

## [News story: Contracts awarded to deliver the first T Levels](#)

A major milestone was reached today (13 February) as contracts to develop, deliver and award the first three T Levels have been awarded by the Department for Education (DfE) and [Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#) (the Institute).

T Levels will be the technical equivalent to A Levels, combining classroom theory, practical learning and an industry placement. Following a competitive bidding process, Awarding Organisation NCFE has been awarded a contract to deliver the Education and Childcare T Level, and Pearson has been awarded contracts to deliver T Levels in Design, Surveying and Planning as well Digital Production, Design and Development. Around 50 further education and post-16 providers will teach these T Level programmes from September 2020.

To protect the gold standard of T Levels and ensure they are a valued qualification recognisable by employers, one awarding body will have exclusive rights to deliver each T Level subject. This was a key recommendation made by Lord Sainsbury in his independent review of technical education in 2016.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

This is a major step forward in our work to upgrade technical education in this country. T Levels are a once in a generation opportunity to create high-quality technical education courses on a par with the best in the world, so that young people gain the skills and experience they need to secure a good job, an apprenticeship or progress into further training.

We have made significant progress to implement these vital reforms which are on track for delivery from 2020. Working alongside the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education the Awarding Organisations will play a vital role ensuring T Levels are high-quality and deliver the skilled workforce employers need.

More than 200 businesses, including Fujitsu, Skanska, and GlaxoSmithKline as well as many small and medium sized firms, have helped design the course content so far to make sure young people taking T Levels are equipped with the knowledge and skills that employer's value. On 31 January, the Institute assumed responsibility for approving the content and procurement for T Levels and will continue to work with industry and the Awarding Organisations as the T Level roll out continues.

Sir Gerry Berragan, CEO of the Institute, said:

I am really pleased at the pace the work has developed and the Institute will continue to build on the work of DfE. Technical Education offers a real and exciting alternative to A Levels for young people, with T Levels now sitting alongside apprenticeships. We remain committed to the pace of the roll out and look forward to working with these suppliers as they develop the first T Level qualifications.

Welcoming this announcement, Lord Sainsbury, Chair of the Independent Panel on Technical Education, said:

My panel recommended the single provider model for two reasons. Firstly, greater clarity. There are currently more than 3,000 Level 3 qualifications eligible for public funding for 16 to 18-year-olds, spread across more than 100 different awarding organisations. We cannot expect every employer in the land to know which of these qualifications are any good and actually deliver the knowledge and skills they are looking for in new recruits.

Secondly, we wanted to remove any possibility of a race-to-the-bottom on quality, where awarding organisations are incentivised to compete for market share on the basis not of rigour but instead on which qualifications are easiest to pass.

I am delighted that we have reached this milestone in the roll-out of the T Levels programme. With the first schools and colleges to offer T Levels in 2020 well advanced in their preparations, and now confirmation of these initial awarding organisations, I am confident that we remain on track to deliver the transformation to technical education that this country so desperately needs.

Rod Bristow, President of Pearson in the UK, said:

We are delighted to be delivering the first wave of T Level qualifications in Construction and Digital. The award of these licenses recognises our longstanding collaboration and partnership with employers of all sizes to design, develop and deliver world class qualifications in these industries.

T Levels represent a significant opportunity to strengthen the recognition and value of technical education in England. We look forward to continuing to work with the Government, employers, and providers to ensure their successful implementation, and to support learners as they begin their programmes of study from next September.

Stewart Foster, Managing Director, NCFE Awarding said:

At NCFE, we are committed to creating opportunities for learners to progress and succeed and we are therefore excited to be at the forefront of the implementation of T Levels. T Levels mark a revolution in technical education and the CACHE developed Technical Qualification will help ensure that learners entering the education and childcare workplace have been trained to the highest of standards. We would like to thank the sector for the huge amount of support offered to us throughout this process and look forward to continuing to work together.

In December 2018, the government announced the next [7 T Levels](#) to be taught from 2021 as: Health; Healthcare Science; Science; Onsite Construction; Building Services Engineering; Digital Support and Services; and Digital Business Services. The procurement to deliver this next wave is expected to be launched in spring 2019.

