyed reported accessing training from awarding bodies, and most had blended TLPD with a

combination of in-house, network and industry sector body support (described in more detail in Section 2.3). The implication of this for evaluation purposes is that it is not possible to attribute the observed impacts to TLPD alone, as most had received professional development from a range of other sources. That said, during the research, research participants were asked about the specific impacts they would attribute to TLPD.

## **TLPD contribution to preparing the FE workforce for TLPD**

One of the main objectives of TLPD is to ensure that providers are ready to deliver T Levels. The evaluation found that as time progressed both senior and route leaders were more likely to say they were prepared for delivery. Following the commencement of delivery, survey responses suggested that in some instances route leaders' assessments of understanding and knowledge of T Levels declined slightly. In Section 3 of the report, we interpret this finding to be somewhat positive– as route leaders move from 'not knowing to what they don't know' to 'knowing what they don't know' and therefore the change reflects a more realistic assessment of how different T Levels are to other qualifications they teach. 70% of senior leaders said that TLPD significantly improved their readiness to deliver T levels (in Section 3.2 of the report).

Readiness to deliver did not always mean that delivery commenced as planned. Fourteen providers that were due to start delivery of new courses from September 2021 deferred at least one route (most commonly Digital). Section 4 reports this was due to a range of factors, including disruptions due to insufficient learner recruitment (due to lack of awareness, preference for what was known (BTEC), or students with attainment below the eligibility criteria), staffing issues and the inability to adequately resource provision, the COVID-19 pandemic, late or occasionally inadequate preparation material from some awarding bodies, or insufficient employer engagement and placements. Notably, readiness of teachers to teach was not reported as a widespread limiting factor – suggesting that preparation work with teachers, including that delivered through TLPD, was successful in mitigating this as an issue.

## **TLPD effect on teaching**

Teachers and managers were aware that T Levels demanded different forms of pedagogic practice to meet a range of different challenges. These included the use of exam-based summative assessments, more theory and theory at a higher level than other qualifications they teach, the need to teach embedded English, maths and digital well, and aligning the delivery of classroom content with placement experiences. They also reported that they had introduced a range of different teaching practices to support learners. These included initial assessments, enhanced induction, plans for formative assessment and feedback, a focus on employability skills and enhanced pastoral support. TLPD has had a positive influence on supporting these changes. TLPD was

reported to have contributed to improving teaching staff's pedagogical knowledge, more notably in curriculum design, lesson planning, and feedback and assessment. It was also effective at raising awareness of pedagogical challenges, and then connecting peers to discuss how to meet those challenges. Further detail about these effects are presented in Section 5 of the report.

## **Satisfaction and suggested improvements**

In the final survey 84% of senior leaders and 52% of route leaders agreed or strongly agreed they were satisfied with TLPD overall (and over a third of route leaders 'neither agreed or disagreed'), while ETF satisfaction surveys found, across the different strands of TLPD activity, between 87% and 95% of participants who had received support agreed they were satisfied with it. Satisfaction was specifically linked to the comprehensive and accessible nature of the offer, the supportive role played by ARDLs, and the opportunities for networking, collaboration and peer learning. On the latter point, the opportunities TLPD had created to meet and share with other providers were highly valued and seen as a key driver of TLPD's impact. It was suggested this could be further strengthened with greater use of Wave- and subject-specific cohorts.

Those who raised areas for improvement commonly focussed on support being too generic or basic, repetition between courses, issues with how the learning offer is marketed, courses having limited opportunities for networking, support not being timely, and limited sharing of slides and recordings after sessions.

Online and in-person CPD were both considered to have advantages and disadvantages, with the most common preference being for a mixed approach.

## **Achievement of objectives**

The primary objective of TLPD is to ensure that every teacher who teaches a T Level programme has the knowledge and skills they need to teach that programme effectively, in good time prior to first teaching. Evaluation evidence shows that most senior and route leaders regarded their teachers to be fully or mostly prepared to teach and that the TLPD programme has helped them achieve this position, whilst also recognising that other sources of support were sought by some providers to equip them for teaching readiness. Other factors affecting teacher preparedness include the prior skills and experience of teachers, teacher turnover, other training available, and the timeliness of awarding body information. Ongoing professional practice requires teachers to continually update and refine their knowledge and skills – respondents noted there is always room for improvement. Ofsted assessment data may reveal an external assessment of those skills in due course.

The evidence relating to the supporting objectives showed they were achieved in part:

- TLPD Networks and TRIPS meant that teachers teaching T Levels could interact and collaborate with each other on a regional and/or subject specific basis so that they can reflect on and embed their professional development, while other TLPD strands provided opportunities for less formal sharing and collaboration
- The majority of senior leaders and route leaders felt their organisation had been ready for delivery. 'Understanding T Levels' was a popular course which many non-teaching staff engaged with. This helped prepare members of staff who have a role in T Level delivery or need to understand T Levels to carry out their role effectively or advise students, with the knowledge they need to play their part in the successful introduction of T Levels. However, both in surveys and case studies, Learner Services and Administrative staff were reported to have lower levels of knowledge and preparedness than other staff. Some suggested the level of understanding amongst these staff needed to be improved, including to ensure they were equipped for conversations with prospective learners.
- Senior leaders considered their understanding of T Levels to be high while route leaders considered their understanding to be more mixed but mostly high. Professional Development for Leaders and Role and Route Specific Training were routes that were reported to be especially impactful. Those with a leadership role in managing T Level delivery were therefore reported to have the knowledge and skills they need to inspire and lead the change process required for the successful introduction of T Levels.
- The OTNAs/ITNAs were helpful to those completing them and provided useful insights to inform the design of the programme. These alongside the adoption of learning from Phase 1, the activity of ARDLs, and ETF quality processes provide sufficient evidence that the TLPD offer is informed by a detailed understanding of the professional development needs of the Providers that will deliver T Levels and of the teachers working in those Providers.

## **TLPD development**

Professional development will continue to be needed for new providers, new staff, and existing staff in new roles to ensure that they feel knowledgeable, confident and equipped to deliver T Levels. To date TLPD has been an important part of the professional development offer around T Levels. The evaluation findings suggest that TLPD is broadly the correct model – in that it is comprehensive, free to access, available to those who want and need it, and is delivered in ways that are accessible, flexible and with in-built quality assurance.

To enhance reach, improve impact and maintain satisfaction the evaluation report suggests a range of changes for consideration (Section 7).

The first is to ensure that TLPD fills gaps in the market for staff already teaching and supporting T Levels which are not addressed through other sources or providers.

Teachers towards the end of the evaluation period told the evaluation that their professional development needs were different from when they started with T Levels. Their development could be supported by other providers (such as awarding bodies), or from other programmes already supported by DfE and delivered by the ETF. While teachers expressed a wish to continue to engage with TLPD, the offer needs differentiation and it also needs to avoid duplicating other provision.

As the TLPD offer develops it will be important for ARDLs and communications teams to continue to ensure that both past and future participants are aware of the new aspects of the offer. Some suggestions for improvement made by research participants had, in fact, already been enacted but they were unaware of this.

Those elements of TLPD that research participants most frequently said they valued were practical solutions to specific issues. Resources created through TLPD activities or identified during discussions were particularly valued, and there was a desire to ensure they were accessible and actively disseminated through TLPD.

There was strong demand for continuing the opportunities for networking, peer learning and collaboration, given how critical it had been to date. Importantly the preference was for these to be focused on providers at similar stages of delivery and/or delivering courses in the same route. While it was recognised that having experienced providers share learning with less experienced providers was valuable, participants thought this could be facilitated separately by TLPD so it did not detract from the quality and usefulness of participation for more experienced providers.

There is insufficient evidence to confidently assess the extent of support staff engagement TLPD, but the indications are that it was partial. Ensuring that staff who have regular connection with potential learners are knowledgeable about T Levels is vital in the context of shortfalls in learner numbers.

There was evidence of appropriate levels of engagement from senior leaders, but limited evidence of the level of engagement by governors. If providers are offering a small number of courses their governors may not necessarily recognise the potential future impact and opportunities from T Levels. However, ensuring that there is experience and foresight among governors will be important for both T Levels and TLPD.

Finally, the report recognises that the range and quality of monitoring and satisfaction data has improved between the first and extended phases of TLPD. Implementing new customer relationship management and feedback systems during the programme's lifetime has meant that tracking individuals or organisations over the entire period has not always been possible. Ensuring a period of data stability will benefit any future evaluation.

# 1. Introduction

The T Level Professional Development (TLPD) programme offers training and professional development support to staff working in education and training providers who are delivering the government's new T Level qualifications. This introduction section sets out a brief overview of the rollout of T Levels, the TLPD programme, and then introduces the evaluation.

## 1.1 An introduction to T Levels

T Levels are new qualifications with the following features:<sup>1</sup>

- Two-year courses
- Broadly equivalent in size to three A Levels
- Post-GCSE courses generally aimed at 16-19 year olds
- Consist of a technical qualification (covering core industry/sector skills plus specialist skills and knowledge for an occupation) and an industry placement with an employer lasting at least 315 hours (approximately 45 days)
- Assessed via end of year examinations and an employer-set project
- Have been designed in collaboration between employers and providers to align content with industry needs
- Require learners who do not have a grade 4 in maths and/or English to work towards attaining a grade 4.

The phased rollout of T Levels started in September 2020 with the qualifications being offered by 44 (Wave 1) providers. The plan was that by September 2021, 62 (Wave 2) providers would offer ten different T Level qualifications across four routes: Construction, Digital, Education and Childcare, and Health and Science. The extent to which this happened is considered in Section 3. Additional T Levels in seven more routes were scheduled for introduction in 2022 and 2023.<sup>2</sup> There were 88 providers planning to offer T Levels from September 2022 (Wave 3) and 269 from September 2023 (Wave 4). This evaluation report is focussed on the 62 Wave 2 providers. A summary of Wave 2 provider characteristics is included in Table 12 in Appendix B.

In addition, the T Level Transition Programme was also introduced from 2020 to provide one year of pre-T Level learning and support for learners not yet ready to study for a T Level, to help them to progress onto T Levels.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the Department for Education's [Introduction of T Levels Policy Paper](#) for further details.

<sup>2</sup> In 2022: Legal, Finance and Accounting, Business and Administration, and Engineering and Manufacturing. In 2023: Hair and Beauty, Catering and Hospitality, Creative and Design, and Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care.

Providers are required to register to deliver T Levels. Only those providers who had Good or Outstanding Ofsted ratings could participate in Waves 1 and 2. Registered providers were invited to apply for support to ensure they have the right facilities (through the T Level Capital Fund<sup>3</sup>), and a professional development offer (TLPD) was put in place to ensure they have well trained and prepared staff.

## 1.2 An introduction to TLPD

TLPD was introduced to support the roll-out of T Levels. TLPD offers free professional development opportunities to all staff with a role in preparing for, and delivering T Levels, including teachers, managers, leaders, support staff and governors. The rationale for TLPD is that high quality professional development is needed to ensure that those teaching T Levels can teach them well, and leaders can prepare staff at all levels for their introduction.

TLPD is funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and delivered by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) in partnership with the Association of Colleges, Association of School and College Leaders, FutureLearn, AlphaPlus, Further Education Associates, Kings College London and Cognition.

The programme's design is underpinned by a set of principles:

- TLPD is free to access and, for some of the more intensive activities, remission funding is available to providers to help cover the costs of cover to allow teaching staff to participate
- Participation is voluntary and open to anyone in Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funded providers including staff working in providers who are not yet offering T Levels.
- Initial diagnostic training needs analyses indicate which courses are most relevant to providers and individual staff, but access to courses is not mediated by any eligibility criteria or application process
- Course design should be appropriate to learning objectives and therefore a range of delivery modes are offered including 'bite-sized' webinars, online self-guided learning requiring a few hours, to more intensive activities such as a five-day industry placements or a residential course for leaders
- TLPD should complement and not duplicate other professional development available to providers from awarding bodies, other training organisations, and colleagues from within their own organisation or their network
- The design and delivery of the programme includes a commitment to continual refinement of content and delivery. To this end, quality assurance is built into the

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<sup>3</sup> By January 2022 the [capital fund](#) had allocated £152 million.

programme, for example via participant surveys. As a result, the programme has evolved throughout its delivery.

The first phase of TLPD ran from May 2019 to March 2020. The second phase ran from May 2020 and was ongoing at the time of writing. This evaluation report concerns this second 'extended' phase of TLPD through research conducted up until June 2022.

There are numerous strands to the TLPD offer and multiple routes into the programme. These are briefly summarised as follows:

### **TLPD overview**<sup>4</sup>

#### **Training Needs Analysis:**

Organisational Training Needs Analysis (OTNA) – these are offered to each provider usually just over a year prior to T Level delivery and are often completed in discussion between an Area Relationship and Development Lead (ARDL) (see below) and a senior manager. They help the provider identify gaps in the knowledge and skills of their staff.

Individual Training Needs Analysis (ITNA) – members of staff can complete a diagnostic to help them identify their individual professional development needs.

Both OTNAs and ITNAs provide a tailored development plan, which identifies TLPD strands they could access to help address development needs.

**Understanding T Levels** are courses to develop provider staff's understanding of T Levels. It includes distinct courses for frontline staff, leaders and governors, business support staff and, school-based staff. The courses include online self-guided courses (suggested six hours) and an online or in-person session. Sessions are also commonly delivered directly to groups of provider staff in-house.

**T Level Role and Route Specific Training** consists of a range of courses aimed at teachers and middle managers to support with pedagogical and subject-specific knowledge and skills. It includes route and subject specific courses, courses on teaching T Levels, courses on embedding the teaching of English, maths and digital, and the New Teacher programme for new or less experienced teachers. The 28 different courses relevant to T Levels delivering from 2021 include a mixture of online self-guided courses of around six to eight hours, and in-person or online sessions, some lasting a day, and some spread across multiple two hour sessions.

**Professional Development for Leaders** are courses and activities to assist leaders in managing the implementation of T Levels. These include courses for operational middle leaders and managers, strategic leaders and governors. These are delivered through online self-guided learning and online and in-person sessions, some lasting a day, and

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<sup>4</sup> Descriptions of the offer are informed by the [TLPD website](#) as of June 2022, and are subject to change.



some spread across multiple two/three hour sessions. It also includes the T Level Leadership Mentoring Programme, which provides structured access to a mentorship from a sector leader over a prolonged period, with six hours of direct contact, six hours of reflective practice, and a four hour online course.

**Industry Insights** is a varied offer that provides staff opportunities to meet with and learn from employers and industry experts, including through placements, to develop up-to-date industry knowledge. It includes access to individual in-person placements lasting between one and five days, individual virtual placements lasting 8-16 hours, virtual day-long group placements with an employer, and an online preparation course. It further includes industry mentoring over a prolonged period, with eight hours of direct contact and eight hours of reflection and preparation. The strand also includes a group industry collaboration, consisting of four sessions with employers and three sessions with other peers in other providers. Lastly, bite-sized one- or two-hour sessions are available through industry workshops.

**Networks** provide opportunities to participate in local, regional and national networks with staff in other providers, both in-person and virtually, to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, ideas and resources on a range of topics related to T Level delivery. It includes Online Network Community Spaces hosted on Microsoft Teams.

**T Level Resource Improvement Projects (TRIPs)** are provider-led, action research projects that enable provider staff to collaborate in the production of resources for T Level planning or delivery, in some instances drawing in wider stakeholders such as employers and Higher Education Institutions. Staff time is funded to support participation in TRIPs, which are one of the most intensive strands of the TLPD offer.

**Area Relationship and Development Leads (ARDLs) (previously Regional Facilitators)** work with providers to promote TLPD to staff and support their professional development.

During the period covered by the monitoring data<sup>5</sup> TLPD delivered 44 different in-person or online events, 41 different online courses and over 500 Industry Insight opportunities (see Table 14, Table 18, Table 19 and Table 20 in Appendix B for further detail on the courses and activities offered under each strand and levels of engagement). The level of engagement with individual strands of TLPD by Wave 2 providers is considered in Section 2.2.

Whilst these activities were offered to all, ARDLs also ran bespoke 'in-house' versions of the offer for some providers which were delivered either in person or online to staff from the same provider. From late August 2021, 39% of events were delivered in-house, with

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<sup>5</sup> See Section 1.3 for methodology notes on data coverage.

Understanding T Levels most likely to be in-house, accounting for 63% of those events (see Table 15 in Appendix B).

The COVID-19 pandemic and its mitigations affected the delivery of TLPD. Whilst it was always intended for much of the training to be accessed online a greater proportion than planned was delivered online. This online TLPD offer is hosted on a T Level Professional Development Platform, through which staff can access ITNAs, a development plan, and a range of online courses and resources. The online courses offered through FutureLearn provide a self-guided learning offer across various strands (see Table 18 for an overview of the FutureLearn courses). The proportion of events that were in-person rather than online was just 20% from late August 2021 onwards (see Table 16 in Appendix B).

Some provision was delayed until face to face delivery could be offered (in line with government guidance). This included residentials as part of the leadership strand. Other provision experienced volatile numbers with late cancellations of bookings, with 36% of all event registrations either not attending or withdrawing (see Table 17 in Appendix B).

## 1.3 An introduction to the evaluation

### Evaluation purpose

In March 2020, DfE commissioned SQW to evaluate TLPD's second phase. This built on the findings of an evaluation of the programme's first phase.<sup>6</sup> The purpose of the evaluation was to provide formative and summative assessment of the extent to which the programme had met its objectives (presented in the 'TLPD Objectives' box below). These would be used by the Department and their delivery partner (the ETF) to shape decisions about the design and delivery of the programme.

The evaluation was managed by a steering group from the Department of Education and delivered with regular input and support from the ETF. Emerging findings and key issues were discussed throughout the research period to ensure transparency and co-ordinate communication and key asks of the sector. The evaluation design and research questions are described in detail in Appendix A.

#### **TLPD Objectives**

##### **Primary Objective (Objective A)**

Every teacher who teaches a T Level programme has the knowledge and skills they need to teach that programme effectively, in good time prior to first teaching.

##### **Supplementary Objectives (Objectives B to E)**

Teachers teaching T Levels can interact and collaborate with each other on a regional

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<sup>6</sup> See [T Level Professional Development Initial phase evaluation](#) for the evaluation of TLPD phase one.

and/or subject specific basis so that they can reflect on and embed their professional development.

Every member of staff within a Provider who will have a role in T Level delivery, or needs to understand T Levels to carry out their role effectively or to enable them to advise students, has the knowledge they need to play their part in the successful introduction of T Levels, in good time before first teaching.

Every member of staff within a Provider who will have a leadership role in managing T Level delivery has the knowledge and skills they need to inspire and lead the change process required for the successful introduction of T Levels, in good time before first teaching.

The TLPD offer is informed by a detailed understanding of the professional development needs of the Providers that will deliver T Levels and of the teachers working in those Providers, identified through a training needs analysis (TNA).

## Evaluation research methods

Evidence used to inform evaluative assessments was drawn from five research strands:

- A series of scoping interviews with DfE staff involved in the delivery of T Levels and TLPD, with TLPD delivery partner staff from the ETF, and other sector stakeholders to inform the baseline and research design.
- Surveys of senior leaders responsible for the rollout of T Levels within Wave 2 organisations (generally the provider's Principal or Assistant Principal). Three surveys were undertaken: a baseline (July-September 2020), interim (May-June 2021) and final (February-April 2022) which received response rates of 97%, 82% and 60% respectively. These were longitudinal surveys that were intended to be completed by the individuals in the same roles across the surveys, although in practice there was attrition in responses by individuals and by organisations (see Appendix A).
- Surveys of route leaders responsible for leading on the rollout of a specific route within Wave 2 organisations (often these were a Head of Department or Curriculum Lead). Two surveys were undertaken: an interim (May-June 2021) and final (February-April 2022) which received response rates of 37% and 27% respectively. These were longitudinal surveys that were intended to be completed by individuals in the same roles. As before, response attrition was noted (see Appendix A).
- A series of one-to-one and group interviews with a total of 71 senior leaders, route leaders, teachers and other delivery staff across 14 Wave 2 providers. These were

undertaken in two phases: prior to T Level delivery (June-August 2021) and following delivery (March-June 2022). There were 13 individuals in 6 of the providers that were interviewed in both rounds to capture a pre- and post-delivery view.

- TLPD monitoring data provided by ETF, which covered professional development opportunities delivered and numbers of individuals who participated (October 2020-January 2022 unless otherwise stated) plus satisfaction/impact surveys sent after each instance of participation in TLPD with an estimated response rate of 18% (December 2020-April 2022).

The research design ensured that survey evidence was explored in greater depth with qualitative fieldwork to understand what might be informing the findings and how effects were experienced by different providers. Research with providers was undertaken between July 2020 and June 2022. This evaluation focused on Wave 2 providers, who were due to commence delivery from September 2021. The research therefore ran alongside a cohort from a year pre-delivery through to nearly a full first year of delivery. All Wave 2 providers were invited to participate in the evaluation but non-General FE providers (e.g. sixth form colleges and school sixth forms) did not participate in case studies, so the findings are largely based on the experiences of General FE providers (who accounted for 50 out of the 62 providers). A scoping report was produced in October 2020 and a set of slides summarising interim findings produced in September 2021 in order to share emerging findings from earlier phases of the evaluation.

Please see Appendix A for further details on the methodology.

## **Data interpretation**

The research was undertaken during a difficult period for education providers due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges they faced were recognised by all stakeholders and consequently the need to minimise the research burden needed to be balanced with the need for good evaluation evidence. The findings in this report based on this data need to be understood within the context of the following factors:

- The evaluation is of TLPD and not T Levels. It is however helpful to set out the effects of professional development to prepare for T Levels within the context of what was occurring in their design, marketing, recruitment and delivery
- Response rates to invitations were lower than would usually be expected, and reminders to encourage participation were deliberately limited to avoid burden
- Six of the ten case studies that participated in 2021, also participated in 2022. Additional case studies were undertaken with four more providers. Two of the providers who participated twice had deferred their T Level offer in September 2021. There may be response bias with case study participants being those with particularly strong opinions about the programme

- Monitoring data systems changed during the evaluation. Consequently, data from October 2020 until January 2022 is used in this report (i.e. data does not cover the full period up to June 2022). Early engagement with TLPD, including with the initial phase, was also not included in the monitoring data. Additionally, there are some data limitations, for example it is not possible to identify whether the staff who engaged from Wave 2 providers are those responsible for delivering in September 2021.

The evaluation did not use a counterfactual because it was neither appropriate nor practical (reasons for this include the nature of the rollout of T Levels, the complexity from varying levels of engagement with TLPD and other CPD, and the “softness” of measures being evaluated). However, the evaluation does consider impact by drawing on survey questions and fieldwork where respondents were specifically asked what impact could be attributed to TLPD.

It is worth noting that we use the term ‘route leader’ as a generic term to denote individuals who are responsible for the implementation of a named route, rather than a job title.

## Data presentation

Survey findings are discussed in the main body of the report which includes selected charts and tables that show high level findings. More detailed charts and tables are presented in Appendix B and C and referenced throughout the report.

The findings presented in this report draw most heavily on the final phase of research into the TLPD programme. Findings from earlier phases, presented in scoping and interim reports, are used to reflect selected changes or developments for example comparing views of preparedness prior and during delivery. The findings relate to all routes unless there are notable and evidentially robust differences.

To enable comparisons between different surveys (e.g. interim vs final) and respondent type (senior leader vs route leader) which have difference base numbers bar charts are presented as percentages, but due to the small numbers responding to surveys the bars are labelled with the number of respondents rather than percentages.

## 1.4 This report

This report presents a summary of evidence relating to the key stages of preparedness for the delivery of T Levels as follows:

- Section 2: Awareness of and engagement with TLPD
- Section 3: Preparedness for delivery and the effect of TLPD
- Section 4: Factors affecting T Level delivery

- Section 5: Effect of TLPD on T Level teaching
- Section 6: Satisfaction with TLPD overall and with each strand
- Section 7: Reflections and next steps.

A set of appendices with additional data is also provided including A: Evaluation methodology; B: Monitoring data summary to show engagement and uptake; C: Survey data, primarily from the final surveys and D: Case studies.

## 2. Awareness of and engagement with TLPD

This section reviews whether key leaders and staff in Wave 2 providers were aware of the support that was available to them, and how many individuals engaged with the programme. It reports that:

There was good awareness of TLPD among Wave 2 provider staff, particularly leaders, managers and teachers. Administrative and learner support staff were thought to be less aware of the offer by senior leaders (based on survey responses), and route leaders and teaching staff in interviews.

While there was some evidence that staff were not aware of all strands, nevertheless senior leaders and managers had been promoting several TLPD strands to relevant staff. Fewer said they had encouraged governors or new teachers to participate.

61 out of 62 Wave 2 providers engaged with TLPD in some capacity. In total there were 5,358 identifiable instances of TLPD engagement from Wave 2 providers.

Of the identifiable distinct participants, 66% have engaged just once. For Wave 2 the figure is 58%. Teachers account for 37% of all those who have engaged, and 47% of Wave 2 staff who have engaged.

Amongst Wave 2 providers uptake is high across all strands except TRIPs, but particularly high for ITNAs and Role and Route Specific Training.

Monitoring data only considers direct reach so will under-report participation as staff are encouraged to share resources and their learning.

Factors facilitating engagement included online delivery, allocation of time, and encouragement from senior managers and peers.

Factors inhibiting engagement included disruptions associated with COVID-19, IT difficulties, staff churn and time and resource constraints.

Staff plan to continue to engage but suggested the programme needed to evolve as their knowledge and experience evolved. The core offer would remain relevant to new providers and new joiners.

All providers also accessed training from awarding bodies, with most also blending TLPD with a combination of in-house, network and sector body support.

Providers collaborate with each other to share learning and help each other prepare for T Level delivery. In some cases, relationships developed through formal networking (such as Networks and TRIPS) endure and are the basis for continued peer support and observation.

## 2.1 Awareness of TLPD

There was good awareness of TLPD among Wave 2 provider staff (see Figure 11 in Appendix C). In the surveys, senior leaders were more likely to say that awareness was highest amongst senior leaders, route leaders and teachers. Learner support and administration staff were considered to have lower levels of awareness, and in a small number of instances, were unaware of the offer.

TLPD awareness among staff was driven by promotion by ARDLs and senior and route leaders, marketing by the ETF and delivery partners, the TLPD website, the DfE T Level newsletter, personal networks, OTNAs, and the development plans created by ITNAs which highlighted relevant strands and courses.

The qualitative fieldwork did find, however, that whilst there was general awareness that TLPD was available to them, some staff had less awareness or understanding of specific strands. This was partly due to the evolution of the offer, with a frequent comment amongst interviewees that they did not feel 'up to date' about available support. Updates from ARDLs and ETF emails were therefore considered important for highlighting new developments. The evaluation also frequently found issues with brand recognition, with staff struggling to identify whether professional development activities they had engaged with were part of TLPD or another offer.

Senior leaders were asked which strands of TLPD they had promoted to their staff (see Figure 12 in Appendix C). In the final survey, most common were Understanding T Levels (92%) Industry Insights, Teaching T Levels and ITNAs (all 89%), Route and Subject Specific Courses (86%), Networks (83%) and TRIPs (78%). This demonstrates that senior leaders valued the range and variety of the offer and thought their staff would benefit from participation. The offers for leaders, governors and the New Teacher Programme were relatively less likely to have been promoted to staff. The fieldwork suggested this reflected: lower need for intensive support amongst leaders; a focus on internal sessions for governors; and a common strategy to task more experienced and higher skilled teachers with T Level delivery, which would limit the market for the New Teachers programme.

## 2.2 Engagement with TLPD

Out of the 62 providers expected to deliver in Wave 2, 61 providers engaged with TLPD in some capacity and 56 fully completed their OTNA.<sup>7</sup> The depth of engagement varied between providers – 18 out of the 62 had engaged with all eight strands, 32 had engaged with seven strands, and 12 engaged with fewer included a provider that engaged with

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<sup>7</sup> The one provider that did not engage at all was a school sixth form. For the OTNAs, there were 59 providers considered in scope at that point in time rather than 62, so three providers had chosen not engage in an OTNA.



none. On average General FE providers had greater breadth and depth of engagement than other provider types.

ETF monitoring data shows a total of 5,358 instances of TLPD engagement by individuals from Wave 2 providers (an instance of engagement includes an attendance at a workshop or network event, undertaking an online course, or completing an industry placement). The total number of instances of engagement by *any* provider is 13,853. The number of individuals represented in this count is lower as individuals may attend multiple events.

The volume of engagement by Wave 2 providers varied. Amongst those with some engagement, the instances of engagement ranged between 3 and 367, with an average of 104. Some of these differences in volume will likely also reflect the difference in the size of providers, number of courses being offered, and number of staff involved in their rollout.

Analysis of participation reveals that 3,034 identifiable individuals working for Wave 2 providers have participated at least once in TLPD. This rises to 8,776 individuals from any provider:<sup>8</sup>

- 66% of all individual participants have engaged with TLPD just once, 20% have engaged twice, and 14% have engaged between three and nine times.
- For individuals known to be employed in Wave 2 providers, the equivalent figures are 58% who have engaged just once, 21% have engaged twice and 20% have engaged between three and nine times.
- Some individuals completed an ITNA as their only instance of engagement, others will have engaged in a course but without completing an ITNA. Across all Wave 2 providers, 1,641 individuals completed an ITNA of whom 923 (56%) did not also engage in any other TLPD strand.

**Table 1: Job role of individuals engaging with TLPD**

Job role	Any Count	Any % of total	Wave 2 Count	Wave 2 % of total
Teacher	3,227	37%	1,439	47%
Unknown	1,392	16%	193	6%
Other	1,067	12%	461	15%
Advanced Practitioner	1,003	11%	476	16%
Manager	956	11%	253	8%

<sup>8</sup> Covers identifiable distinct participants.

Senior Leader	619	7%	51	2%
Teaching Support	281	3%	96	3%
Administration	220	3%	62	2%
Prefer not to say	11	0%	3	0%
All identifiable distinct individuals	8,776	100%	3,034	100%

Source: TLPD monitoring data. Note: counts distinct individuals i.e. individuals who have engaged more than once are only counted once.

- In terms of job role, teachers represent the largest number of individuals participating (see Table 1 below). Managers and senior leaders represent 10% of Wave 2 participants. Teachers, managers and senior leaders from Wave 2 providers who had TLPD support other than ITNAs were more likely to have engaged more than once – 38% of senior leader participants had engaged just once.
- There is the most repeat engagement with Role and Route Specific Training.

Table 2 below shows the level of engagement with each TLPD strand, ordered by the number of Wave 2 providers that engaged. ITNAs were the most-used aspect of the programme. This is encouraging because it shows that individuals were actively reviewing their current skills and knowledge to identify gaps. Anyone can register on the platform without completing the ITNA, but it is built into the platform design and is recommended.

T Level Role and Route Specific Training was popular, with an average of 18 instances of engagement per provider from 58 of the 62 providers. It is probable that Table 2 significantly under-reports uptake of Understanding T Levels because monitoring data does not include early participation (prior to October 2020, when the data starts), when this would have been an obvious starting point for engagement.

Just under half of all providers participated in TRIPs. Those that did not participate said it was due to time restraints as they demanded a lot of staff time.

The bottom row of Table 2 shows the high level of uptake of self-guided FutureLearn courses. These courses are available across most of the strands, and are included in the totals for the relevant strands too.

A more granular breakdown of engagement with TLPD is presented in Table 20 in Appendix B. This shows the full list of courses and activities offered within each strand, and the engagement by Wave 2 providers and overall. Feedback on individual strands is considered in further detail in Section 6.

**Table 2: Number of Wave 2 providers and instances of engagement by strand**

Strands	Number of Wave 2 providers participating	% of providers	Instances of engagement by Wave 2 <sup>9</sup>	Mean instances of engagement by Wave 2	Total instances of engagement (any provider)
ITNAs (completed only)	61	98%	1,654	26	4,068
Role and Route Specific Training (excludes courses explicitly for Wave 3 T Levels)	58	94%	1,131	18	2,175
Industry Insights	55	89%	683	7	1,250
Networks	55	89%	380	6	686
Understanding T Levels	52	84%	795	13	2,685
Professional Development for Leaders	51	82%	463	7	1,157
TRIPs	30	48%	86	1	196
FutureLearn (also counted in relevant strands above)	57	92%	922	15	2,071

Source: TLPD monitoring data

Case studies (Appendix D) show how providers sequenced their engagement with TLPD according to the stage of their planning and delivery. Sequencing occurred by course, with the ITNA and ‘Understanding T Levels’ being entry points; by delivery team, with those directly engaged with delivery participating earlier; and throughout delivery, with more staff engaging with training relating to exam assessment and employer-set projects later into delivery. They therefore accessed those elements of TLPD that most suited their needs at the time that they needed them.

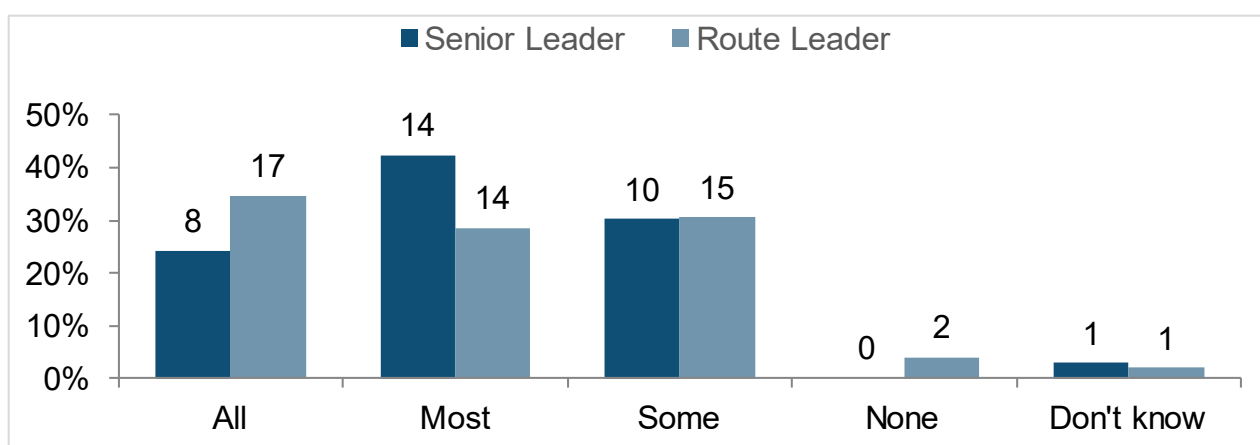
Providers also directed different groups of staff to those elements of training most applicable to their circumstances. For example, one college suggested that staff

<sup>9</sup> For example attended an event, undertook an online course, or completed an industry placement. Some instances of engagement are more time-intensive than others. TRIPs engagements only count the number of providers (not individuals) engaged across the TRIPs.

delivering apprenticeships had different requirements compared with those who had primarily been teaching BTECs.

Senior leaders and route leaders said that either a full or moderate proportion of teaching staff who would be delivering a T Level had engaged with TLPD (see Figure 1 below). This is presented as an approximation because respondents may not have been fully aware of the extent of engagement, especially with the online self-guided elements of TLPD. Respondents reporting full engagement declined in number between the interim and final survey. This might be due to a range of factors, including respondent's ability to recall this detail, that they may have engaged earlier or that more staff were now involved in delivery that had not engaged directly with TLPD. While data on numbers of staff involved in T Level delivery were captured in the survey (see Table 23 in Appendix C) it was not possible to use this with the monitoring data to further test the extent to which there was 'full' engagement. This is because it was not possible to isolate in the monitoring data staff involved in delivery from September 2021. Issues such as staff turnover, rollout of additional T Levels and data coverage were other limiting factors.

**Figure 1: To date, how many teaching staff who will be delivering a T Level have engaged with TLPD?**



Source: SQW TLPD final surveys (n= SL: 33, RL: 49)

## The wider reach of TLPD

Monitoring data only covers direct reach so under-reports the reach of TLPD. In the ETF satisfaction and impact surveys 90% of respondents said they intended to share their learning with colleagues. It was clear from the fieldwork that staff who had engaged with TLPD were disseminating learning, slide packs, resources and recordings of sessions (where available) with colleagues. This dissemination was happening both informally and formally, with the latter occurring through staff delivering sessions in team meetings or internal Continuing Professional Development (CPD) days. Thus the reach of TLPD is wider than the monitoring data alone would suggest.

Where participation required the investment of many hours of development time, some providers reported in interview that a member of staff was nominated to attend on behalf of their colleagues with an expectation they would share their learning. Industry Insight placements were typical of this approach. It was also sometimes the approach taken to developing the knowledge of staff who were less directly involved in delivery, with multiple senior leaders saying during the fieldwork that they had repackaged content from Understanding T Levels to run T Level information sessions for wider staff.

Effective cascading relies on the staff members' skill to effectively recall and share relevant content. The fieldwork revealed some instances where cascading was less successful, because not all relevant information was being passed on. There are therefore limits to what might be expected of indirect reach of TLPD.

There was also evidence of learning being disseminated through inter-college networks among peers in other providers.

## **Engagement drivers and barriers**

Engagement with TLPD was supported by a range of factors:

- Marketing and communications from the ETF, DfE and delivery partners, including newsletters
- The navigability of the ETF website and T Level Professional Development Platform (although a number also commented negatively on these)
- Promotion of TLPD and coordination by ARDLs, senior leaders and route leaders
- The role of OTNAs and ITNAs as an entry point, and the resultant development plans, which signposted users onto the relevant parts of the TLPD offer
- The remission funding available to cover staff time, and provide teaching cover, for more time intensive CPD activities
- The signposting between different parts of the TLPD offer
- Online delivery made the programme more convenient and accessible
- The sharing of session slides and recordings provided a resource to those who participated, and also to those who could not attend events, although these were not always shared (a frequent frustration reported in the fieldwork and surveys)
- A culture fostered by some individual providers, which promoted professional development and allocated more generous resources and time for participation. Some interviewees said they were provided additional CPD specifically for the roll-out of T Levels
- Prior positive experiences of TLPD, which encouraged further engagement.

In many cases the barriers to engagement were the reverse of the drivers set out above. The factors that were identified as barriers to engagement with TLPD in the fieldwork and surveys were:

- Time and capacity constraints, including where courses and activities were run at times of the day or year that were not convenient, and where staff struggled to get appropriate cover in place, especially for more time-intensive activities such as industry placements – insufficient time was identified as the leading reason for lack of engagement in survey responses. In some instances staff said they felt they were not sufficiently supported by their senior leadership team to access the training they needed
- Disruptions from COVID-19, causing issues such as staff absences and the need for prioritising learner catch-up, compounding time and capacity constraints – 31% of senior leaders and 16% of route leaders said COVID-19 had a significant effect on engagement with TLPD, while 56% and 51% respectively said it had a limited effect (see Figure 14 in Appendix C)
- Disruptions from COVID-19 to TLPD delivery, with some planned courses and activity not able to go ahead due to these disruptions, sometimes at short notice
- A preference for in-person CPD events amongst some when much (or, at times, all) of the events were online – but conversely, where in-person CPD events were available, some had found it to be less accessible because of travel and time requirements, and associated costs
- Issues with IT equipment were sometimes an impediment to joining or participating in sessions
- Senior leaders and route leaders frequently pointed to a lack of oversight of individual staff members' ITNA results and their engagement with TLPD, which limited their ability to drive engagement and hold staff accountable
- Dissatisfaction with prior TLPD engagement, which dissuaded some staff from re-engaging (satisfaction is considered in more detail in Section 6)
- Staff not all being in place prior to delivery of T Levels, with some staff only recruited a month or two prior to delivery in September 2021
- The value placed on TLPD relative to other sources of CPD (more on this Section 2.3).

