



Fixing the Big Issues for Disabled People in Buckinghamshire

Charity No 1102511

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# Trustees' Annual Report for 2021-22

## Chair's Introduction

1. Buckinghamshire Disability Service (BuDS) is the county's leading disability charity and its only independent pan-disability organisation. Our visionary aim is to *abolish disability* by building a world which is *Fair4All*, free of the barriers which disable people. We are led by disabled people and committed to the social model of disability.
2. Uniquely, BuDS is a working community of over 180 volunteers, mostly local disabled people, who work together, supported by staff, to achieve our goals. Our 16 projects, many of which are unique to the county, empower thousands of disabled adults, young people and children across Buckinghamshire and permanently remove the barriers facing disabled people so that they can live and work independently.
3. BuDS is a highly diverse and inclusive charity both in terms of disability and intersectionality, and diversity and inclusion is a core value. BuDS is also one of the largest youth charities in Buckinghamshire, with 74 disabled young people (18-25) as staff or volunteers in 2021-22 and a strong project focus on children and young people.
4. We tackle the issues which most affect disabled people in Buckinghamshire by whatever means necessary. 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.
5. The Covid-19 pandemic spurred BuDS in 2020-21 into rapid growth to meet the surging needs of disabled people. While BuDS will continue to be there for disabled people as long as the Covid pandemic lasts, we have successfully revived and grown our non-Covid activity in 2021-22 and now have a balanced portfolio of projects addressing all the key issues for disabled people in Bucks.
6. 2021-22 was a financially challenging year for BuDS. We successfully transitioned from easily-available emergency pandemic funding to more traditional sources such as restricted-use grants, but experienced a 38% drop in income over the year. This led to some reductions in paid staff but, unlike many other charities, our projects always have the option of moving to a slower-

paced, volunteer-only, basis; and so none of our work had to be stopped. We are proud of the resilience, flexibility and good management which enabled us to keep our project output and volunteer numbers high in such a financially challenging year.

7. Huge thanks are due to our Trustees, staff and volunteers who have given so much of their time and talents, and to our funders who have shown such confidence in our work.
8. I hope you enjoy reading more about the unique working community that is BuDS in this Annual Report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Clark', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

**Andrew Clark**  
**Chair of Trustees**

## Introduction

9. This is the Annual Report for Buckinghamshire Disability Service (BuDS), charity registration number 1102511.
10. To comply with Charity Commission reporting requirements, BuDS has switched from calendar reporting to reporting on a financial year basis. This report therefore covers the financial year 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 and includes the independently-inspected accounts for that period.
11. This report replaces the narrative section of the Annual Report for calendar year 2021 published on 31 January 2022. However, the independently-inspected accounts for financial year 2020-21 included as part of the 2021 Report remain valid.
12. 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?

13. BuDS is Buckinghamshire's leading disability charity and the county's only independent pan-disability organisation. Our visionary aim is to abolish disability by building a world which is Fair4All, free of the barriers which disable people. To achieve this, we have built a working community of over 180 local disabled volunteers who work together, supported by staff, to achieve our goals. Our 16 projects both support and empower disabled individuals and work to permanently remove the barriers facing disabled people.

## User Led

14. BuDS is committed to being user-led, that is a charity which is 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 2021-22, 75% of those holding office as Trustees identified as disabled people; while 71% of those volunteers who provided information and 62% of staff identified as disabled.

## Social Model of Disability

15. 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 Voluntary Charity

16. BuDS is primarily a voluntary charity, made up of over 180 volunteers, mostly local disabled people, who work together to remove the barriers which disable them. BuDS aims to be an inclusive working community organised around the key principle that disabled people themselves should tackle the issues and barriers which they face.

17. Our volunteers are not simply people who help BuDS' work, as they are in other charities. Because they are also overwhelmingly local disabled people, our volunteers are also our members and part of our unique working community of disabled people. BuDS in a very real sense *is* its people.
18. Our volunteers are extremely diverse, with every significant impairment group represented. This gives us unparalleled insight into the lives of disabled people. We include a wide age range, with around 65% of new volunteers in 2021-22 being young people under 25. Our volunteers are also at diverse points on their life journey: we include people who are starting out in their adult life, working people, parents, retirees, professionals, jobseekers, and people who are looking to acquire more skills or experience.
19. BuDS actively supports its volunteers. We have a part-time volunteer coordinator responsible for recruitment and induction, and every project includes either a member of staff or volunteer whose specific role is to support volunteers in their volunteering. Training is available in every team 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). Sadly, we have once again lacked resources to launch our BuDS Include project, which aims to develop BuDS as a social community as well as a working one.
20. Using usage data from our IT system (Microsoft Office 365), we calculate that, over 2021-22, BuDS had an average of 48-50 active volunteers working on any particular day, from a pool of active volunteers of around 120 individuals. A further 60 volunteers were temporarily inactive owing to changed personal circumstances or health but had not left the charity. These volunteers worked a total of 48,100 hours in 2021-22. This roughly translates to an average of 267 annual hours per volunteer, or 5.1 hours per week per volunteer. This was a very significant increase from 2020-21.
21. Collectively, volunteers worked the same hours as 28 full time staff, representing a financial contribution in kind of around £753,000 per annum.

