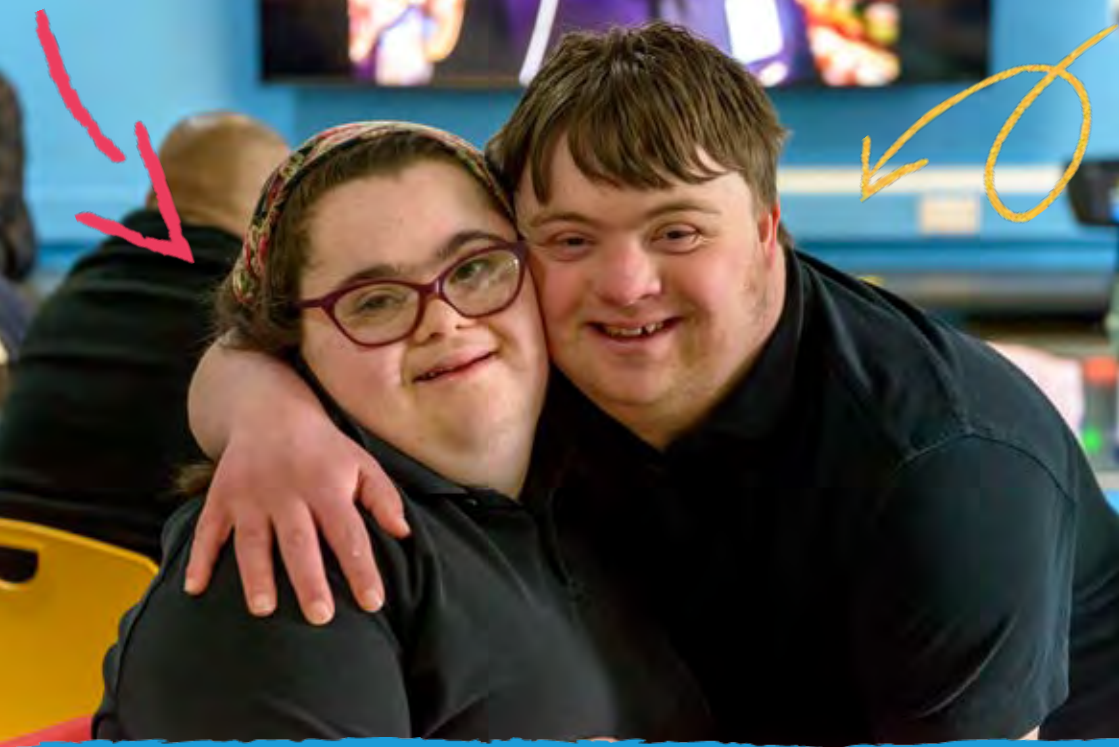




**I've graduated from
Derwen College!**

What comes next?



**Derwen
College**

Life after College



During your time at Derwen College, you will be supported to explore your future options. We will help you make positive plans and support your transition in lots of different ways.



Our students regularly exceed what they and others thought possible.

The skills you learn at Derwen College will help to prepare you for your next steps.

Our aim is for you to reach a stage where you are able to live as independently as possible, whatever that looks like for you.

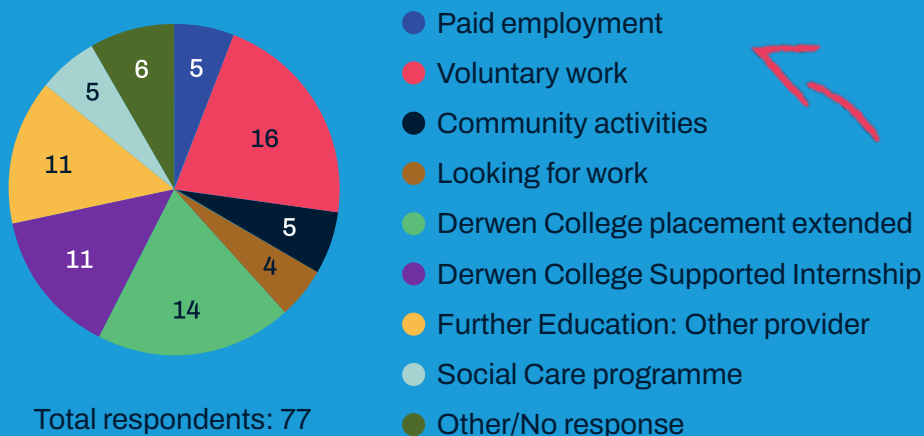


Destination outcomes

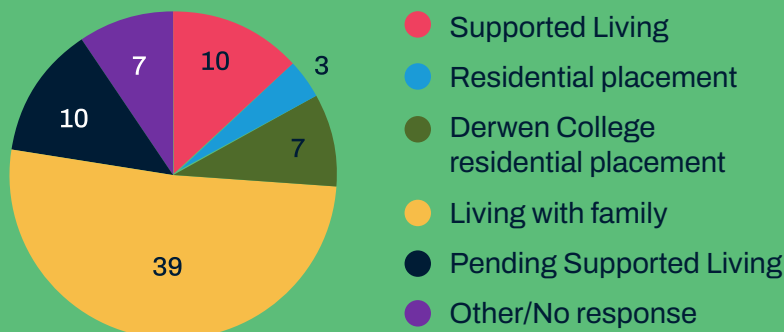


We are very proud that our student outcomes far exceed the national average for young people with SEND going into work. Our 2024–25 graduates have, so far, gone on to achieve the following:

Destination: Work/training outcomes



Destination: Living outcomes



Horticulture



Ben's story

“I like having my own money. I like to spend money on going on holiday somewhere sunny like Portugal. I also like to spoil our cat, Scruffy.”

As a Horticulture student, Ben worked in and around the Garden Centre, organising stock and developing his plant knowledge. As Ben's confidence grew, Horticulture staff were on hand to show Ben how to safely operate gardening tools and machinery.

Ben, who is autistic, was a dedicated and hard-working student who, along with his Horticulture knowledge, learnt independence skills, including travel training at Derwen College.



He progressed to living in one of the College's student bungalows, where students have less direct support, and have their own key to come and go as they please.

Ben says: “I loved my time at Derwen. I liked working in the Garden Centre and spending time with friends in the Student Union.”

Ben now works in the construction industry at a tarmacking depot and is really enjoying it. His typical day involves getting up at 5:30am in the morning to be at work for 7am.

Ben lives at home with his parents, where he enjoys having a job and making new friends. He travels to work alone by bus to site, working full-time (40 hours per week). The best thing about his job, he says, is the wages!

Retail and Enterprise



Mark's story

“I would recommend Derwen College to others. I learnt a lot and had a lot of fun, but most of all, it got me ready for work!”

Mark was a Retail and Enterprise student at Derwen College, where he learnt the skills that helped prepare him for work.

At College, Mark learnt how to print and label stock in the Garden Centre, as well as how to use the till and talk to customers in a professional manner.

Mark's favourite part of the Retail and Enterprise pathway was the external work placements he had at local shops.

“I most enjoyed the external work experience at Co-op, Spar and Nightingales [charity shop], that also helped me to use the bus and train.”

After graduating, Mark was offered part-time paid work by Coed-y-Dinas shop. “I impressed the team there so much that I was offered employment after College.”

Mark works two days a week at Coed-y-Dinas, and enjoys putting the garden furniture together. He has a great team of co-workers and is enjoying his new job.

Mark is now in shared supported living, enjoying his independence. “We take it in turns to cook and do our shopping together. I come home some weekends, whenever I want to catch up with family.”



Performing Arts



Anna's story

“Coming to Derwen College brought out my talkative side and gave me confidence. I started to believe in myself.”

Anna joined from a mainstream college where she'd struggled to fit in. With support from the Performing Arts team, she quickly found her voice, and there was just no stopping her after that!

She became part of the College's Makaton sign, song, and dance group DOT (Derwen on Tour), performing at national and local events, and was also a member of DDC (Derwen Dance Crew), winning competitions in both group and solo categories.



Anna was awarded the Overall Outstanding Student Cup at our Graduation ceremony, and is now living more independently in supported living.

After graduation, Anna continued on a one-year supported internship at Derwen College, honing her employment skills with Performing Arts staff on weekly placements.

Anna now works and volunteers six days a week, and says that she has been able to use all the skills that she learnt whilst at College.

Anna's dedication was further recognised when she won the Inspirational Adult Learner award at the Shropshire Chamber Business Awards. On winning, she said: “It felt like the Soap Awards. I screamed my head off while my mum cried.”

Hospitality and Food



William's story

“I learnt a lot at Derwen and it has given me the confidence to be successful in my new job.”

As a Hospitality and Food student, William – who has moderate learning difficulties and speech, language and communication needs – enjoyed work placements at Derwen Marketplace, the College's customer-facing outlets.

These placements, which include The Orangery Restaurant and Food Centre, helped William to progress his skills, allowing him to build confidence before moving to off-site work placements.



William says, “I did work experience at Premier Inn in Oswestry, doing housekeeping, and in Shrewsbury waiting-on in the restaurant. I also worked at Moreton Hall School doing food preparation.”

After graduating, William was able to access a catering course at a mainstream college in his home area. This led to paid employment as a Food & Beverage Assistant at a four-star hotel in Aldeburgh.

William now works in the hospitality industry at a hotel in Lavenham, putting the knowledge he learnt at Derwen College to good use as he serves customers with teas, coffee and food. 

William says “When I found out that I had a proper job at the hotel, I was really pleased.”

Work and Independence



Jamie's story

“Being at Derwen College helped me to make friends and spend time in different work environments”

Jamie, who is autistic, joined Derwen College Telford's Work and Independence pathway after previously attending a local mainstream secondary school.