To support the further education sector to deliver the new T Level programmes, the government will provide an additional half a billion pounds every year once they are all fully rolled out. The government is also investing £20 million to help prepare the sector for the introduction of T Levels. This includes the [£5 million Taking Teaching Further programme](#), which aims to attract more industry experts to work in the sector, and the [£8 million T Level Professional Development offer](#) to help teachers and staff prepare for the roll-out of the new qualifications.

On Thursday 30 January 2019, eligible further education providers that will teach the first T Levels from 2020 were invited to bid for funding to refurbish their existing buildings or to build new spaces.

The [T Level Capital Fund was announced by the Chancellor in the 2018 Budget](#). It is designed to make sure young people taking the new technical courses have access to industry standard equipment and high quality facilities so they gain the skills and knowledge employers demand. The fund will be delivered in two parts, with funding for specialist equipment such as digital and audio visual kit, allocated to all providers in spring 2020.

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## [News story: Matt Hancock: email must replace paper in the NHS](#)

Email is as secure and cheaper than communicating through paper and fax machines, the Health and Social Care Secretary said in a speech at an NHS England conference.

He outlined an ambition for healthcare staff to email patients directly with information on appointments to reduce delays, boost cyber security and cut

wastage.

NHS organisations will be able to use any secure email provider – not just NHS Mail – if it meets the required security settings. This is so that NHS organisations can choose the best service for their needs and email providers are encouraged to innovate.

The move is part of Matt Hancock's [tech vision](#) for helping NHS organisations to introduce innovative technologies for the benefit of staff and patients.

Digital services and IT systems will soon have to meet a clear set of open standards to ensure they can talk to each other across organisational boundaries and can be continuously upgraded.

Any system that does not meet these standards will be phased out and the government will look to end contracts with providers that do not understand these principles for the health and care sector.

The Health and Social Care Secretary announced a [fax machine ban](#) in December 2018. Fax machines have now been removed from the NHS Supply Chain so trusts can no longer buy them.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Having to deal with outdated technology is hugely frustrating for staff and patients alike – and in many cases downright dangerous. A letter lost in the post could be the difference between life and death.

We have signalled the end of archaic fax machines in hospitals and GP practices, and as of this year the NHS will no longer buy them. Our mission now is to make it as easy as possible for GPs to communicate safely and securely with their patients and colleagues.

There is no reason why a doctor cannot email a patient confidentially, for example with their test results or prescription, rather than make them wait days for a letter or ask them to come into the surgery. The rest of the world runs on email – and the NHS should too.

Mr Richard Kerr, Chair of the Royal College of Surgeons Commission on the Future of Surgery, said:

Last year, work undertaken for the RCS's Commission on the Future of Surgery revealed that NHS hospital trusts own over 8,000 fax machines. This is ludicrous.

We know that digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence, genomics and imaging for healthcare, are going to play an increasingly important role in how we deliver patient care.

It is therefore imperative that the NHS uses modern communication channels that are up to the job of transmitting vast amounts of personalised patient information quickly and securely.

The RCS fully supports the health secretary's ban on fax machines in the NHS.

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## [News story: Near miss with track workers at Browney Curve](#)

At approximately 23:45 hrs on Sunday 20 January 2019, a train operated by Northern encountered two track workers who were walking along the Browney Curve on the East Coast main line, South of Durham. The track workers had just set up a work site and were walking with their equipment to get to their place of work. However, because of an earlier planning mistake which went undetected, trains had not been stopped on the line on which the work site had been established. This occurred because the possession (a part of the railway which is closed to traffic to enable engineering works) did not encompass the location of the work.

RAIB was notified of the incident by Network Rail and has carried out a preliminary examination to understand the circumstances and identify whether it provides the potential for significant new safety learning. On the basis of the evidence that was available at the time, the RAIB has decided not to undertake an investigation into this incident.

The RAIB has previously carried out many investigations into accidents and incidents involving track workers, including a class investigation published in 2017.