Figure 13 in Appendix C sets out the results to a question about reasons for not all teaching staff engaging.

### **Anticipated future engagement with TLPD**

The fieldwork found that staff delivering from September 2021 had continued to engage with TLPD once delivery had commenced (though possibly with less intensity than pre-

delivery). They anticipated that they would continue to engage as they sought to further refine their delivery of T Levels. This was reflected in the final surveys, with 89% of senior leaders and 85% of route leaders expecting further engagement with TLPD by teaching staff during the 2021/22 academic year.

TLPD is something we need to constantly go back to in a pulsed way. We've always got this churn of people who need to go back and do more. – *Senior leader interviewee*

They started with Understanding T Levels and some of them did a TRIP, then they went onto Industry Insights and now they're doing the route-specific pedagogy stuff, so what it means to deliver on the ground within the curriculum. That's been a really nice journey from the year before delivery to now delivering, and training needs have changed, but there's still an opportunity for people to access training [via TLPD] to support that. – *Senior leader interviewee*

Interviewed teachers who had been delivering T Levels from September 2021 highlighted the need for the offer to keep evolving. Their ongoing development needs related to specific T Level qualifications and pedagogical practice. They no longer had any need for more general sessions on T Levels, although they recognised that new staff and future waves would. Some Wave 2 T Level teachers said they were supporting their Wave 3 T Level teaching colleagues, showing use of internal CPD that draws on the experience of previous waves.

## 2.3 Engagement with other professional development activities

TLPD was not the only source of professional development. Table 3 below reports the range of other sources of professional development used by providers. All reported accessing training from awarding bodies, and most had blended TLPD with a combination of in-house, network and sector body support. In the fieldwork, support from awarding bodies was viewed as particularly important given it is more explicitly linked to qualification specifications.

**Table 3: Have staff engaged with any other professional development activities?**

<b>Please select all other sources of professional development that apply</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
Awarding bodies	36	100%
CPD created and delivered in-house	33	92%
CPD delivered in collaboration with other providers	28	78%
CPD offered by other industry sector support organisations	25	69%

Source: SQW TLPD final senior leader survey (n=36)

An implication of these findings is that the evaluation has only been able to attribute impacts to TLPD where respondents were asked specifically about the impact of TLPD.

The fieldwork found that the extent of reliance on these different sources of CPD varied between providers and varied over time. In particular, many interviewees highlighted Understanding T Levels as providing a good base level of knowledge before progressing onto support from awarding bodies which was more subject and qualification-specific. Another example of sequencing is how some providers had initially focused on engaging with the TLPD offer, but subsequently had focused on in-house CPD informed by knowledge gained from engaging with TLPD.

## **Collaboration with other providers**

The survey finding on the prevalence of collaboration with other providers (in Table 3 above) is positive as a key objective for TLPD was “facilitating and supporting the development of greater collaboration between providers.”<sup>10</sup>

To this end, the TLPD offer included formal networking opportunities (such as the Networks and TRIPs strands) as well as informal networking opportunities that arise from participating in CPD alongside peers. The fieldwork also found instances where ARDLs had brokered introductions to other providers or peers around a shared problem.

Some of the collaboration outside of TLPD had been the direct result from the networks and professional relationships that TLPD created. Examples included staff who had maintained contact with peers met during TLPD activities via email or social media, and in one case an interviewee talked about plans to visit a peer met through TLPD to observe T Level delivery. This type of collaboration had also occurred entirely independent of TLPD, as a result of connections made via awarding bodies, local provider networks, social media, and existing professional networks. A few interviewees

<sup>10</sup> DfE. TLPD Service Specification.



talked about being approached directly by providers in subsequent waves through such networks.

Some things have happened within TLPD and it's off-shooted into other forums outside of TLPD. There's been networking between colleges ... through official and unofficial routes. There are a few social media groups with other colleges and FE providers on Facebook. There is quite a lot of cross-college collaboration with ideas. – *Senior leader interviewee*

Positively, the extent of collaboration appeared to have developed further between the initial and final rounds of fieldwork too, with more ad-hoc and informal sharing beyond TLPD taking place, and an appetite for such collaboration to continue.

There was, however, some reluctance identified around collaboration. Firstly, a small number of senior leaders expressed the view that they were in competition with local providers, for both staff and students. During the early roll-out of T Levels this did appear to be less of an issue, but as more local providers begin to offer the same T Level courses there is a risk that providers become less receptive to collaborating, with one interviewee referencing an expectation of a 'tipping point' during the T Level roll-out after which appetite for collaboration would reduce. Providing opportunities for non-local collaboration, through regional and national networking, may help circumvent reluctance to collaboration that could grow as there is more local competition in the delivery of T Levels.

[There has been] a huge amount [of collaboration] and it's been really valuable ... At the moment, because we are early adopters and pilots, there's less resistance to information sharing. We're geographically far enough apart for it not to be an issue, but as local schools and sixth forms come on board, I think that will stop. They'll be a competitive tension, knowing what happens with other things. – *Senior leader interviewee*

## 3. Preparedness for delivery

This section considers preparedness for the delivery of T Levels, the role of TLPD in supporting preparedness, and the significance of external factors on preparedness. It also considers the extent to which T Levels planned for delivery in September 2021 were delivered (or deferred). Key findings are:

Leaders reported high levels of understanding of T Level among their delivery staff. Route leaders tended to report lower understanding scores than senior leaders. Student services and administrative staff were less often said to have full knowledge.

Route leaders' scoring of their understanding of T Levels declined following commencement of delivery. This may reflect greater realism in leader assessments of 'full knowledge' and therefore be a positive finding.

80% of senior leaders and 68% of route leaders agreed or strongly agreed that TLPD had improved staff knowledge. 'Understanding T Levels' was noted to be a key part of the programme to improve knowledge of staff at different levels and at different times.

Most route and senior leaders said they were prepared for delivery. They reported increasing levels of preparedness as time progressed.

70% of senior leaders gave a score of 4 or 5 out of 5 to say TLPD significantly improved their readiness to deliver T Levels.

Fewer T Levels than were planned were running from September 2021. Fourteen providers had deferred at least one route (most commonly Digital). The reasons for this are considered in Section 4.

### 3.1 Understanding of T Levels

TLPD aimed to ensure that all staff delivering T Levels understood their aims, purpose, structure and content. This objective was written into the specification for TLPD:

Every member of staff within a Provider who will have a role in T Level delivery, or needs to understand T Levels to carry out their role effectively or to enable them to advise students, has the knowledge they need to play their part in the successful introduction of T Levels, in good time before first teaching.<sup>11</sup>

TLPD also had similar objectives specifically about developing the understanding of teachers and leaders. The requisite knowledge of T Levels is dependent on the role of

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<sup>11</sup> DfE. TLPD Service Specification.

staff and degree of involvement in delivery. Therefore, this section describes the effect of TLPD on different staff groups. Teachers are considered in greater detail in Section 5 which is about the teaching of T Levels.

The surveys asked senior leaders and route leaders to rate the understanding of different staff involved in the delivery of T Levels (see Figure 15 in Appendix C). Senior leaders tended to consider understanding of T Levels to be high, and higher than that reported by route leaders. The final survey found that senior leaders considered knowledge of the aims and purpose of T Levels to be high amongst their senior leaders, managers and route leaders, with scores of 4-5 out of 5 given in all instances. Route leaders gave more mixed scores, with 2 out of the 45 route leaders who responded scoring their knowledge at 2 out of 5, and 11 scoring it 3 out of 5. The fieldwork suggested this reflected how route leaders needed greater depth of knowledge given they are more closely involved in their delivery, in some cases teaching part of the T Levels.

In some areas, our understanding was more superficial than others  
... staff probably understand it, but you only know for certain when  
you deliver it. – *Senior leader interviewee*

Senior leaders reported lowest levels of knowledge about T Levels was among Learner Services and Administrative staff. Scores of 3-4 out of 5 were most common. Interviews suggested two different perspectives about this finding. Interviewees said that administrative and learner service staff were less involved in delivery and therefore did not need to have full knowledge of T Levels. The counterpoint was offered in a few instances where interviewees felt the level of understanding needed to be improved, especially where staff were involved in explaining T Levels to prospective learner.

Scores relating to understanding of route leaders declined between the interim survey and final survey results (Table 24 shows the changes in average scores). The decline holds true when comparing interim and final scores given by respondents who answered both surveys. It is unlikely that this reflects an objective assessment of degrees of understanding (i.e. that people understood less about T levels as time went on). It is more likely that as their knowledge of the qualifications developed, leaders realised the difference between what they thought they knew, what they needed to know, and the gap between the two. Lower scores could reflect better awareness of gaps in knowledge, and thus be a more informed and realistic response. Indeed, interviewees frequently highlighted how they were still learning what they did and did not know during the process of delivering T Levels.

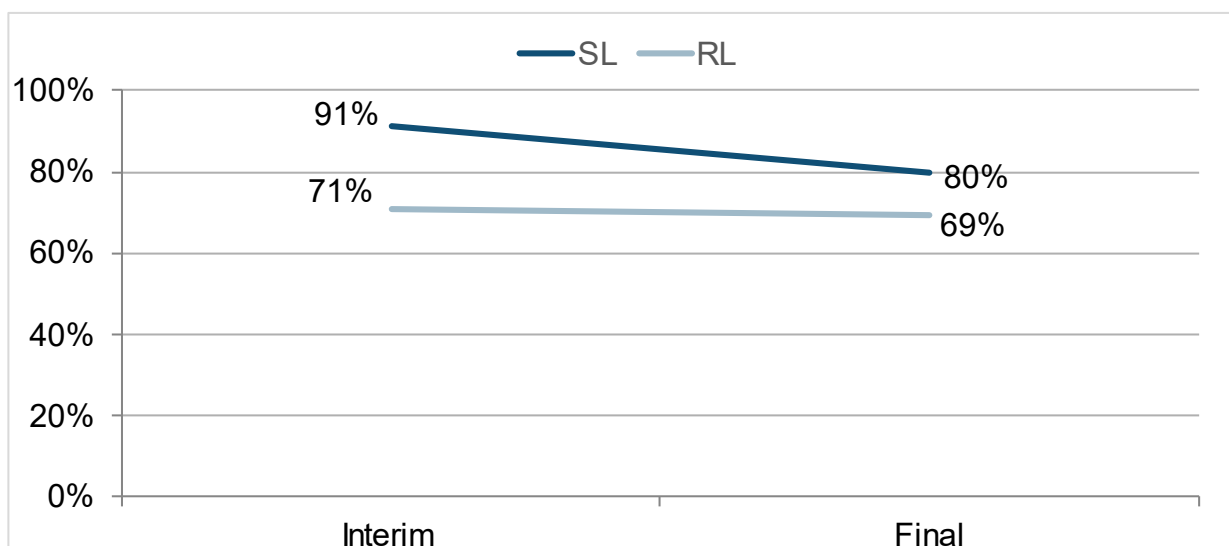
## **Impact of TLPD on understanding of T Levels**

Senior leaders and route leaders were asked how satisfied they were that TLPD had improved their staff's knowledge of T Levels. Figure 2 below shows that in the final survey 80% of senior leaders and 69% of route leaders agreed or strongly agreed that

TLPD had improved staff knowledge. Of the remainder almost all said they ‘neither agreed or disagreed’ (20% of senior leaders and 18% of route leaders), and a small number of route leaders said they disagreed (8%) or strongly disagreed (5%), with these respondents more likely to have reported lower engagement with TLPD. The differences noted are not likely to be significant given the small numbers involved. Changes over time may also be masked as surveys were open for several weeks so will relate to different actual time series.

There were lower levels of agreement about the impact of TLPD in final survey results compared with interim, including when comparing the individual responses of those responding to both surveys. This may reflect the tentative conclusion drawn above, namely that levels of staff knowledge of T Levels was reconsidered as lower than previously thought once delivery had commenced.

**Figure 2: To what extent do you agree: you are satisfied that the TLPD offer has improved your staff’s knowledge of T Levels? (5 point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, with chart showing % agree or strongly agree)**



Source: SQW TLPD surveys. Note: SL/RL=senior/route leader (n= SL interim: 34, RL interim: 48, SL final: 25, RL final: 39)

One strand of TLPD delivery was noted in interviews to have been particularly successful at improving knowledge of T Levels: Understanding T Levels. This strand had a range of different courses for different types of staff. These courses were valued for providing a good introduction to T Levels, including their aims, purpose and structure, and the role different staff would need to play in their delivery. The success of this strand in developing knowledge of T Levels is reflected in 97% of ETF survey respondents saying it had improved their knowledge of the T Levels.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This combines responses to two questions, as the question was changed part-way through delivery from ‘knowledge of T Levels’ to ‘knowledge of the topic’.

Understanding T levels enabled us to ensure that all those involved had a clear understanding of the qualifications and their purpose. – *Senior leader survey respondent*

Understanding T levels was really good because it gave everyone a baseline. The OTNA was really valuable in order to get priorities right. The CPD then falls out of that. – *Senior leader interviewee*

When I first mentioned T levels to the lecturers no one knew what they were. The first courses we did were about understanding T levels. This was massive and meant so much. They suddenly understood what they were doing. Although T levels have been talked about for some time, they've changed massively from the initial idea to what is in place now. I made sure everyone did the understanding T levels course. It will also be compulsory for new staff with an involvement in T levels. – *Digital route leader interviewee*

The availability of Understanding T Levels far in advance of delivery was seen as particularly important because it meant a foundation of knowledge could be developed early in the process. Senior leaders were then able to direct staff towards other parts of the offer when it was the appropriate time for staff to engage. Plus, as already highlighted, some providers drew on TLPD content from Understanding T Levels to develop their own CPD sessions for staff, and many had received in-house sessions from ARDLs. There were, however, a couple of interviewees who felt it needed to have been ready even earlier, because for example they felt that planning around recruitment needed to start 18 months prior to September 2021.

The ETF survey results show that other routes were also considered to have developed knowledge of T Levels (see Table 22 in Appendix B). Professional Development for Leaders and Role and Route Specific Training had the highest proportions from these other routes agreeing they had an impact on understanding of T Levels, at 94% and 88% respectively. For teachers and leaders, these strands were valued for providing the greater depth of understanding that was needed for their roles in rolling-out and delivering T Levels. While the remaining strands were less focused on developing knowledge of T Levels, interviewees did still find them useful for this, especially where there were opportunities to learn more from peers, including those delivering from Wave 1.

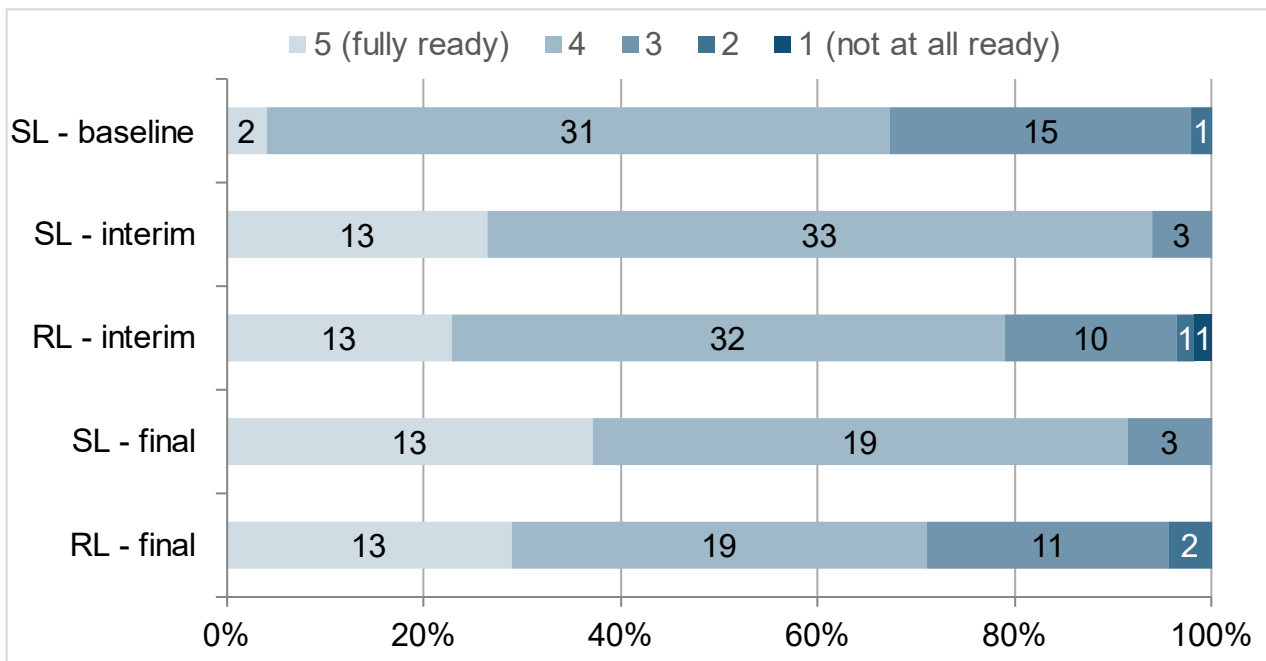
### **3.2 Preparedness for delivery of T Levels**

Senior leaders and route leaders were asked how prepared they felt their organisation was for delivery in September 2021 in the baseline survey around a year prior to delivery (July-September 2020, senior leaders only) and in the interim survey prior a couple of

months prior to delivery (May-June 2021), and again how prepared they felt they were a few months after delivery had commenced (February-April 2022). The results in Figure 3 below show senior leaders reporting improved readiness over time as they were closer to delivery – with the average score out of 5 (meaning ‘fully ready’) for readiness increasing from 3.7 in the baseline to 4.2 in the interim and 4.3 in the final survey. In the interim and final surveys almost all senior leaders gave scores of 4 or 5 out of 5, as did most route leaders. This shows that the majority felt prepared for delivery.

It is notable that there were some route leaders who gave scores of 1-2 in each of the surveys. The route leader giving a score of 1 prior to delivery ultimately deferred delivery of their T Level route. Those who reported scores of 2 did so because employer placements were not ready and staff were in place only immediately prior to delivery. More is said on deferrals in Section 3.3 and on the external factors affecting preparedness for delivery in Section 4.

**Figure 3: How ready is/was your organisation overall for the delivery of T Levels in the 2021/22 academic year?**



Source: SQW TLPD surveys. Note: SL/RL= senior/route leader (n= SL baseline: 49, SL interim: 49, RL interim: 57, SL final: 35, RL final: 45)

Senior leaders were asked to rate their organisational preparedness around some of the necessary arrangements for delivery (see Figure 16 in Appendix C). The senior leaders on average rated ‘appropriate staff development plans in place’ and ‘compliance and quality assurance systems in place’ readiness highest (mean readiness score of 4.4 out of 5 where 5 is ‘fully ready’) followed by ‘sufficient staff in place with clear roles and responsibilities allocated’ (mean readiness score of 4.3) and ‘appropriate student marketing, advice and recruitment processes in place’ (mean readiness score of 3.9).

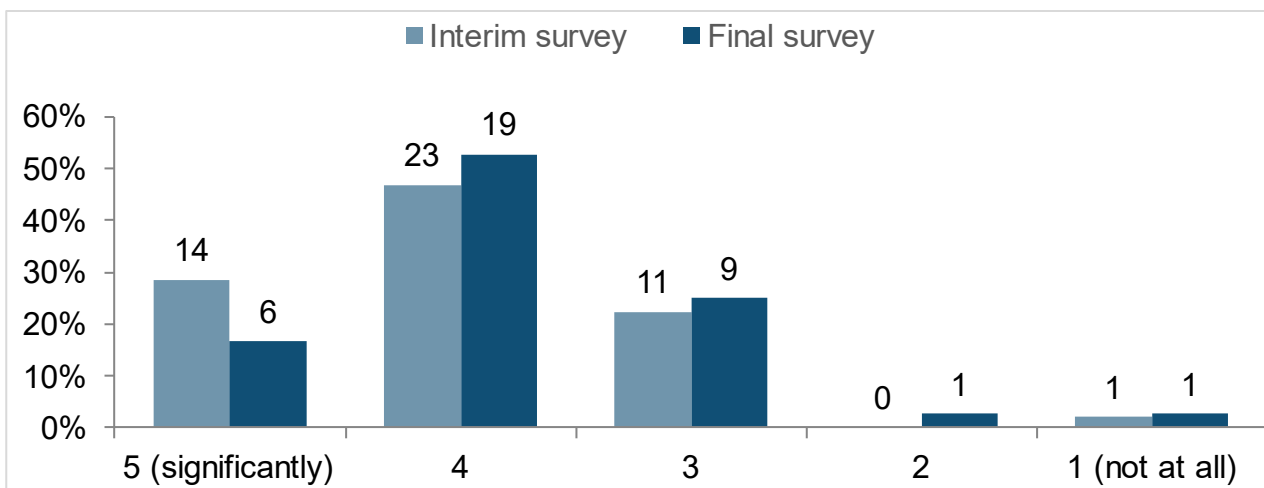
The latter two points are considered in more detail in Section 4 as two of the key issues affecting delivery.

The evaluation also captured views on the preparedness of support staff for delivery. In the final survey most senior leaders scored Learner Services and Administrative staff 3-4 out of 5 for readiness, but there were scores of 2 given to Learner Services in two instances and Administrative Staff in three instances (see Figure 17 in Appendix C). This does suggest some room for improvement in the preparedness of support staff, in addition to earlier findings around gaps in understanding. A small number of interviewees did talk about instances where these staff were not as equipped as they could have been for conversations with prospective learners.

### Impact of TLPD on preparedness for T Level delivery

Senior leaders were asked to what extent they felt staff participation in TLPD had improved their readiness to deliver T Levels. Figure 4 shows that 70% of senior leaders who responded to the final survey gave a score of 4 or 5 out of 5 to say TLPD significantly improved their readiness to deliver T Levels. This figure was a slight reduction on the 76% that gave the same response in the interim survey. The senior leader who gave a score of 1 explained that their staff readiness was informed by professional development from awarding bodies instead of TLPD.

**Figure 4: To what extent did staff participation in TLPD improve the readiness of your organisation to deliver T Levels?**



Source: SQW TLPD senior leader surveys (n= interim: 40, final: 36)

[The role of TLPD has been] massive. We wouldn't have been as prepared as we were without it. It's played a pivotal role in being ready. – *Construction route leader interviewee*

[TLPD] has given people a lot of confidence and readiness. Particularly from the support networks that've been set up, the TRIP

project, and in particular the support from the Regional Facilitator ... Without TLPD there might've been greater degree of nervousness around readiness. – *Senior leader interviewee*

It's reduced the amount of work we've had to do internally to get people up to speed. It's really helped with capacity at the moment in the organisation. I don't think they would have been as far ahead as we are if it hadn't been for that self-directed opportunity to develop our skills – if it had to be all in-house we wouldn't be as far ahead as we are. – *Senior leader interviewee*

A similar question asked senior leaders and route leaders if they were satisfied that TLPD had supported their organisation for the delivery of T Levels (see Figure 18 in Appendix C). This strengthens the finding above, showing a majority of senior leaders and route leaders agreed that TLPD had supported their organisation (88% of senior leaders and 71% of route leaders in the interim survey and 88% of senior leaders and 59% of route leaders in the final survey). Again, route leaders were slightly more circumspect in their response with 12 out of 39 in the final survey (31%) saying they 'neither agreed nor disagreed' and 4 out of 39 (10%) saying they 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed'. Open text responses to other questions suggest some of these responses reflect low uptake, a focus on other sources of CPD, or limited insight into use by other staff because they were relatively new to their role. In some cases though, it does appear to reflect some dissatisfaction with aspects of TLPD that respondents had engaged with. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction are considered in more detail in Section 6.

The aspects of TLPD that were useful for supporting preparedness were identified in the surveys and interviews. The perceived value of each strand is also considered in Section 6, but two more general aspects of TLPD that were seen as particularly useful for preparedness are worth noting here:

- OTNAs/ITNAs helped staff to identify areas for development and skills gaps that needed addressing to ensure they were ready for delivery
- The comprehensiveness of the TLPD offer, as this meant the different types of staff involved in delivery with their various development needs could be supported.

The ETF satisfaction and impact surveys included a question on whether the support had increased the respondent's confidence to deliver T Levels – 79% of respondents said it had, with Role and Route Specific Training having the highest impact at 83%, closely followed by Industry Insights at 82% (see Table 22 in Appendix B).

The evaluation also captured views on the extent to which TLPD had supported the preparedness of support staff for delivery. Senior leaders were asked to assess the impact on Learner Services and Administrative staff's preparedness. Most identified



some impact, but the impact was scored as lower relative to TLPD’s broader impact on preparedness (see Figure 17 in Appendix C). This appeared to reflect the lower direct use of the TLPD offer for these types of staff.

### 3.3 Expected versus actual delivery of T Levels

Following the consideration of preparedness above, this section considers the extent to which T Levels that were planned for delivery by Wave 2 providers were actually delivered from September 2021. The reasons for T Levels not being delivered to the planned extent are then considered in the next section.

The DfE T Level provider list tracks which providers were and are expected to deliver which routes in each academic year.<sup>13</sup> By comparing the tracker from November 2020 against the tracker from December 2021, these changes in delivery against expectation are observable at a route level. Table 4 shows the results of this comparison for Wave 2 providers. It shows that 23% of Wave 2 providers deferred at least one route, and the most common route to be deferred was Digital.

**Table 4: Planned and actual delivery of T Level Routes (September 2021)**

Route	Providers that planned to deliver in Sep-21	Providers that commenced route delivery in Sep-21	% of providers that commenced route delivery
T Level Transition Programme	38	35	92%
Construction	30	27	90%
Digital	45	39	87%
Education and Childcare	41	38	93%
Health and Science	47	44	94%
Any Route	62	48	77%

Source: DfE T Level Provider List

However, this analysis masks the full extent of changes in planned delivery because there are ten T Level courses within the four routes. The senior leader survey asked whether individual courses (rather than routes) had been deferred or cancelled. The results are shown in Table 5, and show that 50% of those respondents (noting not all providers responded) deferred at least one course, with Health and Science most likely to

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providers-selected-to-deliver-t-levels>

see courses deferred or cancelled. Almost all providers ran courses in at least some of the routes as they planned; of the 62 providers, just 3 delayed the launch of all planned T Levels.

**Table 5: Planned and actual delivery of T Level courses by route (September 2021)**

<b>Route the course is within</b>	<b>Providers that planned to deliver courses in Sep-21</b>	<b>Providers that commenced all course delivery in Sep-21</b>	<b>% of providers that commenced route all course delivery</b>
Construction	16	13	81%
Digital	27	20	74%
Education & Childcare	25	22	88%
Health & Science	26	17	65%
Any course	36	18	50%

Source: SQW TLPD final senior leader survey (n=36)

The next section considers the reasons given for why T Level courses were deferred or cancelled, and some of the wider challenges to delivery.

## 4. Factors affecting T Level delivery

This section considers the factors that affected T Level delivery and implications for TLPD. In some instances these factors meant T Levels were not delivered in September 2021 as scheduled. Key factors seen as affecting delivery included:

- the COVID-19 pandemic.
- insufficient learner recruitment due to lack of knowledge, preference for what was known (BTEC), or students with lower attainment than fit eligibility criteria
- staffing issues and the inability to adequately resource provision
- late or occasionally inadequate preparation material from some awarding bodies
- too few employer placements and insufficient employer engagement.

This section also considers a common, spontaneous view emerging from the interviews that the T Level Transition Programme will not achieve its primary objective of providing a flow of learners onto T Level courses.

Regardless of perceptions of readiness for teaching T Levels, some courses were deferred or delayed. The senior leader survey asked why this was. Table 6 categorises open text responses. The most common reason offered was learner recruitment. Some also cited issues with not having employer placements ready, issues with T Level specifications, and in one case, staffing issues. The remainder of this section considers issues around preparedness and delivery, such as these, in more detail. As the reasons for cancellation or deferral were not associated with lack of staff training, this goes beyond the scope of the TLPD and its evaluation. Nevertheless, it is useful to understand this context for delivery and it affects staff experience of training and their ongoing need for professional development.

**Table 6: Reasons given for deferring/cancelling routes**

Reason for deferral / cancellation	Number of providers volunteering reason	% of those deferring / cancelling one course or more
Learner recruitment	15	83%
Employer placements	4	22%
T Level specification	2	11%
Staffing issues	1	6%

Source: SQW TLPD final senior leader survey. Note: out of the 18 respondents who deferred/cancelled one course or more course(s); coded open text responses, respondents could give more than one answer.

## COVID-19 pandemic

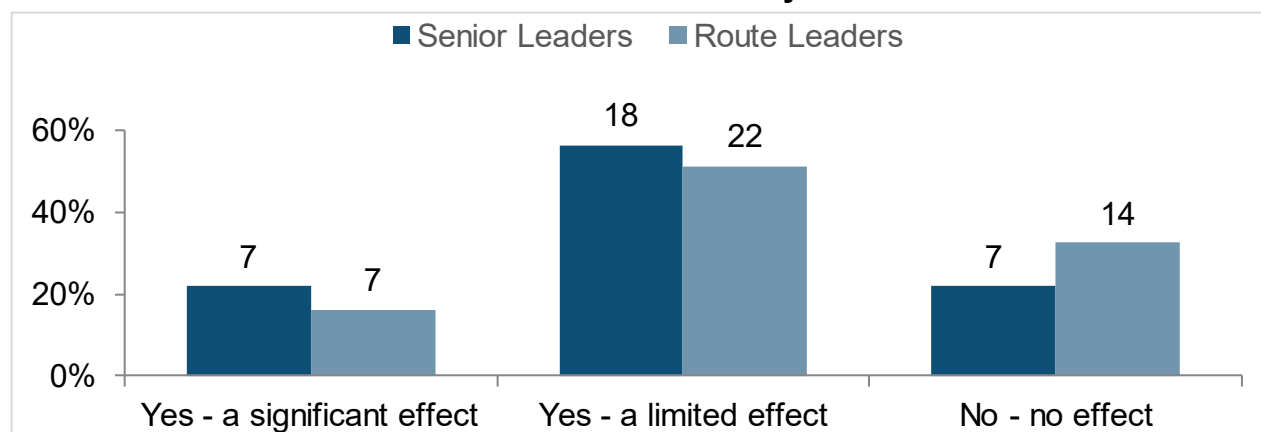
The experiences of T Level preparation and delivery need to be framed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated public health measures. The pandemic impacted all FE staff, their current and prospective learners and placement providers as:

- planning staff time became harder as they adapted to new delivery methods, responded to changing public health messages (in different parts of the country), provided cover for colleagues that were isolating or ill, or needed to prioritise catching up on lost learning time
- learners' education was disrupted and examinations cancelled in favour of teacher assessed grades (that generated higher than usual averages)
- placement providers were responding to changes in ways of working, supply chains and staff shortages in a context where future planning of business needs became very challenging during a period of uncertainty.

The impact of the pandemic is therefore a theme that runs through the remainder of this section on preparedness and the next section on teaching T Levels (Section 5).

Despite this disruption, FE leaders were confident in the resilience and adaptability of their organisations to deliver T Levels with over half of senior and route leaders saying COVID-19 had only a limited effect on their ability to deliver T Levels in the final survey which was completed in February-April 2022 (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Has COVID-19 had an effect on your organisation's ability to deliver T Levels in this academic year?**



Source: SQW TLPD final surveys (n= SL: 32, RL: 43)

## Learner recruitment

Learner recruitment was cited as the foremost reason for courses being deferred or cancelled. Interviewees pointed to limited demand amongst learners for some of the T Levels courses being offered. In the interviews there were multiple courses that received

fewer than five applications, and in one case a science course received no applicants. Reasons given for issues with learner recruitment included:

- Lack of awareness of T Levels amongst learners, parents and schools. This was considered the result of a general lack of awareness in society, but also in some cases reflected difficulties reaching learners in their schools, partly because of the disruption from the pandemic. It was also suggested that in some cases school careers advisors were either ill-informed or unconvinced about T Levels.
- Learner preference for BTECs and other courses instead of T Levels. This was mostly considered to be the result of reluctance to enrol on exam assessed courses, especially as learners had not sat exams for their GCSEs due to the pandemic. Other reasons given included new courses were considered risky, progression pathways were unclear, and the willingness of universities to accept T Levels was also unclear. As a result, where other courses in the same subject were available, this could result in learners being 'spread too thin'.
- Even where there was sufficient demand and/or offers to learners, there could be a shortfall in numbers because learners did not achieve the entry criteria or were assessed as not yet ready to undertake a T Level.

These issues meant a number of courses were not delivered from September 2021 because providers could not recruit enough learners to make the course financially viable or, in some cases, providers talked about the cohort being too small for peer learning or to offer a quality student experience. Some providers did progress with small cohorts though, with one interviewed provider running a course for just two learners, which was viewed as allowing teachers to hone their delivery before recruiting larger cohorts.

Positively, most of the interviewees spoken to in the second round of fieldwork did feel there was an improved level of awareness of T Levels amongst learners being recruited for September 2022, although more was still seen as needed. Interviewees also said they could better sell T Levels based on the experiences of delivering the first year. There were some concerns raised about the continued roll-out of T Levels if demand amongst learners did not grow, as this would create competition between local providers for a small pool of learners.

Interviewees were asked what worked for learner recruitment, and what more was needed. Suggestions included:

- The importance of making T Levels sound appealing, by focusing on the positives rather than aspects which were perceived negatively such as assessment by examination.
- Ensuring all staff are equipped to inform and enthuse learners about T Levels, and having a more coordinated approach. A small number of interviewees suggested that support staff were not as well equipped as they could be to make T Levels sound appealing.

- Longer lead-in times were seen as necessary, so that awareness raising with prospective learners could start sooner. Interviewees highlighted this as one of the challenges for the early roll-out of T Levels, with information about T Levels from DfE and awarding bodies not being available as early as ideal to inform recruitment planning for September 2021 or to answer learner queries.

On the first two points, TLPD was considered to have played a role, and could continue to do so – by developing knowledge of T Levels across different staff, but also by facilitating peer learning around what does and does not work for learner recruitment. On the third point, in the first round of fieldwork some interviewees suggested the Understanding T Levels support would have been more beneficial if in place sooner to support recruitment planning, with one provider saying planning for recruitment needed to start 18 months prior to September 2021.

More broadly, interviewees pointed to the need for a more prominent national campaign on T Levels focused on learners, parents and schools (plus employers – considered later in this section).

## Staffing

Recruiting sufficient staff with the right subject knowledge and good pedagogic practice is a challenge for the whole FE sector, and this was no different for T Level providers. Most providers managed this by allocating T Level delivery to their more experienced and skilled staff. However, in a couple of instances, an inability to recruit staff with the required specialist knowledge meant that courses could not be delivered. In some cases teaching staff were only recruited in August and September 2021, which gave them minimal preparation time. Other providers said some teachers had gaps in subject knowledge which were covered by agency staff or deployment of other current teachers. Looking ahead, a couple of interviewees said they still needed to recruit staff to help with some of the second-year content.

TLPD was considered useful for aspects of upskilling. OTNAs and ITNAs were valued for identifying gaps or areas for improvement in relation to staffing, and staff's knowledge and skills. The Role and Route Specific Training and Industry Insight strands were valued for addressing some of these gaps, providing existing staff or newly recruited staff opportunities to improve their subject and industry knowledge. Awarding body support was similarly considered important for providing this type of support. However, TLPD was designed to supplement skills and pedagogic practice, not as a form of foundation training for inexperienced teachers. As such there were limitations to what could and should be expected of the programme, and it was reported that in some cases gaps in expertise were too significant for TLPD, and could only be solved via recruitment.

The fieldwork identified a couple of instances of T Level delivery staff being 'poached' by another provider. There is a risk that this will become more prevalent as the roll-out of T

Levels continues and in a tight labour market new providers may recruit staff with experience of delivery from providers in earlier Waves, rather than upskill their own staff. However, the evidence in this report that TLPD has helped providers and staff to prepare and deliver T Levels – by offering free and convenient opportunities for upskilling existing staff – ought to help in increasing the prevailing levels of skills amongst all relevant delivery staff.

Amongst interviewed route leaders and teachers there were frequent concerns about the level of staffing and resources required for certain aspects of T Level delivery, particularly the assessment of the employer-set project but also the organisation of employer placements. Consequently, there were concerns about scaling up delivery of T Levels. A few interviewees suggested that there should be more support available through TLPD for assessors.

## **Awarding body information and support**

A commonly identified impediment to preparation for T Level delivery was the quality and timeliness of information from awarding bodies. Senior leaders and route leaders were asked how satisfied they were with awarding body support in the final survey. Most were satisfied or very satisfied (86% of senior leaders and 57% of route leaders). Positive feedback on awarding bodies tended to be about their CPD offers. This CPD was valued because it was subject, course and specification-specific. This was not unanimous though, with some interviewees expressing dissatisfaction with the quality and timeliness of this CPD. Where this was the case, TLPD was frequently valued for helping to address this gap in quality CPD. There was also positive feedback on the quality of some of the resources available through awarding bodies and the role of their awarding body's relationship manager, pointing to regular catch-ups, frequent updates and prompt answers to queries.

The level of satisfaction differed by route, with Education and Childcare route leaders more satisfied, and more substantial levels of dissatisfaction for the other routes, with Digital seeing the highest dissatisfaction with half of Digital route leaders unsatisfied (noting the response rate for Digital route leaders was 22%).

Route leaders were more dissatisfied than senior leaders. Twelve out of 44 route leaders (27%) were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied (see Figure 19 in Appendix C). Considering the reasons for dissatisfaction, some interviewees talked about “being in the dark” and “flying blind” due to limited information on content and assessments, and late or poor quality resources. For example, a route leader for Health said their textbook only came out in March 2022, they only had one specimen paper, and they felt that the information on the employer-set project was very limited. The lack of information and resources was more of an issue for some routes and awarding bodies, with Health and Science suffering more because it was a new route for 2021, but it was not an issue restricted to a single route or awarding body. Prior to September 2021, concerns were more weighted towards

the timeliness of information on content and specifications. In the fieldwork and surveys after delivery commenced, the issues raised more frequently related to limited samples and information for exams and employer-set projects. Other issues raised included the lack of timely information on progression routes and how the qualifications map against apprenticeship standards.

The frustration for us is the timelines ... If you don't get a spec for a brand new qualification until the end of January for a September start that does put pressure on turning around a good scheme, resources and lesson plans ... There was no point in doing any professional development before Christmas because we didn't know what we would be teaching. – *Health route leader interviewee*

Unsure how TPLD could have supported as many of the gaps were awarding body responsibility in my opinion. – *Health and Science route leader survey respondent*

The resources from the [awarding body] didn't arrive until mid-August so we didn't really have those, and they came out in dribs and drabs. [But] seeing the actual content and quality of them, I can understand why – they're excellent. – *Construction route leader interviewee*

Interviewees who were spoken to after first year assessments had taken place identified issues with them. This included exam content and questions that were seen as irrelevant to, or unrepresentative of, the course's occupation, a leak of assessment material, and the aforementioned concerns about the resource intensiveness of employer-set projects.

