



Fixing the Big Issues for Disabled People in Buckinghamshire

Charity No 1102511

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Trustees' Annual Report for 2024-25

Chair's Foreword

1. BuDS changed from a county charity, Buckinghamshire Disability Service, to a national charity in September 2025, shortly after the period of this report. We changed our name to 'BuDS Disability Service' and our area of operations legally became England. However, both during the period of this report and currently, we are a leading disability charity operating in Bucks and across England.
2. BuDS is an independent grassroots pan-disability organisation led by disabled people and committed to the social model of disability. Our visionary aim is to abolish disability by building a world which is Fair4All, free of the barriers which disable people. Our work helps build an inclusive world where disabled and non-disabled people have equal status and equal value opportunities to live their lives.
3. BuDS' mission is to remove the barriers which disable people, so that everyone has equality of opportunity and access. Removing these barriers is what BuDS' projects are intended to do in all areas of life. Our Disability Services help disabled people directly, while our Fair4All projects bring about permanent change to the built environment, structures, systems and infrastructure so that disabled people do not face barriers to living independently. Our Reach4Work projects help disabled jobseekers into work and education. All our work is evidence-based, project-led and responds to the real needs of disabled people. The expertise of our professional volunteers mean we can often punch above our weight.
4. BuDS has an active Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG) project which publishes free information for disabled people about issues of concern to them, including regular information about the changing risk from Covid. This information is seen by tens of thousands of disabled people every month and makes BuDS one of the best-known, respected and increasingly influential disability charities in the UK.
5. 2024-25 was in general a very positive year for BuDS, although – like many charities - volunteering support fell very sharply. Annual income grew by 12% compared to 2023-24 (from £155k to £173k), and cash funds increased by 11% (from £77k to £85k). Staff hours remained stable, but volunteer hours fell by two thirds, from 18,240 hours in 2023-24 to 6550 hours in 2024-25. The overall pattern was of the continued success of staff-led funded projects but a sharp decline in purely voluntary-led projects, with only a few volunteer-led projects being able to continue through the year.
6. On behalf of the Board, I would like to express our wholehearted thanks to all the Trustees, staff and volunteers who have given so much of their time and talents in 2024-25. I would also like to thank our funders who have shown such confidence in our work.

7. I hope you enjoy reading more about BuDS in this Annual Report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Clark', with a long horizontal stroke extending from the bottom of the signature.

Andrew Clark
Chair of Trustees

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Introduction

9. This is the Annual Report for Buckinghamshire Disability Service (BuDS), charity registration number 1102511, for the financial year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, and includes the accounts for that period.
10. As BuDS' income is below £500,000 and it does not have assets worth more than £3.26 million, Trustees are not required to produce a full Annual Report according to the guidelines set out in the Statement of Recommended Practice (FRS 102).

What is BuDS?

11. Buckinghamshire Disability Service (BuDS) is a leading disability charity operating in and around Bucks and increasingly across England. It is an independent grassroots pan-disability organisation led by disabled people and committed to the social model of disability. Our visionary aim is to abolish disability by building a world which is Fair4All, free of the barriers which disable people. Our many projects help build an inclusive world where disabled and non-disabled people have equal status and equal value opportunities to live their lives.
12. In September 2025, BuDS became BuDS Disability Service, a charity able to operate across England rather than only principally in Buckinghamshire.

User Led

13. BuDS is committed to being user-led, that is a charity which is primarily led by disabled Trustees, and which seeks, as far as possible, to include disabled people as staff and volunteers. We see being user-led as vital to our authenticity and mission. In practice, we aim to have 75% of Trustees who identify as disabled people and, as a minimum, 51%. In 2024-25, 78% of those holding office as Trustees identified as disabled people; while 75% of those volunteers who provided information and 40% of staff identified as disabled.

Social Model of Disability

14. BuDS follows and advocates for the social model of disability, which is at the core of our beliefs and work. The social model of disability states that disability is caused by the barriers which society puts in the way of people who have an impairment or medical condition, not by those impairments or conditions. Thus, for example, a wheelchair-user is 'disabled' by the lack of a ramp, not by their lack of mobility, or an autistic person is 'disabled' by a lack of quiet places rather than by their neurodivergence. When we use the phrase 'disabled person', we mean a person with an impairment or medical condition impacted by a barrier which disables them – we are not referring to any physical, sensory or mental health condition they may have.

A Working Community

15. BuDS historically has been a working community of mainly disabled volunteers, supported by a few staff. This was a sustainable model which gave agency and prominence to disabled volunteers working together to address the issues most important to them. However, two factors have made this model impossible to sustain:
 - a. The first is that the rapidly-increasing complexity and reach of many of BuDS' projects has required a rising number of skilled staff to manage and develop them, making a voluntary-led model increasingly impractical.
 - b. The other is the difficulty in recruiting and retaining volunteers, which is affecting all charities but disabled-led charities most of all. 2024-25 has seen continuing severe economic pressure and an accelerating cost-of-living crisis, hitting disabled people

hardest. Many of our disabled volunteers have had to give up volunteering in order to work extra hours or to enter employment, and the same pressures prevent many disabled people from starting to volunteer. Many of our former volunteers also have increased caring responsibilities because statutory services such as SEND education, the NHS, and care services continue to decline. In 2024-25, the hours worked by our volunteers dropped by over a third.