Following this latest incident, the RAIB has written to Network Rail to remind it of the importance of addressing RAIB's findings following an investigation into a near miss at Camden Junction South on 28 February 2017. This recommended that Network Rail investigates ways to improve the layout and format of notices publishing the safety arrangements for track workers, with a specific focus on the greater use of diagrams to represent information.

In July 2018 the RAIB published a safety digest into a near miss west of Dundee. This again arose as a result of people not realising that the location of the work, and the location where protection had been planned, were different. In that safety digest, the RAIB re-iterated the learning from the near miss at Camden Junction South.

The implementation of the Camden South Junction recommendation is still in

progress. The incident on the Browney Curve serves as a timely reminder of the importance of addressing this recommendation.

In its letter, the RAIB also observed that it would be helpful if new planning tools currently being developed by Network Rail could undertake automatic checks on whether work sites are actually located within the possession to which they are linked. The letter has been copied to the Office of Rail and Road as the safety regulator for the UK railways.

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## **Press release: Cash boost to help build 200,000 homes in new garden towns**

A £9 million cash injection to speed up the locally-led building of new garden towns and villages across the country has been announced today (13 February 2019).

The Garden Communities project is expected to deliver 200,000 properties on large sites by 2050, and the latest funding will help get 21 sites ready for development.

The government project is helping ambitious councils get well-designed homes built on large sites, and the money will help pay for master-planning and technical studies.

Work is already underway on 10,000 properties across the country in garden towns and villages, with 36,000 expected to be underway or completed by 2022.

Housing Minister Kit Malthouse MP said:

We have not built enough homes in this country for the last three decades, and we are turning that around as we work towards our target to build 300,000 properties a year by the mid-2020s.

This £9 million funding boost is giving councils the support and cash injection they need so they can finish planning new developments and get diggers on site.

The developments being funded include a 2,000 home site for custom and self-builders in Bicester, on land purchased by the council from the Ministry of Defence.

It also includes developments in Basingstoke, Didcot, Taunton, Harlow-Gilston and across Northamptonshire where work is already underway on the first phase

of developments.

The funding will be administered by Homes England.

<b>Place</b>	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>award Homes</b>
Aylesbury	£420,000	15,000
Basingstoke	£695,000	10,000
Bicester	£770,000	13,000
Harlow & Gilston	£715,000	24,000
North Essex (Colchester, Tendring & Braintree)	£1,000,000	43,000
North Northants (Corby, Kettering & Wellingborough)	£725,000	33,000
Otterpool Park, Folkestone	£1,250,000	10,000
Taunton	£550,000	15,000
Bailrigg	£100,000	3,500
Culm, Mid Devon	£300,000	5,000
Dunton Hills	£100,000	3,500
Halsnead	£300,000	1,589
Handforth	£150,000	1,650
Infinity, Derbyshire	£150,000	3,200
Longmarston	£300,000	3,500
Longcross	£125,000	1,700
West Oxfordshire	£150,000	2,200
Tresham	£300,000	1,500
Welbourne	£300,000	6,000
West Carclaze	£300,000	1,500
St Cuthbert's, Carlisle	£300,000	10,000

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## [Press release: UK House Price Index for December 2018](#)

The December data shows:

- on average, house prices have risen by 0.2% since November 2018
- there has been an annual price rise of 2.5%, which makes the average property in the UK valued at £230,776

### **England**

In England, the December data shows, on average, house prices have risen by 0.3% since November 2018. The annual price rise of 2.3% takes the average property value to £247,886.

The regional data for England indicates that:

- the West Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber both experienced the greatest monthly price rise, up by 2.0%
- the East of England saw the most significant monthly price fall, down by 1.1%
- the West Midlands experienced the greatest annual price rise, up by 5.2%
- the North East saw the largest annual price fall, down by 1.0%

### Price change by region for England

Region	Average price December 2018	Monthly change % since November 2018
East Midlands	£192,748	-0.2
East of England	£289,602	-1.1
London	£473,822	0.1
North East	£128,756	-0.4
North West	£164,352	0.4
South East	£324,729	0.1
South West	£256,427	-0.3
West Midlands	£200,388	2.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	£165,119	2.0

### Repossession sales by volume for England

The lowest number of repossession sales in October 2018 was in the East of England.

