

Toby's dual placement experience and journey to college



"Through my past experience, I felt uncomfortable returning to education in my home town. I wanted to go to college but feared leaving WKS, returning home and the new placement failing. Music has been my passion since I was 12 years old, my first performance on stage was playing Freddie Mercury. My family have been really supportive with my music interests by enrolling me on to The Rock Project in Telford, which fuelled my music interests and I performed repeatedly on stage.

At WKS, I worked towards my Arts Bronze and Silver awards which included teaching and mentoring other pupils. Around 2017/18 some of my WKS friends were transitioning to colleges, I was faced with my own future options and this was a challenge. I knew I wanted to go to college, I needed a lengthy transition and to overcome my past experiences of mainstream.

Working with Mrs Shallcross, the Transition Officer and alongside Liverpool City College, School Link Officer, Julie Brennan, they arranged for me to meet with the tutors and to audition for them. This was scary, but I did it. From there I attended one day a week alongside the students who were studying Music Level 1. Initially, I had a member WKS staff who was travel training me. After four weeks, I felt that I was able to do it on my own, I was making friends and felt that I didn't need to be chaperoned.

In September 2018, I enrolled on the Rock School Level 2 music course, as a dual placement with Liverpool City College. This year has I've been on stage in venues in Liverpool City Centre, travelled independently back and forth from Liverpool, WKS has always been extremely supportive whilst I have been here on the dual placement, I was 'nagged' (Toby's own words) by the whole staff team at



*WKS, Liverpool City College and my family! That said, **without this I wouldn't be where I am today.***

*The benefit of doing a dual placement, is that I have accessed a mainstream college with the safety net of support from WKS. I love college mainly because my social life has expanded, I've made friends, my confidence socially and musically has increased immensely. Doing a course that I'm passionate about and knowing that I have the ability to pass it has been amazing. **The dual placement has given me hope of a career option**, which I thought that performing and writing music would not get me anywhere. It has opened up a world of options on where my career can go and my aspirations.*

My future has options, I'm set to achieve the Level 2 qualification and my next goal is to gain a place on a level 3 music course.

Toby Authur-Hammond

Toby's Mum says "I felt this was a really big step for Toby to undertake but he has got used to his surroundings without the pressure of work.

He has increased confidence in his own ability regarding his independence. Toby made friends, these relationships have continued throughout the course. Something Toby has never had. It's also shown both us and him that with initial support, he can travel using public transport. Watching Toby perform in concerts with his peers has been wonderful. He is still working towards to his Maths and English and now going to be offered a place on the Level 3 course."

From a **schools point of view**, the communication between Toby's family, the care, education and support staff was crucial to this placement. Toby had to deal with the restrictions that we as a school implemented which others didn't have. Whilst there were bumps in the road, the support from Liverpool City College, our staff and Toby's family has enabled Toby to achieve his goals and step towards his aspirations of a career in the music industry.

Good Luck Toby!