16. Faced with a long-term and probably irreversible decline in volunteering, especially by the disabled people most likely to support us, and with our projects demanding expert staff leadership, Trustees have activated plans made in 2024-25 to evolve BuDS' working model.
17. BuDS now organises its work as follows:
 - a. **Staff-led projects** are configured to be funded and staff-led. Staff bring essential skills and sustainable leadership. We seek whenever possible to recruit disabled staff, and this helps ensure that our projects remain disabled-led at the working level. Every project also includes a volunteer team which seeks as far as possible to be made up of disabled people. This team offers vital supported volunteering places to those seeking work and to those battling isolation and loneliness.
 - b. **Volunteer-led projects** remain volunteer-led, primarily by disabled people themselves, with some support from staff. These projects generally have small or minimal budgets. The aim is to move these projects to a funded, staff-led, basis over time.
 - c. A number of projects sadly have had to be made **dormant** until volunteers and/or funding can be secured to revive them.
 - d. Our Trustees, staff, volunteers and the many thousands of disabled people who use our services remain part of our **unique wider grassroots community of disabled people**.
18. In 2024-25, we recruited 32 new volunteers to maintain an active volunteer number of 60 over the year. We had a part-time volunteer coordinator responsible for recruitment and induction. Training is available for all volunteers, and many volunteers also have a mentor for 1:1 support. We have a dedicated in-house welfare team, Help for Helpers. Many of our volunteers are job seekers and we support them towards work through our Reach4Work project (details below).
19. Usage data from our IT system (Microsoft Office 365), shows that, over 2024-25, BuDS had an average of 48 active volunteers (previously 30) working on any particular day, from a pool of active volunteers of around 60 individuals (previously 75). This represents a 60% increase in the number of volunteers active on any particular day, although our total number of volunteers shrank by a fifth.
20. However, the time which our volunteers was able to give us shrank significantly over 2024-25. We calculate that our 48 active volunteers worked a total of 6550 hours in 2024-25, an average of roughly 3.1 hours/week per volunteer. (In 2023-24, 30 volunteers worked 18,240 hours, an average of 4.6 hours/week each). This represents the same hours as 4 full time staff, representing a financial contribution in kind of around £86,000 per annum.

A Youth Charity

21. BuDS is a significant youth and young people's charity, with over a fifth of active volunteers (21%) aged under 25 in 2024-25 (13% in 2023-24). We have a Trustee aged under 25 who specifically represents disabled young people. Around 70% of BuDS' work benefits young people and several projects specifically support young disabled people and children.

Independent & Party Politically Neutral

22. BuDS is an independent charity which can speak up for the interests of disabled people without fear or favour, untrammelled by ties arising from contracts, funding or unequal partnerships. Our strategy specifically requires all funding to be examined to ensure that it does not place unacceptable constraints on our independence and freedom to act. Often, BuDS acts as the spokesperson for other organisations that cannot speak out without fear of jeopardising contracts or financial relationships on which their charity depends.
23. As required by charity law, BuDS is scrupulously party-politically neutral. In accordance with Charity Commission guidance, whilst BuDS reserves the right to be critical of public bodies or the Government, we take great care never to express any party-political views or to create in the mind of a reasonable onlooker the idea that the charity is biased in favour of any particular political party.

A Values-Led Charity

24. In 2021, BuDS adopted strong values to underpin all of our work and the way we behave. These values were reviewed and slightly updated by the 2024 AGM and are now as follows:
 - BuDS is an inclusive & diverse working community of and for all disabled people
 - BuDS is a strong, honest, voice for disabled people
 - BuDS is a proactive charity that lives the social model, removes barriers and finds answers
 - Fair4All is at the heart of all BuDS does
 - BuDS is an empowering, reflective, caring, supportive, kind and safe organisation
 - BuDS has an open culture and is committed to collaborative working

Charity Objects

25. The objects of BuDS in 2024-25, as set out in the Constitution, were: “To relieve the needs of disabled people, their families, and carers, principally within the County of Buckinghamshire excluding Milton Keynes, by any charitable means and in particular, but not exclusively by (1) providing education services, and (2) providing advisory and support services”.
26. In September 2025, the charity commission approved a change to the name of the charity to ‘BuDS Disability Service’ and changes to the objects of the charity so that the legal area of operation of BuDS became ‘England’, rather than ‘the County of Buckinghamshire excluding Milton Keynes’. The Trustees review the charity objects annually, having regard to the Charity Commission’s public benefit guidance, and remain of the view that the objects of the charity continue to meet the public benefit requirement set out in the Charities Acts 2005 and 2011.

Public Benefit of the Charity

27. In accordance with the Charities Acts, the BuDS’ trustees can confirm that they are aware of the Charity Commission’s public benefit guidance, have had regard to it when exercising any relevant powers or duties, and have complied with the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 by including this statement in this annual report. The Trustees do not feel they have departed from the guidance to any extent.
28. The BuDS Trustees, having had regard to the Charity Commission’s public benefit guidance, can confirm that they have operated BuDS in a way that carries out its charitable purposes for the public benefit. Further details can be found in the following sections of this annual report.

Behind the Scenes

29. BuDS has a clear strategic planning process as follows:
- A formal written Strategy and Strategic Plan document is produced annually by the charity's officers and agreed by the Full Board including non-executive Trustees.
 - The Strategy and Plan include formal reporting mechanisms by which Trustees can monitor progress and ensure the charity remains true to its core values.
 - Progress towards achieving the Strategy and Plan is reviewed formally biannually by a full Trustee meeting, which includes non-executive Trustees. The same meeting also reviews formally whether the charity has remained true to its values.
 - Amendments to the Strategy and Plan are made and agreed by the full Trustee Board as necessary, alongside any actions needed to address departures from core values.
30. The Full Trustee Board met on 5 September and 17 October 2024 to carry out a strategic review and agree a revised strategy. This is explained further in paragraph 42 below.