The highest number of repossession sales in October 2018 was in the North West.

Repossession sales	October 2018
East Midlands	44
East of England	14
London	44
North East	84
North West	138
South East	56
South West	32
West Midlands	52
Yorkshire and the Humber	75
England	539

### Average price by property type for England

Property type	December 2018	December 2017	Difference %
Detached	£376,076	£364,892	3.1
Semi-detached	£232,619	£225,102	3.3



Property type	December 2018	December 2017	Difference %
Terraced	£200,569	£195,761	2.5
Flat/maisonette	£226,247	£227,130	-0.4
All	£247,886	£242,378	2.3

## Funding and buyer status for England

Transaction type	Average price December 2018	Annual price change % since December 2017	Monthly price change % since November 2018
Cash	£233,523	2.2	0.3
Mortgage	£255,124	2.3	0.3
First-time buyer	£207,526	1.7	0.3
Former owner occupier	£281,914	2.8	0.3

## Building status for England

Building status	Average price October 2018	Annual price change % since October 2017	Monthly price change % since September 2018
New build	£311,953	5.2	2.3
Existing resold property	£243,997	2.4	-0.4

\*Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

## London

London shows, on average, house prices have risen by 0.1% since November 2018. An annual price fall of 0.6% takes the average property value to £473,822.

## Average price by property type for London

Property type	December 2018	December 2017	Difference %
Detached	£912,343	£899,100	1.5
Semi-detached	£588,078	£573,194	2.6
Terraced	£496,244	£489,692	1.3
Flat/maisonette	£411,950	£421,917	-2.4
All	£473,822	£476,848	-0.6

## Funding and buyer status for London

Transaction type	Average price December 2018	Annual price change % since December 2017	Monthly price change % since November 2018
Cash	£496,483	-1.4	-0.4
Mortgage	£466,885	-0.4	0.2

Transaction type	Average price December 2018	Annual price change % since December 2017	Monthly price change % since November 2018
First-time buyer	£412,679	-1.3	0.0
Former owner occupier	£537,813	0.2	0.3

## Building status for London

Building status	Average price October 2018	Annual price change % since October 2017	Monthly price change % since September 2018
New build	£502,915	1.0	3.1
Existing resold property	£478,869	-0.3	0.5

\*Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

## Wales

Wales shows, on average, house prices have risen by 0.8% since November 2018. An annual price rise of 5.2% takes the average property value to £161,845.

There were 56 repossession sales for Wales in October 2018.

## Average price by property type for Wales

Property type	December 2018	December 2017	Difference %
Detached	£245,785	£231,705	6.1
Semi-detached	£156,068	£148,069	5.4
Terraced	£124,968	£118,993	5.0
Flat/maisonette	£113,926	£111,120	2.5
All	£161,845	£153,791	5.2

## Funding and buyer status for Wales

Transaction type	Average price December 2018	Annual price change % since December 2017	Monthly price change % since November 2018
Cash	£157,825	5.2	1.1
Mortgage	£164,228	5.3	0.6
First-time buyer	£139,487	4.8	0.6
Former owner occupier	£188,008	5.7	0.9

## Building status for Wales

Building status	Average price October 2018	Annual price change % since October 2017	Monthly price change % since September 2018
New build	£218,225	8.1	2.3

Building status	Average price October 2018	Annual price change % since October 2017	Monthly price change % since September 2018
Existing resold property	£157,930	3.8	-0.1

\*Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

[Access the full UK HPI](#)

UK house prices rose by 2.5% in the year to December 2018, down from 2.7% in the year to November 2018.

The [UK Property Transaction Statistics for December 2018](#) showed that on a seasonally adjusted basis, the number of transactions on residential properties with a value of £40,000 or greater was 102,330. This is 3.6% higher compared with a year ago. Between November and December 2018, transactions fell by 0.1%.