## A Youth Charity

22. BuDS is one of the largest youth charities in Buckinghamshire, with over 70 disabled young people (18-25) as volunteers over 2021. We are one of the few charities to have a Trustee aged under 21. 16% of our staff are young adults under 25. Of BuDS' 16 projects, 12 have young people as a significant focus and 6 of those projects offer unique benefits for local young people not offered by any other organisation. Around 70% of BuDS' work benefits young people. In 2022-23, we want to further develop the concept of BuDS as a leading Buckinghamshire youth charity.

## Independent & Party Politically Neutral

23. 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.

24. 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.

## Charity Objects

25. The objects of BuDS, as set out in the Constitution, are: “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. 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 2005 and 2011, 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.

## BuDS Strategy & Strategic Planning

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 executive trustees 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. During 2021-22, the Full Trustee Board met on 17 April & 16 October 2021 to review the BuDS strategy. The Strategy was endorsed without significant change on both occasions and can be

found on our website at <https://buds.org.uk/2021-buds-annual-report/>. Further information on our strategic goals for 2022-23 can be found 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. The current constitution can be seen at <https://buds.org.uk/2021-buds-annual-report/>.

## Constitutional Changes

32. The BuDS constitution was adopted on 11 March 2003 and amended by the Annual General Meeting in 2010, 2012 and 2021.
33. The Annual General Meeting in 2012 agreed that the Trustee Board could take steps to change the legal form of the charity to a charitable company and made constitutional amendments to that effect. This would be a significant governance development requiring significant administrative and Trustee time, and Trustees did not feel in 2021-22 that this change was sufficiently vital to take the necessary resources from front-line project work. The matter will be reviewed again in 2022-23.

## Membership

34. Constitutionally, membership of BuDS is open to all disabled people living in Buckinghamshire or who have a direct interest in Buckinghamshire (e.g. by working in the county). 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. Until 20 November 2021, carers of disabled people were also entitled to become members of BuDS although in practice none did so.
35. In practice, BuDS deems all circa 40,000 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.

## Trustees

36. The BuDS constitution provides that there shall be a minimum of four and a maximum of 12 (increased to 15 in November 2021) Trustees, appointed by the AGM from the membership of the charity. These are the three officers of the charity (Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) appointed by the AGM plus up to nine others (changed to 12 in November 2021) elected by the Annual General Meeting. The constitution requires Trustees to step down after three years in office (although they may be re-elected), but BuDS' practice is to elect or re-elect Trustees every year. No organisation has the right to nominate a Trustee.
37. During 2021-22, 12 individuals have held office as Trustees, with the average size of the Trustee Board being 9 people. A full list of all Trustees can be found at <https://buds.org.uk/2021-buds-annual-report/>. Two members of the Trustee Board are related, and appropriate measures are in place to manage any conflict of interest.

38. As a user-led activist charity, the role of BuDS Trustees is 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.
39. The BuDS Trustee Board is clearly structured. Trustees have 2 main roles (the role of Lead Trustee fell into disuse in 2021 and has been abolished):
- **Officers & Executive Trustees** – these play an active day-to-day leadership role in the charity as decision-makers and through contributing their skills and experience. During 2021-22, six individuals held office as officers or executive Trustees (five disabled).
  - **Non-Executive Trustees** – these Trustees are chosen for their wider experience and skills, including lived experience as a disabled person. They do not play a day-to-day role in the charity but contribute their wisdom at Full Board meetings at which strategy and progress is reviewed, and as needed when key decisions are being taken. During 2021-22, six individuals held office as officers or executive Trustees (five disabled).
40. Reflecting their active role, Executive and Lead Trustees met online mostly twice a month during 2021-2022, the additional monthly meeting being an informal one. Trustees met 24 times in 2021-2022. Formal Full Board meetings with the attendance of non-executive Trustees were held twice. There was also a busy virtual Trustee team for discussions between meetings.
41. Trustees are identified by open advertisement, by canvassing existing volunteers, or direct approaches by the Trustee Board. In 2021-2022, eight potential new Trustees were identified of which five were appointed. The selection procedure is as follows:
- i. Membership eligibility is confirmed
  - ii. Safeguarding, reference and an enhanced DBS check are completed
  - iii. Individuals are invited to attend three Trustee meetings and to become involved in BuDS work and projects over that period
  - iv. The Board then decides whether to second the individual to the Trustee Board until the next AGM
  - v. At the next AGM, the individual is invited to say whether they wish to have their name put forward for election
42. One Trustee resigned, in November 2021.