Charity Structure, Governance and Management

31. BuDS is an unincorporated association in the form of a membership charity. Members elect the officers and Trustees, and key decisions are taken by a General Meeting. The governing document is a written constitution.
32. The 2023 AGM approved the formation of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which will take over the assets of the unincorporated association in due course.

Constitution

33. The BuDS constitution was adopted on 11 March 2003 and amended by the Annual General Meeting in 2010, 2012 and 2021 (and in September 2025, after the period of this report). It is available on the website.

Membership

34. During 2024-25, membership of BuDS was only open to all disabled people living in Buckinghamshire or who have a direct interest in Buckinghamshire. A disabled person for the purposes of membership means being disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 or otherwise having direct personal experience of disability. In practice, BuDS deemed all circa 45,000 disabled people in Buckinghamshire to be de facto members of the charity and seeks through its normal activities to remain in close contact with their views and opinions. The charity does not maintain a formal membership register or have a formal membership process except in relation to Trustees (see below) and for attendees at the AGM. Attendees at the AGM are required to certify that they are eligible for membership before their voting rights are recognised.
35. The 2023 AGM approved a change to the constitution so that all disabled people resident in England would be eligible to be members of BuDS. This change took effect in September 2025, after the period covered by this report.

Trustees

36. The BuDS constitution provides that there shall be a minimum of four and a maximum of 15 Trustees, co-opted or appointed by the AGM from the membership of the charity. These are the three officers of the charity (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) plus up to twelve others. The constitution requires Trustees to step down after three years in office (although they may be

re-elected), but BuDS' practice since 2009 is to elect or re-elect all Trustees every year. No organisation has the right to nominate a Trustee.

37. As a user-led activist charity, the role of BuDS Trustees in 2024-25 was different from that in many other charities. As a charity, we are by policy strongly Trustee-led. It is inherent in our status as a user-led organisation that the BuDS Trustee Board is the clear leadership and direction setting body for the charity. Accordingly, we expect and require all Trustees to have a strong commitment to our values and objectives, and for Trustees to play an active role in the life of the charity.
38. 2024-25 was a welcome period of relative stability for the Trustee Board. 9 individuals held office as Trustees, 7 of whom were disabled people. 3 individuals joined the Board and 3 left, with the average size of the Trustee Board being 7 people. Trustees met formally five times during the year, with a number of informal meetings, and a busy Trustee discussion group on MS Teams.
39. During 2024-25, two Trustees were related. A Related Trustees policy is in force and can be found on the BuDS website.
40. The Chair, Andrew Clark, was on unscheduled long-term leave of absence from 23 May to 13 August 2024. The Executive Trustees led the charity during this period. Succession planning is in place for the recruitment of a new Chair of Trustees during 2026.
41. In keeping with our user-led principles, from 2022-23 the BuDS Trustee Board was structured to distinguish between executive & non-executive trustees. Executive trustees had an active day-to-day leadership role in the charity, collectively playing the role more traditionally taken by senior staff, whereas non-executive trustees contributed their wisdom primarily when key decisions were being taken.
42. However, during 2024, and particularly during the Chair's long absence, this model proved to be unsustainable due to the increasingly complex nature of BuDS' projects and the high demand placed on executive trustees. Accordingly, on 17 October 2024, Trustees adopted a Moving Forward Plan which shifted BuDS towards a more conventional charity governance model. Under this model, BuDS would rely on skilled senior staff to provide operational management, reporting to Trustees through the Chair in the normal way. Trustees would continue to have an active role in the life of the charity but through more traditional means of policy-making and key decisions, rather than operationally.
43. As a transitional measure, the Chair remained a semi-executive role, but Trustees set a further goal of evolving the Chair to a non-executive role in 2026 as part of the succession planning for that role.
44. Trustees are identified by open advertisement, by canvassing existing volunteers, or direct approaches by the Trustee Board. Development support kindly provided by Lloyds Bank Foundation has significantly widened the pool of prospective candidates. In 2024-25, eight potential new Trustees were identified of which three were appointed and four progressed to a shadow Trustee role.
45. The Trustee selection procedure is as follows:
 - a. Membership eligibility is confirmed
 - b. Safeguarding, reference and an enhanced DBS check are completed
 - c. Individuals are invited to shadow the Trustee Board by attending three Trustee meetings as an observer, and to become involved in BuDS work and projects over that period
 - d. The Board then decides whether to second the individual to the Trustee Board until the next AGM

- e. At the next AGM, the individual is invited to say whether they wish to have their name put forward for election

Succession Planning

- 46. Trustees agreed a Succession Plan in January 2024 which prioritised the recruitment of replacement officers of the Trustee Board. However, in the unexpected absence of the Chair on long-term leave from May to August 2024, progress was not made until 16 January 2025 with the appointment of a new Co-Treasurer. A new Co-Secretary started shadowing the Board on 13 March 2025 and joined on 15 May.
- 47. A Succession Plan to prepare for the planned stepping-down of BuDS' longstanding Chair, Andrew Clark, is in place for 2026.

