



## The Cloisters

# Dan's story

**Dan came to The Cloisters at the age of 23 with a diagnoses of autistic spectrum disorder and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). He was previously in a specialist unit, but required ongoing rehabilitation and treatment, which is what The Cloisters could offer him.**

When Dan arrived, he was unable to touch anyone and had great difficulty touching objects. He also had difficulties with tasks of everyday living and he found it impossible to join in with activities due to the fear of cross infection and germs.

He was disconnected from others and had difficulties reading people's social and facial cues. He struggled with washing, dressing and accessing the community.

Dan is highly intelligent, with a creative nature; he loves all types of animals and has a vast knowledge and interest in anything nature related. It is this that The Cloisters built upon throughout his treatment, to encourage Dan further.

For his rehabilitation and intervention therapy, The Cloisters arranged for Dan to be involved with an off-site allotment project. This allowed him to build

upon his love of the outdoors and he grew his own flowers, vegetables and this in turn helped Dan with his self-esteem and confidence. He also got better at touching and nurturing.

These tasks also helped increase Dan's energy and fitness levels which in turn helped to reduce feelings of stress whilst developing his social skills.

Other therapies that Dan grew to enjoy were pet therapy and drama therapy. Both encouraged further interaction which reduced Dan's feelings of loneliness. At first, he could not touch the dog in pet therapy, but as the weeks went on, his trust grew and his anxiety levels dropped.

He developed relationships with the team in drama therapy and he enjoyed learning things like non-verbal communication and the processing of emotions.

Dan stayed at The Cloisters for a total of 16 months and within that space of time, he has developed in such a way that has now allowed him to complete his education and move into supported living. He still also plays football on a regular basis – something he picked up at The Cloisters.