## **Employer engagement**

The last factor frequently identified as presenting a challenge for the delivery of T Levels was employer engagement. At minimum, T Levels require employers for learners to undertake employer placements. The employer-related challenges identified in the surveys and interviews were predominantly about this – providers' ability to secure employers placements for learners. Beyond this minimum, there is also scope for employers to play a role in upskilling and developing the knowledge of teaching staff, and scope for contributions to content delivery (see Section 5). An important distinction between the routes is that some, especially Education and Childcare, were more accustomed to delivering employer placements as part of other existing qualifications.

Senior leaders and route leaders were asked how satisfied they were with employer engagement in the final survey. Most were satisfied or very satisfied (87% of senior leaders and 59% of route leaders), though 8 out of 46 route leaders (18%) were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied (see Figure 20 in Appendix C). The issues identified with employer engagement were:



- Employer awareness of T Levels was mostly very limited, meaning that providers needed to spend time explaining and ‘selling’ T Levels to employers.
- Often developing relationships and placements required a long lead-in time, in part reflecting the point above. One provider talked about starting the process 18 months before delivery. A couple of providers said they could not provide all necessary information to employers as they were waiting on information from awarding bodies, which meant arrangements could not be made in a timely manner.
- Issues with employer willingness or ability to offer placements. One factor was the number of hours required for placements. Some interviewees in the Education and Childcare route said while they were familiar with employer placements, placements for T Levels were perceived as longer and more intensive, and therefore could be difficult to secure. Another factor affecting willingness was the age of learners. For example, extended employer placements in Health subjects are more traditionally at ages 18 and over, and so some providers found that securing these placements for younger learners required more negotiation. The sector also prioritised more traditional qualification placements and at times lacked capacity for more – one provider said a third of their local hospital’s nursing staff were students on placements, and therefore capacity to support younger learners in placements was constrained. Lastly, some interviewees expressed concern about employers being able to offer placements that sufficiently encompassed the different knowledge, skills and technology that learners needed to encounter and utilise during their placement.
- The pandemic further compounded issues with willingness and availability. This was particularly the case for Health, which meant in many cases the NHS was not willing to provide placements due to pressures. It also meant learners needed to be vaccinated, which caused some issues. For the Digital route, the pandemic led to a big shift towards home working. A proportion of placements for the 2021/22 academic year were allowed to be remote, however currently remote placements are not expected to be permissible from September 2022 onwards, which was a cause for concern.
- The level of resourcing required within providers to manage the process was another challenge. One provider had an industry placement coordinator per route specifically for T Levels given the level of resourcing required. Interviewees in some other providers felt the level of resourcing required had not been sufficiently recognised by their senior leadership.

Overall, these issues meant that some providers and courses struggled to source enough placements, and in some cases this led to courses not running. One provider said they planned on running employer placements in the second year, rather than first year as hoped, because they were not secured in time. Looking forward, there were concerns about being able to scale up learner numbers internally because of the difficulties

securing placements. Related to this, a few interviewees expressed concern about the roll-out of T Levels leading to competition for placements between providers.

TLPD was considered by some providers to have assisted in securing employer placements, by linking staff to employers through Industry Insights. However, there had been issues and, consequently, many interviewees said there was scope for improvement of these opportunities. Specifically the issues with Industry Insights were with the number of employers signed up (in part because of the issues above) and, where employers were available, in some instances the available opportunities were not considered to be well aligned to course specifications and occupations. Again, a frequent comment by interviewees was that there needed to be an effective national campaign to raise awareness of T Levels amongst employers.

## **Views on the T Level Transition Programme**

The T Level Transition Programme exists for learners who would like to study a T Level, but who are not deemed ready and could benefit from a year's pre-T Level learning and support before transitioning onto a T Level. The fieldwork found that due to lower than usual learner attainment or academic skill, some providers had made significant use of Transition Programmes.

Transition Programmes were not a focus of the fieldwork, but where they were spontaneously raised in interviews views on them were frequently quite negative. Staff in the providers that had run them did not expect many, if any, of the learners to be able to progress onto a full T Level. Some providers had offered Level 2 Transition Programme certified courses, so that learners who successfully completed the year would have a qualification as well as being able to progress onto a T Level. Where Level 2 courses had not been offered during a transition year there was concern that these learners had, in effect, 'wasted a year' because they would not receive a qualification from participating in the Transition Programme and neither would they be progressing onto a T Level. Where providers felt Transition Programmes had not been as effective as they would have liked there were plans to improve them in the second year.

Other providers had opted not to run Transition Programmes rather to place learners onto Level 2 courses instead, so that they could still progress onto a T Level if they met the eligibility criteria.

## 5. Teaching T Levels

This section considers the teaching of T Levels and in particular pedagogical knowledge, technical knowledge, confidence to teach and views on the teaching of T Levels in the first year of delivery. Key findings are:

Teachers and managers were aware of the differences between T Levels and other vocational qualifications and the need for different pedagogic practice. Challenges were reported to include preparing learners for exam-based summative assessments, more complex theory, embedding English, maths and digital skills and aligning placement learning with classroom learning.

Senior leaders and route leaders were confident that teachers had the necessary pedagogic skills for delivery, giving average scores of 4.5 and 4.3 (out of 5, where 5 means fully equipped and 1 means not at all) respectively.

A range of teaching practices have been implemented to support learners. These include initial diagnostic assessments, enhanced induction, regular formative feedback, enhanced employability skills teaching and increasing pastoral 'wraparound' support to recognise learners' personal, social and emotional needs.

TLPD was reported to have contributed to improving teaching staff's pedagogical knowledge. The average score was 3.2 from senior leaders and 3.0 from route leaders (out of 5, where 5 was a significant impact and 1 was no improvement).

TLPD was reported by route leaders to have had most significant improvements for (in order) curriculum design, lesson planning, and feedback, assessment and reporting.

TLPD was effective at raising awareness of pedagogical challenges, and then connecting peers to discuss ways and methods to meet those challenges.

TLPD was one of several other sources of CPD for teachers including formal (offered by other providers including awarding bodies) and informal (networks and colleagues).

Senior leaders and route leaders both reported their staff had good curriculum and industry knowledge but with room for improvement. Curriculum knowledge received average scores of 4.5 and 4.0 (out of 5, where 5 means fully equipped and 1 means not at all) from senior leaders and route leaders respectively, and industry knowledge received average scores of 4.3 and 3.7.

TLPD was reported to have increased teaching staff's technical expertise. The average score for this was 3.2 from senior leaders and 3.0 from route leaders (out of 5, where 5 was a significant impact and 1 was no improvement).

TLPD was reported to have addressed gaps in industry knowledge, either among teachers who had been out of industry for a while or those who had only ever taught.

Teachers said there was an ongoing need for TLPD, but with an increased emphasis on practical solutions and more subject- and course-specific support.

There was high satisfaction with current teaching, with 95% of senior leaders and 84% of route leaders satisfied or very satisfied respectively with the quality of T Level teaching.

## 5.1 Pedagogical knowledge and skills

### Pedagogical challenges

T Levels are a new type of qualification (see Section 1.1 for a fuller introduction to T Levels) which are different from other technical qualifications such as BTECs. This means teachers may need to develop their pedagogical knowledge and skills in order to adapt teaching practices to deliver T Levels effectively. This was well recognised by all staff spoken to in the fieldwork.

The pedagogical challenges that were identified by teachers during the fieldwork were:

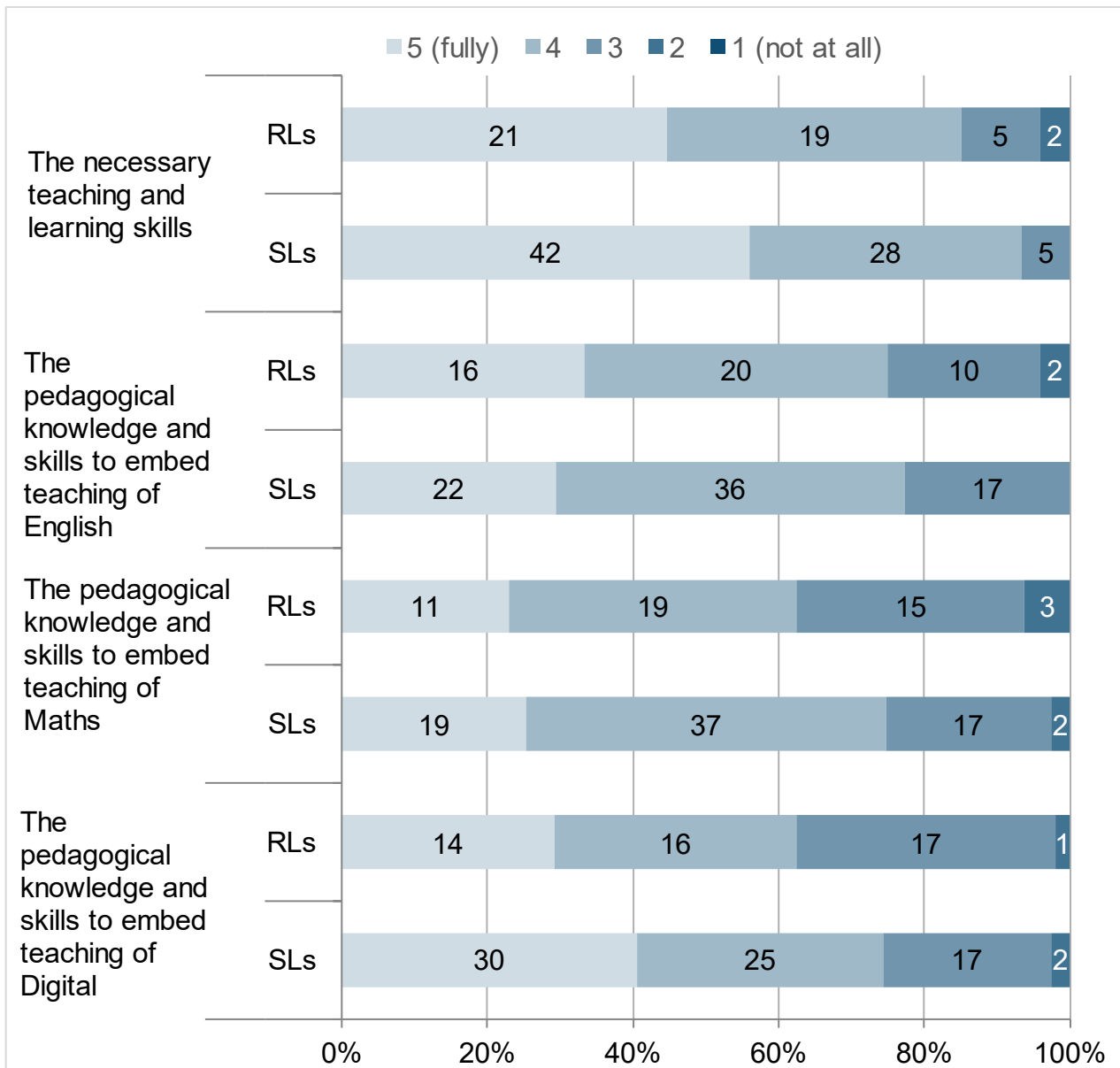
- Teaching to end-of-year exam-based summative assessments. This contrasts with the continuous formative assessment and unit-based summative assessment that most teachers were accustomed to.
- Teaching complex theory to learners who would typically have undertaken BTECs, for which the level of theory was generally considered to be at a lower level. Teachers were wary of the need to ensure the content was accessible. They flagged the need for a focus on maintaining learner engagement in light of this, especially as courses were front-heavy on theory, with the 'hands on' elements usually coming later in the year.
- The extent of change from other courses was considered larger for some routes than others. In the interviews, Construction was considered most different in terms of delivery and Education and Childcare the most similar, while Health and Digital were considered most different in terms of the level of learning.
- Build confidence in teaching the English, maths and digital learning embedded in T Levels.
- Integration of the employer placement and theoretical and classroom-based aspects of the course. Teachers were keen to ensure these different parts of the qualification were as complementary as possible.
- A pandemic-specific challenge was the impact of lost learning, with teachers identifying issues with maths and English, academic skills, interpersonal skills, levels of maturity, personal, social and emotional needs, and work readiness.

- Another pandemic-specific challenge was adapting to teacher-assessed grades. Given the lack of full confidence in these grades, teachers emphasised the need for effective initial benchmarking.
- Another pandemic-specific challenge was the expectation that some learning may need to be adapted to work effectively through blended or fully online teaching.

Positively, the pedagogical challenges identified by teachers in interviews were the same prior to and following delivery starting. This suggests teachers had a good understanding of the pedagogical changes that would be needed prior to delivery.

The surveys included questions on whether senior leaders and route leaders thought teachers had the necessary pedagogical knowledge and skills. Figure 6 below shows responses from the final surveys to whether teachers have the necessary teaching and learning skills for the delivery of T Levels, and for the embedding of English, maths and digital. It shows good levels of confidence for teaching and learning skills (average score of 4.5 from senior leaders and 4.3 for route leaders out of 5, where 5 means fully equipped and 1 means not at all). In many cases the scores were below 5 out of 5, suggesting scope for improvement. Embedding English (4.1 and 4.0), embedding maths (4.0 and 3.8) and embedding digital (4.1 and 3.9) were also scored high to moderate, but with fewer 5 out of 5 scores, again suggesting some room for improvement.

**Figure 6: Leader assessment of whether teachers have developed different skills and knowledge ...**



Source: SQW TLPD final surveys. Note: SL/RL= senior/route leader; asked at the level of individual routes, with answers aggregated here. (n= SL: 74-75, RL: 47-48)

### How teaching practices had been adapted

This section considers how teaching practices adapted to the pedagogical challenges of teaching T Levels, alongside some of the consequences of the pandemic. The following section considers the extent to which adaptations were the result of TLPD.

In the interviews, the common ways in which teaching practices had been adapted were:

- A greater focus on initial diagnostics, reflecting concerns about learner levels, teacher assessed grades and increased personal, social and emotional needs.

One provider had introduced a two-day bootcamp prior to the course commencing to test learners' knowledge and skills, particularly softer skills, and get them better prepared before actual delivery.

- Implementing ongoing formative assessment and feedback and enhancing the tracking of learner progression, to ensure learners were progressing, given all assessment is end-of-year summative assessment. Teachers also emphasised having a greater focus on learners' retrieval and revision techniques to improve recall for exams and the employer-set project.
- Practical ways to embed English, maths and digital learning through a more systematic, planned approach for each student, greater integration into all lessons and integration of staff from English, maths and digital departments into course delivery.
- Focusing on the development of employability and interpersonal skills to get learners 'work ready' in advance of placements. Work readiness was cited as a frequent concern, with the pandemic viewed as having had a detrimental impact. One provider had planned to introduce an employability skills module to help address this. In some instances, providers had delayed employer placements until later than initially planned in order to provide more time to develop these skills.
- Some teachers talked about plans to facilitate remote employer involvement in the classroom during the first round of fieldwork. As these teachers were not revisited, it is unknown whether this did happen.
- Focusing on the integration of classroom teaching and the employer placement in curriculum design.
- Increasing wraparound support, reflecting concerns about learners' personal, social and emotional, particularly on the T Level Transition Programme.

It is important to note that the first year of delivery was understood to be just that – the first year of delivery. Teachers anticipated that there would be a need to review and adapt teaching practices throughout the year and for future delivery.

In that first term there was lots of new discoveries about T Level delivery and staff were finding gaps in their pedagogy and their understanding of pedagogy relating to T Levels. That's only now starting to emerge through our observations ... new and less experienced teachers maybe over focused on one particular aspect [the theory] and forgot softer skills development. – *Senior leader interviewee*

## Impact of TLPD on pedagogical knowledge/skills and teaching practices

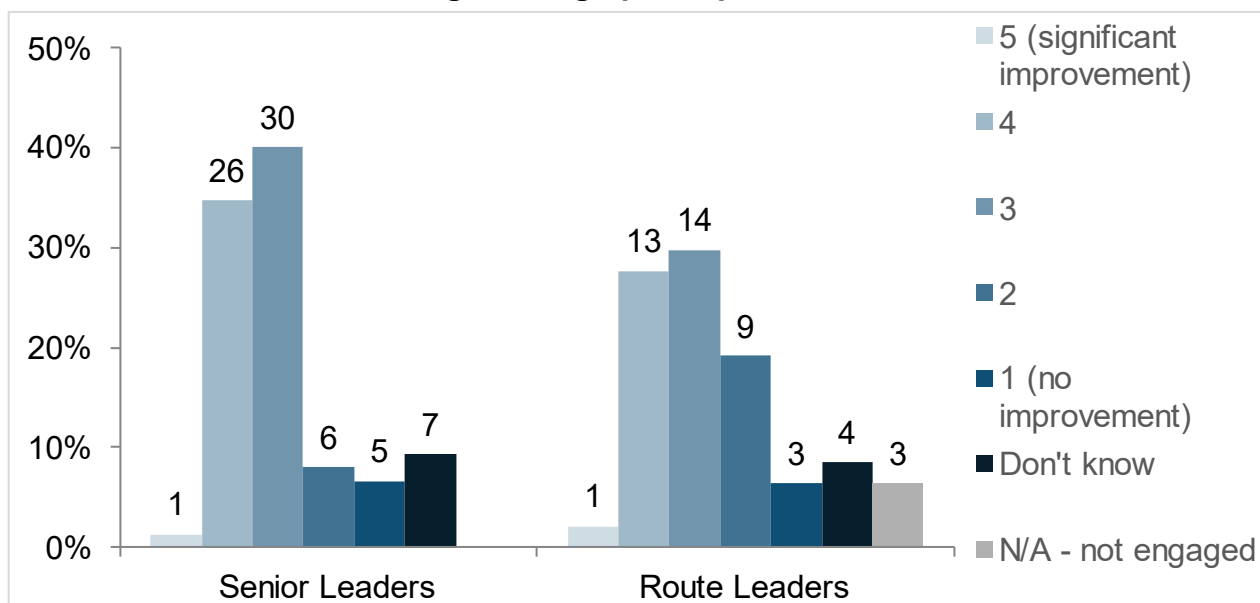
The surveys asked senior leaders and route leaders to score the impact of TLPD on teaching staff's pedagogical knowledge. Figure 7 shows the responses. The average scores (where scores were given) were 3.2 for senior leaders and 3.0 for route leaders (out of 5, where 5 was a significant impact and 1 was no improvement), with most indicating a modest impact. These average scores were lower than the interim surveys, for which scores of 3.7 and 3.4 were given respectively.

Route leaders were also asked the extent to which TLPD had impacted on different aspects of teaching practice. The average scores (where scores were given) were, in descending order, 3.5 for curriculum design, 3.3 for planning lessons, 3.2 for plans for feedback, assessments and reporting, and 3.0 for classroom delivery. See Figure 21 in Appendix C for a full breakdown of scores. Again this shows most respondents indicating a modest impact, although compared to the impact on pedagogical knowledge there were more respondents reporting a significant impact.

There is a lot more fluency in the delivery staff about some of the pedagogical practice; the vocabulary, they're able to use a lot more. I think a lot of this is from TLPD. – *Senior leader interviewee*

It's had an impact in the fact that it enabled people to look at their different teaching strategies and different types of delivery. – *Senior leader interviewee*

**Figure 7: To what extent have teaching staff have improved their pedagogical knowledge through participation in TLPD?**



Source: SQW TLPD final surveys. Note: asked at the level of individual routes, with answers aggregated here (n= SL: 75, RL: 47)



The ETF satisfaction and impact surveys asked whether the support would lead to any change in learning delivery. Table 22 in Appendix B shows 69% of all respondents said it would, with the Role and Route Specific Training scoring highest at 80% followed by Professional Development for Leaders at 74%.

The fieldwork findings help in understanding the common view that TLPD had a moderate impact on pedagogical knowledge and teaching practices. Reasons for this include:

- TLPD was well regarded for raising awareness of the pedagogical issues associated with teaching T Levels – with Understanding T Levels and Role and Route Specific Training valued for making teachers aware of how delivery would need to change from delivering BTECs. However, there were frequent comments that TLPD was less good at directly providing solutions during these courses. That said, peer learning and discussions were seen as important for identifying and sharing solutions, and TLPD was considered to have helped to facilitate this.
- As shown in Section 2.3, TLPD was not the only source of CPD used for the preparation of T Levels. These other forms of CPD were seen as important for influencing teaching practices, including from awarding bodies, networking with peers, and internal CPD and discussions with colleagues (including speaking with A Level colleagues experienced in teaching to end-of-year summative assessment).
- Some of the interviewees talked about choosing routes and courses based on having teachers who were trusted, competent and generally more experienced. This may have reduced the scope for improvements in pedagogical knowledge.

Looking forward teachers emphasised the need to continue to review and refine delivery. Most saw a role for TLPD in supporting that, but a common view was that TLPD needed a greater emphasis on solutions in the subject- and teaching-specific support. There was also an appetite for continued peer sharing of learning about what does and does not work in practice, which TLPD can help to facilitate.

[Pedagogy] is still an area to work on. It [TLPD] is helping but they're not there yet. I think that possibly there wasn't as much engagement with those [aspects of TLPD] when they first came out because the teams thought they didn't need it right now but they're now recognising that there is a need for it. – *Senior leader interviewee*

## 5.2 Subject and industry knowledge

Each T Level course covers (1) the core theory, concept and skills for the route's industry or sector, and (2) the specialist skills and knowledge for the occupation that the course is aligned with. The content of each T Level is designed with input from employers so that it aligns with industry practice and need.

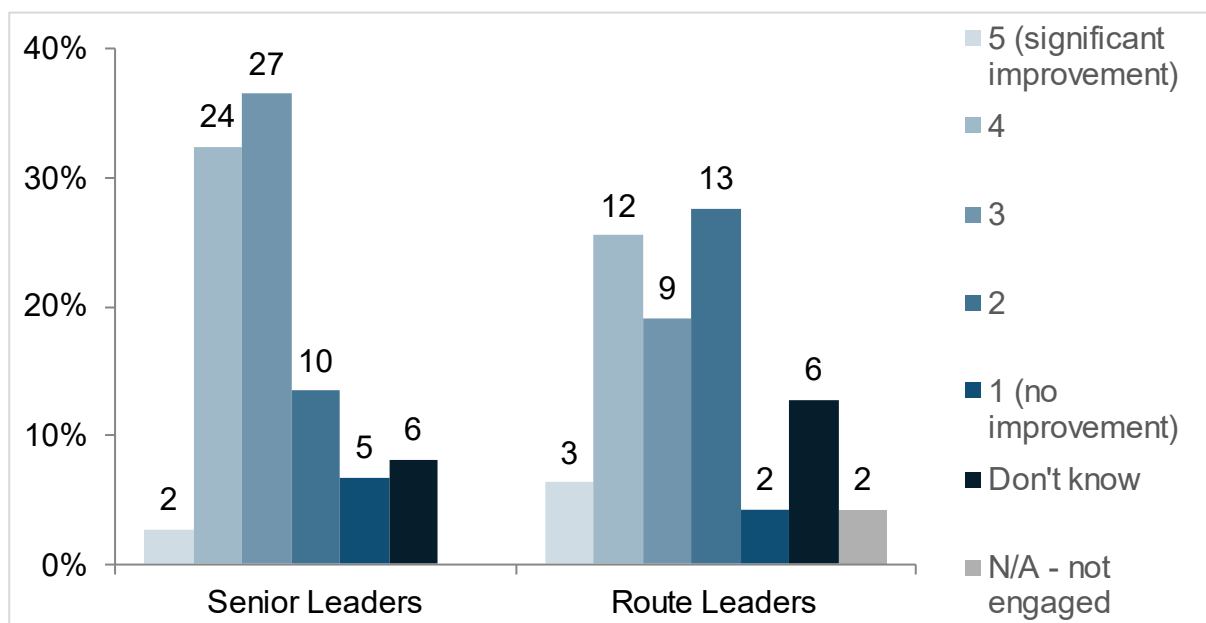
Interviewed teachers recognised that T Levels content was different and often at a considerably higher level than BTECs. As a result, teachers understood the need to develop their subject- and industry-specific knowledge for the delivery of T Levels. Many did say that they were still learning the curriculum and the technical knowledge that was required throughout delivery, so it was an ongoing area of development. In delivery, some reported finding the content was at an even higher level than anticipated, and had struggled to teach it to learners.

The surveys included questions on whether senior leaders and route leaders thought teachers had the necessary curriculum and industry knowledge. In the final survey curriculum knowledge received average scores of 4.5 and 4.0 from senior leaders and route leaders respectively (out of 5, where, where 5 means fully equipped and 1 means not at all) and industry knowledge received average scores of 4.3 and 3.7 (see Figure 22 in Appendix C). The scores suggest room for improvement in both areas, but a greater need around industry knowledge.

### **Impact of TLPD on subject and industry knowledge**

The surveys asked senior leaders and route leaders to score the impact of TLPD on teaching staff's technical expertise. Figure 8 below shows the responses. The average scores (where scores were given) were 3.1 for senior leaders and 3.0 for route leaders (out of 5, where 5 was a significant impact and 1 was no improvement). Route leaders were also asked more specifically about the extent of the impact of TLPD on theoretical/academic expertise (average score of 3.1, out of 5 where 5 was a significant impact and 1 was no improvement) and industry-related and/or applied technical expertise (2.9). The score across these three statements mostly indicate that TLPD was mostly viewed as having a modest impact (see Figure 23 in Appendix C for the full results).

**Figure 8: To what extent have teaching staff improved their technical expertise through participation in TLPD?**



Source: SQW TLPD final surveys. Note: asked at the level of individual routes, with answers aggregated here (n= SL: 75, RL: 47)

The parts of the TLPD offer highlighted by interviewees as most useful for improving subject and industry knowledge were Role and Route Specific Training, Industry Insights and Networks, as well as the informal peer learning and networks that TLPD instigated. The OTNAs/ITNAs and resultant development plans were also frequently highlighted as useful by interviewees and survey respondents because they helped to identify which areas to focus on.

I saw a lot of technology that I've never seen before. I was feeling this is where a student could feel out of their depth. It was almost to a point of embarrassment. I didn't know some of the stuff existed. – *Construction route leader interviewee*

I was given first-hand knowledge of what skills our students will need to gain employment and what they are looking for. – *Education and Childcare route leader interviewee*

The specific impacts of TLPD on subject and industry knowledge identified by interviewees were:

- Addressing gaps in industry knowledge, with interviewees reporting better understanding of industry needs, language, processes, technology and cultures. While some teachers had been in industry until recently, some had been out of industry for a while or had only ever been in teaching, so being able to update this industry knowledge was seen as vital.

- Better understanding the curriculum content and how it links to industry practice.
- Being able to develop appropriate classroom resources and practical exercises based on real industry scenarios.
- Using industry language rather than academic language.
- Better recognition of the soft skills needed in industry, leading to plans for a greater focus on developing these soft skills throughout T Level delivery.
- Better understanding how digital is used in industry, benefitting their ability to embed digital skills.

Teachers recognised that they would need to continue improving on these aspects, and ensure their knowledge stayed up to date over time. TLPD, and particularly Industry Insights, was seen as an important route for doing this.

The fieldwork findings also help in understanding the common view that TLPD had a modest impact on subject and industry knowledge:

- Again, TLPD was not the only source of CPD for improving subject and industry knowledge, with support from awarding bodies, peer learning, and sharing of expertise within teams also regarded as important.
- In some instances, gaps in knowledge had been addressed through recruitment of new staff, or by drawing on colleagues in other departments (for example Health route leaders had drawn on science colleagues to teach the science components in health).
- A few interviewees highlighted issues with the Industry Insights offer. Employers for industry placements and mentoring had not been available for some staff, in part due to the disruption caused by the pandemic, with staff having to source their own employers instead. Group placements were introduced in response to these challenges, which did help remedy this issue but also meant placements were less intensive. Some interviewees also found it challenging to take the time out for more time intensive placements, as despite cover funding it was difficult to find appropriate teaching cover.
- A frequent comment on the broader TLPD offer was that it was too general, and not subject or course specific enough. So a possible improvement to the broader offer that is open to all routes could be to group sessions into route or course cohorts. Another recurring comment from route leaders was that there should be more involvement of subject specialists throughout TLPD, including possibly in an ARDL-type role.

## 5.3 Views on the teaching of T Levels

### Teaching staff preparedness

The final surveys asked senior leaders and route leaders how confident they were that teaching staff had been prepared for all aspects of T Level delivery in the 2021/22 academic year. The average scores out of 5 given were 4.1 and 3.8 by senior leaders and route leaders respectively (where 5 was full confidence and 1 was no confidence). Figure 24 in Appendix C sets out the breakdown of scores given. With 62% of senior leaders and 66% of route leaders scoring 3-4 out of 5, it suggests most saw some room for improvement in preparedness of teachers, although a common view amongst interviewees was teachers could not be fully prepared given T Levels are such a significant change, so they expected there would be a need to learn through delivery. That said, scores of 5 were also quite common with 35% of senior leaders and 28% of route leaders giving this score.

In some cases scores of 2 were given, which open text responses suggest reflected staffing issues, or in a couple of cases, also concerns that staff had not made the time or shown the willingness to engage with enough CPD to prepare. At a route level, it is notable that senior leaders were relatively less confident in Construction teachers.

Prior to delivery, interviewed route leaders and teachers felt better prepared for the earlier phases of delivery of T Levels. An obvious example was interviewees feeling better prepared to deliver the first term's content than content for later terms. In a similar vein, interviewees frequently talked about being less prepared for exams, employer placements and employer-set projects because they were planned for later in the year. Therefore, in many cases preparation for the later aspects of delivery were taking place during the 2021/22 academic year. Route leaders and teachers also talked about the unknowns, and how it was only once they had delivered the course that they could feel confident about what it entailed and how ready they actually were. External factors, such as the timeliness of awarding body information, also influenced how prepared teachers were.

I felt like a complete rabbit in the head lights. But I finished the year, thinking 'that all makes sense and it's all falling into place. It made sense by the end. Getting my head around the assessment methods, so once we ran the core paper mocks and so on, I felt like it all fitted into place. – *Education and Childcare teacher interviewee*

In terms of the curriculum, we were really well prepared. We had clear sequences of learning for this year, progress tests in place and ongoing formative assessments. – *Health route leader interviewee*

[I was prepared] as well as I possibly could be. Some things you don't know until you get going. There is lots to reflect on, but it has been more enjoyable than nerve-wracking ... Overall, it's been a good experience. I've enjoyed the T level because it has such diverse content and it is not as prescriptive. In terms of pedagogy, it is a more exciting course to deliver. – *Science teacher interviewee*

At the start of the year, we were okay for preparation for the initial start but we were not prepared enough for the exams or the employer-led project. The resources were slow in coming out from the awarding organisations. This meant our preparation was late in the day. This was also the first year for the projects and exams being set. This was very challenging. Were we ready to deliver? Yes. Had we prepared students for the assessments? Probably not ... We were ready to deliver as we had the right equipment, staff knowledge and individual contacts. So we were ready to get students but we were not ready for the assessments. Our pitfall was preparing for the assessments. – *Digital route leader interviewee*

TLPD was considered to have played an important role in helping teachers to prepare and to feel prepared. It provided an impetus and structure for planning, supported with the pedagogic, subject and industry knowledge needed for planning, and provided a support network through links to other providers and mentoring. As already highlighted in this section, many interviewees highlighted the ongoing need for TLPD support once delivery had commenced to continue their refinement of delivery.

[TLPD has] played quite a significant part because it's enabled us to prepare and plan, and at times it's pointed us in the right direction. It's really hard to develop, set up and implement a brand new programme. It's not just a few tweaks. – *Senior leader interviewee*

Personally, I'd say I was 95% prepared. The other 5% is the unknown. This was due in part to our college starting preparation early. We started our planning and preparation a year in advance, and had a full day available every week to do it ... [and TLPD helped through providing access to] leadership mentoring, collaborating with other colleges and networks. – *Construction route leader interviewee*

[Did TLPD have an impact?] I think so – I wouldn't have been as prepared, I would've been more reactive, maybe still writing schemes of work as the year started, whereas I had it all done over the summer. – *Digital route leader interviewee*

## Quality of teaching

The final surveys asked senior leaders and route leaders how satisfied they were with the quality of teaching. It found 95% of senior leaders and 84% of route leaders were satisfied or very satisfied, and 1% and 4% unsatisfied or very unsatisfied respectively (see Figure 25 in Appendix C). Related to this, 95% of senior leaders and 84% of route leaders were satisfied or very satisfied with student learning (see Figure 26 in Appendix C). Some of the interviewees expressed a desire to only deliver T Levels going forwards because of this satisfaction with the first year of T Levels delivery.

Most of the issues faced in teaching T Levels have already been highlighted in Section 4 and earlier in this section, such as challenges with staffing, learner levels, teaching for exams, limited information from awarding bodies, issues with securing employer placements, and an inability to fully prepare for all aspects of delivery. In addition to these challenges, some teachers identified challenges with the amount of content to cover in the first year of delivery. Teachers were finding it difficult to cover it within the amount of time available, with some saying they had not been allocated enough teaching hours, and that the courses were frontloaded. The issues with learner levels versus the level of the content had compounded this challenge. Route leaders also highlighted having to delay employer placements due to learners not being work ready. Some of the interviewed teachers planned to re-order or re-balance delivery going forwards as a result of these challenges.

[Satisfied with the teaching?] Very satisfied. Students are happy with the experience they are having on the T level. Staff are happy and want to stop the BTEC so this is a good outcome. ... One year ago, staff were worried about the T level. Now, I can see a difference in staff confidence ... It's always difficult adjusting to change and the fear of the unknown. – *Senior leader interviewee*

We've had no major issues, so looking back on it we were prepared. The actual teaching has been okay ... The industry, the placement part of it and the observation – that's where I don't think we had the information, and I still don't think we have. That's one area I'm not sure on. – *Education and Childcare route leader interviewee*

It has gone remarkably smoothly and successfully. The students love it. I did put our strongest tutors on, it and this is reflected in the excellent job they've done. We've had feedback from a developmental Ofsted inspector to support us, and he couldn't speak highly enough of the feedback he was getting from the students on the T level. – *Health route leader interviewee*

[How satisfied are you with your delivery of T Levels this year?] I wouldn't give it ten out of ten, but I'm comfortable. There are lessons to be learned. Next year will be more polished. Given all that's happened, I'm relatively happy with what they've done. – *Science teacher interviewee*

[How satisfied are you with your delivery of T Levels this year?] It could be going better. Next year's provision will be quite different to this year. We did what we thought was right at the time, but living and breathing it, there are some gaps and development areas. It's probably been a bigger jump than we anticipated. – *Senior leader interviewee*

[How satisfied are you with your delivery of T Levels this year?] Very well. I know it a hundred times better than at the beginning of the year. We've not failed the students, but this first year has been a great learning curve for everybody, including for the students. And this year, we've got all the planning we've done for the first year which we can plough into the second year. The support from ETF has played a massive part of this, with their networks and webinars and the online training. – *Construction route leader interviewee*



## 6. Satisfaction with TLPD

This section summarises the evidence around satisfaction with the TLPD offer. It considers overall satisfaction, feedback on individual strands, and then concludes by considering how respondents felt TLPD compares and aligns with other CPD. Key findings are:

Satisfaction with TLPD was mostly moderate to high. In the final survey 84% of senior leaders and 52% of route leaders agreed they were satisfied with TLPD overall (and over a third of route leaders 'neither agreed or disagreed'), while ETF satisfaction surveys found, across the different strands, 87%-95% agreed they were satisfied following support. There was positive feedback for being comprehensive, joined-up via TNAs and ARDLs, providing opportunities for networking, collaboration and peer learning, and for the accessibility of the offer.

The opportunities TLPD created for networking, collaboration and peer learning were highly valued and a key driver of TLPD's reported impacts. It was suggested these could be further developed with greater use of Wave- and subject-specific cohorts.

Respondents recognised both advantages and disadvantages associated with online and in-person CPD, and going forwards the most common preference was for a mixed approach.

Issues raised for improvement were commonly focussed on support being too generic, repetition between courses, content being too basic, issues with how the learning offer is marketed, courses having limited opportunities for networking, support not being timely, and limited sharing of slides, resources and recordings after sessions.

The issues and suggestions for improvements that are identified in this section are considered to be incremental changes to enhance the existing model.

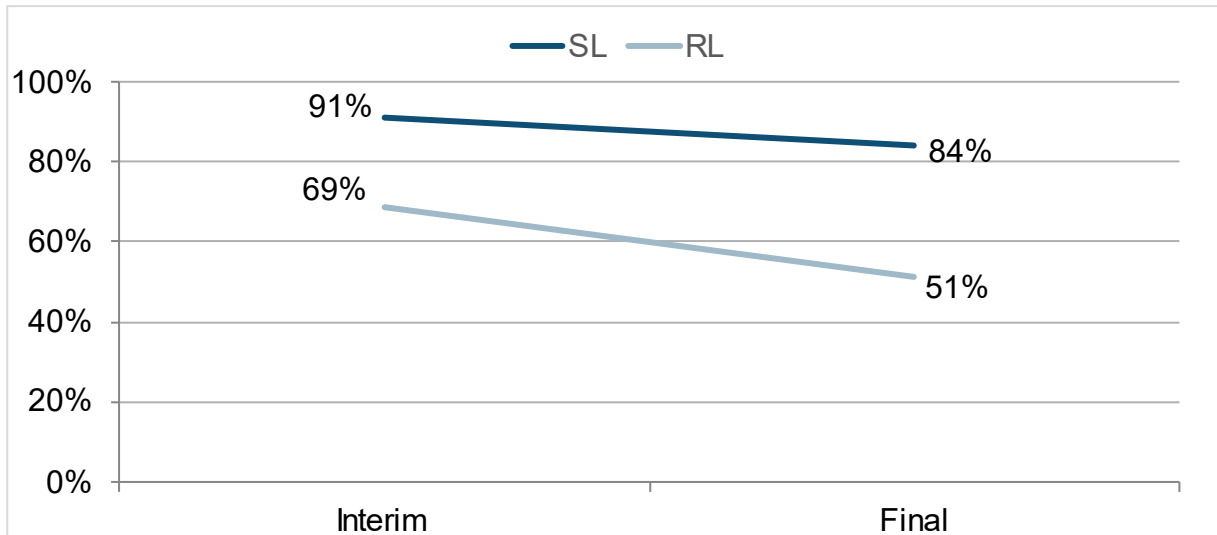
Environmental factors also shape reported satisfaction and issues for improvement such as the shortage of skilled staff cover to enable teachers to invest time in their training.

### 6.1 Overall satisfaction with TLPD

Figure 9 below shows that 84% of senior leaders and 52% of route leaders either agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied overall with the TLPD offer. Qualitative fieldwork broadly mirrored these findings around satisfaction. Three points are notable: (1) the level of agreement fell between the interim and final surveys; (2) over a third of route leaders 'neither agreed or disagreed' in the final survey; and (3) a small number of route leaders 'disagreed' (4% in interim and 5% in final) or 'strongly disagreed' (4% in interim and 5% in final) in both surveys. The reasons given for satisfaction and

dissatisfaction are considered throughout this section, first at a high level and then for each of the strands of TLPD.