Organisation & Management of the Charity

- 48. Since 2020, BuDS has been structured according to Agile project management principles, to maximise output, flexibility and responsiveness whilst enabling best practice project, cost and risk management. The basic building unit of the charity is the project team. This is a group of staff and/or volunteers working together around a common theme, goal or idea. The project team is structured and will have members in different defined roles.
- 49. Projects are grouped together into one of 4 departments: Disability Services, Fair4All, Reach4Work or Housekeeping.
- 50. During 2024-25, all team members worked from home using Microsoft Teams as a virtual office, including video meetings, messaging, task boards, wikis, forms, etc. Each project has objectives agreed by Trustees and progress is monitored at Trustee meetings through staff reporting. The typical working process is that of the 'sprint' – a sustained team effort to achieve a piece of work or outcome - followed by a reflective pause to evaluate success and plan next steps.
- 51. BuDS had 22 active project teams in April 2024, of a total of 30. In March 2025, there were 14 active project teams of a total of 35. This reflected the strategic shift to staff-led projects agreed in September 2024.

Staffing

- 52. Janneke Elford remained the BuDS Projects Manager, leading the staff team, throughout 2024-25. She left on 31 March 2025 as a consequence of the Moving Forward plan adopted in September 2024. The role of project manager was then divided between two new roles, that of Support Manager and Projects Operation Manager. Simone Curran took up the role of Support Manager on 1 April 2025, and Claire Bishop joined on 8 August 2025 as Project Operations Manager.
- 53. All staff are on short-notice contracts reflecting the dynamic funding situation typical to small un-endowed charities. During 2024-25, BuDS had an average of eight staff in post (4.4 FTE), compared to eight staff (4.4 FTE) in 2023-24.
- 54. BuDS aims to be an inclusive employer, and we are proud that 40% of individuals employed during 2024-25 identified as disabled people. Reflecting our ethos and insight into the barriers preventing disabled people from working, we offer all staff flexible working hours alongside remote working from home. We also offer 'disability leave' and shape working patterns and routines around staff needs as disabled people. This policy has been highly successful in motivating and retaining staff, not just those who are disabled.

Safeguarding & Welfare

55. Safeguarding is exceptionally important to BuDS. All Trustees, staff and volunteers, other than short-term temporary roles, are fully safeguarded including the taking up of references and an enhanced DBS check. There is mandatory safeguarding training, delivered inhouse, for all staff and volunteers. As an online organisation, our IT system has been configured to enhance safeguarding. We are linked to Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs and able to make direct referrals to them if needed.
56. The welfare and safety of the BuDS community is also important. Many of our volunteers and staff are potentially vulnerable and our welfare team is available to anyone needing a chat or word of advice. During 2024-25, a significant number of welfare concerns relating to volunteers were resolved.
57. The safeguarding sub-committee of the Trustee Board was stood down at the beginning of 2024 and replaced by a staff-led Safeguarding & Welfare team which throughout 2024-25 included two or three professionally trained (Level 3) safeguarding officers.

Diversity & Inclusion

58. The Trustees are committed to intersectional diversity across the charity. We aim to be an inclusive community where everyone can find a place and fulfil their wishes without discrimination, and we are proud to have many LGBTQ+ people among our number. A Trustee with lead responsibility for intersectional diversity across the charity was in post in 2024-25. The BuDS Trustee Board is significantly more intersectionally diverse than most charity boards.

BuDS Work in 2024-25

Overview

59. 2024-25 was in general a very positive year for the charity, although – like many charities - volunteering support fell very sharply. Annual income grew by 13% compared to 2023-24 (from £155k to £176k), and cash funds increased by 11% (from £77k to £85k). Staff hours remained stable, but volunteer hours fell by two thirds, from 18,240 hours in 2023-24 to 6,550 hours in 2024-25
60. The overall pattern was of the continued success of staff-led funded projects but a sharp decline in purely voluntary-led projects, with only a few volunteer-led projects being able to continue through the year. The number of active projects fell from 22 to 14 over the year.

BuDS Structure

61. BuDS has four departments: Disability Services, Fair4All, Reach4Work, and Housekeeping. Each department contained several related projects.

Disability Services

62. The Disability Services group of projects were those directly helping and empowering disabled individuals in Buckinghamshire and beyond.

Enquiries & Information Service

63. The BuDS Enquiries & Information Service answered questions and supported disabled adults and young people (plus carers and parents) on any disability-related issue or topic, filling gaps that other services could not provide. The Enquiries Service does not duplicate services available elsewhere, such as CAB. Rather, it acts as a safety net, picking up clients, questions and issues which other agencies cannot, or do not have resources, to address. Importantly, it

can offer long-term support with complex issues and work with disabled people who find it hard to access other services. Typical queries include housing, utilities, benefits (PIP, ESA, DLA and Universal Credit), accessibility, disability law, equality, work and employment, education and schools, and Covid. With only a relatively small amount of funding for this project, it is primarily volunteer-led and run.

64. Enquiries & Information received doubled over 2024-25 to over 1000, of which over 500 were successfully completed within the year. This is a considerable tribute to the hard work of numerous volunteers.
65. The Enquiries & Information Service was generously funded in 2024-25 by small grants from the Matrix Causes Fund and The Rothschild Foundation. Securing additional funding to expand the Service remains a high priority.

