



Passport to your future

My Experience

Dudmaston Hall



House and Collections

Having completed an undergraduate degree in Fine Art and gained work experience in different areas such as office administration and hospitality I was still searching for a career that I could see myself happily working in. I applied to the National Trust Passport To Your Future traineeship in 2011 as I had no prior experience of working in museums or heritage and I thought it would definitely be something that would suit my interests and personality. It really appealed to me that the traineeships were aimed towards increasing the diversity of people working for the National Trust, including those with disabilities, which is where I saw myself fitting in.

I have a neurological condition called Spasmodic Torticollis, a form of Dystonia, which affects my voice and the movement of my neck. Knowing that an employer would be understanding and able to gear the role around me was really appealing.

From 2011 to 2012 I completed a twelve month House and Collections Management traineeship based at Dudmaston Hall in Shropshire. I thoroughly enjoyed the whole year and learnt so much more than I expected. It enabled me to gain a huge number of practical skills

and experience through on-the-job training, formal training courses and job-shadowing colleagues across different properties. I took the opportunity to learn as much as possible in areas such as conservation cleaning, handling and moving collection objects, the National Trust collections management system, working with volunteers and the general running of a historic property open to the public.

I found the structure of the Passport To Your Future programme really beneficial; with the ability to choose the modules I wanted to complete and to have the formal evidence sheets and log of the work I did across the year. The staff who supported me, both at the property and at head office, provided a brilliant environment in which I thrived and grew so much in confidence.

By the end of the traineeship I felt comfortable and confident enough to give small house tours and even opted to provide a presentation and workshop for volunteers. The traineeship enabled me to get a foot in the door of the heritage industry; although it does still remain a competitive industry it equipped me with the skills and experience to get started.

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By Bethany Phelps

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