House prices grew fastest in Wales and in the West Midlands region, increasing by 5.2% in the year to December 2018. House prices in London fell by 0.6% in the year to December 2018. London house prices have been falling over the year since July 2018.

See the [economic statement](#).

## Notes to editors

1. The UK House Price Index (HPI) is published on the second or third Wednesday of each month with Northern Ireland figures updated quarterly. The January 2019 UK HPI will be published at 9.30am on Wednesday 20 March 2019. See [calendar of release dates](#).
2. We have made some changes to improve the accuracy of the UK HPI. We are not publishing average price and percentage change for new builds and existing resold property as done previously because there are not currently enough new build transactions to provide a reliable result. This means that in this month's UK HPI reports, new builds and existing resold property are reported in line with the sales volumes currently available.
3. The UK HPI revision period has been extended to 13 months, following a review of the revision policy (see [calculating the UK HPI](#) section 4.4). This ensures the data used is more comprehensive.
4. Sales volume data is also available by property status (new build and existing property) and funding status (cash and mortgage) in our [downloadable data tables](#). Transactions involving the creation of a new

register, such as new builds, are more complex and require more time to process. Read [revisions to the UK HPI data](#).

5. Revision tables have been introduced for England and Wales within the downloadable data. Tables will be available in csv format. See [about the UK HPI](#) for more information.
6. Data for the UK HPI is provided by HM Land Registry, Registers of Scotland, Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and the Valuation Office Agency.
7. The UK HPI is calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. It applies a hedonic regression model that uses the various sources of data on property price, in particular HM Land Registry's Price Paid Dataset, and attributes to produce estimates of the change in house prices each month. Find out more about the methodology used from the [ONS](#) and [Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency](#).
8. The [UK Property Transaction statistics](#) are taken from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) monthly estimates of the number of residential and non-residential property transactions in the UK and its constituent countries. The number of property transactions in the UK is highly seasonal, with more activity in the summer months and less in the winter. This regular annual pattern can sometimes mask the underlying movements and trends in the data series so HMRC also presents the UK aggregate transaction figures on a seasonally adjusted basis. Adjustments are made for both the time of year and the construction of the calendar, including corrections for the position of Easter and the number of trading days in a particular month.
9. UK HPI seasonally adjusted series are calculated at regional and national levels only. See [data tables](#).
10. The first estimate for new build average price (April 2016 report) was based on a small sample which can cause volatility. A three-month moving average has been applied to the latest estimate to remove some of this volatility.
11. Work has been taking place since 2014 to develop a single, official HPI that reflects the final transaction price for sales of residential property in the UK. Using the geometric mean, it covers purchases at market value for owner-occupation and buy-to-let, excluding those purchases not at market value (such as re-mortgages), where the 'price' represents a valuation.

12. Information on residential property transactions for England and Wales, collected as part of the official registration process, is provided by HM Land Registry for properties that are sold for full market value.
13. The HM Land Registry dataset contains the sale price of the property, the date when the sale was completed, full address details, the type of property (detached, semi-detached, terraced or flat), if it is a newly built property or an established residential building and a variable to indicate if the property has been purchased as a financed transaction (using a mortgage) or as a non-financed transaction (cash purchase).
14. Repossession sales data is based on the number of transactions lodged with HM Land Registry by lenders exercising their power of sale.
15. For England, this is shown as volumes of repossession sales recorded by Government Office Region. For Wales, there is a headline figure for the number of repossession sales recorded in Wales.
16. The data can be downloaded as a .csv file. Repossession sales data prior to April 2016 is not available. Find out more information about [repossession sales](#).
17. Background tables of the raw and cleansed aggregated data, in Excel and CSV formats, are also published monthly although Northern Ireland is on a quarterly basis. They are available for free use and re-use under the Open Government Licence.
18. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.
19. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.
20. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £4 trillion, including around £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles showing evidence of ownership for some 86% of the land mass of England and Wales.
21. For further information about HM Land Registry visit [www.gov.uk/land-registry](http://www.gov.uk/land-registry)

22. Follow us on [Twitter](#), our [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#)