BuDDies & MeetUps

66. BuDDies is a fully safeguarded, professionally managed, but sadly now small-scale specialist befriending service for disabled people. It is one of only a few voluntary schemes able to support people with complex mental health conditions and to offer long-term and open-ended befriending support. Set up in 2020 as an emergency response to Covid-19 lockdowns, BuDDies in 2024-25 continued to be a lifeline for lonely or isolated disabled people. BuDS BuDDys (as the befrienders are called) are highly skilled and trained volunteers and the nature of the people supported by BuDDies means that significant welfare, safeguarding and peer-support is needed to keep the service sustainable and safe.
67. Demand for BuDDies befriending support in 2024-25 was once again very significantly greater than the capacity of the service, with frequent referrals from NHS mental health services and community prescribers, and sadly there is a long waiting list. Although BuDDies was able to significantly grow in 2024-25, this growth fell far short of meeting demand.
68. During 2024-25, around 930 hours of befriending support were provided to 12 disabled people by 9 volunteer 'BuDDY' befrienders. This was nearly five times more hours of support than in 2022-24. BuDDies was generously part-funded in 2024-25 by The Rothschild Foundation, Garfield Weston and the Rectory Foundation.
69. MeetUps was a new development of the BuDDies project in 2024-25. With generous funding from Arnold Clark & Heart of Bucks, plans were made for a series of face-to-face social gatherings and meetings in the summer and autumn of 2025 for lonely older people, reducing social isolation and building resilience and connectivity.

Covid Information, Advice, and Guidance

70. The BuDS Covid IAG project continued in 2024-25 to support disabled and clinically-vulnerable people across England with information, advice and guidance about Covid. BuDS maintained and grew its national (and increasingly international) reputation as a highly respected and reliable source of Covid information used weekly by tens of thousands of people, presenting information in written, video, infographic and easy read formats, with Substack being added from November 2024. We were proud to receive endorsements and praise from respected academics and clinicians.
71. The Covid IAG project published 3 articles and 46 risk assessments on our website and social media, which together generated more than 500,000 views or engagements. Our Covid Substack, launched in November 2024, grew very rapidly by over 200 additional readers per week and was still growing at the end of 2024-25. Our own Covid support community group on Facebook also grew its membership to over 500 individuals.

72. Covid remained a politically controversial topic and, operating within policies agreed by the entire Trustee Board, great care was taken to never express any party-political views and for BuDS to remain scrupulously party-politically neutral.
73. In 2024-25, the Covid IAG project received no external funding and was funded entirely from unrestricted funds. It was almost entirely volunteer-led with limited staff input. BuDS is immensely grateful to its extremely dedicated and skilled volunteers who make this project possible.

Health & Disability Information, Advice, and Guidance

74. 2024-25 saw the welcome revival of BuDS' very successful and popular Health & Disability IAG. This project provides disabled people with accurate, fact-checked, general information and advice on topical health and disability-related issues, presented in a simple and accessible way. This information is published on the BuDS website and on social media, aiming to support disabled people, and their families and carers, in the online spaces which they most often use. The project routinely corrects popular misconceptions, addresses and disproves misinformation, and helps people see past clickbait and alarmist media headlines, increasingly AI generated. Opposing vaccine misinformation was a strong theme over the year.
75. In 2024-25, this project published 19 web articles and over 250 social media articles covering a very wide range of topics including benefits and social care, employment and the DWP, vaccines and vaccinations, health conditions, medicines, scientific developments and other topical issues. These articles were generally very well received and attracted good readership, although sometimes challenged by antivaxxers and other health misinformation activists.
76. BuDS does not provide medical advice, that is to say personalised health information or advice intended for or tailored for one person, or relating to a specific person's symptoms or medical history. We also do not offer any form of medical diagnosis, where a specific person is advised that they may have any particular medical condition. Where relevant, BuDS includes a disclaimer to that effect on all health information and strongly advises people to consult their own doctor or healthcare professional for personalised health information, advice or diagnosis.
77. In 2024-25, the Health & Disability IAG project received no external funding and was funded entirely from unrestricted funds. It was almost entirely volunteer-led with limited staff input. BuDS is very grateful to its skilled and determined volunteers who make this project possible.

Assisted Dying Bill Campaign

78. In October 2024, BuDS shared the widespread concerns of disabled people about Kim Leadbeater MP's Bill to legalise a form of assisted dying or assisted suicide. Recognising the high public profile and strongly-held views on this matter, BuDS consulted widely within its own community and through disability networks before Trustees agreed a statement of policy opposing assisted dying/suicide on evidence-led and principled grounds. This policy statement was published and subsequently relied upon as the basis for an information and lobby campaign against Kim Leadbeater's Bill, in collaboration with Disability Rights UK and other disabled-led groups opposing the Bill. BuDS' statements and insights were very well-received by disabled people across England and helped inform the vigorous Parliamentary debate on the Bill. In 2024-25, this project published 7 web articles and over 900 social media contributions.
79. In 2024-25, the Assisted Dying Bill Campaign project received no external funding and was funded entirely from unrestricted funds. It was entirely volunteer-led. BuDS is incredibly grateful to its skilled and determined volunteers who have led this strong and influential campaign on a matter of vital importance to many disabled people.

Fair4All

80. Fair4All is a BuDS 'brand' for our projects aiming to build an inclusive world which is free of the barriers which disable people: a Fair4All world in which disability is effectively abolished.

Fair4All Attitudes and Hate Crime

81. This project remains dormant until new funding can be found.

Fair4All Card Scheme

82. The Fair4All Card is an innovative and discreet secure photocard which provides disabled people with definitive proof of their legal status as a disabled person and lists the 'reasonable adjustments' the holder is legally entitled to expect from shops, services and individuals in the community. A substantial four-year development grant from The National Lottery's Reaching Communities Fund was received in August 2023, allowing a major expansion of the scheme to commence. This expansion plan took major steps forward in 2024-25.
83. Key developments in 2024-25 included the successful finalisation of a Microsoft Dynamics web portal allowing people to apply for a Card online, and the design of a new F4A Card website. This essential infrastructure laid a sound foundation for the expansion of the project.
84. The original plan to issue cards with the support of third-party disability organisations was significantly modified in 2024-25, because most disability organisations are now under such pressure that supporting the Card scheme, however much they wish to do so in principle, is no longer practical for them. A new operating model was successfully developed for rollout in 2025.

