

Ashton McConnell's Journey with DurhamWorks Video Transcript:

[Text: Ashton McConnell]

[Soundtrack: Modern upbeat inspirational music.]

Ashton McConnell: I'm Ashton McConnell, I'm 22 years old.

[Video: Ashton walks down the street in Bishop Auckland Market Place.]

Ashton McConnell: Before I heard about DurhamWorks, I had just recently moved into Bishop Auckland –

[Video: Ashton stands in front of the DurhamWorks building. The doors open greeting him inside. He walks up a set of stairs towards DurhamWorks' office.]

Ashton McConnell: and I started working with the Prince's Trust in the area.

[Video: Ashton walks into the DurhamWorks office. A man behind a reception desk waves and Ashton waves back.]

Ashton McConnell: And, after I had finished with them and I'd sort of gotten back my footing after the move, I was introduced to DurhamWorks and they sort of helped me further along the path of the Prince's Trust.

[Video: In the Youth Forum, Ashton looks around the room smiling at fellow DurhamWorks participants.]

Ashton McConnell: They helped me out by helping to flesh out my CV, make it actually, like, properly presentable because I used to have one of those old Indeed ones.

[Video: Ashton, in work uniform, in the Spanish Gallery talking to camera. There are various paintings behind him.]

Ashton McConnell: Then they also just helped me, telling me about volunteering things, how to get more stuff done in the community –

[Video: Ashton talking to David Curry during a Youth Forum session. He nods his head and smiles.]

Ashton McConnell: and sort of things to help me improve myself over time, such as the Fit for Life course –

[Video: Close up of Ashton talking to camera in the Spanish Gallery.]

Ashton McConnell: that I did just before I did full-time volunteering with the Auckland Project.

[Video: Cut to Ashton, in Fit for Life uniform, at the seaside talking with the course tutor.]

Ashton McConnell: Thanks to the volunteering, I was able to get a lot of practical skills, I also learned a lot about how to keep up appearances, how to maintain time scheduling, building up a lot of confidence. That was the main thing for me, building up that confidence –

[Video: Ashton talking to camera in the Spanish Gallery.]

Ashton McConnell: as well as just learning how to communicate better with other people. That was probably my weakest aspect. But, thanks to all the volunteering and especially talking with the people from DurhamWorks, they helped me build that skillset.

[Video: Cut to close up of Ashton, in Fit for Life uniform, talking with the course tutor.]

Ashton McConnell: Because I found that initiative, it allowed me to build up a good network around Bishop Auckland, especially within the Auckland Project. Which, through volunteering with them, really putting myself through paces, I was able to get a job with them.

[Video: Ashton talking to camera in the Spanish Gallery.]

Ashton McConnell: And I still actually do work with DurhamWorks every Tuesday for their youth group.

[Video: Ashton sitting amongst fellow DurhamWorks participants and DurhamWorks Job Coaches at a Youth Forum session.]

[Text: David Curry. Young People's Engagement Worker, DurhamWorks]

David Curry: Ashton came to us, it was probably two or three months ago.

[Video: David Curry smiling to camera in the DurhamWorks office.]

David Curry: He was out of work, he was out looking for employment in the local area. He worked very, very closely with the Wrap Around Support staff here at DurhamWorks.

[Video: David Curry talking to camera in the DurhamWorks office.]

David Curry: But, from the Forum, you can see that Ashton – sort of, again, his confidence improved massively and he's now working part-time for the Auckland Project over there.

[Video: David Curry and Ashton are talking in an office cubicle. David is intrigued by something Ashton says and starts to write on a notepad.]

David Curry: When he first came to us, confidence was quite low.

[Video: David Curry talking to camera in the DurhamWorks office.]

[Text: Michele Atkinson. Employer Engagement Officer (EEO), DurhamWorks]

Michele Atkinson: I met Ashton at DurhamWorks.

[Video: Michele Atkinson talking to camera in the DurhamWorks office.]

Michele Atkinson: He was volunteering with the Auckland Project, so he was known to them.

[Video: Michele Atkinson talking to camera in the Spanish Gallery. There are various statues and exhibits behind her.]

Michele Atkinson: And then, when some job roles came up, we helped him with application forms, job interview techniques, and he was successful in gaining that role.

[Video: Ashton sitting inside an office cubical. He is nodding to someone off camera.]

Michele Atkinson: He's fit into the Auckland Project brilliantly. He's quite a vocal character in any case, so it was an ideal role for him.

[Video: Michele Atkinson talking to camera in the Spanish Gallery. There are various statues and exhibits behind her.]

Ashton McConnell: Every day there's something new. More people to talk to, more things to learn.

[Video: Ashton in the Spanish Gallery talking to camera. There are various paintings behind him.]

Ashton McConnell: Going from that tiny, little constrained bubble of anxiety and self-deprecation and not knowing what to do; to now having a good support group within the Auckland Project and with DurhamWorks, and the freedom to do what I want to do.

[Video: Ashton sitting amongst fellow DurhamWorks participants and DurhamWorks Job Coaches participating in a Youth Forum session.]

Ashton McConnell Without DurhamWorks, instead of being here now, I'd probably be in this spot at the end of this year. They definitely pushed things forward a lot better because of the support they gave me, and they helped me get that network built up.

[Video: Ashton in the Spanish Gallery talking to camera.]

[Video: DurhamWorks and European Social Fund logo.]

[Text: This project is part-funded by the European Social Fund and supported under the Youth Employment Initiative.]