

# William's story

William, from Suffolk, spent three years on the College's Hospitality & Food pathway where he learnt cooking and food preparation skills, and immersed himself in student life. His new-found skills and self-confidence enabled him to access a catering course in his home area which has led to paid employment working front of house in a hotel.

**William graduated from Derwen College in 2021 having spent three years as a residential student on the College's Hospitality & Food pathway.**

William, from Suffolk, learnt cooking, hospitality and food preparation skills. He also immersed himself in all aspects of College's life.

His new-found skills and increased self-confidence have enabled him to access a catering course at a mainstream college in his home area.

Student William achieved a huge amount during his three years at Derwen College. He gained qualifications, enjoyed a professional chef workshop at Whitbread's Training Centre, and took part in skills competitions against other colleges.

As part of his vocational learning, William – who has moderate learning difficulties and speech, language and communication needs – enjoyed work placements in the College's customer-facing 'Marketplace', including the Orangery Restaurant and Food Centre. Once his skills progressed, he moved on to off-site work placements.

**William says:**

***"I've learnt lots of life skills, like keeping fit through running, cooking my tea, making my bed, and getting a train to work experience on my own."***



**William – busy at College**

During lockdown, the College created work experience by launching a staff and student takeaway food service.

He says: "At Derwen, I enjoyed helping in our Tip Top Takeout service, and serving the customers.

"I did external work experience at Premier Inn in Oswestry, doing housekeeping, and in Shrewsbury doing service. I also worked at Moreton Hall school doing food preparation."

For William, though, the Derwen experience was more than work.

"I've learnt lots of life skills, like keeping fit through running, cooking my tea, making my bed, and getting a train to work experience on my own. I completed my Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Awards.

"I started running, and staff helped me to learn different running routes which I could do on my own.

"I even did a half marathon in



**In his new job!**

December 2020, and raised money for Derwen Charity. I still keep up running regularly.

"For fun, I liked going to the Student Union, going to the gym, and going on trips. I was also voted deputy representative in Hospitality for the Student Union Board."

William admits he felt a bit sad when he left Derwen. However he's still in touch with friends, and has an exciting future ahead.

He embarked on a catering course at West Suffolk College, which has led to paid employment at the four-star Brudenell Hotel, in Aldeburgh where he is a Food and Beverage Assistant

He says: "I learnt a lot at Derwen. When I first started, the trainer was impressed with all the skills I'd learnt at Derwen.

"Derwen has given me the confidence to be successful in my new job."