Fair4All Education

85. The Fair4All Education project promotes the interests of disabled children and young people (SEND students) in the education system. It is led by disabled young people and by the parents and carers of disabled children.
86. A major research project into educational and work transitions for disabled children and young people in Bucks, with the very generous support of The Rothschild Foundation, was completed in 2024-25, with plans for a live online launch event in July 2025. This research has highlighted the 'devastating and shocking' experiences of SEND children and young people in Bucks within education, and the urgent need for reforms and improvements to SEND education.
87. As a response to this research, BuDS has made plans for the launch of a pilot SEND Transitions Service in a Buckinghamshire school. This pilot is designed to establish the benefits – both educationally and financially – of a dedicated service to support SEND students through key educational transitions and when leaving education for work. This pilot, which will be extended to further schools as part of the ongoing proof-of-concept, is scheduled to start in 2025-26.

Fair4All Events

88. BuDS is committed to making large public events more accessible and inclusive for all disabled people, and has Buckinghamshire's only stock of accessible and inclusive children's games and activities. We have a long and highly successful pedigree of working with event organisers to help them create and run truly inclusive events. However, sadly lack of specific funding and volunteers meant that this project was dormant throughout 2024-25. Funding is actively sought to revive it.

Fair4All Public Spaces

89. BuDS has a long history of successfully supporting councils, developers, property owners and visitor attractions and others to make public spaces more accessible and inclusive for disabled people. We have two consultancy arms within this project, Fair4All Visitor and Fair4All Access & Inclusion Surveys. However, sadly lack of specific funding and volunteers meant that this project was dormant throughout 2024-25. Funding is actively sought to revive it.

Fair4All Services

90. BuDS has always worked to improve council, NHS and private-sector services for disabled people in Buckinghamshire. Fair4All Services is the only independent disabled-led monitoring and campaigning group in Buckinghamshire. However, it is entirely volunteer-led, and recruiting volunteers with the time and skills to deliver the project goal again proved impossible in 2024-25. With very considerable regret, this project was mothballed, although the intent to revive it is strong.

Reach4Work

BucksWorkability

91. The BucksWorkability Partnership, which BuDS supported, brought together the NHS, DWP and 39 CVS disability employment schemes in the public, voluntary and private sectors. However, the project is now mothballed pending national changes to disability employability schemes which may reinvigorate it.

Reach4Work

92. Since 2010, BuDS has helped its volunteers towards work. Our Reach4Work project, created in 2018, codified and developed that help, creating a professional wrap-around service for our disabled volunteers who want to move into or closer to work. The key elements of Reach4Work are:
- a. BuDS provides a supportive, inclusive and caring community which provides exceptional emotional and peer support to disabled jobseekers. When a disabled jobseeker joins BuDS, they are not merely a client or service-user but a member of the charity, a full participant in our wider 'working community'.
 - b. The volunteer role which job seekers have within a BuDS project is bespoke and structured to provide the experience, skills and networking which the individual jobseeker needs – it is a 'real unpaid job' created for the benefit of both the charity and the jobseeker, with highly supportive staff and volunteer support.
 - c. Reach4Work provides disabled jobseekers with professional employment support elements such as training, mentoring, interview and CV skills, job placements, etc
 - d. Jobseekers are brought into contact with local employers who are already being helped to create inclusive workplaces and opportunities for disabled workers.
93. Unsurprisingly, BuDS is exceptionally successful at moving disabled jobseeker volunteers into or closer to work. Typically, 95% of participants report positive progress towards work and around a third of our disabled job seeker volunteers move into work or vocational training within a year of starting with BuDS.
94. Demand for Reach4Work places is exceptionally high and outstrips our ability to provide places, as it is rightly recognised by both disabled people and professionals as the leading and most successful employability scheme of its kind.
95. Around 55 disabled people were supported by Reach4Work in 2024-25, of which around a third were aged under 25.

Reach4Work Digital

96. This project is unique to BuDS and helps disabled young people gain key skills and experience to get jobs in the digital sector. The team, of around 4-8 people, employs Agile methodology, which is widely used in the digital sector. The project has built close links with local technology and IT employers. It is run entirely by disabled young people, with some staff support, and has delivered high quality products to industry standards, including phone apps, online databases and websites.

Reach4Work Work Experience

97. This project provides disabled university and college students with high quality work experience and has been extremely popular and successful in the past. However, lack of funding meant that the project remained dormant in 2024-25.

Comms, Website and Creative

98. In 2024-25, BuDS maintained four websites and twelve social media channels to communicate with the public, its supporters and disabled people across Buckinghamshire and the UK. These were all maintained and developed by disabled staff and volunteer members of the very busy Communications, Websites and Creative teams.

Plans for 2025-26

99. BuDS' detailed plans for 2025-26 are set out in its strategy documents, which are available on the website.
100. BuDS has an unparalleled insight into the circumstances of disabled people. It has a proven capacity to use that knowledge to generate and design projects which support disabled people in innovative and effective ways. These projects are attractive to funders. The key issue, therefore, is the need to ensure that BuDS can deliver projects when funding and other resources allow. 2024-25 was a period during which the Trustees evolved the charity's operating model and financial systems to support more robust project delivery. 2025-26 will see a new staffing structure and enhanced focus on staff skills and experience.
101. Trustees took decisive steps in 2024-25 to strengthen the corporate governance of the charity and reform the role of the trustee board to a more sustainable position. With the generous and essential support of the Lloyds Bank Foundation, succession planning, and the replacement of the Chair, will continue into 2025-26.
102. Constitutional evolution begun in 2023 has now moved forward. From September 2025, BuDS became a national charity called BuDS Disability Service, able to work across England. Further work to allow the charity to take the form of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) will occur in 2026.

