

Whitley Bay Mum Transforms Garden with £1,000 DIY Project

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A mother from Whitley Bay in North Tyneside has saved herself a substantial £9,000 by taking on a garden renovation project independently after being quoted an eye-watering £10,000 for professional landscaping.

Holly Metcalfe, 37, who works in the housing sector, completed the entire project on her own for just £1,000, utilising affordable materials sourced from B&Q, Amazon, and online

discounts. She also used ChatGPT to gather practical guidance and design inspiration.

“The quotes I received were shocking, and I couldn’t justify that kind of cost for something we’d only use in the summer,” she told What’s The Jam. “I wanted to show my children that with determination and effort, you can get things done yourself.”

Determined to make the garden more usable without overstretching her finances, Holly worked around her full-time job and parenting commitments. Her 16-year-old son and 14-year-old daughter supported her throughout, as she committed evenings, weekends, and spare lunch hours to the transformation.

She began by clearing the existing gravel and preparing the ground. Once the hard physical labour was done, she built a shed, painted the fencing, laid artificial turf, and cleaned and repainted paving slabs.

“The paving was probably the most gruelling part. At times, it felt endless, and I had to re-lay some slabs when they weren’t level,” Holly explained. “But I stuck with it. I wasn’t willing to give up halfway.”

Her methodical approach included ordering items in advance to create a schedule, such as having the shed delivered before the base was laid to ensure progress stayed on track. Although her son helped with some heavy lifting and her father assisted with transporting materials, Holly did the bulk of the work herself.

“Building the shed and painting the fences gave me a real sense of achievement,” she added. “I never thought I’d enjoy a project like this so much. It’s been hard work, but also incredibly rewarding.”

Holly also taught herself how to film and edit videos to document the renovation online, receiving positive reactions from family, friends, and strangers alike.

“My friends call me ‘superwoman’ now,” she said. “The kids are proud, and we’re spending a lot more time together outdoors. It’s made a big difference.”

Now putting the final touches on the garden with lighting and additional plants, Holly says the experience has boosted her confidence and sparked ideas for future DIY projects.