**Figure 9: To what extent do you agree: you are satisfied with the TLPD offer overall? (5 point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, with chart showing % agree or strongly agree)**



Source: SQW TLPD surveys. Note: SL/RL=senior/route leader (n= SL interim: 34, RL interim: 48, SL final: 25, RL final: 39)

The surveys to senior leaders and route leaders also asked whether they would recommend TLPD to a friend or colleague. The average scores given out of 10 were 8.6 and 8.2 from senior leaders in the interim and final surveys respectively, and 7.7 and 7.2 from route leaders in the interim and final surveys (where 10 meant likely to recommend and 0 meant not at all likely) (see Table 25 in Appendix C).

The more general positive feedback across all respondents on TLPD related to:

- The comprehensive nature of the offer, including the range of staff covered, the content, the formats and intensity of opportunities available. The evaluation did not identify any gaps in the TLPD offer, only issues for refinement within the current offer.
- How the TLPD offer is joined up and sequenced, from an initial introduction and support from the ARDL to completing an OTNA and individual ITNAs.
- The opportunities for networking, collaboration and peer learning (more is said on this in its own section on 'satisfaction with opportunities for collaboration and peer learning' below).
- The accessibility and convenience of much of the TLPD offer (again more is said on this in its own section on 'online versus in-person support' below).

- Interviewees who said they had engaged with the first phase of TLPD invariably commented that the extended phase was a significant improvement. While a good finding, it was clear some had been put off from re-engaging with the extended phase of TLPD due to these earlier poor experiences.

The fact that there's something for everybody, so professional services and curriculum/route-specific activity. There's every type of level of activity from a short introduction to chunky courses. It's really varied. Also, having the OTNA which helps you to signpost people to the right ones. Having [the ARDL] and the OTNA is really helpful and again signposts people to the right places. – *Senior Leader interviewee*

Feedback about general improvements related to:

- Content being too generic, either because it was not subject or course specific, or because it was not Wave specific.
- Content being repeated between sessions, which was seen as a consequence of having most courses open to anyone, rather than having to complete courses in a particular sequence.
- Content being too basic, which reflects the difficulty of pitching courses to participants with different levels of experience and at different stages in the delivery of T Levels.
- Courses being mis-marketed or with insufficient information about what they entailed. This was an important driving factor for the issues above. Positively, in the second round of fieldwork this was raised less often.
- Some sessions were considered to have lacked sufficient opportunities to ask questions and network. Again, in the second round of fieldwork this was raised less often.
- Courses being available later than interviewees would have liked relative to delivery.
- Slides, resources and recordings of courses not always being available to assist participants in revisiting and/or disseminating learning
- A couple of gaps identified in the topics covered by TLPD, with support for SEND learners and support around designing the transition programme cited as possible gaps.

The remainder of this section considers respondents' views on the merits of online versus in-person support, the satisfaction with opportunities for networking, peer learning and collaboration, and then feedback on individual strands of TLPD.

## Online vs in-person support

While TLPD included FutureLearn as an online learning offer, the rest of the programme was intended to be face-to-face. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic much, or at times all, of the events took place online instead. In the interim phase, the interviews and surveys included questions about mode of delivery preferences.

The reported advantages of online training were:

- The accessibility, flexibility and convenience it offered. TLPD users were more easily able to fit the training into their schedule at their own convenience, so timetable and capacity constraints were ameliorated.
- Time savings and reduced costs from not having to travel, especially for those who are geographically isolated and typically have to travel very far for any training. Again, this made the training more accessible and convenient, and it had benefits for productivity.
- Lower risks associated with attendance. Interviewees said they were less likely to be frustrated with sessions that were not as useful as anticipated, because they had not lost as much time.
- Without geography as a limiting factor to attendance, there was more scope to make cross-country connections with peers, which could circumvent the potential reluctance to collaborate with local providers.
- Public health benefits from limited social contact in the context of a pandemic.

Conversely the reported disadvantages of online training were:

- Concerns about the depth of learning and quality of experience of online training, especially given there was felt to be less scope for discussion. That said, some thought the quality was just as good.
- The attendance rate for online events was 57% compared to 82% for in-person events (noting the latter included in-house sessions so may not be directly comparable). Virtual sessions were said to be more vulnerable to displacement by other demands, and more likely to be cancelled at short notice. Some interviewees reported internal calls being booked in that clashed with sessions, or being asked to do something else, which was less likely to happen with booked-in in-person sessions.
- Level of engagement with the training. Many commented on the greater scope for distractions when dialled-in remotely rather than in situ.
- A common view was that opportunities for networking and sharing were restricted, particularly the conversations that would happen around a session when in-person, which are a highly valued part of training.

- Some interviewees pointed to online learning fatigue, especially during the early pandemic when much or all of their work was being done remotely.
- Some interviewees said they found large virtual groups intimidating, so were less likely to ask questions or get involved in discussions.
- Technical challenges, such as staff struggling with the online booking system and training platform, or having difficulty with their laptop or internet, or dialling into a call.

In the interim surveys, senior leaders and route leaders were asked what their preferred format of CPD would be. The strong preference was for a mix of online and face-to-face CPD opportunities (81% of senior leaders and 78% of route leaders), though some expressed a preference for maintaining primarily online CPD (16% of senior leaders and route leaders) (see Figure 27 in Appendix C). Suggestions for which types of training would be most beneficial in-person were:

- Training that was more in-depth or more interactive
- For CPD taking place over multiple sessions, the initial, middle and final parts
- Visits to employers via Industry Insights and other providers for TRIPs.

## **Satisfaction with opportunities for networking, peer learning and collaboration**

The opportunities to network, share and collaborate with other providers was a highly valued, and in the most part well-realised aspect, of the TLPD offer (see also Section 2.3). This section reflects on satisfaction and dissatisfaction with peer learning and collaborative working and the associated impacts.

The benefits of collaboration and peer learning identified by interviewees and survey respondents included having opportunities to share good practice, resources, expertise and insights, resolving queries and problems, drawing on peers as a professional ‘sounding board’, and providing reassurance around levels of preparedness and delivery. This appeared to be especially important for staff who either were part of a small team and/or staff in providers that were only delivering one route in 2021.

Because it’s the first time we’ve run it, there’s no set expectation of how to run it. So having other colleges to bounce ideas off was really useful. – *Digital route leader interviewee*

Collaboration is key to making it work. If you get five people in a room from five different colleges you will get five different ideas. They can all contribute something. – *Construction route leader interviewee*

It's been really good to find things out with people going through the same thing. We can pick up best practice and find out what the dangers may be and risks to mitigate these ... The collaboration has been the most valuable part in terms of talking to people in the same boat as you. – *Science route leader interviewee*

Opportunities to learn from providers delivering in Wave 1 were particularly valued, because they were further ahead in preparing for, and delivering T Levels. Conversely, there was some dissatisfaction with sessions that included Wave 3 and Wave 4 providers because it meant sessions and questions were focused on points that Wave 2 staff had already addressed. There is an obvious tension here, as Wave 3 and Wave 4 would benefit from these opportunities, just as Wave 2 benefited from speaking with Wave 1 providers. Given this, some staff in Wave 2 providers did recognise their role in supporting learning of staff delivering later waves.

Another common and similar complaint was about courses that were not subject or course specific, because it often meant there was less transferable learning, although a small number of interviewees did say they had benefited from cross-route sharing.

Bringing us together with Wave 1 providers has been really helpful, even if it's not for your route, sharing good practice and picking up what's worked for them. I've picked things up I'm definitely going to be using. It definitely makes us feel more prepared and organised. – *Senior leader interviewee*

While some interviewees thought in-person activities were better for networking, others reported the opposite saying it was easier to make initial contact in an online forum. This also had the advantage of extending networks nationally thus countering the risk of reluctance to collaborate with local competitors.

With the Onsite Construction course there's nobody local who is doing it. Everyone was 200 miles away and so it's quite interesting to see that different cities, different towns, different parts of the country were having the same sort of issues. It was interesting to talk about those. – *Construction route leader interviewee*

Most interviewees were keen to continue sharing and collaborating with other providers, seeing this as key to continuing to refine delivery. The intensity and frequency of communication within these networks was thought to change over time.

I think the collaboration will continue. We've made some great contacts and we keep in touch. Especially now that it's the end of the first year, it's great to go and talk to these other colleges about how they've found the employer-set project and what their mock results

were for the core paper. This has been really important. –  
*Construction route leader interviewee*

There has been lots of networking going on, which has come out of this process. To start with, it was about being a support network and how we were going about setting up the courses. Then, once the course was set up, it became more about sharing resources, ideas and good practice. It's become more individualised now and we have our own Facebook group ... It's been a safety net but as we get more confident, we've moved away from it ... Over the past year, the collaboration is still there but it's not as intense as it was. It's a support network. – *Health route leader interviewee*

## 6.2 Satisfaction with TLPD strands

The evaluation surveys asked senior leaders and route leaders which aspect of TLPD they valued the most. The responses were free text, but the surveys did include list of prompts covering the different strands and the format. Figure 10 below shows the totalled up coded open text responses. Understanding T Levels, Role and Route Specific Training, Industry Insights and Networks all scored highly. Comparing the senior leaders against route leaders, the former most commonly said Understanding T Levels was most valuable, while route leaders most commonly said Industry Insights and Role and Route Specific Training. In the interim survey, senior leaders were more likely to say Networks and Industry Insights.

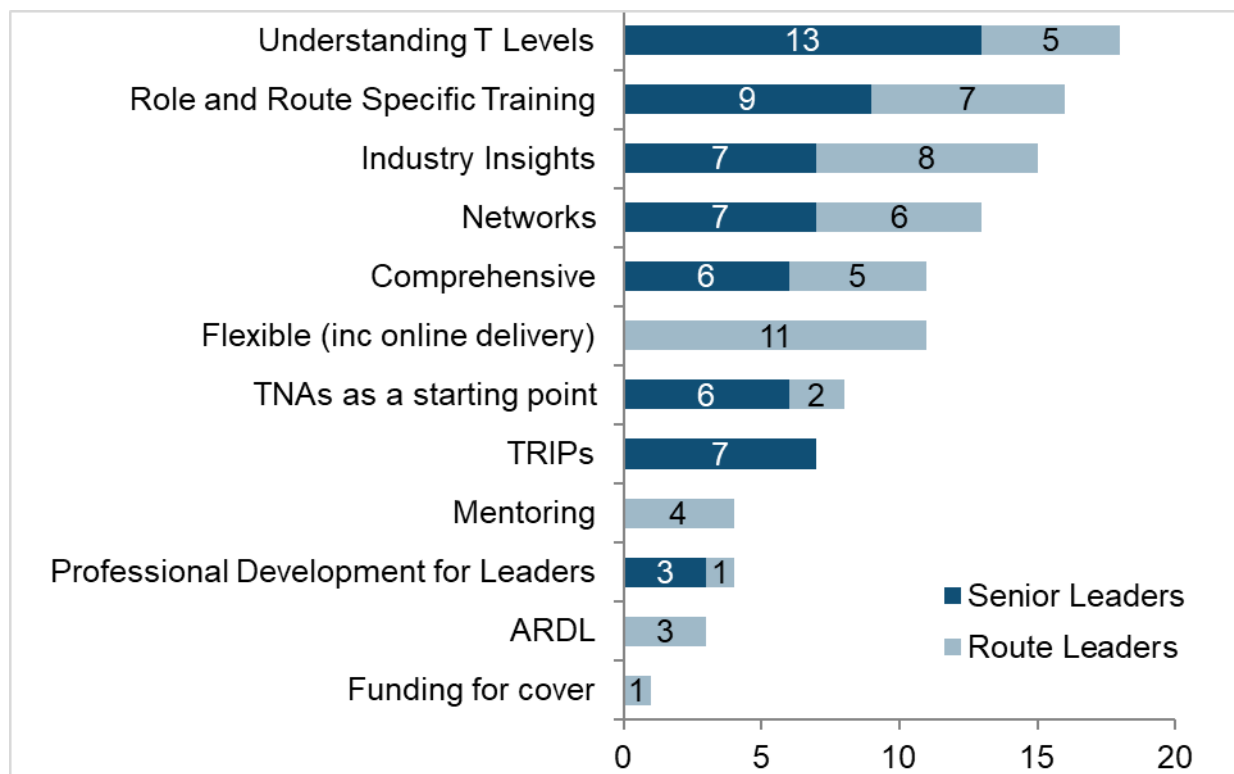
What also stands out is the range of answers, and some responses explicitly talked about the range of the offer. Throughout the research there were no significant gaps in support identified. All suggestions either reflected limited awareness of certain parts of the offer, or requests for adaptations to existing strands.

Another source of feedback on individual strands was the ETF satisfaction and impact surveys. These were sent out to participants after they had participated in TLPD activities, and received an estimated response rate of 18%. They show high levels of satisfaction across the strand, with 87%-95% of respondents for individual strands agreeing they were satisfied with their learning experience overall (see Table 21 in Appendix B). The proportion reporting an expectation the activity would have a positive impact on their practice is also high with 86%-90% of respondents agreeing (see Table 22 in Appendix B).

These surveys provide further evidence used in the remainder of this section to review strand feedback. It sets out the headline finding followed by issues and points for improvement. Some of these points have already set out throughout the report, but are collated here for expediency. It is worth reiterating that satisfaction with TLPD has mostly been shown to have been high, and impact has mostly been shown to be moderate. The

issues and points for improvement should be considered as improvements to existing practice rather than as suggestions for radical change.

**Figure 10: Which element(s) of the TLPD offer have you found most valuable and why?**



Source: SQW TLPD final surveys. Note: chart shows quantified coded open text responses (n= 68, consisting of SL: 34, RL: 34)

## Training Needs Analysis

Headline finding: The OTNAs and ITNAs were mostly valued and well-regarded as an initial diagnostic for T Level preparation that identified areas for development and signposted relevant training. There were high levels of uptake, with 98% of Wave 2 providers making use of them. Some providers had asked all staff to complete them and made them core to T Level preparation. In the interim survey 76% of senior leaders agreed the OTNA was a useful exercise, although this fell to 62% by the final survey (see Figure 28 in Appendix C). This may reflect the time elapsed since completing the OTNA and its decreasing importance as readiness progressed.

TLPD helped to give us a starting point and a focus through the ITNAs. This individualised self-assessment was the right approach – a diagnostic of what you know and what you don’t is key. – *Senior leader interviewee*



We've got as many people as possible through the ITNA, and then we get a training plan out of that. – *Learning and Development Manager interviewee*

It changed the way I look at CPD. With the TNA, there is a bespoke CPD plan there for you. – *Digital route leader*

### Issues and points for improvement:

- A common request amongst interviewees was for results of ITNAs (and subsequent participation in TLPD activities) to be shared with senior leaders, route leaders or staff with oversight for professional development. It was considered useful information to oversee and drive participation in TLPD. However, it is understood by the report authors this has not been possible due to GDPR concerns.
- There were requests for the option to revisit and repeat OTNAs and ITNAs to provide an up-to-date picture and demonstrate distance travelled. This option is already in place, so there may be a need to promote that this is possible.
- A small number of interviewees suggested that the ITNA would benefit from being more subject specific, although this was less common than interviewees saying it provided a good general starting point.

## Area Relationship and Development Leads

**Headline finding:** ARDLs were valued for their role in raising awareness of TLPD and driving engagement. They offered a route for queries to be raised and addressed. ARDLs also helped to flex and build on the core offer, by offering and delivering bespoke training and brokering relationships between providers.

The majority of senior leaders who responded to the final survey said they knew how to contact their ARDL, said that they communicated regularly, that they were available when support was needed, and that they had relevant knowledge and skills (see Figure 29 in Appendix C). This was not universal though, with some interviewees placing less emphasis on the importance of their ARDL.

Initially, there was so much content and so many differing strands that it was hard to establish what was relevant to which staff. Our [ARDL] helped us to understand and direct each team to the correct parts. They created a training route for each job role and joined us in meetings to deliver that information to staff at all levels of the organisation. – *Senior leader survey respondent*

[The ARDL] has been instrumental because they have not just been in contact with [senior leader], but also with programme teams if there's specific CPD that's available. They will go direct to people, which is something we agreed from the start because this speeds things up a bit. – *Senior leader interviewee*

[The ARDL has] been there for any questions or queries. It's really useful. [Senior leader's] job is huge and [ARDL] has been able to take some things off her and support the staff. – *Senior leader interviewee*

We can email and they get straight back with an answer or an 'I don't know yet, but I'll come back to you'. It's really good involvement from [the ARDL]. I can't fault it. – *Construction route leader interviewee*

At the beginning I'd have liked absolute clarification about what they [the ARDL] can and can't do for me. It was all a bit woolly ... [But since then] they were brilliant, they've been down to the college, running sessions and engaging with senior leaders and directors who need a bit more support. – *Learning and Development Manager interviewee*

### **Issues and points for improvement:**

- The success of the role depends upon the professionalism of each ARDL, and some were very successful whilst others had more difficult relationships with some providers.
- With some providers the ARDL relationship was only with senior leaders which could create an information bottleneck. Whereas with others, ARDLs were more active with route leaders and teachers who were familiar with their ARDL and valued their work.
- Some areas had experienced turnover in their ARDLs, creating discontinuities in the support and relationship.
- A common request amongst interviewed route leaders and teachers was for a subject-specialist role akin to ARDLs, who could provide more subject-specific support. However, this risks a lack of coordination between the routes within individual providers.
- As the roll-out of T Levels continues, there is a risk that ARDLs become less effective as their provider case load increases. Some interviewees did say their ARDL was now less responsive than they had been. Consideration will need to be given to the number of providers ARDLs are responsible for.

I haven't had much contact with [the ARDL]. I think the communication goes between [the senior leader] and area leader, and it doesn't get down to us. – *Route leader interviewee*

[The ARDL was] quite good to start with ... but that phased out during delivery. Things became more subject specific which they couldn't help with ... [and] it has gone a bit quiet. I know if I needed to speak to them I could but they could maybe be more proactive at communicating. – *Digital route leader interviewee*

## Understanding T Levels

**Headline finding:** Valued for offering an initial introduction to T Levels that covers all staff, giving all a shared understanding. High level of uptake, with at least 84% of Wave 2 providers making use of the offer (the true level is likely higher as the monitoring data only starts in October 2020). For most of the providers interviewed it was regarded as the best available introduction for T Levels. Providers frequently requested in-house sessions delivered to large numbers of staff, to ensure a widespread understanding of T Levels. Content was also used to inform internal sessions that introduced T Levels to staff not directly involved in their delivery. See Section 3.1 for more detailed feedback on Understanding T Levels and its impact.

### Issues and points for improvement:

- Some interviewees suggested Understanding T Levels courses were not in place soon enough for Wave 2, with longer lead-in times required for some aspects of delivery, most notably learner recruitment. There were also gaps in the information in early sessions, due to aspects of T Levels not being finalised at that point.
- Some interviews suggested limited awareness of the offer amongst non-frontline staff.

## T Level Role and Route Specific Training

**Headline finding:** Valued by teachers for providing pedagogical and subject-specific support, including around how to effectively embed English, maths and digital within subject specific provision. It had high levels of uptake (with 94% of Wave 2 providers having engaged) and high levels of satisfaction (with 91% of ETF survey respondents agreeing they were satisfied with the learning experience overall). The ETF surveys also show good levels of impact, with the strand most likely to lead to changes in learner delivery (80%) and most likely to improve confidence for the delivery of T Levels (80%). The scores do show some room for improvement around impact though, especially as respondents were more likely to 'agree' than 'strongly agree' with these statements. Note that evaluation evidence did not capture any feedback on the New Teacher Programme.

## Issues and points for improvement:

- While uptake was high, the repeated requests for more subject-specific support during the fieldwork suggests that awareness of this strand may be limited.
- While the strand offered subject-specific support, interviewees commonly said that the support would be further beneficial if it was more course- and specification-specific.
- There was strong demand for the sessions to be more forthcoming with solutions and resources for delivering T Levels, with the support seen as better for identifying the challenges associated with T Level delivery rather than offering the tools to respond to them. A frequent comment was that other participants were frequently a valuable source of information.
- Some more experienced teachers said they felt the content was pitched too low.

## Professional Development for Leaders

**Headline finding:** With the exception of TRIPs, this was the strand with the lowest uptake by Wave 2 providers at 82% uptake. The proportion of ETF survey respondents agreeing they were satisfied with the learning experience overall was high at 87%, even if this was the lowest score out of any strand. Considering take-up further, it was highest for Operational Middle Leaders and Managers at 81%, but just 44% had used the Strategic Leaders Providing T Levels training and 15% had used the course for Governors. The interviews suggested impact on general leadership and management skills was more noticeable among less experienced leaders and managers, but learning around how to roll out T Levels was more universal. The opportunity to have discussions with peers was key to this – in the ETF surveys, almost all open text responses said opportunities for discussion were the most valued part of the courses. This strand was also most likely to have respondents to the ETF surveys agreeing it would impact on future planning and learner support at 85% and 71% respectively. Leadership Mentoring had full engagement based on the number of places available, which for Wave 2 providers equated to 44% being able to participate. Amongst interviewees who had participated, it was highlighted as playing an important formative role in preparing for T Level delivery. The mentoring had further contributed to the extent of sharing between providers.

[My mentor] was brilliant and very helpful. ... I was worried [about a variety of issues, but] did quite a bit of work with my mentor and she gave me suggestions about things to go away and try. She would sometimes pair me up with people from other colleges also doing the mentoring and coaching, and we would have a chat on Teams and share how things were going. It made me feel better because it showed me I wasn't on my own ... It was a really good programme and she really enjoyed it. – *Digital route leader interviewee*

## Issues and points for improvement:

- As with other strands, there was some feedback that highlighted the difficulty of pitching the support right given varying levels of career experience.
- There were also requests for those overseeing a particular route or course to be grouped together, to enhance the value of sharing.
- A recurring comment in the ETF surveys was that the support would have been more beneficial earlier into preparing for T Levels, so there could be a case for encouraging leaders and managers to engage sooner.
- Given how valued the leadership mentoring was by some, there was appetite for it to cover more hours.
- The intensive residential course was delayed until March 2022 due to the COVID 19 pandemic. The interviews did not identify feedback on these because none of the Wave 2 providers with staff who undertook the residential agreed to participate in the fieldwork.

## Industry Insights

**Headline finding:** A distinct offer which was seen as addressing a critical development need for some Wave 2 teachers, particularly in routes that were less industry-focused for courses taught prior to T Levels. Uptake amongst Wave 2 providers was high at 89%. The range in intensity and format of support offered was important to ensuring access, as some struggled to find sufficient time for placements, but where placements had been possible the feedback was very positive. This strand has helped staff develop links with new employers, to the benefit of learners. The proportion of ETF survey respondents agreeing they were satisfied with the learning experience overall was high at 90%, although survey results only cover Group Placements and Industry Workshops. It had the highest proportion of respondents saying it had increased their confidence to deliver the topic at 87%. The types of impacts experienced were set out in more detail in Section 5.2.

Industry workshops and insights are a very strong selling point [for TLPD]. It wasn't giving me new knowledge as a nurse, but it provided a bit of a refresh. – *Health route leader interviewee*

I did like the industry placements for getting out into industry and refreshing our knowledge. This is very beneficial, especially if people have been teaching a long time or have come from academia. You can also get employer connections which helps the students, and helps with getting placements for the students. – *Digital route leader interviewee*

I linked up with Google reps and went through the areas for the course, including how projects were managed in industry. Having not been in industry for 20 years, things have changed since then, so getting their input on how it is to work in digital industries was really useful. It helped me out with programming stuff, and I had some resources which I shared with them and they tweaked them. – *Digital route leader interviewee*

### Issues and points for improvement:

- There were difficulties in delivering this strand to the planned extent due to challenges with employer engagement arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Adapting the offer to include virtual and group placements helped to ameliorate this, but possibly at the expense of the richness of the knowledge that participants gained.
- Frequently staff who had been keen to undertake placements had been told they needed to source their own. There was a strong appetite for this strand to better support links to new employers, especially as it could also lead to opportunities for learners.
- Some staff struggled to secure time out for more time-intensive placements, despite the funding available for cover, because of difficulties finding adequate lesson cover.
- Some interviewees questioned the relevance of some sessions they had attended or placements they had been offered to the T Level they were delivering.

We would've liked to do more industry placements, but we found that ... the [facilitator] struggled to find us placements. They were looking for the college to find us our own placements. I was confused by this as I understood that they would contact the employers and try and match us up. – *Health route leader interviewee*

The offer of money for Industry Insights is wonderful but we're so short staffed we can't use it. – *Learning and Development Manager interviewee*

## Networks

**Headline finding:** Interviewees and survey responses emphasised the importance of opportunities to network and share with peers, and this strand formally provided these opportunities. Uptake was high, with 89% of Wave 2 providers having engaged. In the ETF surveys 91% of respondents agreed they were satisfied with the overall learning experience, and it was the strand with the highest proportion saying it would have a positive impact on their practice at 91% and second highest saying it had increased their

confidence to deliver the topic at 83%. The limited opportunities for in-person networking was seen as a limiting factor though. Much of the feedback on this strand is reflected in the more general feedback around opportunities for networking set out earlier in Section 6.1.

The networking sessions were really positive and provided opportunities to speak to people who were in a similar position, to share and exchange ideas and to foster working relationships outside of the organised sessions. – *Senior leader survey respondent*

### Issues and points for improvement:

- As already highlighted, Wave 2 providers found opportunities to network with Wave 1 and 2 providers more useful. Wave 2 staff frequently felt like they were contributing lots without getting much in return when sessions were dominated by later Waves.
- The interviews identified common dissatisfaction with the extent of activity occurring through the Online Network Community Spaces hosted on Microsoft Teams, finding other online forums set up separately were more likely to be actively used. It was suggested there needed to be greater instigation of posting. However, if other online forums are functioning sufficiently well, this might not be a major gap.

I've been to quite a few Networks, but I felt I was there for everyone to pick my brains – I was giving everything but not getting anything back, as they were all later waves. So I didn't find them that useful. I don't mind some sharing, but I don't want to come away with nothing ... Whoever is running network, there needs to be slots where they are giving some kind of direction – what they've learnt from Wave 1-2 that can be shared. It's sold as networking, but it's more like you end up facilitating it. ... [and] the forum on Teams they try to plug, that's a waste of time, it's not used very well and it's not very active. – *Education and Childcare route leader interviewee*

## T Level Resource Improvement Projects (TRIPs)

**Headline finding:** TRIPs were highly valued by many of those involved for providing the time and opportunity for action- and practitioner-led research and development. Participants talked about the strong and focused collaboration it facilitated, and the quality of resources produced as a result. The topics were considered appropriate and important for the delivery of T Levels. Some interviewees had engaged in multiple TRIPs because of their buy-in to the approach. However, the level of uptake was considerably lower than other strands at 48%. This appeared to be due to the level of input required, despite funding being available for staff time. This was a frequent difficulty cited by those

who had participated too. The initial TRIPs model required providers to identify topics and submit proposals, which also presented a barrier, though they have since been remodelled. The ETF surveys only cover TRIPs dissemination events, so the feedback on TRIPs themselves is limited.

In the early days, the TRIP helped to bring together partners with similar thinking and linking partners up, ... joining the thinking up within the sector. – *Senior leader interviewee*

If you've got a central theme from the TRIP to work on, that's where ideas come out ... [and] they're going to create a scheme of learning so everyone has a focus of what to do. This has been pretty good. I've done three TRIPs in total. – *Construction route leader interviewee*

I still have catch up meetings every couple of months with two of the colleges who worked on the TRIP. We get together and talk about how we're getting on with the T Levels and any problems ... without the TRIPs, collaboration would not be as strong as it is. – *Senior leader interviewee*

#### **Issues and points for improvement:**

- The initial TRIPs model required providers to submit bids, some of which were rejected, and if successful lead providers had to take responsibility for much of the administration of the TRIP. This was considered too time-consuming for many of the providers, including those who did and did not participate in TRIPs. TRIPs were reformulated as a result, with the focus of TRIPs pre-determined and providers applying to participate in them.
- Despite the funding of staff time, many interviewees said they did not feel they had sufficient time and could not find appropriate teaching cover.
- Interviewees pointed to difficulties meeting deadlines and attrition in TRIP participation due to the high amount of time required, which was difficult to maintain alongside delivery, even with funding available.
- One interviewed teacher attended a TRIP information session, but said the decision to participate would be 'above my pay grade' and therefore marketing of TRIPs needed to target senior leaders.

### **6.3 TLPD in the context of other CPD opportunities**

Lastly, it is worth briefly considering how TLPD was viewed in relation to other CPD. Providers have a choice of CPD for their staff. Some had adopted TLPD as their core



CPD offer around T Levels, while others had been more focused on CPD from awarding bodies, internal CPD, or independent collaboration with other providers. Most providers had adopted a mix of these approaches, with very few providers making minimal or no use of TLPD. Providers did need to carefully plan their approach as the content of CPD from different sources was sometimes similar.

TLPD is our go-to offer for T level curriculum development. We start there and, if it's not there, which rarely happens, then we look elsewhere. It has been great that we've not had to use a huge amount of our CPD budget because it is already being funded through this offer. I don't think the curriculum would have been viable due to the level of training we would've had to engage in to get staff and the organisation ready. It would've been a huge drain on resources. – *Senior leader interviewee*

The points identified as strengths or selling points for TLPD in relation to other CPD were:

- Being free and convenient to access and, in particular, costs being covered for staff time for more intensive activities such as Industry Insights placements and TRIPs.
- The strands that were considered to be more distinctive were OTNAs/ITNAs, Understanding T Levels and Industry Insights. That said, interviewees did not suggest that there was no need for the other strands because that type of support was available elsewhere. The quality and accessibility of these TLPD activities was felt to provide richer opportunities for professional development.
- TLPD was frequently valued for providing the initial, more general support around understanding T Levels before progressing onto the specifics of individual courses through awarding body support. However, where awarding body support was considered suboptimal, TLPD played an important role in filling that gap.
- The opportunities for peer learning and collaboration that it instigated were valued, although this also occurred through other routes, including CPD offered elsewhere. Nonetheless, the general view was that: the more opportunities for peer learning and collaboration, the better.
- The timeliness of the support through TLPD compared to some of the awarding body CPD, which was sometimes commented on as being in place too late.

## 7. Reflections and next steps

Research participants considered T Levels to be a 'step change' from other qualifications offered by FE. By design, their content, structure, placements and assessments are all substantially different from other qualifications. T Level providers need to make structural changes to systems to introduce them, but perhaps the most significant change required is with up-skilling and re-skilling teaching staff, their leaders and managers, and support staff. TLPD was developed to support this by supporting all staff involved in T Level delivery to understand what T Levels are and the changes that were needed, improve the knowledge and skills of teachers so that courses were taught effectively, and help leaders and managers to manage the process. The TLPD evaluation followed a cohort of providers – those introducing T Levels in Wave 2 from September 2021 – from over a year pre-delivery and through most of the first year of delivery, in order to gauge what role TLPD played in supporting the rollout of T Levels.

### Context for delivery

Introducing T Levels under normal circumstances would be challenging, but introducing them during a pandemic presented a greater challenge. Prevailing challenges were associated with staffing levels (as there is a high proportion of churn in the FE workforce), connection with employers and the provision of placements, and maintaining high quality teaching and learning. Another factor was the quality and timeliness of awarding body information about the curriculum content and assessment. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these issues by increasing demands on staff time, introducing uncertainty into the education system and increasing pressures on staff and students. In response, delivery of TLPD was modified so that most planned activities could be delivered in a different format during the pandemic, but these factors affected both preparation for, and delivery of T Levels.

Out of the 62 Wave 2 providers, 14 either deferred or cancelled a route that they initially intended to deliver in September 2021. Of those who responded to the final survey, half had deferred or cancelled a T Level course they had planned to deliver. This was mostly due to challenges with learner recruitment, and to a lesser extent some of the wider context above. TLPD can, and has, played some role in sharing ideas about effective learner recruitment, however it is not going to be possible for TLPD alone to help providers overcome low levels of demand. Continuing to raise the profile of T Levels amongst learners, parents and schools is evidently key to create sufficient demand from learners for courses to be viable. Positively, the fieldwork suggested that learner recruitment had been more buoyant for September 2022.

## Engagement with TLPD

The evaluation found that all Wave 2 providers except one sixth form college had engaged with TLPD. ARDLs have been important in raising awareness both of the need to prepare staff and the opportunities provided by TLPD. Nearly all Wave 2 providers completed an OTNA to help guide their thinking about the development needs of their T Level staff. At least 3,034 individuals from Wave 2 providers engaged at least once with TLPD, while in total at least 8,776 individuals from any provider (including those not in any Wave) accessed support from the programme.

The depth of engagement varied between providers. The fieldwork findings suggest this is due to differences in the emphasis placed on TLPD alongside other CPD provision for the introduction of T Levels. Providers chose to resource their CPD from a combination of TLPD, other providers including assessment boards, in-house or from local networks. In many cases ARDLs played an important role in raising awareness of the TLPD offer, guiding and signposting managers, and indeed delivering bespoke in-house courses from the TLPD programme. In addition, OTNAs and ITNAs, as well as Understanding T Levels, functioned as routes into further professional development. Uptake was high across the different strands, with the exception of TRIPs due to their more intensive nature.

TLPD aimed to ensure that every member of staff with either a leadership role, teaching role or student advisory role had the knowledge they needed to play their part in the successful delivery of T Levels. Evaluation evidence suggests that leaders were confident in their organisation's ability to deliver T Levels. Senior leaders tended to be more confident about this than route leaders who were perhaps closer to the practical challenges associated with delivery. Monitoring data showed that the largest group of people who engaged with TLPD were teachers and Advanced Practitioners, and all the teachers that participated in the evaluation had valued support from TLPD and were confident in their ability to teach. The group with least engagement with TLPD (and also with the evaluation) were student advisory staff. These staff may have been informed about T Levels via other means such as in-house briefings or there may be a gap in knowledge remaining amongst this cohort to be addressed.

The monitoring data also suggested that there were different routes in to TLPD. The programme's design was sufficiently flexible that individuals could complete an ITNA and progress to other courses, but also, they could access courses without an ITNA or indeed, complete an ITNA but then choose not to take part in any other TLPD courses or events. From Wave 2 providers, 1,641 individuals completed an ITNA of whom 923 (56%) did not also engage in any other TLPD strand.

The predominantly online offer helped with accessibility, and the range of formats and intensity of support on offer was important. Where staff felt unable to access TLPD this was a reflection of time and staffing pressures rather than anything intrinsic to the design of TLPD. The inclusion of financial support to facilitate engagement with the more

intensive support had been effective in addressing this barrier for some providers although for others the shortage of staffing cover remained a barrier notwithstanding financial support.

## The impact of TLPD

TLPD played a key role in ensuring staff were aware of, and understood, the key features of T Levels. For many of the Wave 2 providers, accessing 'Understanding T Levels' was the first step in developing this knowledge amongst staff directly or peripherally involved in the delivery of T Levels. The range of staff covered by the offer was important in enabling this. The more targeted Role and Route Specific Training and Professional Development for Leaders strands supported teachers, managers and leaders to develop the required depth of understanding. Gaps in knowledge were reported amongst teachers, but these were generally seen by interviewees as the 'unknowns' that teachers will only be able to fully understand once they have delivered the course, rather than due to gaps in TLPD.

TLPD was assessed by evaluation participants to have had a positive albeit moderate impact on teacher's pedagogical, subject, technical and industry knowledge. This may be due to several reasons. First, providers chose to offer routes aligned with their more experienced and knowledgeable teachers, including those with more recent industry knowledge. These teachers already had high skills and therefore the marginal additional benefit of training might reasonably be expected to be modest. Second, some courses were also more similar to other qualifications teachers were accustomed to delivering, so required less knowledge development. Thirdly, teachers commonly said that TLPD was better at raising awareness of the challenges for delivery rather than necessarily providing practical solutions and resources for teaching.

Confidence around teaching was mostly high. Issues causing concern were more commonly externally driven, such as attainment levels among learners and the quality and timeliness of awarding body information and support. Where there was a lack of confidence this tended to be due to the 'unknowns' prior to delivery. These tended to be related to the structure and content of T Levels and assessments. Self-assessed satisfaction with the quality of teaching in the first year was high. In the spirit of effective professional practice there was recognition that teachers would need to reflect on and refine delivery going forward.

The opportunities for networking, peer learning and collaboration were critical to many of the reported impacts. Given the challenging context that teachers, managers and leaders were facing, and the uncertainties inherent in a new qualification, having access to peers in other providers offered important reassurance, support, inspiration and answers. It was particularly beneficial for levels of confidence around preparedness, as staff were able to recognise that challenges and unknowns they were facing were common across all providers. Teachers also pointed to sharing between peers as the aspect of TLPD most

likely to deliver solutions and resources for teaching. Much of this networking, peer learning and collaboration was fostered by TLPD directly or indirectly, and it has grown beyond the confines of TLPD. This is an important success for the programme.

## Satisfaction with TLPD

Satisfaction with TLPD was mostly moderate to high. The extended phase was considered an improvement on the initial phase, and even during the extended phase the programme had been refined due to a commitment to continual improvement. The regular capture of user feedback, both formally and informally (including through ARDLs), was key to facilitating this.

The comprehensiveness and joined-up nature of TLPD was particularly valued. Participants involved in the evaluation valued being able to use it in a sequenced manner, starting with OTNAs/ITNAs, progressing onto Understanding T Levels, and then more focused support, with the flexibility to choose what was most appropriate.

The accessibility and convenience of the support was also highlighted. Online delivery helped to support uptake, and in many cases with no loss of quality. There were, however, some that would have preferred an in-person experience, often because this created more opportunities for connecting and sharing with peers.

## Extent to which TLPD achieved its objectives

The table below assesses the evidence on the extent to which TLPD achieved its objectives.