Achievements and Performance

Achievements

103. The following table summarises the difference that each of our projects made to the lives of its beneficiaries:

Project and if unique in Bucks	Difference to Beneficiaries
Enquiries (unique)	Answered questions and offered advocacy support to disabled people which they could not obtain elsewhere

BuDDies	Befriended and supported lonely and isolated disabled and clinically vulnerable people
Covid-19 IAG (unique)	Information, advice, guidance and analysis about Covid-19 for disabled and clinically vulnerable people, including a weekly risk assessment
Health & Disability IAG	Information, advice, guidance and analysis about health and disability issues, in a uniquely accessible format.
Assisted Dying Bill Campaign	Information and lobby campaign against Kim Leadbeater's Bill, in collaboration with Disability Rights UK and other disabled-led groups opposing the Bill
Fair4All Card (unique)	Helped disabled people get the help and support that they are legally entitled to in shops and public places
Fair4All Services	Dormant
Fair4All Attitudes & Hate Crime (unique)	Dormant
Hate Crime Support & Report Service	Dormant
Fair4All Education	Dormant
SEND Transitions Service (unique)	Researched and analysed SEND and work transitions for disabled children and young people and captured the authentic voice of disabled children and young people. Now moving to deliver a UK-first and unique pilot SEND Transitions Service.
Fair4All Events (unique)	Dormant
Fair4All Public Spaces	Dormant
Fair4All Visitor (unique)	Dormant
Fair4All Access & Inclusion Surveys	Dormant
Reach4Work – General	Supported disabled BuDS volunteers who are jobseekers towards or into work
Reach4Work – Digital (unique)	Trains and develops disabled young people for careers in the digital industry
Reach4Work – Work Experience	Dormant
BucksWorkability	Dormant
Housekeeping Projects	Allowed disabled people to volunteer in vocational roles which helped move them towards work

Cost Effectiveness

104. BuDS aims to be a highly cost-effective and efficient charity. Gifts in kind and the value of voluntary and pro bono support in 2024-25 amounted to circa £131,140, or £1.32 for every pound raised by BuDS. The principal ways in which this support was obtained are as follows:

- a. 60 active volunteers worked a total of 6550 hours in 2024-25, an average of roughly 3.1 hours/week per volunteer. This represents the same hours as 4 full time staff, representing a financial contribution in kind of around £86,000 per annum.
- a. IT and software donations, including 117 Microsoft Office 365 licences, representing a financial contribution in kind of £14,500.
- b. Inhouse design and media production by volunteers saved an estimated £28,000
- c. Pro bono professional legal and accountancy support saved an estimated £2,500

105. BuDS would like to thank all the businesses which have supported us, including Microsoft UK Ltd, CloudyIT Ltd, B P Collins LLP and Seymour Taylor Limited.

Fundraising Activities

106. BuDS expenditure on fundraising activities in 2024-25, principally the salaries of two part-time grants fundraisers, was £13,440, and income generated as a result of this activity was £172,972. This represents a return of £12.87 on every pound invested in fundraising.

Financial Review for FY 2024-25

107. Financial year 2024-25 saw a 12% increase in BuDS' income compared to 2023-24, because of successful grant fundraising. Voluntary fundraising in the form of donations was very small, reflecting both the austere economic circumstances and the difficulty of raising funds from our supporter base of primarily disabled people. Expenditure, drawing on both current fundraising and balances carried forward, increased by 51%. However, reserves ended the year 11% higher.

Reserves Policy

108. The formal Reserves Policy for financial year 2024-25 remained unchanged, i.e. to hold a balance in reserve adequate to cover all legal or employment liabilities and three month's unavoidable (fixed) running costs. This total was calculated at £2000 and held largely in the charity's legacy Cooperative Bank account. This reserves policy will be reviewed annually.

Charity as a Going Concern

109. Like most charities without a significant standing endowment, BuDS relies on attracting a constant flow of grant and fundraising income to sustain its activities. This exposes the charity to a running risk of future financial deficits which, if unmitigated, could cause the charity to become insolvent or fail as a going concern. Trustees have taken steps to mitigate this risk as follows:

- d. The charity treasurer is a qualified accountant and is charged specifically with warning the Board about any financial risk which may occur.
- e. A qualified grants fundraiser is employed to generate a constant flow of grant applications, and a fundraising team is being developed to boost voluntary giving
- f. A current budget and cash flow is examined at every monthly Trustee meeting and a forward plan is formulated at each Full Trustee meeting. This transparent planning enables all members of the Board to evaluate future risks and to raise concerns at the earliest opportunity
- g. A strategic plan is in place which would allow the charity to contract to a size which would be sustainable long-term *without* major grant funding. All contracts, including employment contracts, can be terminated with short notice if funding was to fall significantly.
- h. Employment and service contracts are specifically examined so as to minimise longer-term financial liabilities. The charity had no significant longer-term financial liabilities such as pensions or property leases in 2024-25. There are statutory redundancy liabilities for three employees.

110. As a consequence of the mitigations mentioned above, as of March 2025, Trustees had no concerns about the charity's ability to remain financially viable and a going concern for the foreseeable future.

