Changing lives: traineeship guides Danielle out of a



Danielle Shortall loved growing up in Northern Ireland, and had always dreamed of a career in conservation. Training helped her - finally - get the job she always wanted.

“I had geared everything towards this, but it seemed that there was always someone more qualified or with more experience than me.

“I kind of felt at a real dead end," she explains. “How am I ever going to overcome this?”

Reluctantly, Danielle considered moving away due to the lack of opportunities and the fierce competition for the few available jobs. “I started to think that I’d never get a job here in Northern Ireland and that the years of studying and volunteering would be for nothing.”

A real turning point

It was taking part in a National Lottery-funded traineeship with the Ulster Wildlife Trust that gave Danielle the skills she needed to progress to the next level of her career.

> "I had applied for two jobs with the National Trust before and the feedback was that I wasn’t skilled enough, but all that changed as a result of the traineeship."
>
> - Danielle

“The traineeship was a real turning point as it helped me to develop the practical skills I needed.

“In my past volunteer roles, the opportunities to get outside were limited, but the traineeship couldn’t have been more different.

“Most of my other volunteer roles were desk-based but with the Skills for Living Landscapes and Seas project I was outside for four days each week, learning new practical skills like how to conduct surveys or maintain and protect habitats.”

The right career for me

Danielle found the project not only boosted her conservation skills, but her confidence grew too.

“I learned what it takes to work in conservation by doing the job on a daily basis, and as I was becoming more qualified it really helped boost my confidence and belief that this was the right career for me.”

A real difference

Shortly before completing the traineeship, Danielle applied for a position for which she’d previously been unsuccessful, but this time, things were different. She got the job and is now a ranger at the National Trust Castle Ward estate in County Down.

“Every day here is different and I’m putting the skills I gained through the traineeship programme to good use. I wouldn’t be working here now if it wasn’t for National Lottery players."

“I’ve implemented a new butterfly and bees survey which is a first for the estate, and thanks to the traineeship I know that I can handle whatever challenges the day brings.”

Danielle believes the skills learned through The National Lottery-funded traineeship helped to secure her dream job: “I wouldn’t be working here now if it wasn’t for National Lottery players. I had applied for two jobs with the National Trust before and the feedback was that I wasn’t skilled enough, but all that changed as a result of the traineeship with Ulster





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