

## **Dan's Story**

My name is Daniel Reynold, Dan for short. I'm aged 42. I'm Jewish. I grew up in North London in Hampstead Garden Suburb. I have mild learning difficulties.

I went to a special school in Mill Hill, then Oak Lodge and Samuel Rhodes in Islington.

I left school at 16 and then I went to a Youth Training scheme at the Harington in Highgate. It's a gardening scheme. That's how I started my gardening career. I also went to college to learn computing, cookery and horticulture. I passed my City and Guilds part 1 in Horticulture.

Before moving to Israel I lived in High Wycombe and worked with the National Trust doing forestry.

I emigrated to Israel and I went to classes and learnt Hebrew. I live in a special community called Kfar Idud – in English this means Village of Encouragement. The people there have different levels of learning difficulties, some with mild learning difficulties like me, some with more special problems who need general care. The place is run by social workers and there are activities such as art, exercise groups and drama. I am especially keen on art and have painted many pictures. I am also in the village choir.

I have always done gardening work and worked for various gardeners and garden centres. But I found the work low paid and I decided to become self-employed. To get customers I got contacts and recommendation through the garden centre in the village. Sometimes I deliver leaflets. I have 50 customers and I do landscape and maintenance work.

I am successful in what I do and I have a lot of work. My customers like the work I do and are happy because they don't need to tell me what I need to do. I do a bit of garden design which I really enjoy. I also cut grass, tidy up, do planting – which is garden maintenance. I am successful because I work hard and I'm reliable. I don't have a car and I transport my tools with a bike and trailer. I am happier being self-employed.

In the future I'd like to be a part-time garden designer and part-time artist, painting and selling pictures.