Investment Policy

111. BuDS has no investment funds and therefore no investment policy. One will be adopted if needed in the future.

Principal risks facing the charity

112. The principal risks facing the charity, and the mitigations in place for them, are as follows:

Risk Type	Mitigation	Assessment
Structural Risks	BuDS has an appropriate legal form, registered with the Charity Commission and is in good governance, maintaining membership of NCVO and the Fundraising Regulator. Trustee Liability insurance is in place. Approval is in place for the charity to take the form of a CIO and Trustees are moving ahead with this change.	All significant risks are satisfactorily mitigated
Trustee-related Risks	The size and composition of the Trustee Board is actively managed to ensure a broad range of appropriate skills, and Trustee training is delivered. Good governance is maintained in the forms of transparent evidence-based decision-making at frequent well-attended meetings.	All significant risks are satisfactorily mitigated
Conflicts of Interest	The size and composition of the Trustee Board is actively managed to avoid conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest are transparently managed by Trustees without a conflict, eg relating to the employment of family members of Trustees. A related Trustee policy is in place.	All significant risks are satisfactorily mitigated
Safeguarding Risks	Safeguarding policies and practices are in place, and safeguarding is actively managed across the charity by a dedicated Trustee sub-committee which includes trained safeguarding personnel. Safeguarding incidents are managed appropriately and links to the MASH hub used as necessary.	All significant risks are satisfactorily mitigated
Contractual Risks	All significant contracts are subject to legal advice and Trustee approval. Professional liability insurance cover is in place for all activities.	All significant risks are satisfactorily mitigated
Staff-related Risks	A qualified HR professional is in post and appropriate staffing policies are in place. Appropriate employment-related insurance is in place and regularly reviewed. The Senior Management Team manages staffing issues. Staffing decisions which might give rise to liability (e.g. disciplinary actions) are managed by HR professional with external lawyers input as needed.	All significant risks are satisfactorily mitigated
Financial Risks	See above	All significant risks are satisfactorily mitigated
Reputational Risks	The Senior Management Team and Trustee Board actively manages all reputational risks, and appropriate editorial processes and policies are in place including designated spokespeople and restrictions on social media use. Defamation and litigation liability insurance cover is in place for all activities.	All significant risks are satisfactorily mitigated

Compliance Risks	The charity has few activities which are subject to formal accreditation or compliance regimes, but Senior Management Team actively manages compliance issues, and all significant contracts are subject to legal advice and Trustee approval. Professional liability insurance cover is in place for all activities. Where a new activity raises a compliance risk, this is assessed and mitigated before commencement	All significant risks are satisfactorily mitigated
Legal Risks	The Senior Management Team and Trustee Board actively manages all legal risks, and appropriate processes and policies are in place to mitigate a legal liability including formal approval processes and staff training. Public and professional insurance cover is in place for all activities. The charity has a retained legal advisor, a leading local practice.	All significant risks are satisfactorily mitigated

113. On 7 June 2024, the Charity Commission contacted the charity about allegations made to them about governance issues, including information policies and conflicts of interest. The charity provided comprehensive information to the Commission, and the Commission subsequently took no further action beyond drawing the attention of the Trustees to its published guidance.

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name: Buckinghamshire Disability Service (BuDS)

Other name the charity uses: BuDS

Registered charity number: 1102511

Charity's principal address: Buckinghamshire Disability Service, c/o B P Collins LLP, Collins House, 20 Station Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, SL9 8EL

Advisors



Type of advisor	Name	Address
Accountant	Tearle & Carver	Chandos House, School Lane, Buckingham, MK18 1HD
Solicitor	B P Collins LLP	B P Collins LLP, Collins House, 20 Station Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, SL9 8EL

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature(s)

	
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Full name(s)	Andrew Clark	Jason Jervis
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair of Trustees	Treasurer
Date	23/01/2026	23/01/2026

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Buckinghamshire Disability Service BuDS

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Buckinghamshire Disability Service BuDS

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Buckinghamshire Disability Service BuDS (the Trust) for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under Section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by Section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Tearle and Carver Limited

Tearle & Carver Limited
Chandos House
School Lane
Buckingham
Buckinghamshire
MK18 1HD

Date: 27 January 2026

Charity Name BUJS	No (if any)
Receipts and payments accounts	
For the period from	01.04.2024 To 31.03.2025

CC16a

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Grants Unrestricted	50,304	-	-	50,304	30,000
Grants Restricted	-	-	-	-	-
Reach4Work - Restricted	-	21,669	-	21,669	27,982
Fair4All Projects - Restricted	-	55,900	-	55,900	88,589
Disability Services - Restricted	-	28,059	-	28,059	6,333
Transitions - Restricted	-	14,100	-	-	-
Donations - Unrestricted	5,400	-	-	5,400	1,494
Enquiries + Earned Income	750	-	-	750	166
Other	124	-	-	124	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	56,578	119,728	-	176,306	154,564
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	56,578	119,728	-	176,306	154,564
A3 Payments					
Reach4Work	-	28,498	-	28,498	27,281
Fair4All Projects	-	67,769	-	67,769	56,542
Disability Services	-	9,638	-	9,638	2,621
Transitions	-	22,172	-	22,172	-
Governance	36,918	-	-	36,918	22,274
Digital & internet	2,713	-	-	2,713	505
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	39,631	128,077	-	167,708	109,223
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	39,631	128,077	-	167,708	109,223
Net of receipts/(payments)	16,947	- 8,349	-	8,598	45,341
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	9,692	67,224	-	76,916	31,575
Cash funds this year end	26,639	58,875	-	85,514	76,916

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank Accounts			
	CAF	84,341	-	-
	Co-Op	1,148	-	-
	Paypal	25	-	-
	Total cash funds	85,514	-	-