**Table 7: TLPD objectives and assessment of achievement**

Every teacher who teaches a T Level programme has the knowledge and skills they need to teach that programme effectively, in good time prior to first teaching.	
Sub-theme	Assessment of evidence
Every teacher who teaches a T Level programme...	<p>Information about the number of T Level teachers is not known. Consequently, measures of universal reach rely on reports from managers of participating providers.</p> <p>TLPD reach is not fully known because insights and resources are shared among colleagues.</p> <p>There is insufficient evidence to say comment about the reach of the programme to every teacher. However, the majority of survey respondents said all or most teaching staff had engaged with TLPD.</p>

<p>...has the skills and knowledge they need...</p>	<p>Self-reported measures of teaching quality were sought. Providers said they allocated T Level teaching to their more experienced staff. The evaluation surveys correspondingly found good levels of confidence in the teaching and learning skills of teachers.</p> <p>TLPD was well regarded for raising awareness of the pedagogical issues associated with teaching T Levels and it was reported to have had a modest impact on teaching staff's pedagogical knowledge.</p> <p>Teachers' curriculum and industry knowledge were scored high to modest in the surveys, with scores suggesting room for improvement in both areas but greater need around industry knowledge. TLPD was mostly viewed as having a modest impact on these areas.</p>
<p>...to teach the programme effectively...</p>	<p>External assessments of the effectiveness of teaching were not available to the evaluation. In time, Ofsted reporting will address this gap.</p> <p>Teaching staff reported being better prepared for earlier phases of T Level delivery (e.g. induction) than later phases (e.g. assessment). External factors, such as the timeliness of awarding body information, also influenced how prepared teachers were. Positively, almost all survey respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of teaching in the first year.</p>
<p>...in good time prior to first teaching</p>	<p>Survey scores suggest most senior and route leaders regarded teachers to be fully or mostly prepared.</p> <p>For many, the ambition to be 'fully prepared in good time' could never be achieved because the novelty of T Levels meant that there would inevitably be aspects of need that emerged with delivery. This was exacerbated by late delivery of resources by some awarding bodies.</p> <p>In addition ongoing professional practice requires teachers to continually update and refine their knowledge and skills – respondents noted there is always room for improvement.</p> <p>In addition there will be a need for TLPD support to prepare new teachers and replace existing skills as teachers leave the workforce.</p>

Teachers teaching T Levels can interact and collaborate with each other on a regional and/or subject specific basis so that they can reflect on and embed their professional development.	
Sub-theme	Assessment of evidence
Teachers teaching T Levels can interact and collaborate with each other on a regional and/or subject specific basis...	<p>The opportunities to network, share and collaborate with other providers was a highly valued, and in the most part well-realised aspect, of the TLPD offer. TLPD was considered to have directly facilitated this through strands such as Networks and TRIPs, while other strands provided more informal opportunities. Networks were organised on a regional basis. TRIPs were designed to focus on specific themes.</p> <p>Some contacts and networks established through TLPD had gone on to share and collaborate outside of TLPD activities.</p> <p>While some thought in-person activities were better for networking, others reported the opposite saying it was easier to make initial contact in an online forum. This also had the advantage of extending networks nationally thus countering the risk of reluctance to collaborate with local competitors.</p>
... so that they can reflect on and embed their professional development	<p>The benefits of networking and collaboration included having opportunities to share good practice, resources, expertise and insights, resolving queries and problems, drawing on peers as a professional 'sounding board', and providing reassurance around levels of preparedness and delivery.</p> <p>Feedback around the extent to which learning could be embedded varied. Wave 2 providers valued the opportunity to learn from Wave 1 providers, but reported frustration with sessions that included subsequent waves as they were less likely to acquire knowledge that would be useful for their own practice.</p> <p>Similarly, some support was not subject or course specific which had limited the scope for transferable learning. Nevertheless teachers emphasised the need to continue to review and refine delivery, and there was an appetite for continued peer sharing of learning about what does and does not work in practice.</p>

Every member of staff within a Provider who will have a role in T Level delivery, or needs to understand T Levels to carry out their role effectively or to enable them to advise students, has the knowledge they need to play their part in the successful introduction of T Levels, in good time before first teaching.	
Sub-theme	Assessment of evidence
Every member of staff within a Provider who will have a role in T Level delivery, or needs to understand T Levels to carry out their role effectively ...	<p>Information about the number of T Level staff is not known. Consequently, measures of universal reach rely on reports from managers of participating providers.</p> <p>Understanding of T Levels was considered to be high amongst senior leaders, managers and route leaders, although route leaders gave their own understanding more mixed scores in the survey, possibly because they needed to know more and were more mindful of the unknowns.</p> <p>The Understanding T Levels strand was particularly important to developing understanding amongst all staff. Nearly all ETF survey respondents said it had improved their knowledge of T Levels following the session.</p>
... or to enable them to advise students ...	Learner Services and Administrative staff were reported to have lower levels of knowledge and preparedness than other staff. Some suggested the level of understanding amongst these staff needed to be improved, especially where staff were involved in explaining T Levels to prospective learners.
... has the knowledge they need to play their part in the successful introduction of T Levels, in good time before first teaching	<p>Survey scores on overall preparedness for delivery showed the majority of senior leaders and route leaders felt their organisation had been ready for delivery, with almost all giving scores of 4 or 5 out of 5.</p> <p>The majority of senior leaders and route leaders agreed or strongly agreed that TLPD had improved staff knowledge, with only a small number disagreeing, and those respondents were more likely to have reported lower engagement with TLPD.</p>



Every member of staff within a Provider who will have a leadership role in managing T Level delivery has the knowledge and skills they need to inspire and lead the change process required for the successful introduction of T Levels, in good time before first teaching.

#### Assessment of evidence

Senior leaders considered their understanding of T Levels to be high while route leaders considered their understanding to be more mixed but mostly high. Professional Development for Leaders and Role and Route Specific Training were two of the routes with the highest proportions of ETF survey respondents agreeing it had an impact on understanding of T Levels. They were valued for providing the greater depth of understanding that was needed for their role in rolling out T Levels. They also had high proportions of respondents saying it would lead to changes in delivery.

The TLPD offer is informed by a detailed understanding of the professional development needs of the Providers that will deliver T Levels and of the teachers working in those Providers, identified through a training needs analysis (TNA).

#### Assessment of evidence

The OTNAs/ITNAs and resultant development plans were frequently highlighted as useful by interviewees and survey respondents because they helped to identify areas for development and skills gaps to address prior to delivery. They also fed into the design of the programme.

The evaluation found satisfaction with the comprehensive nature of the offer, including the range of staff covered, the content, the formats and intensity of opportunities available. The evaluation did not identify any gaps in the TLPD offer, only issues for refinement within the current offer. The issues for improvement included content being too generic or basic, and suggestions that some of the support would have been more beneficial if it was available sooner.

Those who said they had engaged with the first phase of TLPD invariably commented that the extended phase was a significant improvement.

## Next steps

There is a clear ongoing need for professional development to support the rollout of T Levels. By the end of the 2021/22 academic year, only two waves of providers had started delivering T Levels. Providers delivering in Wave 3 onwards will need the support that Wave 2 providers have received. Staff within Wave 2 providers who will be delivering routes launching in 2022 and onwards will similarly need support. Also, any new staff joining a provider to deliver courses that have already commenced may need support.

The evaluation findings suggest that TLPD is broadly the correct model to support these new providers and staff.

The points for consideration identified by the evaluation are therefore all suggestions to improve impact and satisfaction within this model. Where dissatisfaction was expressed with the existing support, it was around: support being too generic, content being too basic, repetition between courses, not enough opportunities for networking, support not being timely, and limited sharing of slides, recordings and resources after sessions. These are points that can be addressed with better guidance to prospective participants, and in some cases, clear eligibility criteria (such as prior engagement with other support, delivery Wave, or job role). In Section 6.2 there were various other issues and issues suggestions for improvement set out for individual strands.

For staff who have commenced delivery of T Levels, the consensus was that there is an ongoing need for support but of a different nature. Teachers used reflections on their first year of delivery to identify their ongoing professional development needs. Intentions for where staff intended to source support varied – some planned to focus on provider-led independent CPD and networking, or on support from awarding bodies.

Consequently, engagement specifically with TLPD may decline but there are other aspects of DfE support (delivered by the ETF and other partners) that could fit with the teacher development needs of those with more experience of delivering T Levels. Similarly, there are other opportunities for professional development being rolled out by assessment boards and by other providers<sup>14</sup>. While teachers expressed a wish to continue to engage with TLPD, the offer needs differentiation and it also needs to enhance and complement other provision in the market.

The evaluation surveys showed scope for improvements in pedagogical, subject and industry knowledge. Teachers delivering T Levels also emphasised the need for practical solutions and resources, and for all support to be subject- and (ideally) course-specific to ensure relevance. TLPD can help by collating and disseminating the practical solutions and resources created and identified through TLPD activities and TLPD-facilitated discussions; this could be done through TLPD staff or a resource bank.

There was strong demand for continuing the opportunities for networking, peer learning and collaboration, given how critical it had been to date, but importantly the preference was for these to be focused on providers at similar stages of delivery. A common complaint around networking was that sessions were too often dominated by providers from later waves who were pre-delivery, and therefore focused on less relevant issues for those in the middle of delivery. Similarly, there were frequent requests for networking to be more subject specific. Taking a cohort-based approach to segment the needs of the T

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<sup>14</sup> For example the [National Networks Programme](#) from the Gatsby Foundation.

Level delivery workforce may help ameliorate these issues and ensure that people get what they need from each session.

Separating waves into cohorts does risk later waves not benefitting from the experience and knowledge of earlier waves, but this can be facilitated through TLPD. Networks, dissemination sessions and mentoring with this specific purpose would facilitate sharing, with enough Wave 2 staff keen to help in this manner.

There is insufficient evidence to confidently assess the extent of support staff engagement TLPD, but the indications are that it was partial. Ensuring that staff who have regular contact with potential T Level learners are knowledgeable about T Levels is vital in the context of shortfalls in learner numbers.

Similarly, there was evidence of appropriate engagement from senior leaders, but insufficient evidence regarding governor engagement. If providers are offering a small number of courses then governors may not recognise their potential future impact and choose to use their time for other priorities. However, ensuring that there is knowledge and foresight among governors will be important for both T Levels and TLPD.

There also needs to be a continued effort to promote TLPD to Wave 2 staff. There is a risk that staff are unaware of new and updated parts of the TLPD offer. Having an active ARDL, and avoiding information bottlenecks, would likely help with this.

Finally, going forward, the preference was for a blend of in-person and online support. Online support was valued for its convenience and accessibility, but in-person support was valued for enhancing depth, engagement and opportunities for discussion. The view was not that in-person should be the default, but that it should be used where appropriate.

## **Recommendations for assisting future evaluation**

This final section makes some recommendations around the capture of monitoring data to assist future evaluation of TLPD.

The design and collection of monitoring data has improved between the first and extended phase of TLPD. Having unique identifiers has meant that it is possible to identify the number of individuals engaging with the programme as well as the number of engagements. There were, however, still limitations and challenges to data collection, which in turn affects the conclusions about the programme that can be drawn:

- Foremost were the changes to data collection and management during the programme's lifetime. While done to improve data quality, it did make it challenging to track a cohort over the course of two years. Data stability and fidelity is important for any future evaluation.

- Second, it was not always possible to identify staff from Wave 2 providers, in part because of how some parts of the offer were open. Consideration could be given to better capturing and mapping providers going forwards.
- Third, it was not possible to distinguish between staff in Wave 2 providers delivering from September 2021 from staff in Wave 2 providers delivering from September 2022 or later. Capturing this information could help in tracing uptake amongst staff delivering at different points, and help in creating cohorts of participants at similar stages of delivery.

## Appendix A: Evaluation methodology

### Scoping exercise

A scoping period helped to refine the work plan and develop research tools. This period coincided with the first national COVID-19 lockdown and this extended the scoping period as the effect of the pandemic was being monitored.

A series of scoping interviews with DfE staff involved in the delivery of T Levels and TLPD, with TLPD delivery partner staff from the ETF, FutureLearn and Association of Colleges, and the Gatsby Foundation as a sector stakeholder were undertaken. The eight scoping interviews focused on the design of T Levels, the process for rolling them out, the need for TLPD, and wider context. A document review of key materials was also undertaken including a review of the initial findings of the evaluation of the first iteration of TLPD with Wave 1 providers. The findings from these exercises informed the design of subsequent surveys and fieldwork with Wave 2 providers. A scoping report was prepared and agreed with DfE that included an overview of the TLPD format, data collection and availability, the baseline survey, priorities for the next phase of the evaluation and a risk assessment. The research questions (see below) that informed the brief were retained for the work plan.

#### Research questions

- Has TLPD prepared all delivery staff to deliver the new T Level routes?
- Has pedagogical knowledge improved for teachers delivering T Levels?
- How have teaching practices been adapted for T Levels?
- Has the teaching workforce improved its technical expertise? Are they able to confidently teach T Level course content to learners, using the knowledge gained from TLPD?
- Do all staff within providers understand what T Levels are and what they offer to learners?
- Are providers able to teach T Levels to learners within the agreed timescales? If not, why not
- Are providers able to teach T Levels to the extent they had planned? If not, why not?
- Do providers collaborate more effectively as a result of TLPD, or do they merely remain in competition for 'the best' people?
- How confident do staff and their managers/leaders feel about teaching T Levels prior to delivery? How does this change over time, once delivery has begun?
- How well are T Levels being taught over the course of the first year?

## Surveys of senior leaders

Senior leaders within the 62 Wave 2 providers were surveyed at three points during the evaluation. The three surveys were:

- Baseline survey (July-September 2020) – a short baseline survey took place around a year prior to Wave 2 providers commencing delivery of T Levels to capture levels of preparedness.
- Interim survey (May-June 2021) – a more extensive survey took place around four to five months prior to Wave 2 providers commencing delivery of T Levels to capture the extent of engagement with TLPD and other CPD, levels of preparedness, feedback on TLPD, and professional development priorities at that point in time.
- Final survey (February-April 2022) – another extensive survey took place around six to eight months into Wave 2 providers delivering T Levels to capture the extent of engagement with TLPD and other CPD, reflections on actual levels of preparedness, reflections on the quality of delivery, feedback on TLPD, and professional development priorities at that point in time.

Each survey was an online survey, containing a mixture of multiple choice and open text responses. Many of the questions were repeated across the surveys, to capture changes and distance travelled. For each survey, a single senior leader was invited to respond on behalf of their organisation.

The number of responses to each survey is shown in Table 8. It shows attrition between the surveys, with the baseline achieving 97% coverage and the final survey achieving 60% coverage. Participation in the surveys was encouraged by DfE staff and ETF staff, but there was difficulty securing participation as the research programme went on, in part due to the pressures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Table 8: Senior Leader survey response rate**

	Number of responses	Response rate (out of 62)
Baseline survey	60	97%
Interim survey	51	82%
Final survey	37	60%

Source: SQW TLPD senior leader surveys

Throughout this report, much of the focus is on the final survey because it reflects the most up-to-date findings. Findings from the baseline and interim report were shared with DfE earlier in the process to inform programme refinement.

Comparisons between the final and interim report are made in places, with the caveat that respondents do differ between the surveys. The evaluation aimed to maximise continuity in respondents between the surveys, however, in practice this was not entirely achievable. Just 12 individuals responded to all three surveys and 20 individuals responded to both the interim and final surveys. Consequently, the value of making comparisons between the surveys is limited, as differences may simply reflect the different respondents rather than anything more significant. Comparisons are made infrequently a result, and with this caveat highlighted.

## Surveys of route leaders

Route leaders within the 62 Wave Two providers were surveyed in a similar manner to senior leaders. However, for route leaders there were just two surveys:

- Interim survey (May-June 2021) – an extensive survey took place around four to five months prior to Wave Two providers commencing delivery of T Levels to capture the extent of engagement with TLPD, levels of preparedness amongst teachers, and feedback on TLPD.
- Final survey (February-April 2022) – another extensive survey took place around six to eight months into Wave Two providers delivering T Levels to capture the extent of engagement with TLPD and other CPD, reflections on actual levels of preparedness, reflections on the quality of delivery, feedback on TLPD, and professional development priorities at that point in time.

Again, each survey was an online survey, contained a mixture of multiple choice and open text responses, and questions were repeated across the surveys.

The number of responses to each survey is shown in Table 9. The response rates were considerably lower than the senior leader surveys, and again there was attrition between the surveys. For each survey, the aim was for a single route leader to respond per Route on behalf of their organisation. However, in practice, some providers had multiple route leaders for a single route (e.g. one for Health and one for Science, or one per provider campus), resulting in some instances where two responses were received for a route from a single provider. Therefore, the table shows the number of routes in each provider for which a distinct response was received, and the total number of responses.

**Table 9: Route Leader survey response rate**

	<b>Number of distinct responses (non-distinct)</b>	<b>Number of routes/providers</b>	<b>Response rate</b>
Interim survey	60 (67)	164 routes	37%
Final survey	46 (44)	164 routes	27%

A summary of responses and response rates by route are presented in Table 10. It shows response rates varied considerably, from 44% of Education and Childcare routes in the interim survey to just 17% of Construction routes in the final survey. Low response rates for some routes reduces the significance of comparisons between the routes.

**Table 10: Route Leader survey response rate by route**

	<b>Number of distinct responses (non-distinct)</b>	<b>Number of routes/providers</b>	<b>Response rate</b>
All route leaders – Interim survey	60 (67)	164 routes	37%
All route leaders – Final survey	44 (46)	164 routes	27%
Construction – Interim survey	12 (12)	30 providers	40%
Construction – Final survey	5 (5)	30 providers	17%
Digital – Interim survey	13 (15)	46 providers	28%
Digital – Final survey	10 (12)	46 providers	22%
Education & Childcare – Interim survey	18 (20)	41 providers	44%
Education & Childcare – Final survey	16 (16)	41 providers	39%
Health & Science – Interim survey	17 (20)	47 providers	36%
Health & Science – Final survey	13 (13)	47 providers	28%



## Fieldwork with provider staff

A series of interviews with Wave 2 provider staff were undertaken in two rounds:

- First round (June-August 2021) – prior to commencing T Level delivery.
- Second round (March-June 2022) – after commencing T Level delivery.

The first round of fieldwork was with senior and route leaders at ten providers, the second round also included teachers and other support staff. Interview formats varied between one-on-one and group interviews. The number of providers and staff interviewed in each round is set out in Table 11 which shows 70 distinct individuals were interviewed, of which 13 were spoken to in both rounds. The intention was to revisit the same 10 providers in each round of fieldwork, however some did not wish to re-participate, and therefore for the second round the evaluation revisited 6 of the providers, and an additional 4 were invited to participate. In total, fieldwork was undertaken with 14 of the 62 Wave 2 providers. Efforts were made to secure participation from a variety of provider type, however all fieldwork was with General FE providers.

**Table 11: Providers participating in fieldwork**

	Number of providers	Number of staff
First round	10	47
Second round	10	37
Overall (distinct providers/individuals – some spoken to in both rounds)	14	71

The interviews enabled the evaluation to capture more in-depth findings. The findings from the 10 providers visited in the second round have informed a series of case studies in Appendix D, which illustrate how providers have prepared for the delivery of T Levels and the role of TLPD in supporting this preparation.

## ETF TLPD monitoring data

The ETF collected monitoring data on the TLPD programme. This captured the activities offered, the level of uptake, and feedback on satisfaction and impact.

The data used for this report primarily covers the period of October 2020 to January 2021. Data on TLPD prior to these dates containing the necessary information for the evaluation was unavailable due to changes to data collection. Data after these dates

frequently had disjoints with the previous datasets, but has been used in some instances. Where different data is used in the report, this is clearly noted.

Key points about the monitoring data are:

- The date range used does not cover the entirety of the second phase of TLPD, which ran from May 2020 to June 2022. As a result, nor does it cover the entirety of engagement by Wave 2 providers. Wave 2 participation in the initial phase of TLPD is not covered either.
- In most instances the provider that staff work for was identifiable in the monitoring data, however this was not the case for 810 out of 8,776 (9%) of identifiable distinct individuals.
- Individual staff members were identified with a unique identifier. Job role was also captured for most but not all identifiable distinct individuals (94% for Wave 2 and 84% for any provider). However, it was not possible to identify whether an individual member of staff was involved in T Levels which started delivery specifically in September 2021. Therefore, within Wave 2 providers, it was not possible to identify whether the staff themselves were part of Wave 2 delivery.
- A satisfaction/impact survey was sent to participants after completion of TLPD support, and had an estimated response rate of around 18%. The dates covered by the surveys are December 2020 to April 2022.

The unknowns and different timespans of data account for small differences between some of the tables that use TLPD monitoring data in the main body of the report and Appendix B.

## Data considerations

This report triangulates these various strands of evidence gathered over a two-year period. A few reflections and caveats on the evidence base are worth noting:

- The findings presented in this report primarily reflect the final phase of research. Findings from the research conducted in 2020 and 2021 were fed back to DfE and ETF at the time, to inform ongoing programme refinement. That said, the report does reflect on changes from these earlier findings, for example considering how views of preparedness prior to delivery compared against views on preparedness for delivery after delivery commenced.
- The COVID-19 pandemic had implications for the evaluation. Minimising the burden on provider staff was a key concern of SQW and DfE throughout, while pressures on provider staff also meant many were reluctant to participate in the evaluation surveys and fieldwork. The levels of participation secured was the result of a significant effort by DfE, ETF and SQW to encourage survey responses and participation in fieldwork.
- Wave 2 provider participation in the surveys experienced attrition over the course of the evaluation. Resultantly, there is a larger margin of error in the later surveys,

but this is compensated for by corroborating the results with fieldwork findings and earlier survey results. This report focuses on findings in which there are greater levels of confidence based on this triangulation. The fieldwork findings provide greater depth to and help to illustrate the survey findings.

- The surveys also experienced changes in respondents, reducing the meaningfulness of making comparisons between surveys. Given this, where comparisons are made, checks have been performed on any changes by comparing the responses of individual respondents who were the same across the surveys.
- Route leader survey response rates were low for some routes, particularly for the final survey, which limited confidence in comparisons between routes. Comparisons between routes are however made in this report, where it has been possible to corroborate findings corroborating the results with fieldwork findings and earlier survey results.
- The surveys targeted senior and route leaders. It is possible that the respondents were not fully aware of the extent of engagement by their staff, particularly in the less intensive parts of the TLPD offer. Similarly, the respondents may not always be informed of staff satisfaction with or the impact of TLPD activities they had engaged with.
- The research primarily reflects the experiences of General FE. Similarly, the evaluation reflects the experiences of providers rated Outstanding and Good by Ofsted because all Wave 2 providers are rated as such by Ofsted.
- The extent of engagement with other professional development activities (see Section 2.3) means it has not been possible to test the impact of TLPD based on different levels of engagement in the monitoring data. Instead, in this report the attribution of impact relies on survey questions and fieldwork where respondents were specifically asked what impact could be attributed to TLPD.

## Appendix B: Monitoring data summary

**Table 12: Provider type of Wave 2 providers**

Provider type	Count
General Further Education College	50
Sixth Form College (General)	5
Private Sector Public Funded	2
Academy School	1
Voluntary School	1
Higher Education Institution	1
Studio School	1
University Technical College	1

Source: DfE T Level Provider List and UK Register of Learning Providers

**Table 13: Region of Wave 2 providers**

Provider region	Count
East Midlands	2
East of England	6
London	5
North East	2
North West	15
South East	8
South West	6
West Midlands	12
Yorkshire and the Humber	6

Source: DfE T Level Provider List and UK Register of Learning Providers

**Table 14: Breakdown of events (courses/activities) and attendees by strand**

<b>Strand/course</b>	<b>Number of events</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
<b>Industry Insights</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>450</b>
Group Industry Placements	18	152
Industry Workshops	28	298
<b>Networks &amp; TRIPs</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>1,098</b>
Digital Skills for T Levels	1	22
Learning from 2020 T Level Providers	7	261
T Level Resource Improvement Projects	10	188
Curriculum Design and Delivery Networks	73	392
Industry Placements	23	196
Marketing Network	2	27
Network for Schools and Sixth Forms	4	12
Network online communities	10	-
<b>Professional Development for Leaders</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>717</b>
Governors Providing T Levels	12	70
Operational Middle Leaders and Managers: Designing the T Level Curriculum: Theory into Practice	23	192
Operational Middle Leaders and Managers: Leading Curriculum Change for T Levels: Leadership Practice	7	31
Operational Middle Leaders and Managers: Working Collaboratively: Effective Leadership to Plan, Implement and Deliver T Levels	3	5
Operational Middle Leaders and Managers: Working with Employers: Co-Designing the T Level Curriculum, Putting it into Practice	12	71
Strategic Leaders Providing T Levels	17	80

T Level Leadership Development Programme	2	0
Operational Middle Leaders and Managers	25	268
<b>T Level Role and Route Specific Training</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>1,315</b>
Introducing the Business and Administration Route	5	34
Introducing the Construction Route	5	17
Introducing the Digital Route	5	30
Introducing the Education and Childcare Route	6	42
Introducing the Engineering and Manufacturing Route	1	0
Introducing the Health and Science Route	4	23
Introducing the Legal, Finance and Accounting Route	1	0
New Teacher Programme	12	38
Teaching and Learning on the Building Services Engineering for Construction T Level	3	20
Teaching and Learning on the Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction T Level	3	24
Teaching and Learning on the Digital Production, Design and Development T Level	2	12
Teaching and Learning on the Digital Support Services T Level	1	8
Teaching and Learning on the Education and Childcare T Level	6	43
Teaching and Learning on the Health T Level	5	42
Teaching and Learning on the Healthcare Science T Level	2	5
Teaching and Learning on the Management and Administration T Level	3	0
Teaching and Learning on the Onsite Construction T Level	2	6
Teaching and Learning on the Science T Level	3	21

Teaching T Levels: Enhancing Pedagogy	48	559
Teaching T Levels: Vocational and Professional upskilling	39	391
<b>Understanding T Levels</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>1,786</b>
Understanding T Levels for Business Support Staff in the Post-16 Sector	12	149
Understanding T Levels for Frontline Staff in the Post-16 Sector	39	314
Understanding T Levels for Leaders and Governors in the Post-16 Sector	5	56
Understanding T Levels for Schools	48	505
Understanding T Levels for the Post-16 Sector/FE	47	762

Source: TLPD monitoring data. Note: number of events covers up to 31/04/22 to set out full span of events, whereas attendees covers up to end of 31/01/22 - the two could not be reconciled due to disjoints between data exports - this is why some courses have no attendees recorded; this excludes FutureLearn courses which are set out in Table 18.

**Table 15: Type of events by strand**

	Open	In-house	Flexible	% open	% in-house
Industry Insights	22	0	6	79%	0%
Networks & TRIPs	51	0	2	96%	0%
Professional Development for Leaders	22	23	0	49%	51%
T Level Role and Route Specific Training	27	28	0	49%	51%
Understanding T Levels	30	52	0	37%	63%
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>39%</b>

Source: TLPD monitoring data. Note: from 25/08/21 only - data for format is not available prior to this; excludes FutureLearn courses which are all online.

**Table 16: Format of events by strand**

	In-person	Online	Blended	% in-person	% online
Industry Insights	7	14	1	32%	64%
Networks & TRIPs	0	51	0	0%	100%
Professional Development for Leaders	12	32	0	27%	73%
T Level Role and Route Specific Training	10	43	0	19%	81%
Understanding T Levels	21	56	0	27%	73%
All strands	50	196	1	20%	79%

Source: TLPD monitoring data. Note: from 25/08/21 only - data for format is not available prior to this; excludes FutureLearn courses which are all online.

**Table 17: Attendance at events by strand**

Strand	Attended	Partially Attended	Withdrawn	No Show	% withdrawn or no show
Industry Insights	532	32	30	369	41%
Networks	455	19	63	423	51%
Networks & TRIPs	207	12	21	243	55%
Professional Development for Leaders	635	82	32	273	30%
T Level Role and Route Specific Training	1,456	216	82	768	34%
Understanding T Levels	1,705	23	55	661	29%
<b>All strands</b>	<b>5,048</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>2,756</b>	<b>36%</b>

Source: TLPD monitoring data. Note: excludes FutureLearn courses.

**Table 18: Breakdown of FutureLearn courses and numbers participating by strand**



<b>Strand/course</b>	<b>Number participating</b>
<b>Industry Insights</b>	<b>287</b>
T Levels: Industry Workshops	287
Employer Partnerships and Industry Insights	-
<b>Professional Development for Leaders</b>	<b>267</b>
Governors Providing T Levels	19
Operational Middle Leaders and Managers	122
Operational Middle Leaders and Managers: Leadership and Professional Practice for T Level Planning and Implementation	-
Operational Middle Leaders and Managers: Leading and Managing Curriculum Change for T Levels	-
Strategic Leaders Providing T Levels	34
T Level Leadership Mentoring	92
<b>T Level Role and Route Specific Training</b>	<b>618</b>
Supporting T Level Learners with Embedded Digital	-
Supporting T Level Learners with Embedded English	-
Supporting T Level Learners with Embedded Maths	-
Introducing the Business and Administration Route	11
Introducing the Construction Route	20
Introducing the Digital Route	36
Introducing the Education and Childcare Route	49
Introducing the Engineering and Manufacturing Route	15
Introducing the Health and Science Route	67
Introducing the Legal, Finance and Accounting Route	12
New Teacher Programme	56

New Teacher Programme: How am I going to teach?	-
New Teacher Programme: What is Learning?	-
New Teacher Programme: Who are my Learners?	-
Teaching and Learning on the Accounting T Level	2
Teaching and Learning on the Building Services Engineering for Construction T Level	11
Teaching and Learning on the Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacturing T Level	1
Teaching and Learning on the Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction T Level	11
Teaching and Learning on the Digital Business Services T Level	9
Teaching and Learning on the Digital Production, Design and Development T Level	20
Teaching and Learning on the Digital Support Services T Level	13
Teaching and Learning on the Education and Childcare T Level	41
Teaching and Learning on the Engineering, Manufacturing, Processing and Control T Level	5
Teaching and Learning on the Finance T Level	2
Teaching and Learning on the Health T Level	51
Teaching and Learning on the Healthcare Science T Level	25
Teaching and Learning on the Maintenance, Installation and Repair for Engineering and Manufacturing T Level	2
Teaching and Learning on the Management and Administration T Level	8
Teaching and Learning on the Onsite Construction T Level	6
Teaching and Learning on the Science T Level	26
Teaching T Levels: Enhancing Pedagogy	72

Teaching T Levels: Vocational and Professional Upskilling	47
<b>Understanding T Levels</b>	<b>899</b>
Understanding T Levels for Business Support Staff	316
Understanding T Levels for Frontline Staff	480
Understanding T Levels for Leaders and Governors	103

Source: TLPD monitoring data. Note: courses include those available up to 31/04/22, whereas numbers participating covers up to end of 31/01/22 - the two could not be reconciled due to disjoints between data exports - which accounts for some courses having no participants in the table.

**Table 19: Number of Industry Insight opportunities by type**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Count</b>
Work Placement	193
Group Industry Placements	152
Shadowing	129
Virtual Work Placement	32
Industry Mentoring	29
Industry Workshops	15
Group Industry Collaboration	10
Virtual Shadowing	7

Source: TLPD monitoring data

**Table 20: Providers engaged and instances of engagement by strand**

<b>Strand</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>All instances of engagement</b>	<b>Instances of engagement – Wave 2</b>	<b>Wave 2 providers engaged</b>	<b>% of Wave 2 providers</b>
Industry Insights	Industry Workshops	Events and/or FutureLearn	585	332	48	77%
Industry Insights	T Level Resource Improvement Projects - Industry Insights	Events	91	50	25	40%
Industry Insights	Shadowing	Placement	129	83	23	37%
Industry Insights	Work Placement	Placement	193	84	21	34%
Industry Insights	Group Industry Placements	Events	152	62	12	19%
Industry Insights	Virtual Work Placement	Placement	32	28	10	16%
Industry Insights	Industry Mentoring	Mentoring	29	15	10	16%
Industry Insights	Digital Skills for T Levels	Events	22	15	8	13%
Industry Insights	Group Industry Collaboration	Collaboration	10	9	4	6%
Industry Insights	Virtual Shadowing	Placement	7	5	3	5%
Networks	Curriculum Design and Delivery Networks	Events	392	215	51	82%

Networks	Industry Placements	Events	196	109	35	56%
Networks	Learning from 2020 T Level Providers	Events	46	34	19	31%
Networks	Marketing Network	Events	27	13	11	18%
Networks	T Level Resource Improvement Projects - Networks	Events	13	8	5	8%
Networks	Network for Schools and Sixth Forms	Events	12	1	1	2%
Prof Development for Leaders	Operational Middle Leaders and Managers	Events and/or FutureLearn	390	212	45	73%
Prof Development for Leaders	Leadership Mentoring	Mentoring	137	66	27	44%
Prof Development for Leaders	Strategic Leaders Providing T Levels	Events and/or FutureLearn	114	52	19	31%
Prof Development for Leaders	Operational Middle Leaders and Managers: Designing the T Level Curriculum: Theory into Practice	Events	192	47	13	21%
Prof Development for Leaders	T Level Leadership Mentoring	FutureLearn	92	19	12	19%
Prof Development for Leaders	Governors Providing T Levels	Events and/or FutureLearn	70	39	9	15%

Prof Development for Leaders	Operational Middle Leaders and Managers: Working with Employers: Co-Designing the T Level Curriculum, Putting it into Practice	Events	71	5	3	5%
Prof Development for Leaders	Operational Middle Leaders and Managers: Leading Curriculum Change for T Levels: Leadership Practice	Events	31	4	2	3%
Prof Development for Leaders	Operational Middle Leaders and Managers: Working Collaboratively: Effective Leadership to Plan, Implement and Deliver T Levels	Events	5	2	2	3%
Role and Route Specific Training	Learning from 2020 T Level Providers	Events	215	130	42	68%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching T Levels: Enhancing Pedagogy	Events and/or FutureLearn	631	334	33	53%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching T Levels: Vocational and Professional upskilling	Events and/or FutureLearn	438	190	33	53%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Health T Level	Events and/or FutureLearn	93	47	24	39%
Role and Route Specific Training	Introducing the Education and Childcare Route	Events and/or FutureLearn	91	54	23	37%

Role and Route Specific Training	Introducing the Health and Science Route	Events and/or FutureLearn	90	45	21	34%
Role and Route Specific Training	Introducing the Digital Route	Events and/or FutureLearn	66	35	20	32%
Role and Route Specific Training	New Teacher Programme	Events and/or FutureLearn	94	50	18	29%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Education and Childcare T Level	Events and/or FutureLearn	84	41	18	29%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Science T Level	Events and/or FutureLearn	47	31	18	29%
Role and Route Specific Training	T Level Resource Improvement Projects - T Level Role and Route Specific Training	Events	84	39	17	27%
Role and Route Specific Training	Introducing the Construction Route	Events and/or FutureLearn	37	20	13	21%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Digital Support Services T Level	Events and/or FutureLearn	21	15	13	21%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Healthcare Science T Level	Events and/or FutureLearn	30	17	12	19%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Digital Production, Design and Development T Level	Events and/or FutureLearn	32	15	12	19%

Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction T Level	Events and/or FutureLearn	35	25	11	18%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Building Services Engineering for Construction T Level	Events and/or FutureLearn	31	21	10	16%
Role and Route Specific Training	Introducing the Business and Administration Route	Events and/or FutureLearn	45	18	9	15%
Role and Route Specific Training	Introducing the Engineering and Manufacturing Route	FutureLearn	15	7	5	8%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Onsite Construction T Level	Events and/or FutureLearn	12	7	5	8%
Role and Route Specific Training	Introducing the Legal, Finance and Accounting Route	FutureLearn	12	5	5	8%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Engineering, Manufacturing, Processing and Control T Level	FutureLearn	5	4	2	3%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Management and Administration T Level	FutureLearn	8	2	2	3%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Accounting T Level	FutureLearn	2	1	1	2%



Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Digital Business Services T Level	FutureLearn	9	1	1	2%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Maintenance, Installation and Repair for Engineering and Manufacturing T Level	FutureLearn	2	1	1	2%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacturing T Level	FutureLearn	1	0	0	0%
Role and Route Specific Training	Teaching and Learning on the Finance T Level	FutureLearn	2	0	0	0%
TRIPs	Holistic planning and delivery	-	8	7	6	10%
TRIPs	Skills in Context- Contextualised diagnostic assessments	-	9	6	5	8%
TRIPs	B&A - Developing AO2 and AO3 formative assessment materials	-	8	5	5	8%
TRIPs	E&M - Developing AO2 and AO3 formative assessment materials	-	6	5	5	8%
TRIPs	Schemes for Skills- Co-designed schemes of learning for the Construction Industry	-	7	5	4	6%
TRIPs	Contextualised Science Skills for the Health T Level	-	5	4	3	5%

TRIPs	Developing Python Skills for the Employer Set Project	-	6	4	3	5%
TRIPs	Passport to Placement toolkit for Health T Level	-	5	4	3	5%
TRIPs	Science Competence Portfolio Development	-	7	4	3	5%
TRIPs	Any - Contextualised learning materials to support development of core skills for the Employer Set Project	-	4	3	3	5%
TRIPs	Developing effective formative assessment for SEND	-	5	3	3	5%
TRIPs	Digital - Developing AO2 and AO3 formative assessment materials	-	9	3	3	5%
TRIPs	H&S - Developing AO2 and AO3 formative assessment materials	-	8	3	3	5%
TRIPs	Developing Employment Competency	-	6	3	2	3%
TRIPs	Any - 'Day in the life' learning resource, to showcase working environments and activities within a particular sector	-	4	2	2	3%

TRIPs	Any - Developing Core Skill formative assessment materials to support success in the Employer Set Project	-	4	2	2	3%
TRIPs	B&A - Employer informed case study	-	3	2	2	3%
TRIPs	E&C - Developing AO2 & AO3	-	6	2	2	3%
TRIPs	E&C - Developing OS Formative Assessment	-	3	2	2	3%
TRIPs	E&M - Employer engagement - motor vehicle	-	4	2	2	3%
TRIPs	Placement videos	-	4	2	2	3%
TRIPs	Project Based Learning and Delivery Tool-Kit	-	5	2	2	3%
TRIPs	Developing an Outstanding Approach to careers in Children's Services	-	5	2	1	2%
TRIPs	Co-designing and co-delivering the contextualised and introductory T Level content with employers	-	2	1	1	2%
TRIPs	Construction - Developing AO2 and AO3 formative assessment materials	-	3	1	1	2%

TRIPs	Construction - Industry Placement learning objective examples	-	3	1	1	2%
TRIPs	Contextualised resources to support delivery of the health and safety core content	-	6	1	1	2%
TRIPs	E&C - Project based learning in education and childcare	-	2	1	1	2%
TRIPs	Employability Skills in a Changing World	-	2	1	1	2%
TRIPs	H&S - Contextualised learning materials to support understanding of challenging science concepts	-	8	1	1	2%
TRIPs	Pan Leeds Health T Level	-	5	1	1	2%
TRIPs	Partnership approaches to developing effective Health and Nursing T Level placements	-	4	1	1	2%
TRIPs	Any - Holistic learning activities to apply core knowledge in the development of occupational specialism skills	-	4	0	0	0%
TRIPs	Communities of Practice- Developing pathways from T Levels to local HE	-	3	0	0	0%

TRIPs	Construction - Employer engagement - legislation for on-site construction	-	2	0	0	0%
TRIPs	Developing strategies to support CEIAG for vocational learners	-	5	0	0	0%
TRIPs	E&C - Contextualised learning materials to support understanding and skills of challenging maths concepts	-	3	0	0	0%
TRIPs	Feasibility Study: Digital and Business Industry Placements into Football	-	3	0	0	0%
TRIPs	Preparing staff and students for T Level Assessment	-	4	0	0	0%
TRIPs	Provider preparation to deliver the Business & Administration T Level (with an Occupational Specialism of Business Support)	-	4	0	0	0%
TRIPs	Sequencing year one – A collaborative approach to planning	-	2	0	0	0%
Understanding T Levels	Understanding T Levels for Frontline Staff	Events and/or FutureLearn	794	263	47	76%
Understanding T Levels	Understanding T Levels for Business Support Staff	Events and/or FutureLearn	762	336	31	50%

Understanding T Levels	Understanding T Levels for the Post-16 Sector (/FE)	Events and/or FutureLearn	465	155	27	44%
Understanding T Levels	Understanding T Levels for Leaders and Governors	Events and/or FutureLearn	159	32	19	31%
Understanding T Levels	Understanding T Levels for Schools	Events	505	9	9	15%

Source: TLPD monitoring data. Note: instances of engagement for TRIPs counts number of providers engaged.

