

Hospitality Connect

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From classroom to career: how Hospitality Connect helped Fallon find her place in a five-star hotel



Fallon first engaged with the Hospitality Connect programme while studying at South Bank College, through a partnership with Brown's Hotel, a Rocco Forte five-star hotel in Central London. At the time, she was keen to gain experience but had never imagined herself working in a luxury hotel environment.

Bringing the industry to life

As part of the Hospitality Connect programme, Fallon and her classmates visited Brown's Hotel to learn more about the business and the wide range of careers available within it. The visit included a behind-the-scenes tour, an introduction to the hotel's history, and the opportunity to experience the environment first-hand. "They showed us the whole hotel and talked about the history," Fallon says. "We tried the afternoon tea – the pastries and the teas – and I think that was really nice. Even for people who don't want to work in the industry, it's nice to see new things and learn new things."

For Fallon, this early exposure played an important role in making a luxury hotel environment feel more accessible. "I was really scared at first," she admits. "I thought I might do something wrong or say something wrong. But now I feel so much more comfortable – you don't need to feel like that at all."





Building confidence through experience

Following the visit, Fallon completed work experience at Brown's Hotel, working initially in the Afternoon Tea department. Being welcomed into a professional team and trusted with real responsibilities helped her quickly build confidence. "I think how well and smoothly I was talking to customers really stood out to me," she says. "And working with colleagues – they made it such a good experience. I love working in a team and working for the guests."



That sense of belonging made a lasting impression

"After two weeks, I didn't even want to leave," Fallon recalls. "It gives you an insight. If I'd just started the job without that experience, I would have been much more scared and worried."

From placement to paid employment

Shortly after completing her work experience, Fallon took the initiative to contact the hotel about job opportunities. She was successful and is now employed as a Commis Waitress, working part-time alongside her Level 3 Travel and Tourism studies. "My role is the first step of being a waitress," she explains. "Before service we set up, then during service we make coffee, serve food, and make sure everything runs smoothly behind the scenes." She works as part of a diverse, international team and enjoys the fast-paced, people-focused nature of the role. "I really enjoy meeting new people and talking with customers," Fallon says. "Meeting nice people can make your day. I also like meeting colleagues from all around the world — you learn a lot."

The power of encouragement

A key part of Fallon's development has been the support she has received from her manager and colleagues. "My manager, Antonio, really inspires me and pushes me to do more," she says. "When you're being praised, it makes you want to do more all the time. It builds your confidence and makes you feel proud of what you're doing."



Looking ahead

Fallon now sees hospitality as a long-term career with clear opportunities to progress. "I definitely want to learn more — about the menus, the history, everything," she explains. "If I get promoted, I need to know these things. The training here really helps." She reflects on how unexpected this path once felt. "I didn't see myself working in a hotel at all," Fallon says. "The only reason I got this job is because of the programme. I would have seen myself somewhere much smaller — definitely not here." Now, her ambitions are firmly rooted in the industry. "I don't see myself leaving anytime soon," she says. "I do see myself progressing. I want to improve."



Advice for future hospitality professionals

Reflecting on her journey, Fallon is clear that hospitality is a career worth pursuing — particularly for young people who enjoy working with others and developing transferable skills. “Be patient, always smile and help as much as you can,” she says. “Hospitality really helps you build your soft skills and your confidence, and those skills will stay with you wherever you go.” She also encourages students not to be put off by the pace or high standards of the industry. “It can feel like a lot at first, especially when you walk into a restaurant or hotel for the first time,” Fallon explains. “But don’t put too much pressure on yourself. You learn so much as you go, and the more you do it, the more confident you become.” For Fallon, the experience has confirmed hospitality as a meaningful and sustainable career choice. “I definitely feel like I made the right choice,” she says. “Working in a five-star hotel has given me real experience, knowledge and opportunities. There are so many different roles and ways to progress — it’s not just a job, it’s a career you can grow in.”



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