At College, Jamie developed an interest for working in customer-facing environments, where he learnt about visual merchandising, stock checks, pricing, stock rotation and serving customers on the till.

Jamie initially attended work experience placements at Derwen College's commercial print shop, charity shop, Garden Centre and at Much Wenlock Market, where he demonstrated good money handling skills.

As well as developing his customer service skills, Jamie also enjoyed employability and Independence

sessions. He was also voted to be the Derwen College Telford student rep, representing his peers at Student Council meetings.

Talking about his time on the Work and Independence pathway, Jamie said: “I was supported to get the skills and work experience to compile a really good CV.”

Along with achieving his BTEC Level 1 qualification in Vocational Studies, being at Derwen College also taught him to become more independent, which he says his mum is particularly pleased about.

“I've learnt to wash up, Hoover, clean up and take care of myself,” he says. “I'd like to live in my own house, with a partner or friends, and a pet, probably a cat!” he says.”

Learning for Life



Luke's story

Luke's communication skills have developed to a point where he is now able to ask for help when he needs it.

Luke, from Flintshire in Wales, attended a mainstream school before coming to Derwen College. During his time at school, a speech therapist told Luke's mum Donna that Luke's speech would never improve. "It couldn't have been further from the truth!" Donna says.

The Learning for Life pathway (LfL) gave Luke the foundation he needed to succeed. Initially, Luke required one-to-one support all day but, after being provided with new communication strategies by our Speech and Language Therapy team, this need gradually decreased over time.

The progress Luke made in LfL meant he was able to move full-time on to a linked pathway, Hospitality and Food. After finding his feet, Luke flourished and, as a result, he excelled in his placements at our on-site Derwen Marketplace outlets.

Luke is now in supported living, and mum Donna is delighted with his progress. "He's got enough independence that he knows what Mum says doesn't necessarily go any more. He can make his own choices."

Luke now works four days a week in a local café. He's enjoying it so much, he even visits on his days off! Luke bakes cakes, cooks sausages, bacon, eggs and toast. He also makes customers their tea and coffee, and serves them at the till.



Nurture



Jordan's story

Jordan's confidence in communication has grown thanks to the Nurture programme, and has resulted in more positive experiences.

Jordan, from Wrexham, arrived on the Nurture programme having experienced difficulties attending school – he often refused to go. He was anxious about many situations outside of home, and could display behaviours of concern.

Jordan had an Eye Gaze communication device, however, he wasn't using it as intended. He considered the Eye Gaze to be a task in sessions, rather than a tool for communication.



Staff in Nurture worked with Jordan along with his mum and external care team to help his understanding of how Eye Gaze could help him. This helped to improve Jordan's confidence in using Eye Gaze to communicate.

Jordan became empowered to decline things he didn't want to do. For example, being peg-fed meant that meal times were difficult for him. Using his Eye Gaze properly, Jordan was able to say he preferred to spend time on his own during lunch times.

Jordan now lives in a flat attached to his mum's house. It is clear, however, that Jordan lives as a neighbour to mum, not 'with' mum. His flat is separate to the house and Jordan knows he can use his voice to invite who he wants into the flat.

Supported Internship



Oliver's story

“It’s a very good college with nice teachers. It took me about a week to settle in, but once I got to know everyone it was great”

Oliver began his Derwen College journey as a day student at our Walford satellite site, arriving with a clear goal in mind. “I wanted to come to Derwen College because it does gardening and I wanted to learn how to use the machines,” he said.

Oliver quickly built practical skills and impressed staff at his gardening work experience placements. After successfully completing his vocational programme, Oliver progressed to a one-year Supported Internship, allowing him to further progress his skills in real workplaces.

During his internship, Oliver carried out grounds maintenance and horticultural jobs at Alderford Lake in Whitchurch, Emstrey Crematorium in Shrewsbury and several other local workplaces.

At Alderford Lake, he soon became a key part of the team. Sales and Marketing Manager Zoe Watson said: “Oliver has brought a fantastic attitude, real dedication, and a genuine enthusiasm that makes a difference every day.”

Reflecting on his journey, his mum said: “Ollie is turning into a young adult that we are very proud of. He’s changed so much for the better, not just for the education he’s received but the improvement in his social skills, and his outlook for the future.”



A place of possibility

www.derwen.ac.uk

Sign up to our newsletter to stay updated about Derwen College!



Derwen Charity

Derwen Charity hosts a number of fundraising events each year that you can get involved with. Whether it's competing in the 10km Challenge, visiting our Derwen Fete and Dog Show, or seeing Santa at our Christmas Fayre, we would love to see you at one!



Derwen Connects



Derwen Connects is our Facebook group dedicated to ex-students. You can meet friends and join our online events!

Joining is easy, just scan the QR code!



derwen.ac.uk



Derwen College



@derwencollege