**Table 21: Proportion of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with ETF survey satisfaction questions**

Satisfaction with... (survey iteration)	Industry Insights	Networks	Professional Development for Leaders	Role and Route Specific Training	TRIPs	Understanding T Levels	All strands
My learning experience overall (both)	90%	91%	87%	91%	95%	93%	91%
The information I received (second)	94%	91%	91%	91%	91%	95%	93%
The organisation overall (second)	96%	93%	91%	89%	95%	93%	93%

The information I received and organisation overall (first)	90%	93%	91%	89%		91%	91%
The skills and knowledge of the facilitators (both)	97%	96%	92%	93%	100%	96%	95%
The content was relevant & appropriate to my role (both)	88%	93%	89%	89%	86%	91%	90%
Respondents (min-max)	31-113	112-237	47-143	63-227	20-22	218-464	630-1,322

Source: TLPD ETF surveys. Note: other options are 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'; there were two iterations of the ETF survey and some of the survey questions remained the same across both surveys but some were changed - so respondent numbers vary and the table highlights which survey iterations (first, second or both) each question covers in brackets - questions featured in both iterations have the highest respondent numbers because it combines both survey cohorts; shading is darkest for highest figures and lightest for lowest figures.

**Table 22: Proportion of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with ETF survey impact questions**

Impact of TLPD activity... (survey iteration)	Industry Insights	Networks	Professional Development for Leaders	T Level Role and Route Specific Training	TRIPs	Understanding T Levels	All strands
It will have a positive impact on my professional practice (both)	89%	90%	86%	90%	86%	87%	88%

It has improved my knowledge of the topic (second)	94%	90%	86%	94%	77%	98%	93%
It has increased my confidence to deliver the topic (second)	87%	83%	76%	81%	75%	81%	81%
It has improved my knowledge of T Levels (first)	84%	72%	94%	88%	-	96%	89%
It has increased my confidence to deliver T Levels (first)	82%	71%	78%	83%	-	78%	79%
I plan on sharing learning with colleagues (both)	87%	91%	92%	90%	95%	90%	90%
I plan on changing learning delivery (both)	70%	54%	74%	80%	68%	64%	69%
I plan on changing future planning (both)	78%	78%	85%	80%	77%	76%	78%
I plan on changing learner support (both)	70%	49%	71%	67%	62%	62%	63%
Respondents (min-max)	28-111	111-236	41-142	64-226	19-22	204-457	604-1,311

Source: TLPD ETF surveys. Note: other options are 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'; there were two iterations of the ETF survey and some of the survey questions remained the same across both surveys but some were changed - so respondent numbers vary and the table highlights which survey iterations (first, second or both) each question covers in brackets - questions featured in both iterations have the highest respondent numbers because it combines both survey cohorts; shading is darkest for highest figures and lightest for lowest figures.



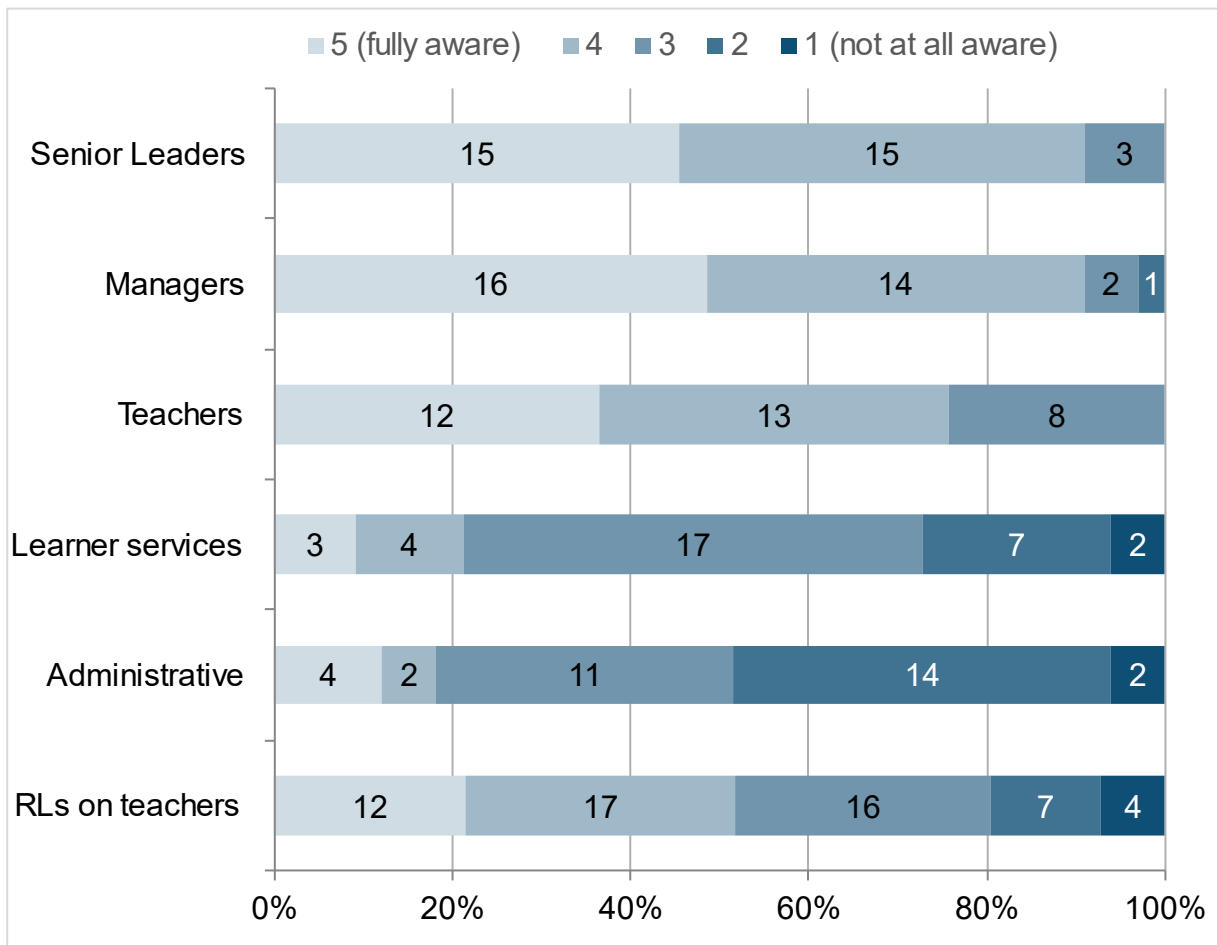
## Appendix C: Survey data (selected findings)

**Table 23: Staff per provider directly involved in T Level delivery / support (2021/22)**

Role	Mean	Median	Max
Senior Leaders	4.2	3	20
Governors	3.3	2	19
Teachers	11.9	10	52
Managers	4.9	4	15
Learner services	6.0	4	24
Administrative	4.2	3	20

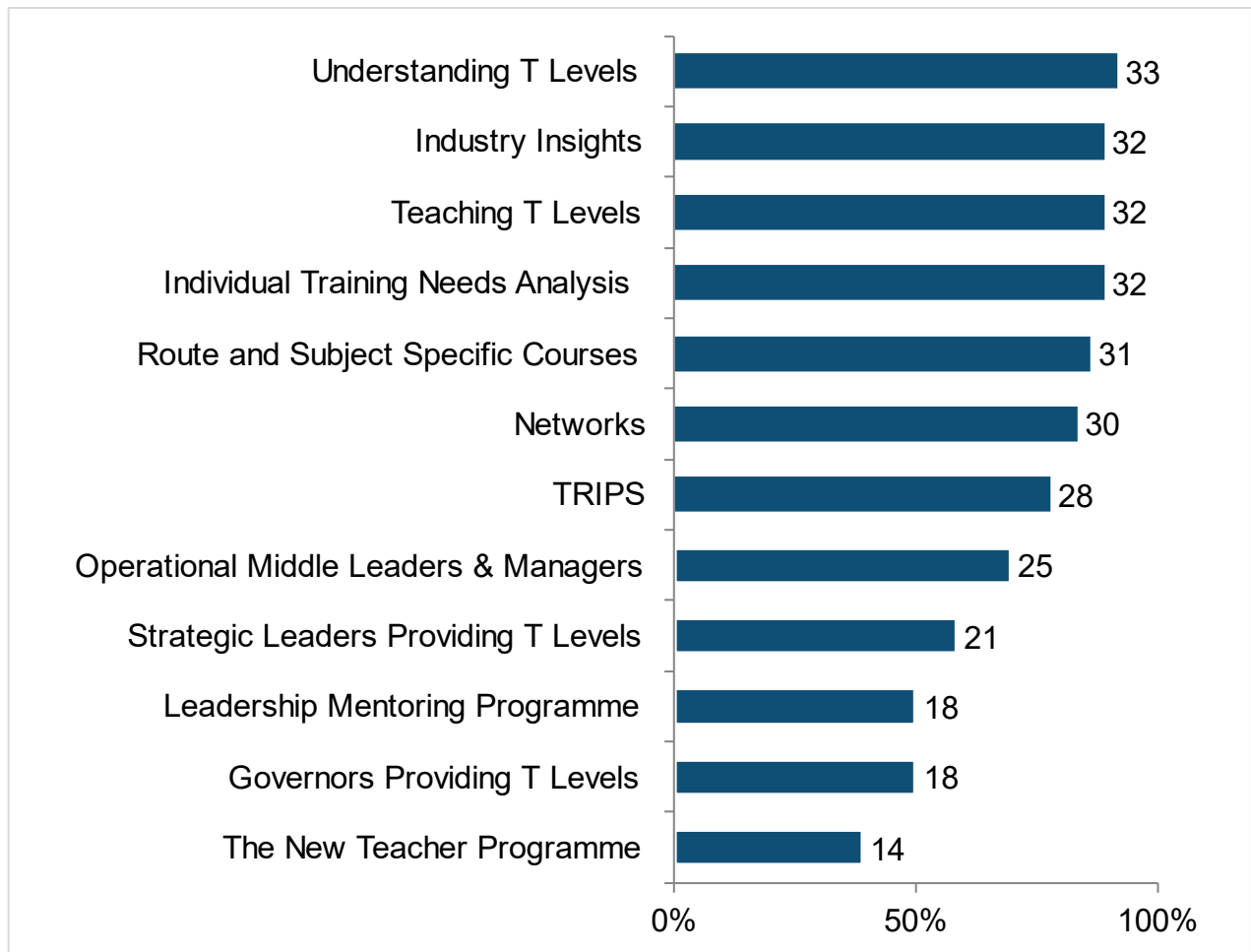
Source: SQW TLPD final senior leader survey. Note: respondents were instructed: if a member of staff has multiple roles please just include them once in their main role, please count staff numbers not FTEs. (n=33)

**Figure 11: Please provide your assessment of the following staff's awareness of the TLPD offer**



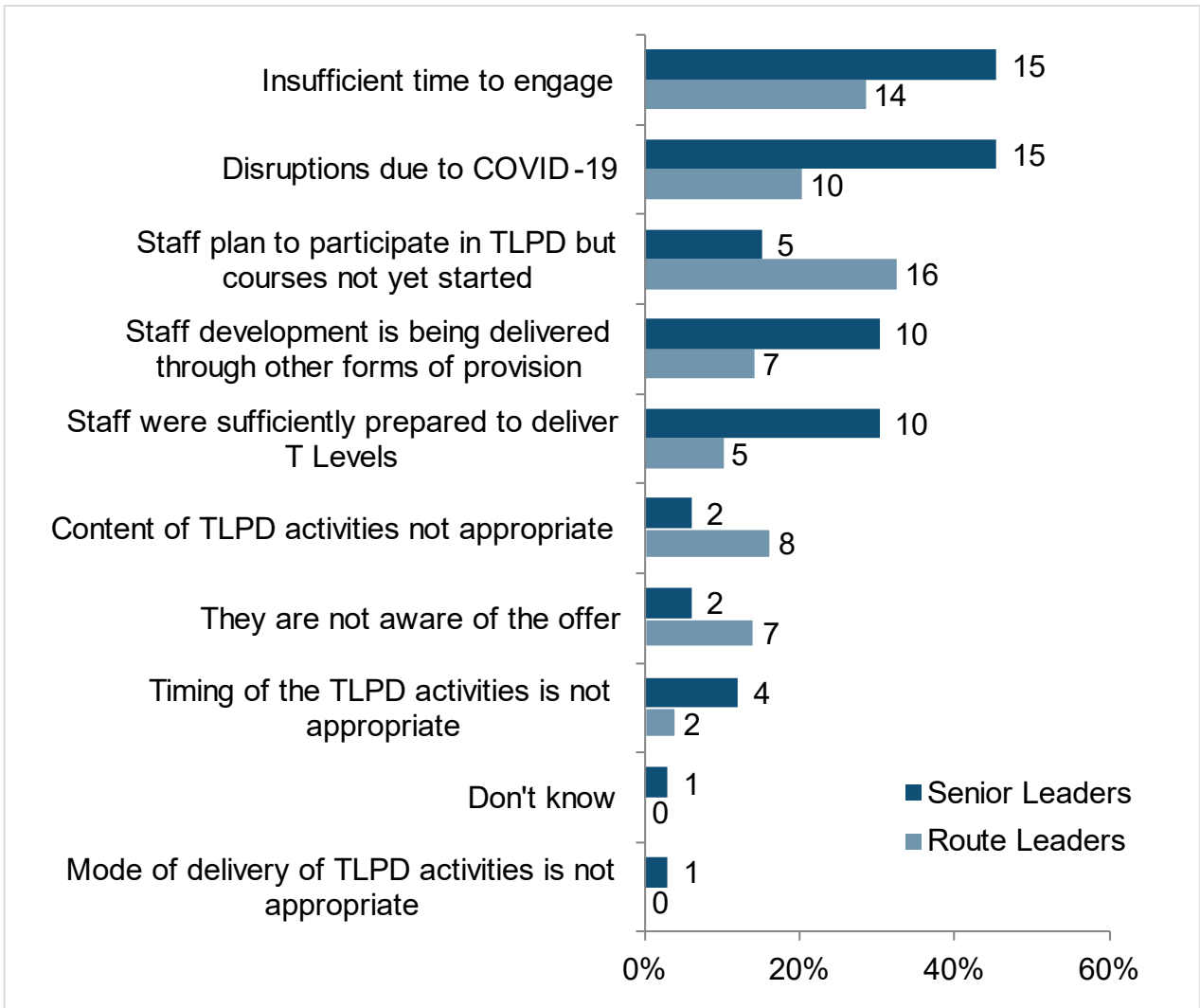
Source: SQW TLPD final surveys. Note: all senior leader views except final column which is route leader (n= SL: 33, RL: 56)

**Figure 12: Which of the following elements of the TLPD offer have you promoted to your T Level delivery staff?**



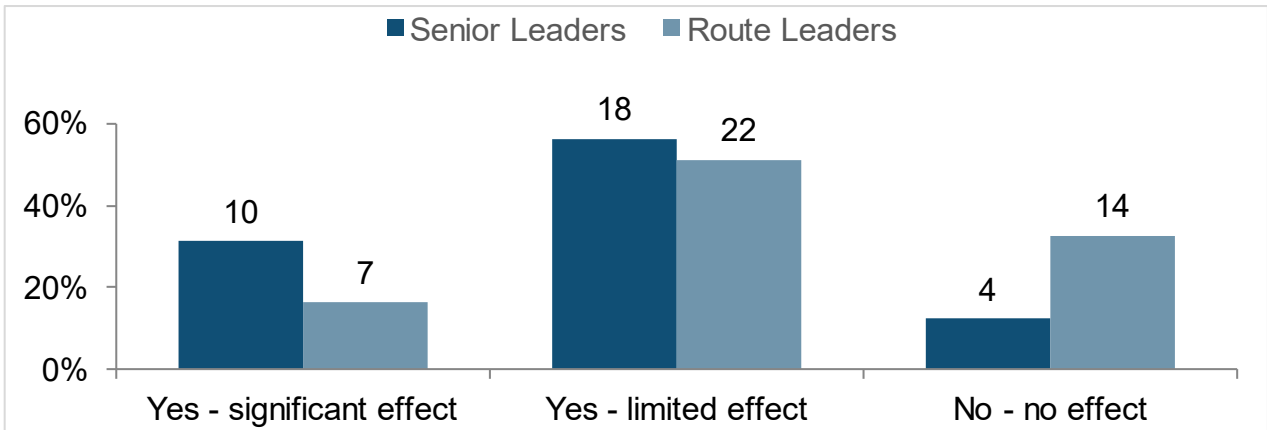
Source: SQW TLPD final senior leader survey (n=33)

**Figure 13: Why haven't all T Level teaching staff engaged with TLPD? Please select all that apply**



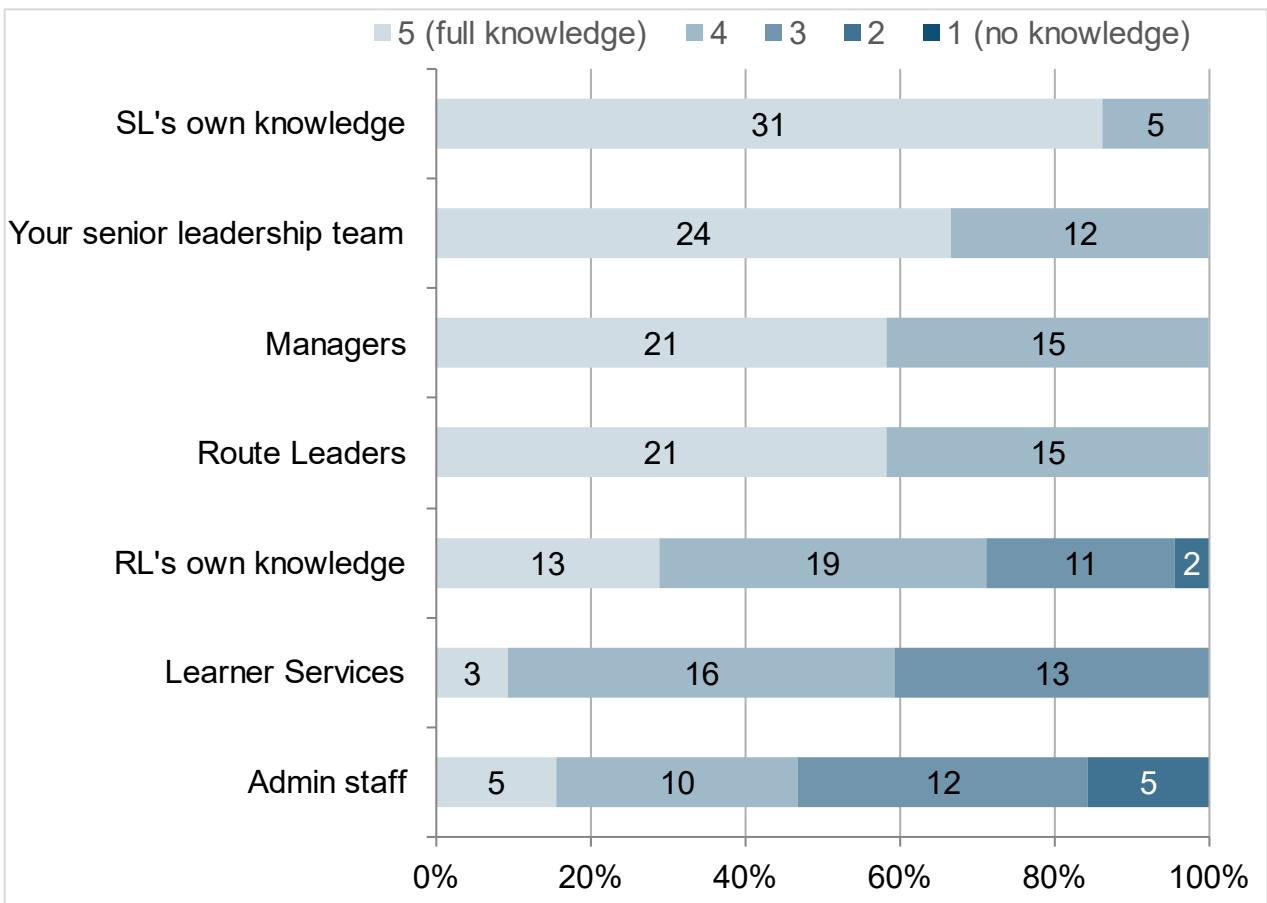
Source: SQW TLPD final surveys (n= SL: 33, RL: 49)

**Figure 14: Has COVID-19 had any effect on staff's ability to engage with the TLPD programme to date?**



Source: SQW TLPD final surveys (n= SL: 32, RL: 43)

**Figure 15: How do you rate the knowledge of the aims and purpose of T Levels of the following staff?**



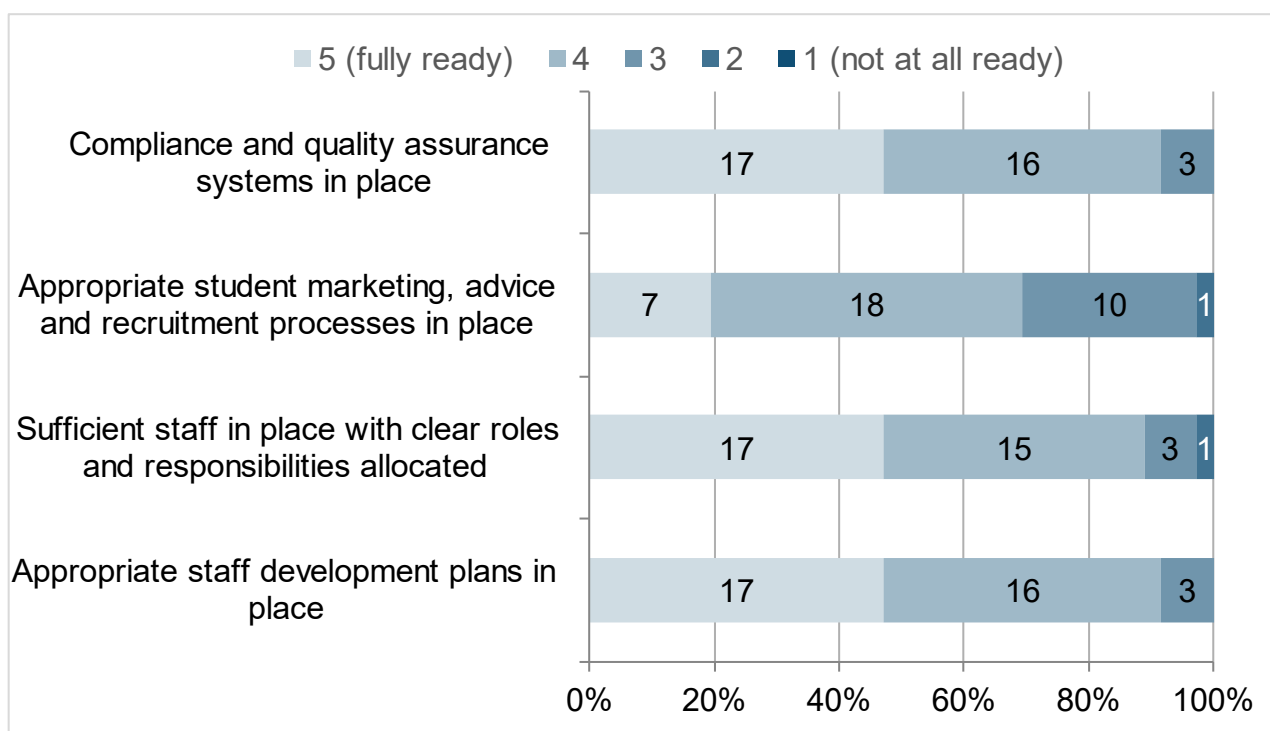
Source: SQW TLPD final surveys. Note: all senior leader views except route leader's own knowledge which is the view of route leaders (n= SL: 32-36, RL: 45)

**Table 24: How do you rate the knowledge of the aims and purpose of T Levels of the following staff?**

Understanding	Average score in interim surveys	Average score in final surveys
SL's own knowledge	4.9	4.9
Your senior leadership team	4.6	4.7
Managers	4.5	4.6
Route Leaders	4.7	4.6
Learner Services	3.8	3.7
Admin staff	3.6	3.5
RL's own knowledge	4.4	4.0

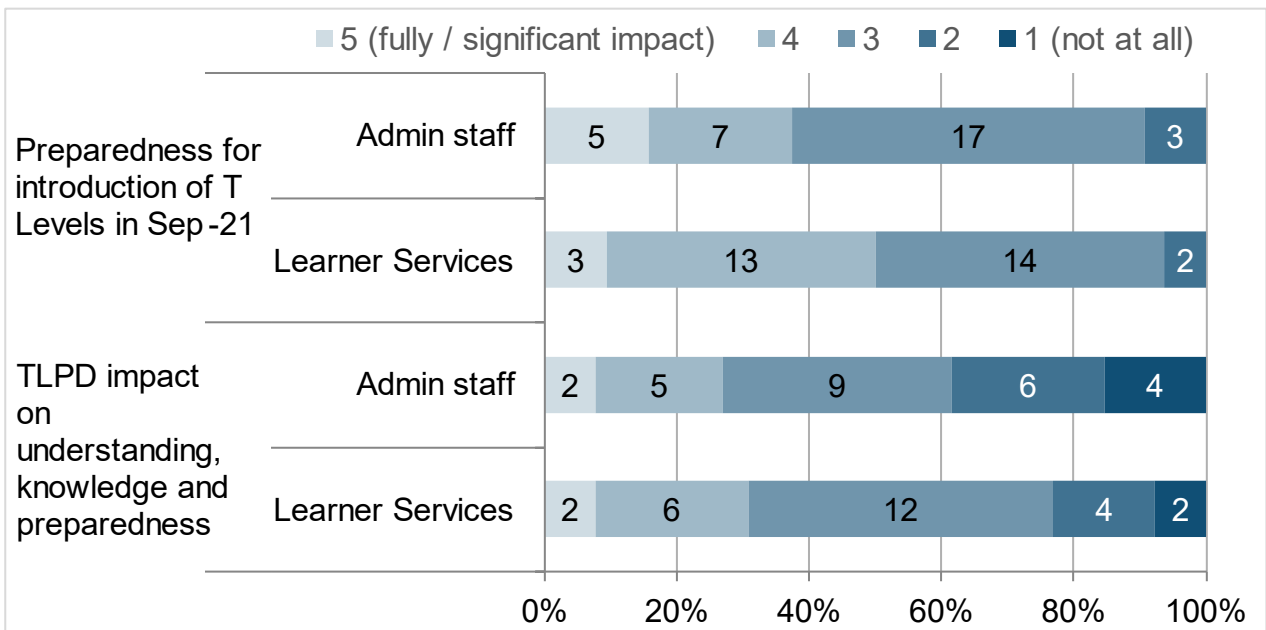
Source: SQW TLPD interim and final surveys (n= SL: 32-36, RL: 45)

**Figure 16: On reflection how ready was your organisation to offer T Levels starting in the 2021/22 academic year, in terms of having:**



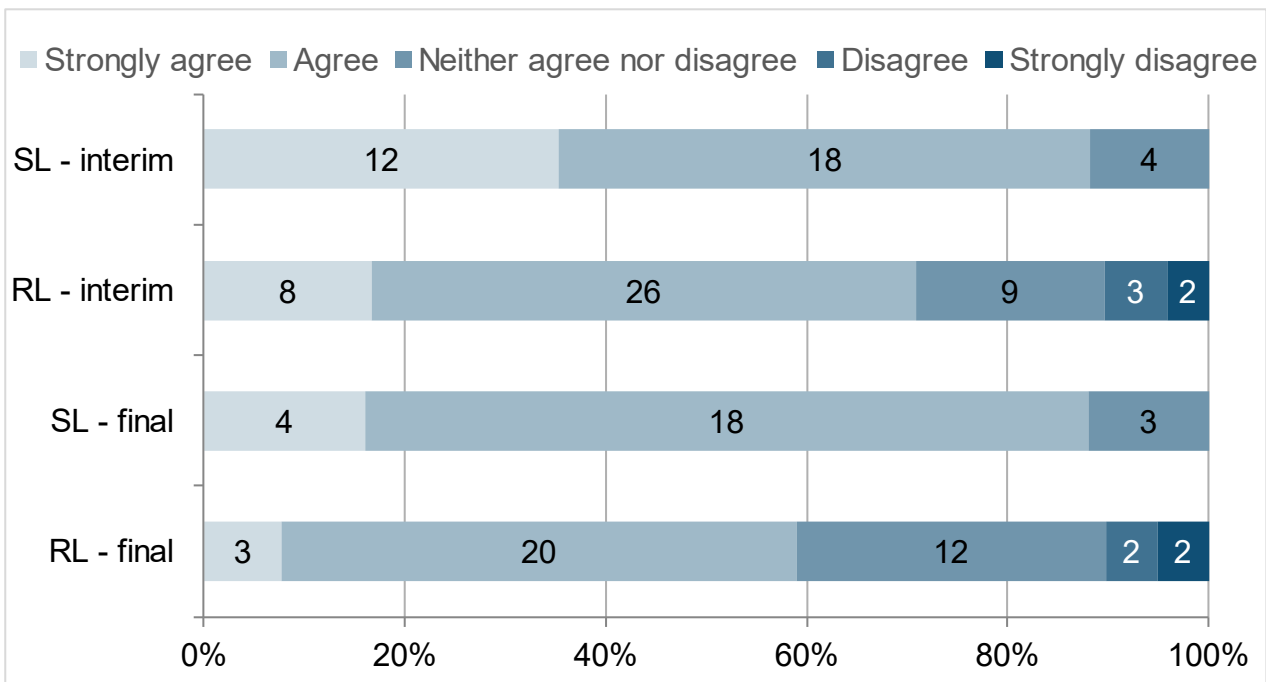
Source: SQW TLPD final senior leader survey (n=36)

**Figure 17: How do you rate the following for Learner Services and Administrative staff?**



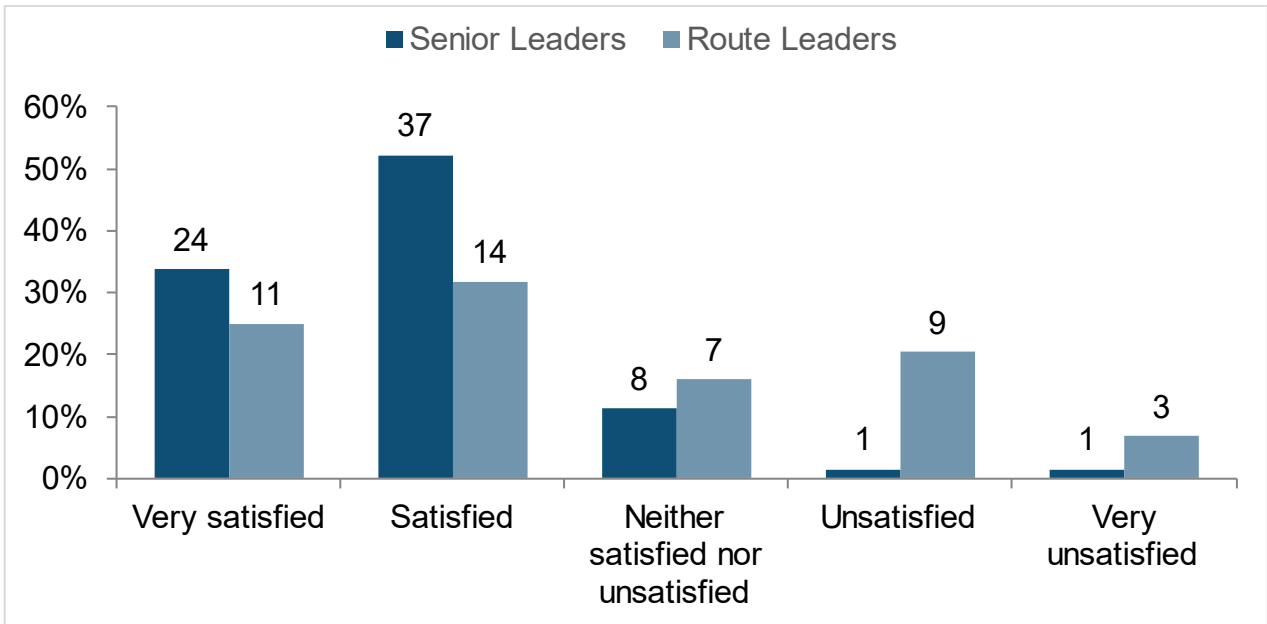
Source: SQW TLPD final senior leader survey (n= 26-32)

**Figure 18: To what extent do you agree: you are satisfied that the TLPD offer has supported your organisation for the delivery of T Levels?**



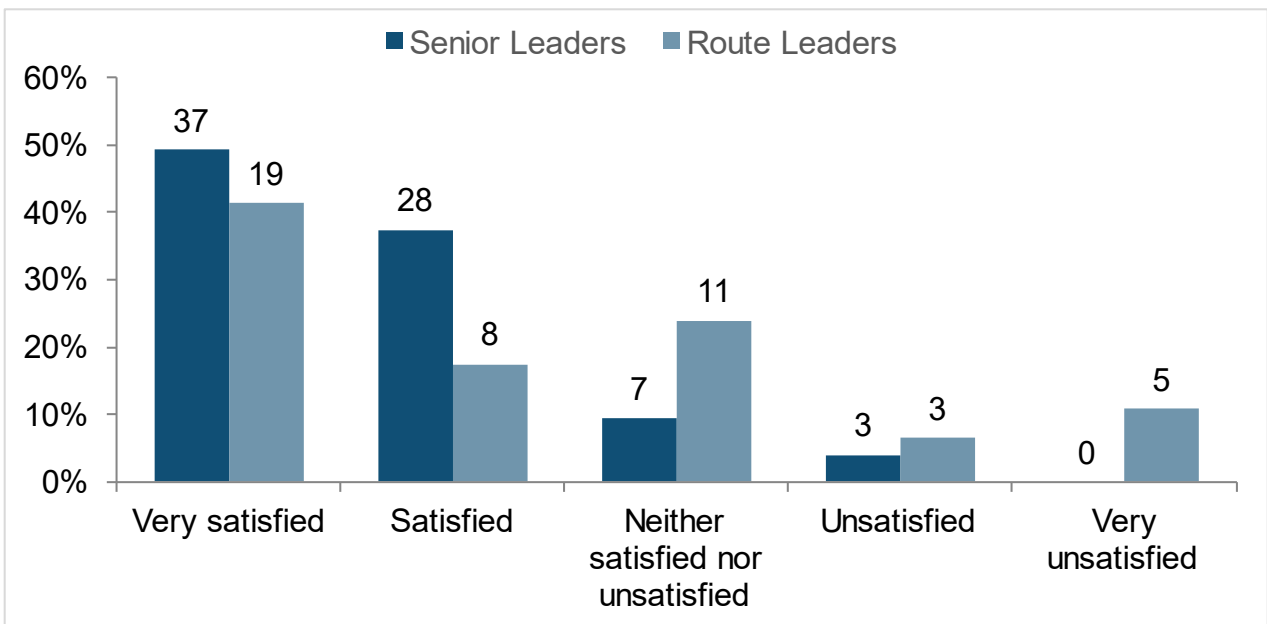
Source: SQW TLPD surveys. Note: SL/RL= senior/route leader ((n= SL interim: 34, RL interim: 48, SL final: 25, RL final: 39)

**Figure 19: How satisfied are you with: awarding body support?**



Source: SQW TLPD final surveys. Note: asked at the level of individual routes, with answers aggregated here (n= SL: 71, RL: 44)

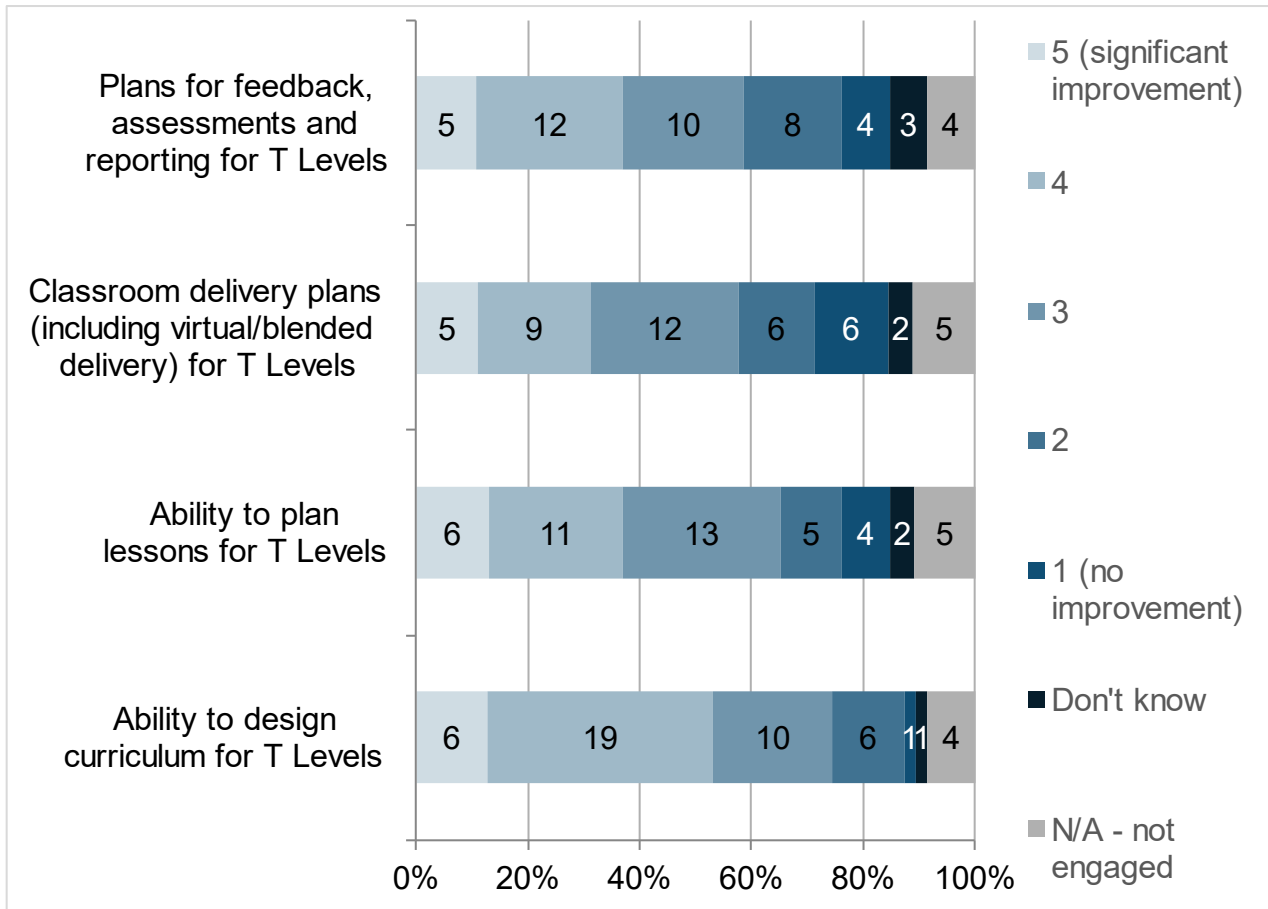
**Figure 20: How satisfied are you with: the engagement of employers?**



