

# Sam's story

SAM, from London, is a former Derwen College Retail & Enterprise student who graduated in 2021. During his four years at the College, Sam developed work skills, confidence and independence which have helped him to get paid and voluntary work and to move into his own flat.

SAM, from London, was a hardworking and dedicated student who embraced every opportunity available to him during his four years at Derwen College. The College was incredibly proud to hear that since graduating, he now works four days a week, and is living in his own flat.

Since leaving Derwen, Sam, from London, has moved into his own supported living flat. He completed a supported internship at his local hospital, and now works and volunteers four days a week.

Sam works as a waiter at the exclusive Hilton Waldorf Hotel, where he meets and greets customers, including a few famous visitors!

He also volunteers at his local hospital and at a care home.

During his time at Derwen, Sam worked in the College's Print Shop and on Derwen's weekly Oswestry Market Stall. He also had regular work placements at a local charity shop and at Severn Trent Water's main Shrewsbury site where he worked on reception and supported with health and safety checks.

Outside of work, Sam embraced the College social life, sports and leisure



Sam is able to plan and cook his own meals in his new flat, and enjoys eating alfresco on his balcony.



Living at Derwen has equipped Sam for a more independent future.

programme, and was a dedicated part of the Derwen community.

Sam, who has Down's Syndrome and a moderate learning difficulty, achieved his Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award, was a regular in the gym, and in sports teams, and represented his fellow Retail students on the college's Student Union Board.

In Sam's final year, he lived in a shared bungalow in the College's Agnes Hunt Village where he learnt homemaking and independence skills, preparing him for life after College.

Sam says:

*"Derwen College meant the world to me. I am living independently in my own one-bedroom flat with a bit of support, and have started an internship at the Royal Free Hospital.*

*"My time living away from home at Derwen in the bungalows and all the great work experience I did there, helped me get the confidence and skills to be able to live in my own flat and to get the internship.*

*"My local friends who did not go away to College are all still living at home*



Sam sold Derwen produce at the weekly town market.

*and can't look after themselves. I am very happy and proud that I was lucky enough to go to Derwen."*

Sam's parents say:

*"During his time at Derwen, Sam has grown in confidence and competence in every way, to the extent that he has been able to move straight into his own one-bedroom flat in London in an assisted living block of 38 flats. He also started a supported internship at our local hospital.*

*"Him living independently at the age of 21, was beyond our wildest dreams and, if it was not for the time he spent in the bungalows learning independent living skills in a real 24/7 environment, I am sure he wouldn't have been able to do this.*

*"His great education and work experience gave him the skills and confidence to take on the internship which then led on to paid employment.*

*"We are so proud of all that Sam has achieved and will be eternally grateful to Derwen for giving him such a fantastic education and opportunities."*