

Millie's story

MILLIE, from Tyne and Wear, is a former Derwen College Retail & Enterprise student. Since leaving college, she has started a business apprenticeship and moved into supported living in her home area. Millie – who has communication and learning difficulties and dyspraxia – tells us how her time at Derwen College prepared her for future employment and independence.

What first attracted you to Derwen College?

I found out about Derwen College through my mum who looked on the Natspec website (<https://natspec.org.uk/>).

When me and my parents visited Derwen for the first time, we saw all the different students making friends and enjoying themselves. I enjoyed learning about the different departments of college and about independence training.

I enjoyed having a taster session in the Retail department because it helped me to see how much fun it was learning new skills. I enjoyed making badges in the college print shop.

What did you enjoy about working in Retail?

My favourite work experience at College was in the Karten Print Shop. I enjoyed learning how to use the equipment to print different types of work such as banners, labels, leaflets and posters.

I also liked talking to internal and external customers in person or over the phone, and talking to suppliers over the phone.

What work experience did you do at College?

I worked on Reception in the college training hotel Hotel 751 and at the Premier Inn hotel in Oswestry.

What independence skills did you learn at Derwen College?

I can use the oven by myself now without any assistance. Now I'm in my own home, I do chores such as laundry, vacuuming, dishwasher, sorting out clean clothes and tidying up.

What were some of your favourite things do at Derwen for fun?

I enjoyed going on trips to the theatre, cinema, shopping, Cadbury's World, Alton Towers and other fun trips.

I enjoyed doing clubs like College Band, women's football, Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze award, swimming pool lessons, dancing class, table cricket, boccia, disco, and playing pool in the Student Union.

What did you enjoy doing with your friends?

I enjoyed hang out with friends, listening to music, chatting and playing games, watching movies, having picnics in the summer, having tea at their houses or having them over to my house, or visiting the Walled Garden Cafe with them

How did you feel about finishing at Derwen?

I felt ready to leave because I wanted to move on to the next chapter of my life. However, it was a shame that the final year was cut short because of Covid—the prom and graduation had to be held virtually.

What training did you do after Derwen?

I went on to complete a supported internship called Project Choice which is run by NHS Trust. From there, I am excited to have just been offered a business apprenticeship for NHS NTW solutions.

Where are you living?

I am now in my own flat in supported living which is awesome. It's near my family home, but I can be independent and do what I want.



What are your hopes for the future?

I would like to get a full-time job in business admin, and to possibly learn to drive an automatic car. One day I'd like to take my family on holiday.

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