Source: SQW TLPD final surveys. Note: asked at the level of individual routes, with answers aggregated here (n= SL: 75, RL: 46)

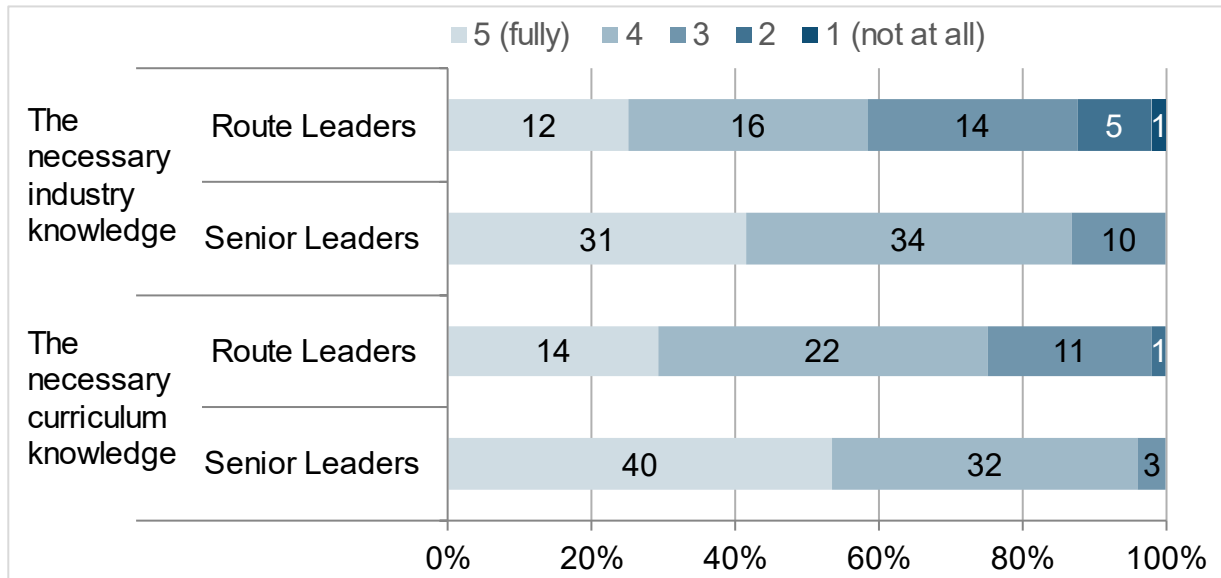


**Figure 21: Please provide your assessment of the effect of TLPD on teaching staff's...**



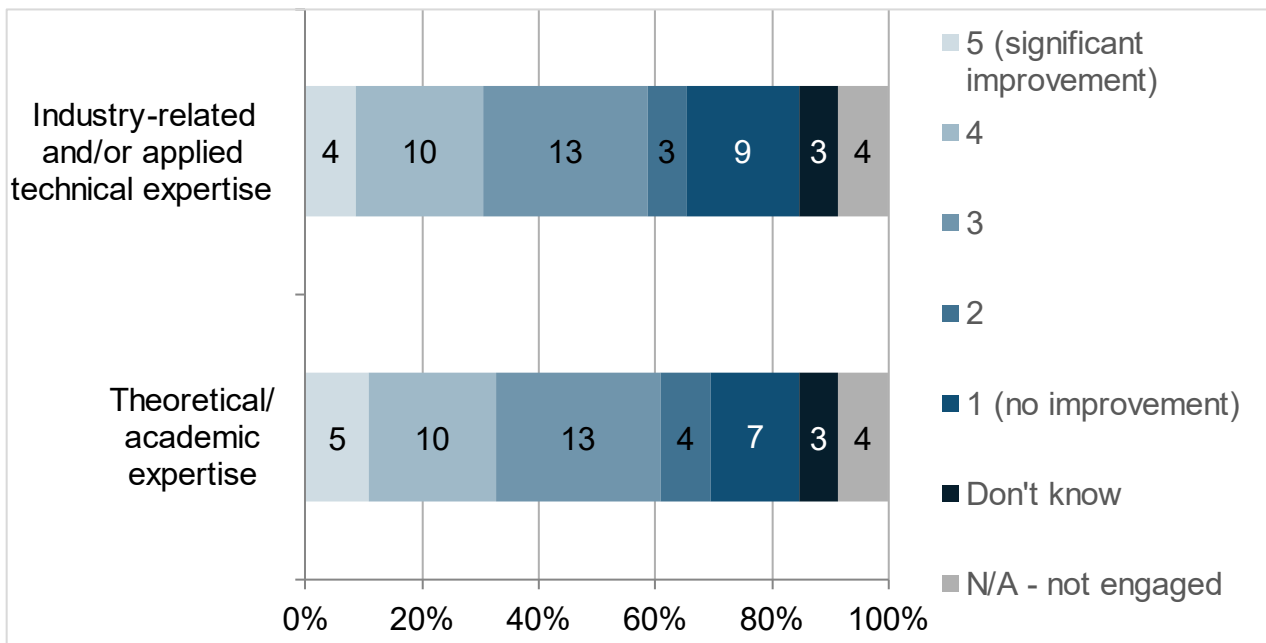
Source: SQW TLPD final route leader survey. Note: asked at the level of individual routes, with answers aggregated here (n=45-47)

**Figure 22: Please provide your assessment of whether teachers have...**



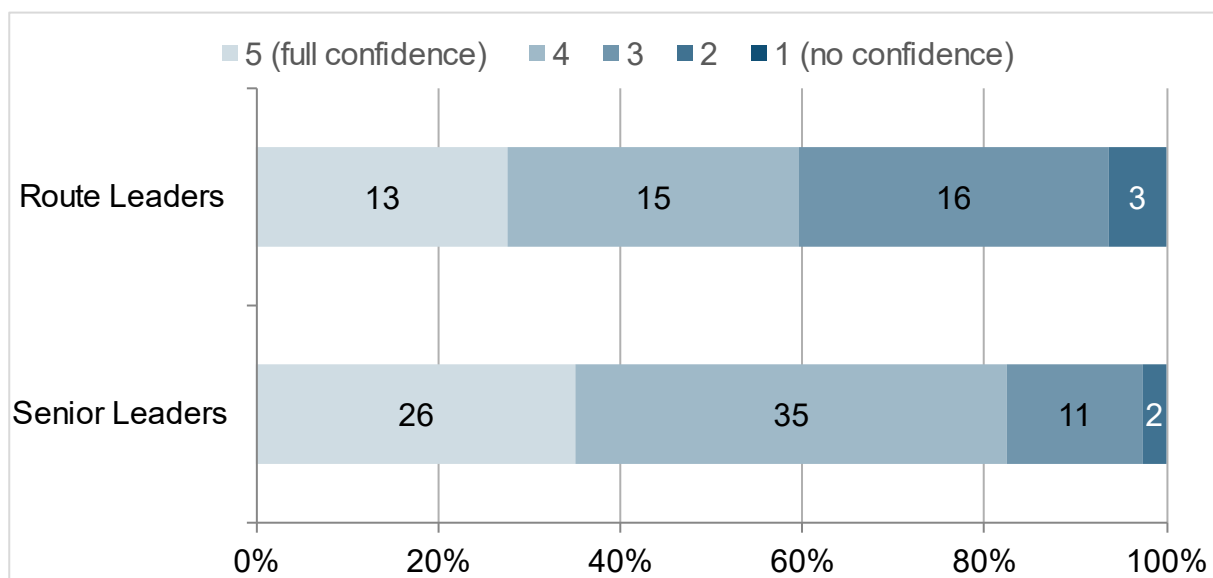
Source: SQW TLPD final surveys. Note: SL/RL= senior/route leader; asked at the level of individual routes, with answers aggregated here (n= SL: 75, RL: 48)

**Figure 23: Please provide your assessment of the effect of TLPD on teaching staff's...**



Source: SQW TLPD final route leader survey. Note: asked at the level of individual routes, with answers aggregated here (n=46)

**Figure 24: What is your level of confidence in teaching staff's preparedness for all elements of T Level delivery in 2021/22 the academic year?**



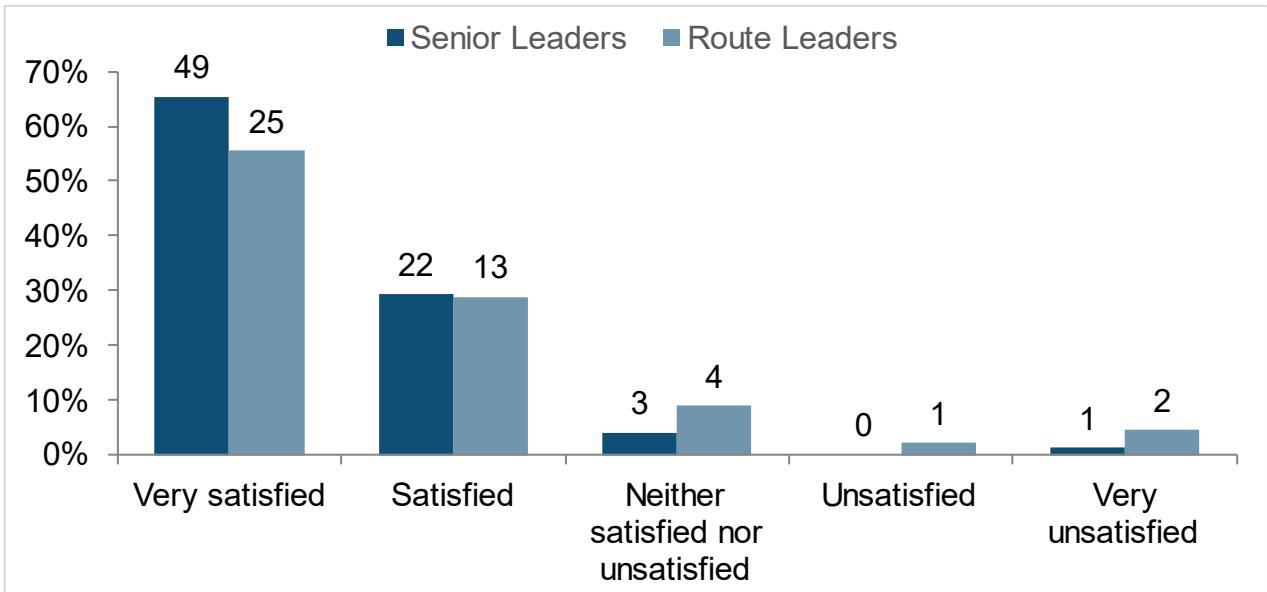
Source: SQW TLPD final surveys. Note: asked at the level of individual routes, with answers aggregated here (n= SL: 74, RL: 47)

**Table 25: How likely is it that you would recommend TLPD to a friend / colleague?**

<b>Rating</b>	<b>SL - interim</b>	<b>RL - interim</b>	<b>SL - final</b>	<b>RL - final</b>
0 (not at all)	0	0	0	0
1	0	1	0	1
2	0	0	0	0
3	0	1	0	2
4	2	1	0	1
5	0	4	2	5
6	3	5	0	2
7	1	5	6	9
8	5	13	5	7
9	11	4	6	4
10 (definitely)	12	12	5	7
<b>Average score</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>7.2</b>

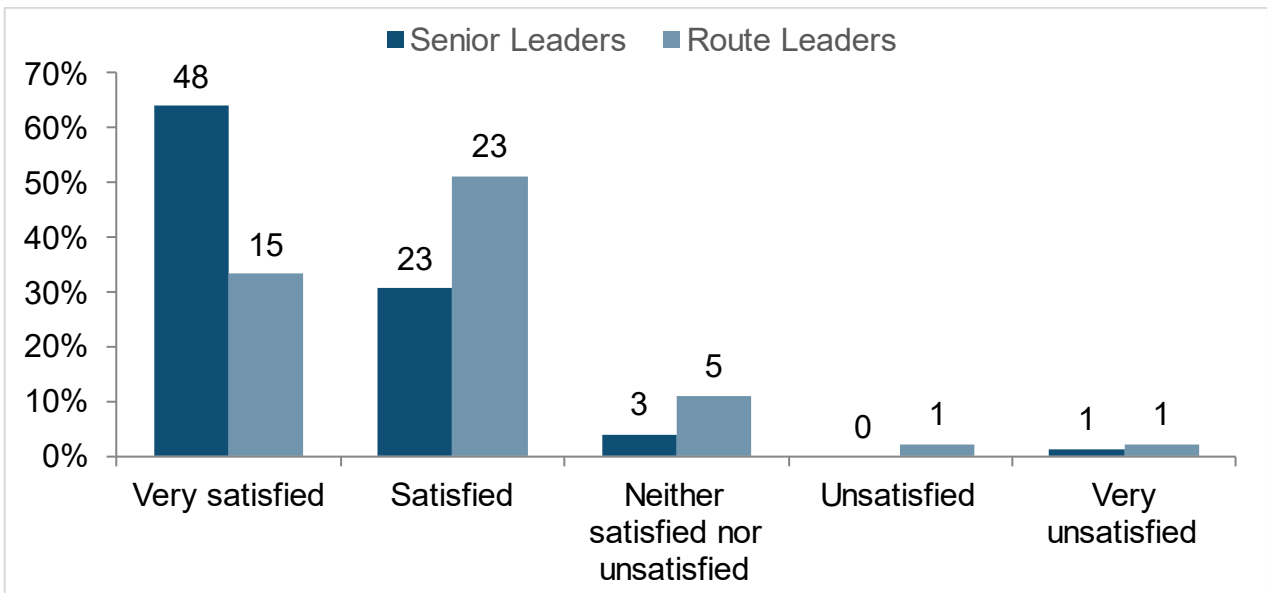
Source: SQW TLPD surveys. Note: SL/RL= senior/route leader (n= SL interim: 34, RL interim: 46, SL final: 24, RL final: 38)

**Figure 25: How satisfied are you with: the quality of teaching?**



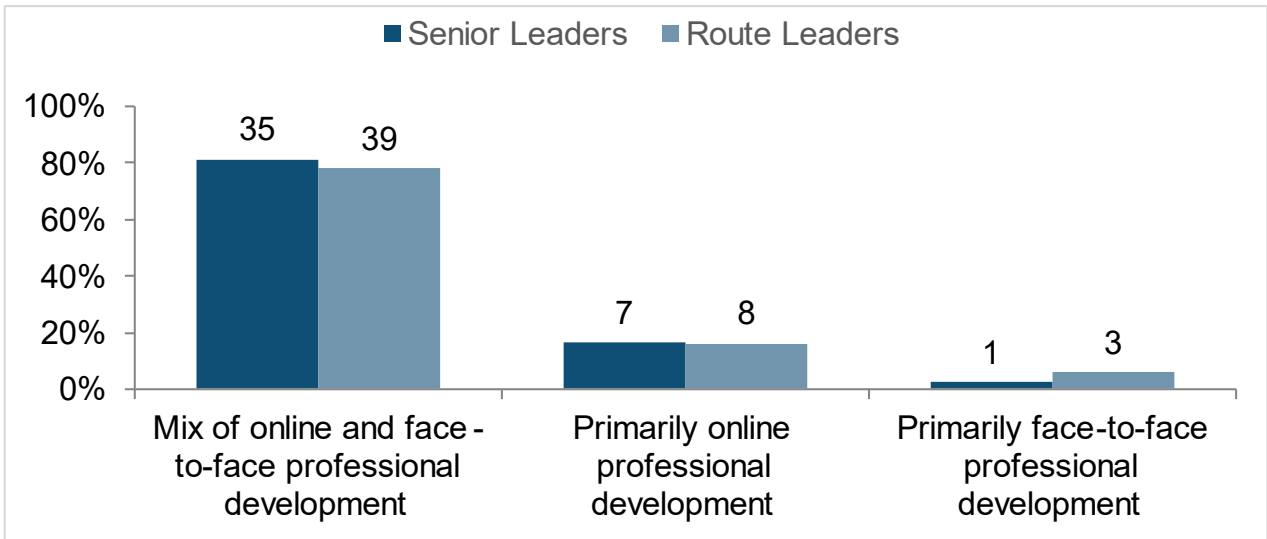
Source: SQW TLPD final surveys. Note: asked at the level of individual routes, with answers aggregated here (n= SL: 75, RL: 45)

**Figure 26: How satisfied are you with: student learning?**



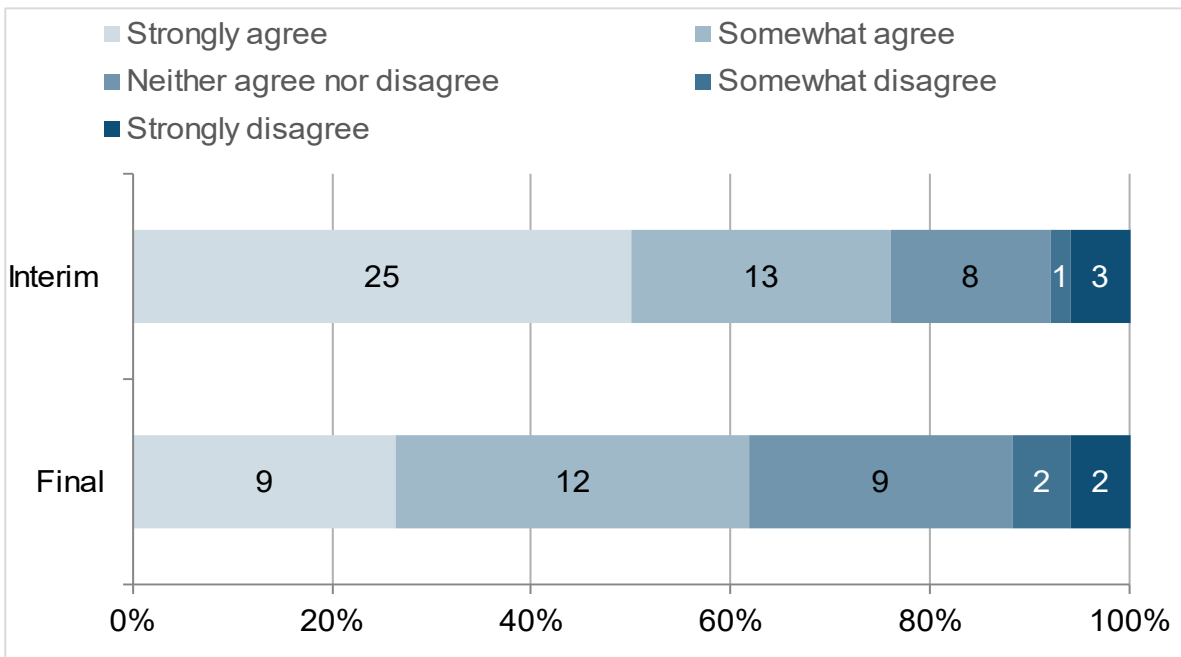
Source: SQW TLPD final surveys. Note: asked at the level of individual routes, with answers aggregated here (n= SL: 75, RL: 45)

**Figure 27: Going forwards ... when face-to-face training is considered safe, which of the following would you prefer?**



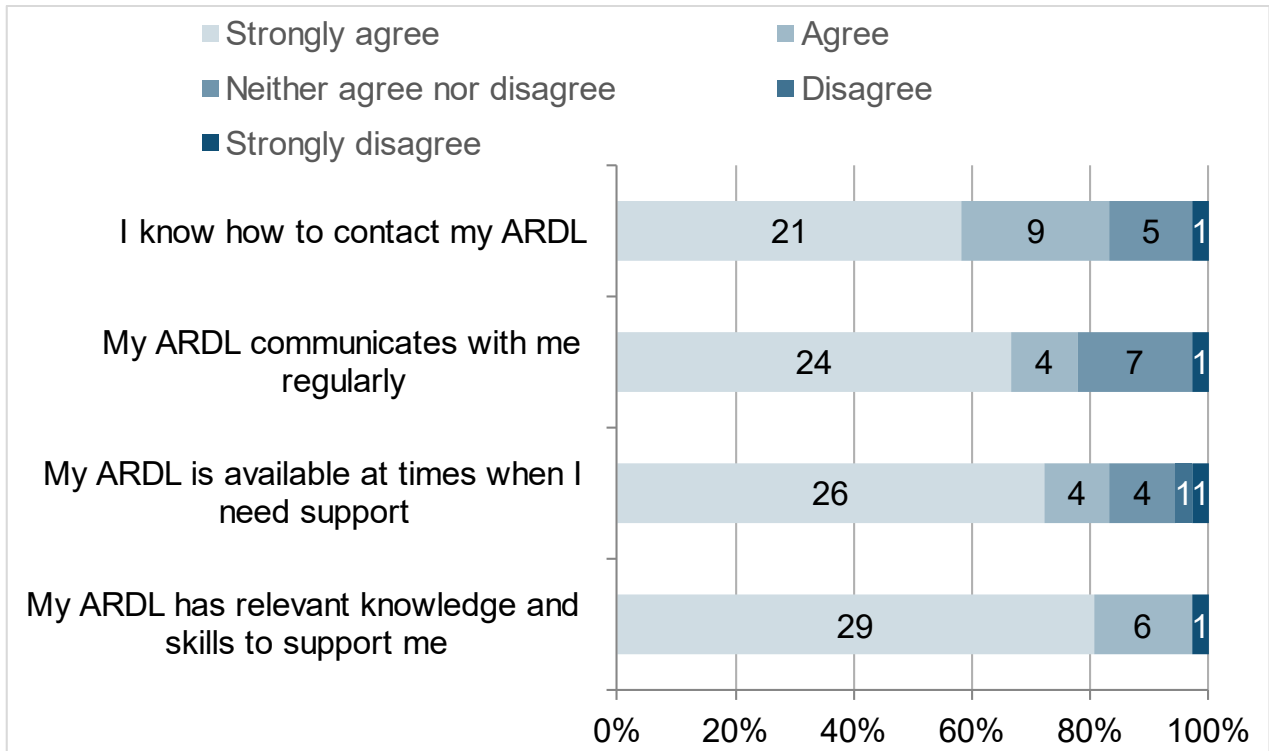
Source: SQW TLPD interim surveys (n= SL: 43, RL: 51)

**Figure 28: To what extent do you agree: the OTNA was a useful exercise?**



Source: SQW TLPD senior leader surveys (n= interim: 50, final: 34)

**Figure 29: To what extent do you agree...**



Source: SQW TLPD final senior leader survey (n= 36)

## Appendix D: Case studies

This section provides summary narratives for ten case study providers. These include single site general FE colleges, multi-site general FE colleges, an education group and a sixth form college. The case studies were conducted either as a longitudinal visit at two points in time (pre-delivery and post-delivery) or a single point in time (post-delivery), and drew on survey findings and monitoring data. They provide perspectives on how TLPD has been integrated into providers' staff development plans. They are presented anonymously.

Provider A is an education group with an effective CPD portal and an active approach to staff engagement with professional development, including TLPD. They have encouraged all staff teams to engage with TLPD and are keen for more and more practical training opportunities.

Provider B is a smaller rural college. Their priority was to prepare teachers familiar with BTECs with T Levels. They found Industry Insights to be very helpful and would have liked more such opportunities. Different routes appreciated different aspects of TLPD.

Provider C is a large single site general FE college. They have engaged with TLPD from its start and noted that as the programme developed it has improved in range and quality. They are keen to engage in future opportunities that are tailored to meeting the emerging needs of Wave 2 and 3 providers.

Provider D is a large general FE college with two sites in a deprived locality. The introduction of T Levels and associated staff development was overseen by an internal steering group. Different teaching teams engaged with TLPD to varying degrees. Teaching staff had engaged more and benefited more than other staff.

Provider E is a general FE college with four campuses across a large county. They deferred their T Level from September 2021 to September 2022. They noted that staff delivering apprenticeships were more familiar with structural elements of T Levels compared with BTEC staff. They had engaged a lot with TLPD and said they felt ready for T Levels.

Provider F is a large general FE college in a very deprived part of the country. Having TLPD available to all staff, and with high participation rates, senior leadership were confident that their staff were prepared. The greatest impact was felt in the support to embed English, maths and digital skills.

Provider G is a general FE college with two sites. They chose to introduce two courses in September 2021 and assign very experienced tutors who managed their own engagement with some having regular engagement and others being more sporadic.

Provider H is a general FE college with four campuses in a rural area. Staff were said to be ready when T Levels launched, and continue to identify development needs as



delivery takes place. At this stage their development needs became more focussed. They have engaged with TLPD a lot and it has been their 'go-to' for curriculum development.

Provider I is a large college with six sites. The initial OTNA helped to set objectives for staff development, and a range of different staff have engaged. Route leaders have been given protected time to prepare and they encouraged key staff to engage in selected components of TLPD and to effectively prepare and plan.

Provider J is a large general FE college with seven campuses. The planned T Level route was deferred due to low number of offers being accepted. The college have an active approach to staff development. It phases engagement with TLPD to ensure that staff learn about it at a time close to their engagement. They also cascade learning through teams in bitesize parts, and signpost key elements to key teams.

## **Provider A**

### **About the provider**

Provider A is an education group with eight general FE colleges cross three English counties and c.9,000 students. Staff teams are split by faculty across all sites, not geographically. Both T level routes in Digital, and Health and Science routes were offered as planned from September 2021.

This case study is informed by an interview with a senior manager undertaken in June 2022. Additional evidence used includes provider responses to SQW's evaluation surveys and ETF TLPD monitoring data.

### **Training priorities for preparing for T Levels**

There is an organisational training plan on the staff portal. The plan is linked to the TLPD programme and signposts all activities. Every T level subject has its own page with links to route specific training, planning support, and upcoming training from TLPD as well as links to faculty resources and awarding bodies. The intention is that no training opportunity should be more than three 'clicks' away.

All new staff have a meeting specifically to learn about T levels as a routine part of the induction process. If they are in a delivery role, they are signposted to complete the ITNA through TLPD or given a basic overview of the qualification. Existing staff are encouraged to complete an ITNA, and to date, monitoring data shows that 116 assessments have been completed.

### **Engagement with TLPD**

Everyone was asked to complete the Understanding T levels course, including non teaching staff. In total, 112 staff completed the course for the post-16 sector. Following this, the

Learning and Development Manager had a conversation with staff to identify the most relevant TLPD courses. New teachers were directed to the enhancing pedagogy and vocational and professional upskilling courses.

The organisation reported a difference in levels of engagement in TLPD between faculties. In the Engineering faculty, the route leader has one day off a week to prepare for the T levels which the interviewee thought was important in giving staff enough time to prepare. This model was used in a Wave 1 college locally and was implemented in Engineering as it was considered to be best practice.

One of the colleges in Wave 1 is local to me and they did that, and it's really good advice if you want this all singing, all dancing course. Time to prepare is the crucial thing. – *Senior leader*

Over the past year there has been a lot more engagement from staff in the network meetings. This reflects the fact that staff wanted to access opportunities to learn from each other and speak to staff at other colleges. The ARDL played a key role initially in linking staff to these networks.

Embedding digital skills was identified as an organisational training need and subsequently the TLPD English, maths and digital skills course was welcomed. However, the organisation was not able to book staff onto the course due to it being fully booked. As an organisation of colleges, they would have liked to run an in-house session and would have had enough demand to fill the spaces.

The level of staff engagement with TLPD is difficult to track as there is no dashboard available to the senior management team. College Directors are interested monitoring staff engagement in different activities. At the moment staff have the autonomy to engage with the activities they think are most relevant to them, and this is not captured.

The organisation has engaged with training from the awarding bodies, such as Pearson. The resources they used covered understanding each section of different exams and developing a timeline for planning your course. The organisation considered this content to be much more practical help than the options within TLPD.

### **Impact of engagement with TLPD**

The organisation was not fully satisfied with the TLPD offer. Given the limited capacity of staff, they thought the resources needed to be more concise and focused on the practicalities of what teaching T Levels means for staff in how they design, structure and staff their courses. The organisation recognised that these resources have been released more recently.

With the impact of the pandemic, the organisation found it very difficult to observe the use and impact of TLPD. Teaching staff have been involved in a lot of class cover which has impacted on their time to engage in TLPD and benefit from the resources.

The ARDL role was identified as having a positive impact. The organisation appreciated having the support of leads who visited the colleges, delivered training sessions and engaged with senior leaders and directors who required a bit more support.

### **Future plans for professional development**

Despite expressing some dissatisfaction, the organisation plans to signpost all new staff to TLPD. They would like to see more learning events and cross college interaction for existing staff entering year two and three of delivery as they will still need some support and have been asking for this.

At the minute it's very focused on first year T level teachers but actually I've got all these second year teachers who still need support and I've got nothing for them. They keep asking, is there anything for ongoing teachers rather than new? – *Senior leader*

## **Provider B**

### **About the provider**

Provider B is a sixth form college with c.1,500 students, based in a predominantly rural county, where agriculture, manufacturing and tourism are key employment sectors. T Levels in Digital Design and Product Development, and Health and Science were delivered from September 2021 as planned.

This case study is informed by interviews undertaken in June 2022 with the senior leader responsible for T Levels at the college and two route leaders responsible for Digital and Health and Science. Additional evidence used includes provider responses to SQW's evaluation surveys and ETF monitoring data.

### **Training priorities for preparing for T Levels**

The senior leader reported that all staff have engaged with at least one element of TLPD. In total 12 ITNAs were completed, and there were 33 instances of engagement.

The provider engaged with TLPD to help staff improve their overall understanding of T levels as most staff were already involved in delivering BTECs and were conscious of the differences between the two pathways in terms of pedagogy and assessment. Route leaders focused on T Level Role and Route specific training and Industry Insights for health and science, and digital. They were also keen to learn from others who had already started delivery through the network opportunities.

## Engagement with TLPD

The Industry Insights training was reported to be popular with staff. However, the capacity of local businesses to engage was limited, resulting in unmet demand. Nevertheless, a visit to research institutes to observe the processes that they would be teaching on the health and science route did take place and was useful. The ARDL had been helpful in ensuring they were matched to appropriate employers.

The senior leader expected a richer offer from industry and more impactful engagement once businesses recover from the pressure of the pandemic. It was hoped this would also address the lack of volume around student placements. The provider recognised that the Industry Insights were good for upskilling teachers, however they didn't find the messaging through TLPD on the value of building employer relationships for students useful, as it didn't help address the challenge of sourcing the volume of placements needed for students in their area.

The sixth form college encouraged staff to engage in other professional development opportunities to complement TLPD. Staff attended training on the technical administrative aspects of T Level delivery such as how to manage the individual learner records, uploading work placements, and ensuring these met the funding requirements. Staff also accessed external training on how to teach revision techniques and prepare for assessments as this was identified as a training need for staff used to delivering BTEC courses rather than T Levels.

The college also had been involved in raising awareness of T levels and TLPD amongst local schools and businesses through events such as employer breakfasts. All staff were invited to attend these events if they wished.

I don't think any of this is a missing chunk from the [TLPD] platform offer. It's just what we've managed to engage with anyway, there should be stuff you can self-generate. You can't provide a universal structure - *Senior leader*

## Impact of engagement with TLPD

Before delivery started, the college had reported in survey returns that staff participation in TLPD had improved the overall readiness of their organisation to deliver T Levels. The health and science route leader reported that TLPD had helped consolidate the staff's subject knowledge base and reassure them that they were teaching what they needed to teach.

Industry Insights was reported to have a positive impact on the digital route. The route leader was able to link up with staff from a large technology company to understand more about how projects were managed in industry and what it is like to work in digital industries. They thought this was really useful as they had not worked in industry for many years. The engagement also enabled the route leader to share their teaching resources which the company who provided feedback to make them more relevant to current practice.

In terms of impacting pedagogy and technical expertise, TLPD was reported to have lower impacts on the digital route. The route leader reported little impact on staff's pedagogical knowledge and technical expertise. However, they did think that TLPD helped them in their organisation and preparation to ensure their lesson planning was completed by the start of term.

I wouldn't have been as prepared, I would've been more reactive, maybe still writing schemes of work as the year started whereas I had it all done over the summer -  
*Route leader*

## **Future plans for professional development**

The provider would prefer to engage with most activities online, unless there was clear value in meeting in person. Online activities were considered more accessible and a more efficient use of time. Staff did not feel that the online delivery impacted the opportunities for networking or the quality of delivery. However, it was noted that face to face events create space to focus on learning as well.

I think people have realised that if you're going to go somewhere physically that needs to be a valuable experience, with the networking, discussion, and small group work. We do engage [in face to face events] but with reluctance if the agenda is just to be 'talked at', we'd rather get that bit virtually. - *Senior leader*

Staff will continue to engage in TLPD, however the provider thought TLPD would be more relevant for those staff teaching T Levels which have not yet been released.

The introductory sessions and the offer at set up is still going to be important as we bring more T levels in, but for teams that have set up, they're moving more to [resources which cover] current sector practices, using their professional contacts and what's happening in the workplace now. - *Senior leader*

The provider is also signed up as a sector delivery partner for the T Level Sector Delivery programme and will be delivering training for colleges focused on introducing and delivering T levels through TLPD provision which they expect to learn more from as an organisation.

## **Provider C**

### **About the provider**

Provider C is a general FE college with c.6,000 students on a single campus. The college's catchment area includes areas of both high and low deprivation.

It recruited as expected in September 2021 to T Levels in the Education and Childcare, and Health and Science routes, except for one course from the Health and Science route, which was deferred by a year due to staffing issues.

This case study is informed by interviews undertaken in June 2022 with route leaders and teachers responsible for the oversight and delivery of the T Levels. Additional evidence includes responses to SQW's evaluation surveys and TLPD monitoring data.

### **Training priorities for preparing for T Levels**

Teachers reported various challenges for the delivery of T Levels that were understood prior to delivery. These included understanding what T Levels were, having a solid grasp of their structure and content, having up-to-date and sufficiently comprehensive industry knowledge, being able to teach for exam-based summative assessment, and implementing formative assessment throughout the year. Staff said that they had started afresh in designing lesson plans, resources and assessment tools, which was time intensive, but seen as important to delivering high quality courses.

A challenge that was foreseen but not fully comprehended prior to delivery was learners being at a lower than usual level in English, maths and science (for healthcare students). This was viewed as being a result of the pandemic and teacher assessed grades.

### **Engagement with TLPD**

Teaching staff involved in the delivery of T Levels all completed ITNA prior to delivery. This was generally considered a useful exercise, and the signposting onto further TLPD support was considered helpful. A teacher comment was that the ITNA could benefit from being more T Level specific. Information about new courses was predominantly driven by TLPD update emails and internal staff with oversight of CPD. However, one teacher reported not receiving update emails despite repeated sign-ups, while others said they also intermittently checked the TLPD website for new content.

Most of the engagement with Understanding T Levels had taken place in the first phase of TLPD. It was seen as offering a helpful initial introduction, although at that point there were still many unknowns around T Levels which meant the sessions were not as comprehensive as later Understanding T Levels sessions attended by other teachers.

The staff who participated in the fieldwork had engaged quite extensively with the Networks offer. Small numbers had also engaged with Industry Insights, Role and Route Specific Training and Professional Development for Leaders. Limited time was the key barrier to more engagement, especially during the first year of delivery which had been intensive. The engagement with Industry Insights was via workshops and group placements, as teachers had either not had the time to participate in individual placements or did not feel able to source their own.

A frustration with some of the TLPD support was that often course recordings and slides were not shared. Often a single teacher attended on behalf of the wider team, with the intention of sharing lessons learnt, and this limited how well they could do this. It also meant staff could not easily revisit the content to consolidate their learning.

In addition to TLPD, staff participated in events run by their awarding bodies. Feedback on these activities was mixed.

Staff also engage with their peers at other providers. Staff from a Wave 4 provider had recently visited (independent of TLPD) to learn about their delivery of the Education and Childcare route. Hosting staff also found this was a useful way to reflect on their practice and share ideas.

### **Impact of engagement with TLPD**

Overall, support from TLPD was viewed positively. It aligned with their professional development needs for the delivery of T Levels and was said to be mostly good quality. The less positive feedback tended to be about the initial phase of TLPD, with staff saying there was too much repetition between sessions and some of the content was too basic. The second phase of TLPD was considered an improvement.

Understanding T Levels and Role and Route Specific Training were said to have helped teachers start to prepare for delivery and understand the challenges for T Level delivery. TLPD was considered less helpful for offering clear, practical, implementable solutions to these challenges.

Teaching staff emphasised the importance of the opportunities for networking with other providers to identify such practical solutions. Staff valued the opportunity to discuss challenges, solutions and good practice, and the reassurance that it offered around preparedness. TLPD was seen to offer these opportunities through Networks, but also through other strands. Amongst the different Network events that staff had participated in, the most useful were sessions focused on Wave 1 providers sharing their experiences.

Teachers reported that the other Network events, and other courses where there were opportunities for discussion, tended to be dominated by providers from later Waves. As a result, they had found themselves answering lots of questions from other providers (which they were happy to do) but not coming away with much new learning themselves, which they found frustrating. For this reason, social media forums were seen as more useful than some Network events. There was appetite for separating some of the TLPD sessions into pre-delivery and in-delivery cohorts to minimise these frustrations, although it was noted that later Waves did still need opportunities to learn from earlier Waves, just not at the expense of the quality of TLPD support for earlier Waves.

I've been to quite a few Networks, but I felt I was there for everyone to pick my brains – I was giving everything but not getting anything back, as they were all later Waves. So I didn't find them that useful. I don't mind some sharing, but I don't want to come away with nothing.  
– *Route leader interviewee*

Industry Insights had been used to improve industry knowledge of teachers. In some cases it had provided an update or refresher on occupations that teachers had prior experience of, and in others it provided insights into occupations that teachers had not worked in which they needed to understand for T Level delivery.

## **Future plans for professional development**

The main focus for teachers at the end of the first year of delivery was how to successfully deliver the second year. They wanted support that was specific to the second year of delivery but TLPD was not seen as offering this yet.

Looking further ahead, teachers were considering whether future course delivery could be better structured across the first and second year. There was a concern that one Education and Childcare course was too frontloaded with theory in the first year. Teachers were keen to engage with other providers (via TLPD and other routes) to understand different options for structuring the course to achieve a better balance.

As highlighted earlier, staff had started afresh in designing their resources for delivery. There was a strong appetite for TLPD to do more around collating, sharing and signposting quality resources to reduce the amount of time spent on resource creation. Formative assessment tools and resources were seen as particularly important, as the amount available from awarding bodies was very limited.

Staff did intend to continue engaging with TLPD. Some of the teachers were keen to revisit their ITNA to track their progress and identify outstanding training needs. Some specifically highlighted plans to engage with Industry Insights and TRIPs. The revised approach to TRIPs, of predetermined topics which providers sign up to, was seen as more appealing. Teachers said they would also like more Industry Insights placements made available through TLPD, as this would enhance their employer contacts.

Lastly, teachers pointed to the growing role of assessors in the second year of delivery, as programmes scaled up in learner numbers, and as more T Level courses were delivered. It was suggested that assessors needed targeted support from TLPD to ensure they understood T Levels and how to effectively support their delivery.

## **Provider D**

### **About the provider**

Provider D is a general FE college with c.6,000 students studying across two sites. The college is in a deprived town where educational attainment at Levels 3 and 4 is well below the regional and national average, and where there are low rates for entry into Higher Education.



The college started delivering T Levels in the Construction, Digital, and Education and Childcare as planned in September 2021. The Health and Science route was rescheduled to September 2022 due to issues with employer placements and staffing.

This case study is informed by interviews undertaken in June 2021 with the senior leader responsible for T Levels at the college and two route leaders responsible for Education and Childcare and Health and Science. Follow-up interviews were conducted with the route leader for Education and Childcare, and an Education and Childcare teacher in June 2022. Additional evidence used includes responses to SQW's evaluation surveys and TLPD monitoring data.

### **Training priorities for preparing for T Levels**

In preparing for T Levels, the key focus of the provider was on ensuring all relevant staff had a good understanding of the T Level content, structure, design and main aims of the qualification, to enable them to successfully plan their provision for September 2021. Interviewees reported that in general their teaching staff had a good understanding of T Levels, including those staff not yet involved in T Level delivery.

Other training priorities for the provider were: upskilling staff to better support SEND learners; training to support learners on the transition programme to move from Level 2 to Level 3; and improving the understanding of non-teaching staff outside of subject departments. TLPD was used to address the latter priority, with the first two priorities predominantly addressed in-house due to a perceived lack of TLPD support around these issues, although they did participate in a TRIP on assessment for SEND learners.

### **Engagement with TLPD**

The provider hired and/or assigned a coordinator to each T Level route, and each of these coordinators had protected time for T Level related professional development throughout the 2020/21 academic year.

The college became aware of TLPD through their ARDL and with their support completed an OTNA, and asked all delivery staff to complete an ITNA for the second time (the first time being associated with the first phase of TLPD). Some staff found this frustrating as they thought it was an unnecessary call on their time. While the OTNA process was considered relatively helpful on an organisational level, the ITNAs were less helpful for the senior leader, who did not have access to individual results, and therefore could not map specific needs across the college.

Understanding T Levels was used to improve knowledge of T Levels, including for those in non-teaching roles such as support services and administration. Staff had also engaged in Industry Insights placements (group and individual) and workshops. Network events, the courses for Operational Middle Leaders and Managers, various Role and Route Specific courses and a TRIP on developing effective formative assessment for SEND learners. In total, the monitoring data shows 31 staff engaged across 134 instances (noting this only covers engagement from October 2020, and so excludes prior engagement).

There were different levels of engagement with TLPD in 2021 by T Level route. Most engagement was by staff within Education and Childcare and Health and Science teams. Participation from other teams was ascribed to staffing challenges. For example, on the Digital T Level, one staff member left the college which meant the T Level coordinator had to pick up teaching responsibilities and could not maintain their protected development time.

Timing affected staff engagement. One route leader suggested that their level of engagement with TLPD depended on the timing within the year. They said that between June and September the offer should be at its peak as staff are planning for the new year. In addition, the types of training should also reflect the time of year with, for example, curriculum design occurring over the summer preparation period, rather than autumn.

In addition to TLPD, staff participated in events through the AOC and their respective awarding bodies. At times, interviewees found it difficult to identify whether the training they received was part of the TLPD suite of courses. Staff also participated in internal training within the college, particularly on systems and process development.

### **Impact of engagement with TLPD**

Interviewees reported that the TLPD programme did have an impact on the college and individuals' preparedness to deliver T Levels. The senior leader reported that TLPD had an impact on their knowledge and leadership of T Levels. A steering group with other members of the senior leadership team and governors had been set up so that information and learning could be shared more widely. The senior leader said that TLPD had more of an impact on delivery (teaching) staff, and less so for other staff (such as learner services and administration staff).

The activities which were seen as the most impactful were the Networks, Leadership Mentoring, TRIPs and Industry Insights. All of the interviewees reported that the Networks were very helpful, as it gave them the chance to learn from other providers. Specifically, it was helpful to learn from Wave 1 providers delivering in 2020 and to connect with others delivering the same routes in 2021, as they were able to share best practice and resources and discuss shared issues to try and identify solutions. The route leaders also felt they were able to build more informal networks through connections made during the Network meetings, which had continued (through social media) and were seen as very useful. One of the Network events had focused on marketing, which had helped them with targeting and developing their marketing strategies.

I think moving forward the networking ones are going to be the most valuable as it's good to get ideas from other people ... to hear how other people are approaching certain areas. – *Education and Childcare teacher*

TRIPs had provided an opportunity to network and develop strong relationships with other colleges, working with other providers over an extended period. The findings from the TRIP on supporting SEND learners had been useful, and contributed towards a priority area for the staff. However, one interviewee commented that the resources developed through

other TRIPs across TLPD were often not shared. This is something they thought could be improved to increase the impact of TLPD.

The route leader for Education and Childcare found the Industry Insights activities very valuable. Staff undertook placements in local schools as part of this programme, which had improved their subject and industry knowledge. It also built relationships which they anticipated would lead to employer placements for T Level students.

There was less of an impact reported by route leaders on pedagogical knowledge, as this was considered strong already.

## **Future plans for professional development**

Reflecting on their delivery experience in 2022, interviewees said they had been well prepared for delivery. Going forward, their new training priorities were around understanding the requirements of the employer placement and the observation guidelines, including how to staff and timetable them, how to get learners exam ready, (for example how to teach note taking and revision techniques); how to better connect the specifications to the assessments learners will be undertaking; and how to get learners work-ready.

There was a consensus that staff would continue to use TLPD, especially the Networking activities to learn from the experiences of other providers. However, it was observed that there was not a clear distinct offer for those delivering the second year of T Levels. New staff will continue to be signposted to TLPD and encouraged to use to prepare for delivery.

It [TLPD] was good at the beginning. Setting it up, there was lots about curriculum design and introduction to T Levels. Now moving onto the second year, there isn't anything specifically about the second year. This is the sort of time I'm now thinking about the second year and I couldn't find anything ... it doesn't say first year or second year. – *Education and Childcare route leader*

## **Provider E**

### **About the provider**

Provider E is a general FE college with c.6,000 students studying at four campuses. It is based in a historic city with an industrial heritage, and offers a range of both FE and HE courses.

The college planned to deliver Digital Production, Design and Development; and Education and Childcare routes from September 2021. Due to lower-than-expected numbers of applications and acceptances the college did not deliver the routes as planned in 2021, and deferred to a September 2022 start. They reported that there was no further training or additional support that could have been provided through TLPD which would have enabled them to deliver in 2021.

This case study is informed by initial interviews undertaken in July 2021, and follow-up interviews in June 2022 with the provider's senior leader and two route leaders in Digital Production, Design and Development; and Education and Childcare. Additional evidence is drawn from provider responses to SQW's senior leader and route leader surveys and ETF monitoring data.

### Training priorities for preparing for T Levels

The college promoted all elements of the TLPD programme to their staff.<sup>15</sup> The senior leader completed the OTNA and staff were encouraged to undertake the ITNA which was considered a good starting point to highlight gaps in knowledge, and then access those elements of the TLPD that were personally relevant. Insights from the needs assessments led senior and route leaders to conclude that their skills base did not have significant gaps which required external recruitment.

Some training needs were unique to individuals while other training needs could be determined based on certain group characteristics. For example, the provider found that teachers who delivered and / or assessed apprenticeship courses fully understood the holistic approach to T level teaching. This was different for teachers of BTEC courses for example:

One of the teachers used to be an apprenticeship standards teacher and assessor so fully understands how a holistic approach works. Other staff have been used to BTEC modularisation and this is a massive shift. - *Route leader*

Industry Insights was considered a training priority both for Digital Production, Design and Development; and Education and Childcare. Prior to TLPD, employer engagement in FE was a challenge for the college and the option of activities with industry was viewed as an important opportunity to help address this challenge.

### Engagement with TLPD

The provider implemented a whole organisation approach to the integration of T levels into their education offer to ensure high levels of awareness of the new qualifications and the TLPD offer. In total, the monitoring data shows 52 staff engaged in 139 instances.

As an organisation, everyone is involved from the Principal down. It's a whole organisation approach. We've done a lot of work with careers, student support, finance and marketing so that everyone is aware of the different needs. - *Senior leader*

Senior Leaders and Governors were given a specific T Levels essentials session early on and signposted to training specific to their role. Route leaders presented T levels at CPD days and highlighted those parts of TLPD that would be relevant for each team. Route leaders identified the relevant activities for curriculum staff and these were covered collectively, with one member of staff attending the session and providing feedback to the rest

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<sup>15</sup> With the exception of the New Teacher Programme as no new teachers had been recruited.

of the team. No additional time was allocated to route leaders for TLPD management and delivery as senior and route leaders were managers and not teaching staff.

Due to this approach, all staff were engaged in TLPD activities relevant to their role. The college reported that senior leaders, managers and teachers were fully aware, and almost all learner and administrative staff were aware of the TLPD offer. Out of the 50 Understanding T Levels courses completed by staff at the college, 41 were by business support staff.

Route leaders for Digital Production, Design and Development, and Education and Child-care accessed additional curriculum-specific professional development through the relevant awarding bodies (e.g. Council for Awards in Care, Health and Education (CACHE) and the NCFE). One of the reasons for this was because leaders thought the TLPD programme was too generic in its offer. They felt there was a need for more curriculum specific training.

The Digital Production, Design and Development route leader reported that knowledge gained from other forms of CPD (outside of TLPD) had slightly more of an impact on teachers' ability to confidently teach the T Level route than TLPD activities. Non-TLPD sources accessed included the British Computing Society (the Chartered Institute for IT) because the provider was aware that BCS were involved in the design and development of the T Level content with DfE and as such, thought their offer would be well aligned to the T level requirements.

### **Impact of engagement with TLPD**

All leaders (senior and route) reported that the greatest impact from engaging with TLPD was gained through the TRIPs. Interviewees stated that TRIPs helped them prepare by offering opportunities to develop new relationships with other providers and discuss their work on T Levels. Both route leaders reported that the relationships built through the TRIPs would be sustained and collaboration was intended to continue on T Levels, and wider education issues.

Improving connections with industry through TLPD was a high priority. While COVID-19 disrupted industry insight workshops and prevented the provider from experiencing the full benefit of this strand on their routes, there were 27 insight engagements completed. In addition, 11 TRIPs were industry-insight related. The route leader in Digital Production, Design and Development reported that this level of engagement strengthened links between the classroom and industry.

Both strategic and route leaders reported that all teaching staff who would be involved in the delivery of T levels had a full understanding of T levels and the curriculum requirements, in part due to TLPD. The TLPD activities were seen as giving a 'helping hand' to staff, even although they are used to receiving new curriculum specifications and developing their delivery programmes. Having TLPD activities in integrating English, maths and digital also helped raise awareness in other departments and support joint working.

Teachers had different feedback depending on their level of experience, with early career teachers finding the Introduction courses more useful than more experienced teachers. Early career teachers found the TLPD activities a good refresher of pedagogy and curriculum design, whereas these activities were considered insufficiently technical for more experienced teachers.

All leaders (senior and route) felt that a mixture of online and face to face training in future would be a good approach. However, they emphasised that the benefits of online courses (e.g. being more accessible to staff; more time efficient) meant online training options should remain a large part of the training offer. This offer should also combine live and recorded sessions. To mitigate against the risk of a lack of interaction online and maintain good quality training, the sessions need to be well managed and use break out rooms which are curriculum specific to encourage engagement.

### **Future plans for professional development**

Route leaders for Digital Production, Design and Development, and Education and Child-care both anticipated that their staff would participate in further TLPD activities this year, anticipating more engagement with industry insights and networks. Staff from new T Level routes are also being signposted to use TLPD to support their preparation, however they are expected to rely more on the expertise of staff who have already been involved in T level preparation.

We're trying to encourage the newer areas coming on board, to go along and join these things but whether the take up has been as good, I think it probably isn't. Once you start to run things within a college, the staff will want to migrate more to people who are already doing it. - *Route leader*

## **Provider F**

### **About the provider**

College F is a general FE college with c.8,000 students. The college is based in a town which is within the 10% most deprived areas in the country, with engineering and digital industries being key employment sectors.

The college delivered T Levels in the Construction, Digital and Health routes, as planned, from September 2021. It had also planned to introduce a Science T Level, however this offer was postponed until September 2022 to gain more preparation time.

This case study is informed by interviews undertaken in June 2021 with the senior leader responsible for T Levels at the college and two route leaders responsible for Construction and Digital. Follow-up interviews were conducted with the senior leader, route leaders, and teachers in June 2022. Additional evidence includes college responses to SQW's evaluation surveys and TLPD monitoring data.

## Training priorities for preparing for T Levels

The main training needs identified by the college were around designing the curriculum and lesson planning to enable teachers who were used to teaching BTECs to learn and adapt their pedagogy to the new qualifications. There was also an interest in integrating English, maths and digital elements. The senior leader thought that historically those areas tended not to be included as teaching points within some subjects such as construction lessons. The college wanted to clearly focus on integrating key subjects into T level delivery and work with staff to develop capacity and resources to do so.

Beyond these needs, it was expected that new training needs would emerge as delivery commenced. In addition, the college assigned a Governor with T level responsibility. Their role will be to drive engagement across new senior and middle managers to increase T level knowledge.

## Engagement with TLPD

The college have participated in TLPD since its initial launch. The programme was promoted to all staff, with a particular focus on the 'core' teams who would be teaching and supporting the T Levels. In total 27 ITNAs were completed, with 58 instances of engagement with TLPD (extended phase) recorded which was described as an *"ongoing, iterative process."* According to the survey "most" staff engaged in TLPD with the senior leader reporting they had high levels of engagement.

Staff engaged most in the T Level Role and Route specific training attending the subject introductions, vocational and professional upskilling and enhancing pedagogy courses. The Industry Insights offer in TLPD was used least by staff, as the college is situated in a digital hub area with well-established links to industry and businesses. Similarly, the construction route benefited from strong pre-existing industry links with specialist businesses, and student placements were facilitated by the in-house work-experience team.

Time had been the main barrier to participating in TLPD - particularly during term time. To address this, staff attended different courses and shared learning with each other:

The curriculum managers are saying now it's delivery time, [they] can't keep getting released to do things, [they] need to teach. - *Senior leader*

Apart from TLPD, the college has relied on producing in-house CPD resources. Based on the TLPD network approach, they have created teaching innovation groups (TIGs), where staff contribute during the year to a group innovation or implementation of an idea that will improve outcomes for learners. Staff work in small teams using peer review techniques to undertake research on informed evidence-based practice to incorporate into their work.

## Impact of engagement with TLPD

Senior leader and route leaders thought TLPD had a positive impact on their preparedness for the delivery of T Levels in September 2021. The senior leader said TLPD *"absolutely*

*had an impact*”, particularly in terms of their planning and shaping their curriculum and assessments. Having TLPD available to all staff, and having high participation rates, gave senior leadership, *“more confidence that everyone is prepared.”*

There is a lot more fluency in the delivery staff about some of the pedagogical practice vocabulary, they’re using it a lot more. – *Senior leader*

Route leaders commented that they’d seen an improvement in the amount of information available through TLPD over the last year. They benefited from the resources on agile methodologies and working in an agile programme learning environment which they felt added an extra level of detail in their teaching for the students.

The TRIPs and Networks were valued for providing opportunities to collaborate and share learning with other colleges. Importantly, these had enabled colleges to work with institutions that they had not worked with previously, so had expanded their professional networks. These networks also enabled staff to share materials and ideas while awaiting the materials from awarding bodies.

All the route leaders agreed that it was helpful to have the online activities throughout the pandemic and appreciated the accessibility and flexibility it offered. The Digital route leaders were very happy for online activities to continue, as long as they included some interactivity to make them engaging. The Construction route leader said that face-to-face activities tended to be more appropriate for staff in their field.

### **Future plans for professional development**

The college recruited new staff members for T Level delivery and expect to promote the TLPD to new staff. If training needs for existing staff become apparent, the college would also still refer staff to TLPD if there was relevant support.

The senior leader expressed a desire to rerun courses on the contextualisation of English, maths and digital, because they had found this ‘invaluable’ and felt it was an area they needed to improve on across the college.

The college is planning to relaunch TLPD to encourage staff to keep returning to it. They plan to integrate TLPD into their platform to see dashboard analytics of levels of engagement over different courses. The set up will also be able to flag TLPD resources to specific teams and inform managers of what aspects of their staff CPD requirements are related to TLPD.



## Provider G

### About the provider

Provider G is a general FE college with c.5,800 students studying across two sites. It offers a range of courses from pre-entry level to degree level in a wide range of vocational and academic subject areas. The areas surrounding the provider's two campuses have differing levels of academic attainment, but both have lower rates at Level 4 than the regional average.

Both the Science T Level and Health T Level courses went ahead as planned in September 2021.

This case study is informed by interviews undertaken in June and July 2021 with two senior leaders responsible for T levels at the college, the route leader responsible for the Health T Level and the route leader and lecturers responsible for the Science T level. Follow up interviews were conducted with all but one of the senior leaders again in March and April 2022. Additional evidence includes provider responses to SQW's evaluation surveys and ETF TLPD monitoring data.

### Training priorities for preparing for T Levels

The college chose to limit their offer to two courses in September 2021. They chose to assign tutors who had specific expertise, strong pedagogical skills, and extensive experience of delivering vocational qualifications to those courses. Therefore, their training needs were to ensure that a relatively small core of staff had a good understanding of the T Level content, design and structure. The college assigned a route leader to each T Level route. In the run up to delivery, the senior leader held regular meetings with all staff involved in the first year of T Level delivery to discuss progress with their preparations and resolve any issues. They therefore felt prepared for delivery.

The only concern raised was around the work placements for the Science T Level as these had been difficult to deliver for previous qualifications. Whilst staff acknowledged that there were financial incentives for businesses, it was felt that this did not necessarily mean that the provider could secure the number of placements needed for their students.

### Engagement with TLPD

The senior leadership learned about TLPD from their ARDL and encouraged specific groups of staff to take part in the programme, including governors, management, teaching and support staff. The college was keen to engage in the programme in order to improve their preparedness for T Level delivery and share experiences with other providers. The provider's early involvement had also led to two of their Advanced Practitioners supporting the ETF with the delivery of training on T Levels.

The OTNA was said to be a helpful starting point as the college prepared to deliver T Levels. Following this, staff had engaged with various elements of the TLPD offer, including ITNAs, T Level and Route Specific Training courses, Network events, and Industry Insights. In total, the monitoring data shows 98 instances of engagement and 33 ITNAs completed. There were differing levels of engagement from staff on the Science T Level. One staff member had been very engaged and had regularly completed TLPD courses. Their colleagues had engaged with TLPD more sporadically, but were still planning to engage with the programme in the future.

The college had not taken part in any TRIPs. A few staff members had explored this previously, but one proposal was rejected due to similarities with a separate TRIP whilst another proposal did not get off the ground. This is something they would be open to doing in the future.

The main barriers to engaging with TLPD were time and timing. Some of the TLPD courses were seen as requiring a significant time commitment, which coincided with the period when staff were dealing with remote teaching and other more immediate priorities. Furthermore, holding sessions during the day was challenging as it required finding staff to cover teaching commitments.

Alongside TLPD, staff at the college had completed internal CPD around T Levels and training provided by the Awarding Organisations as well as other organisations (e.g., STEM Learning). The provider was also part of a local network of FE colleges which regularly held teaching and learning conferences, one of which was due to be on good practice in delivering T Levels. The college found the training from the Awarding Organisation useful as it provided an opportunity to speak to subject-specific specialists, whilst the TLPD training tended to be aimed at a broader audience.

### **Impact of engagement with TLPD**

Feedback from interviewees indicated that participating in the TLPD programme had positively impacted the provider's ability to successfully deliver T Levels and had given staff confidence. The senior leader felt that taking part in the programme had improved staff understanding of T Levels and had positively impacted their ability to interact and collaborate with teachers of T Level programmes in other colleges.

Overall, they were very satisfied with the offer and liked the opportunity to 'pick and choose' which elements were most suitable. TLPD was also seen as a useful starting point as, for someone new, it provided an overview and could then act as a springboard to further training.

[TLPD] was a safety net. You knew the support was always available which is really important - *Route leader*

One of the most useful parts of the TLPD offer was the opportunity to collaborate and interact with other providers. Staff at the college had found it useful to talk to others who were delivering T Levels and share good practice. The networking had also evolved over time. Initially, it focused on how each provider was setting up their T Level course, then became more about sharing resources and ideas once delivery had commenced. However, there were mixed views on the format of networking. Some viewed networking online positively as it enabled staff to work with people from across the country more easily and efficiently. Others felt that the interaction and ability to build relationships during face-to-face networking could not be replicated online.

One of the Science tutors particularly liked the FutureLearn courses due to the ability to retain access to them and have a body of knowledge to go back to. These courses had helped the tutor to work through the specification and complemented other internal and external training. The online courses also offer flexibility and can be fit around other commitments.

At times during the training, interviewees felt that providers were all at different points in terms of preparation and delivery. In order to have more meaningful conversations, they suggested that certain sessions could be aimed at 'beginners' whilst others could provide more 'advanced' training. They would appreciate the opportunity to link up with others who were more likely to be in a similar position to themselves.

## **Future plans for professional development**

Reflecting on their experience of delivering T Levels in 2021-22, interviewees felt that they had been well prepared due to their early planning and range of training activities. Looking forward, the college will continue to engage with elements of the TLPD offer, including Industry Insights and FutureLearn courses. Engagement will be both from those already delivering T Levels as well as those involved in the next T Levels the provider will introduce. The college hopes to be able to arrange or attend Industry Insight events held at a more convenient time, rather than in the middle of the teaching day.

## **Provider H**

### **About the provider**

Provider H is a general FE college with c.5,400 students studying at four campuses. The college is one of few with foundation degree awarding powers. It is based in a rural area, with the main campus in a Local Authority area that is characterised by lower rates of educational attainment at Level 4 than the regional and national averages.

Three routes; the Digital, Education and Childcare, and Health and Science were offered from September 2021 as planned. The fourth, Construction, did not go ahead. A cohort of learners did apply for this programme but it was decided that they were not ready to do a T Level. They were put on the transition programme, however, since then, they have all

secured employment and become apprentices. Alongside this, the provider has decided that they do not have the learners or employers who would benefit from an Onsite Construction T Level so have stopped offering this.

This case study is informed by interviews undertaken in June and July 2021 with the senior leader responsible for T Levels at the college and with route leaders responsible for the Health and Science and Education and Childcare T Levels. Follow up interviews were conducted with the senior leader and route leaders responsible for Health and Science and Digital T Levels in April and May 2022. Additional evidence is from responses to SQW's evaluation surveys and ETF monitoring data.

### **Training priorities for preparing for T Levels**

Prior to the delivery of T levels, initial training needs included raising awareness amongst teaching and support staff, focus on more holistic modes of delivery and the implications of a shift from assignment-based to examination assessments. In 2021 leaders felt that those staff who would be teaching T Levels or supporting T Level students were ready to do so, although they reported that staff not directly involved in T Levels were not familiar with them. In addition, route leaders felt that more marketing was needed to raise awareness and understanding amongst students and parents.

Now that T Level delivery has commenced, the senior leader felt that staff did not understand T Levels as well as they thought they did. One of the reasons for this was the level of content being very different to existing Level 3 provision. Staff had read the specifications and knew there were differences but it was not until they started delivering the T Levels that they realised their extent. In response, the college recently completed a curriculum deep dive which highlighted areas for development. These included teaching and learning techniques for different T Level learners; retrieval practice, and support for formative assessment; and tracking industry placements to complement theory taught in the classroom. Staff will be signposted to internal CPD as well as the TLPD programme in order to upskill in these areas.

### **Engagement with TLPD**

A CPD panel meets every half term to consider individual requests and plan provision. A T Level implementation group also met monthly and was involved in planning and promoting relevant CPD. The college appointed T Level leaders for each route who were given additional time, of an hour per week, to prepare for T Levels. Most training is delivered in-house and includes industry updates, and teaching and learning strategies.

The senior leader completed the OTNA initially and found this to be valuable in order to determine CPD priorities early on and put together bespoke training plans. Staff were encouraged to start their engagement by completing an ITNA. One frustration for the senior leader was that whilst information is available on how many ITNAs had been completed, it does not specify which individuals have completed these (for GDPR reasons). It was suggested that it would be useful if there could be a consent button for sharing this information

with the senior leader to give them a better idea of who has completed an ITNA, and what needs are identified. They felt their engagement with the programme really improved when they were assigned an ARDL.

The college had been involved in the TLPD programme for a number of years and were interested in hearing from others about their experience of implementing T Levels.

The monitoring data indicates that, in total, 64 staff members have engaged in a total of 111 TLPD activities. Of these, 40 had completed an ITNA. Other activities participated in included Understanding T Levels (7), T Level Role and Route Specific Training (20), Industry Insights (20), Networks (15), TRIPs (7), Professional Development for Leaders (2) and FutureLearn courses (16 enrolments). For those who had not engaged, some did not recognise that the training was linked to their role whilst others had limited capacity, which was a continual challenge.

Barriers to participation include time away from the classroom for teaching staff. Even when remission funding was available to provide teaching cover, there was still a reluctance to disrupt student learning by introducing different cover teachers. COVID-19 created other barriers as staff were dealing with many additional new demands (not least shifting to online delivery) and their managers were reluctant to add to these pressures during the lockdown and subsequent periods.

Interviewees had engaged in other professional development in addition to the TLPD programme. Early on, the senior leader attended some information sessions organised by the Department for Education on T Levels. More recently, staff had engaged in CPD from the Awarding Organisations and internal CPD sessions. The provider felt that the TLPD programme complemented other CPD that was available rather than duplicated it. Due to the range of options, the senior leader was able to signpost staff to the CPD that was most relevant and appropriate for them.

### **Impact of engagement with TLPD**

The college reported they found the TLPD programme to be really valuable in helping them to prepare for and deliver T Levels. TLPD was their 'go-to offer' for T Level curriculum development. The senior leader liked the fact that there were progression opportunities, for example staff members could move from sessions focused on understanding T Levels to sessions on route-specific pedagogy, which were more helpful now that they have commenced delivery 'on-the-ground'. The college team had found networking events useful, particularly when they had been able to meet Wave 1 providers and hear about their experiences. Networking with others helped them feel less isolated and the route leaders found it useful to get ideas from other colleges about how they were planning to run their delivery.

The provider had taken part in a number of TRIPs related to embedding English, maths and digital into the core curriculum, formative assessment, and the industry placement. These topics aligned well with their development planning. The senior leader appreciated

how all the different routes were involved in the TRIPs. They enjoyed being able to network with colleges in other parts of the country, to supplement their strong local networks.

Route leaders had found the Industry Insights very useful. Existing employer links were enhanced and developed further because TLPD badging helped to focus and organise the activities. The college sourced some of their own opportunities and TLPD were supportive of this. For example, the Health team had done a placement with social working teams, the Science team had been able to spend some time in local hospital labs and the Digital lead had done a week-long placement at a software house. For the Digital lead, having this experience of industry was important and had helped them to understand what tools were being used in industry and make sure students had access to these. The college felt that there were fewer Insight opportunities than they originally expected, and some were less relevant to the content of the T Level courses.

Having an ARDL had been important to the provider. The ARDL had done some in-person training with staff and attended the provider's implementation group meetings once a term to update them on the available and upcoming CPD courses. They contact the route leaders directly if there is a specific CPD course available which would be of benefit. This direct contact helps to speed communication up and frees up the senior leader. The senior leader had shared their challenges with the ARDL who had subsequently linked them to other colleges facing similar challenges.

[The ARDL] keeps it at the top of the agenda. It's pretty easy when you're a big organisation with so many competing priorities for things to get missed and lost but [the ARDL] is very supportive. She has a great relationship with the whole team. She has worked really hard and is tireless in her role to support people - *Senior leader*

Taking part in the TLPD programme reduced the amount of work the provider had to do internally to get people up to speed on T Levels and had helped with capacity within the organisation. If it had all been in-house, the senior leader felt that their understanding would not have progressed as quickly.

Interviewees appreciated the mix between virtual and face-to-face activities and would like to see a hybrid approach going forwards. Networking and Industry Insights were said to be better when delivered in person. College staff would have liked the opportunity to visit one of the Wave 1 providers ahead of their delivery commencing in 2021, as their virtual connection was helpful but would have been enhanced had they observed delivery on-site to put their learning into context.

The route leaders felt that the most useful part of the TLPD offer was the range of courses available, as well as the funding that could be used to release staff to attend the Industry Insights. It was commented that the TLPD website was easy to use and booking onto courses was straightforward. One of the route leaders would like the option to input their route into the portal and for it to then be more tailored, e.g., with links to route specific courses as well as the specification and core content. Feedback from other route leaders

included that some of the sessions were quite long with little additional information to what was on the slides. The sessions that were more interactive were felt to be more useful.

### **Future plans for professional development**

The college plans to continue to engage with the TLPD, both staff who have started delivery (who are particularly interested in training related to year 2 delivery) as well as staff who will be delivering in Wave 3 and Wave 4. The senior leader was in the process of undertaking a new OTNA in order to see the distance travelled and work out next steps in terms of the provider's training needs. This would be used to determine their future engagement with TLPD. The senior leader was also keen to raise awareness of T Levels with the wider organisation.

In terms of outstanding training needs, the route leaders would like more training on the end of year assessments and how to help students with exam preparation. Alongside this, they plan to continue to engage with the Industry Insights to ensure their teaching is in line with the latest industry practice.

## **Provider: I**

### **About the provider**

Provider I is a general FE college with c.7,700 students studying across six campuses. It offers a broad range of vocational and academic courses across many subject areas. The college's campuses are located within three separate Local Authorities, all of which have lower rates of education attainment at Level 4 than regional and national averages.

Digital and Construction routes were offered from September 2021. The college was approved to run the Education and Childcare route but this had been postponed to start in September 2022. This is attributed to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and students preferring courses which were portfolio-based.

This case study is informed by interviews undertaken in June and July 2022 with the senior leader responsible for T Levels at the college, route leaders responsible for the Digital, Construction and Business and Administration routes and the work experience team leader. Additional evidence includes provider responses to SQW's evaluation surveys and ETF TLPD monitoring data.

### **Training priorities for preparing for T Levels**

The college is committed to upskilling and developing staff, and supportive of requests for staff development that align to the college's strategic priorities. Since they agreed to deliver T Levels, there has been a particular emphasis on upskilling staff involved in T Level delivery. Due to the long lead in time, the senior leader felt that staff delivering T Levels understood the qualification really well. However, it was felt that, whilst other staff at the

college are aware of T Levels, they have less in-depth knowledge on the specifics of T Levels.

Prior to the delivery of T Levels, training priorities were to ensure that staff were aware of differences in how T Levels were structured (compared with other qualifications taught at the college) and, to be fully aware of current industry standards. The TLPD programme was said to be the best option to address their needs and a central place where the college could get all the information needed.

Reflecting on the first year of delivery, staff were pleased with how the year had gone but also commented that it had been a learning curve for everybody. They were committed to making sure that the learning from the first year of delivery would be used to inform subsequent T Level delivery.

### **Engagement with TLPD**

The college learned about TLPD via ETF direct emails and their ARDL. T Level leads for each route were given protected time (six hours per week) to prepare for T Levels and they helped to filter information about opportunities through to their department. Alongside this, the senior leader met regularly with the two route leaders to discuss how they had been preparing and key issues.

The college's first engagement with the TLPD was completing an OTNA to identify skills gaps and signpost staff members involved in the delivery of T Levels to relevant CPD courses. All of the staff involved in T Level delivery had engaged with the TLPD programme. In total, the monitoring data shows 80 instances of engagement and 12 ITNAs completed. Alongside this, staff had engaged with Professional Development for Leaders, Networks, T Level Role and Route Specific Training, Industry Insights, Understanding T Levels, FutureLearn courses and TRIPs. Engagement was highest amongst teaching staff, but others had also taken part in the programme, including governors, the exams department, the finance department and careers advisers.

Route leaders found the structure of the TLPD programme helpful, in particular being able to complete the initial skills analysis and provide an overview of T Levels to their staff before directing them to the most relevant courses.

The skills analysis was perfect....It was nice to have that initial snapshot and then branch off on different specialisms in different places after that. – *Route Leader, Construction*

It had been difficult for some teachers to engage with the programme due to time pressures and other commitments. However, route leaders were able to encourage staff to take part by sharing how much the programme had benefited them and by suggesting to people that they start with the introductory courses which often led to further engagement.



Staff also engaged with CPD from Awarding Organisations as part of preparing for T Level delivery. In general, it was felt that the CPD from Awarding Organisations tended to be more subject-specific, whilst the TLPD training tended to be more generic.

### Impact of engagement with TLPD

Overall, the provider was very satisfied with the T Level programme and the role it's played in helping them prepare for the delivery of T Levels. The programme has provided support and guidance to staff members and was seen as well-structured and easily accessible.

It has played quite a significant part because it's enabled us to prepare and plan. And at times, it has pointed us in the right direction. It's really hard to develop, set up and implement a brand new programme. It's not just a few tweaks... We want to make it successful and make sure we get it right for the learners – *Senior leader*

The provider had appreciated the opportunities for collaboration through the TLPD programme. The senior leader and both route leaders had taken part, or were taking part, in TRIPs which had led to an ongoing network of peers in other colleges who have regular catch-up calls to discuss progress and resolution to emerging delivery issues. Alongside, the route leaders have also taken part in Networks which have provided another opportunity to collaborate and share experiences. By meeting together, they can work through any issues and share possible solutions.

Working with the other colleges [on the TRIP] was great as we were all in the same boat. It was nice to share good practice and work collaboratively together – *Senior leader*

The two route leaders had taken part in mentoring, with one of the route leaders progressing from 'mentee' to 'mentor' as their knowledge and understanding has grown. Both had found having a mentor valuable, particularly for talking through key concerns (such as the industry placements), and had been given helpful suggestions about things to put into practice.

Building a relationship with their ARDL has been useful for the provider. The ARDL provided regular updates and was seen as responsive as well as the key contact if any queries came up. The ARDL had been able to provide support to both the senior leader to help the college move forward, as well as the route leaders to help them put together an action plan for their T Level area.

In terms of format, whilst the provider would like to see a hybrid approach for the CPD events going forward, they have found face-to-face events more engaging and productive. There can be multiple distractions when completing CPD courses online or attending virtual events. Interviewees suggested that there could be more guidance and materials linked to

employer engagement, in order to help college's secure industry placements, and closer mapping between Industry Insights events and route-specific specifications.

### **Future plans for professional development**

Staff at the provider plan to continue to engage with the TLPD programme, through their continued engagement with TRIPs and through engaging with any new courses or materials that are released or updated. They also plan to continue their engagement and collaboration with other colleges delivering T Levels.

## **Provider J**

### **About the provider**

Provider J is a general FE college with c.8,000 students studying across seven campuses. It is based in a historic town with a high prevalence of both manufacturing and digital industries.

The college expected to deliver Digital Support Services route from September 2021. However, due to lower-than-expected number of offers being accepted, the college deferred delivery to September 2022. This decision was based on low numbers of prospective students rather than a lack of preparedness among college staff, or indeed any other reason.

This case study is informed by two interviews undertaken in July 2021 with the provider's senior leader and route leader in Digital. A follow up interview was conducted with the senior leader in June 2022. Additional evidence includes provider responses to SQW's senior leader surveys and ETF monitoring data.

### **Training priorities for preparing for T Levels**

The college's senior manager completed the Organisation Training Needs Assessment (OTNA) and 38 staff completed their Individual Training Needs Assessments (ITNA). These informed the training approaches taken for the Digital department and other college teams

The senior leader noted that different departments would need more TLPD activities than others, and at different times. Doing some activities too early risked staff losing the knowledge gained. Consequently, curriculum and teaching staff started their TLPD earlier to give them an 18-month lead in time, whereas staff in learner services and administrative roles started their training later.

We took a whole college approach initially but then realised for some of the teams, they were learning something they weren't going to implement for another two years. So we will probably re run these sessions in another two years as a refresher.- *Senior leader*

No external recruitment was considered necessary to support the T Level delivery, as training needs were easily facilitated by TLPD and in-house provision. In total, the monitoring data shows that staff engaged with TLPD in 148 instances.

### **Engagement with TLPD**

The provider implemented a whole college approach to using TLPD. The programme was promoted through the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to all staff and ETF was invited to host a two-day programme to ensure all staff received information on T Levels and TLPD relevant to them.

ETF trainers delivered 1-hour bitesize sessions for different departments including finance, marketing, student services, employer engagement, and curriculum. SLT ensured staff knew that their attendance was expected and each department was required to attend their session. Staff engaged with TLPD did so using their regular personal development time. While no additional time was allocated, senior leadership were clear that any TLPD training needs would be supported, which included funding teaching cover if necessary.

All teaching staff who were to deliver the T Level programme in 2021/22 engaged with TLPD. However, the route leader reported that the level of staff engagement was mixed as the activities ran through the academic year and required staff to do their TLPD in parallel with their teaching, rather than at the end of term (which is the prevailing model).

To address these issues, the route leader created a document for staff with the links to the TLPD webinars and highlighted key activities for staff to prioritise. They also attended awarding body sessions and broke down the information received and presented that back to their team in bitesize parts which helped staff engage.

The provider accessed additional professional development activities to prepare for the delivery of T Levels through the relevant awarding bodies (such as NCFE) and in collaboration with other providers. Additional personal development resources were also created and delivered in-house.

While the senior leader commented that the awarding bodies were later in introducing resources for providers to use, awarding bodies provided more attractive resources as they are considered the 'master of the outcome' and offered a subject specialist view in all conversations.

We would have been ready if there hadn't been any training from anyone. Okay, we would have made more mistakes. But now we have the awarding bodies doing training and ETF have been doing training and leadership, that has helped us iron out some errors.- *Senior leader*

### **Impact of engagement with TLPD**

The senior leader reported that staff participation in TLPD had significantly improved the overall readiness of the organisation to deliver T Levels. While there is a development

process in place for new qualifications, TLPD kept a focus on T Level development throughout the year which was important given the high profile of the T Level qualifications.

In particular, the senior leader reported that the monthly area meetings with their regional lead were helpful in giving them updates about staff attendance at TLPD events and upcoming opportunities. These meetings helped the senior leadership to make sure they were checking in with the route leader and staff and asking the right questions of them to ensure they were ready.

The senior leader had full confidence in their teaching staff readiness to offer T Levels in the Digital route and considered TLPD to have significantly improved on their pedagogical knowledge and technical expertise. Further, they said that engagement in TLPD specifically had a positive impact on the understanding, knowledge and preparedness of learner services and administrative staff.

TLPD has been quite good. It has given us insight and time to reflect on the information gathered so we are a bit better prepared. If we'd just been given the resources, we'd have been far more disorganised. - *Route leader*

TLPD highlighted specific training that staff required to improve their understanding of industry needs. The route leader thought that by upskilling and aligning staff skills with qualifications that the digital industry would recognise, this would enable them to teach these to the young people within the curriculum. Linked to this, TLPD gave the provider the opportunity to visit potential employers and ask about how they wanted to be involved in T level delivery (e.g. 45 day work experience, curriculum design, mentoring a member of staff, masterclasses) and this enabled the route leader to develop a bank of employers to bring in to support delivery.

### **Future plans for professional development**

The provider confirmed that their teaching staff would participate further in TLPD. Staff delivering the new routes in Engineering and Manufacturing, Health and Science and Surveying and Design in 2022/23 are starting to attend their subject specific TLPD activities. However, the provider thought that these activities may not be taken up as much in the future as staff move on to use the resources from the awarding bodies who may have more detailed, curriculum specific information.



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