## Organisation & Management of the Charity

43. BuDS is organised as a working community of volunteers, supported by staff, who collaborate together on projects. 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. A structure chart, representing the position in March 2022, can be found at <https://buds.org.uk/2021-buds-annual-report/>.
44. The basic building unit of the charity is the project team. This is a group of Trustees 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 including that of project

coordinator. Paid staff may be deployed to support the team but BuDS does not have enough staff to support all teams.

45. Projects are grouped together into one of 4 departments: Disability Services, Fair4All, Reach4Work or Housekeeping. These departments are explained further below.
46. During 2021-2022, 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 the lead or executive Trustee for that project. 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.
47. During 2021-22, BuDS had sixteen active project teams, and ten teams dealing with 'housekeeping' or corporate issues such as communications, finances, fundraising, HR, etc.
48. Janneke Elford remained the BuDS Projects Manager throughout 2021-22, responsible for the 16 active project teams in the Disability Services, Fair4All, and Reach4Work departments. Housekeeping teams remained under direct Trustee management throughout 2021-22. The ambition is to appoint paid managers for each group of projects or department as those projects expand.

## Staffing

49. BuDS is an overwhelmingly voluntary charity, and the role of our paid staff is primarily to support volunteers to achieve their project goals. All staff are on short-term contracts reflecting the funding currently available to BuDS. Other than specialists, such as a grants fundraiser and HR/volunteering officers, staff are deployed flexibly across a range of active projects to support volunteers and help advance the project. During 2021-22, BuDS had an average of 9 staff in post (six FTE).
50. BuDS aims to be an inclusive employer (see <https://buds.org.uk/2021-buds-annual-report/> for full staff diversity statistics) and we are proud that 14 of the 19 individuals employed during 2021-22 (71%) identified as disabled people. Reflecting our ethos and insight into the barriers preventing disabled people from working, we offer all staff flexible working hours and the opportunity to work 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

51. Safeguarding is exceptionally important to BuDS and has a higher profile than in many charities. 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 the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and able to make direct referrals to them if needed.
52. The welfare and safety of the BuDS community is also important. Many of our volunteers and staff are potentially vulnerable and our 'Help for Helpers' welfare team is available to anyone



needing a chat or word of advice. During 2021-22, a number of welfare concerns relating to volunteers were resolved.

53. Safeguarding and Welfare is managed by a safeguarding sub-committee of the Trustee Board which throughout 2021-22 included 3 professionally trained safeguarding officers.

## Diversity & Inclusion

54. 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. During 2022-23, we aim to collect more volunteer intersectional diversity data.
55. The BuDS Trustee Board is significantly more intersectionally diverse than most in Buckinghamshire, but we recognise that more needs to be done to maintain and develop the Board's diversity. Full board diversity statistics can be found at <https://buds.org.uk/2021-buds-annual-report/>

## BuDS Work in 2021-22

### Overview

56. 2021-22 was a year of continuing transformation for BuDS. After extraordinary pandemic-related growth in 2020-21, the challenge for 2021-22 was to hold onto as much of that growth as possible and, while continuing to support disabled people during the ongoing pandemic, also revive our non-Covid projects. To a large extent, this has been achieved. While income has significantly decreased with the end of pandemic funding, and staff numbers have fallen accordingly, BuDS has maintained its volunteer numbers and all projects have remained active. New projects have been added and new funding secured which is allowing continuing development. We are proud of the resilience, flexibility and good management which enabled us to keep our project output and volunteer numbers high in a financially challenging year.

### BuDS' New Structure

57. To take account of the charity's expansion and development, a new internal structure was adopted by the Trustees in 2021-22. This divided the charity's projects into four departments: Disability Services, Fair4All, Reach4Work, and Housekeeping. Each department contained a number of related projects which were led by volunteers with the support of staff.

### Disability Services

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

### Benefits Information, Advice, and Guidance

59. The Benefits IAG project provided information, advice and guidance to disabled people in Buckinghamshire and beyond about disability benefits, e.g. PIP, ESA, DLA and Universal Credit. The project was the only free source of specialist information, such as Upper Tribunal decisions, in Buckinghamshire. In early 2022, the project resumed one-to-one advice and guidance, and plans were laid for a specific children and young people's disability benefits advice service.

## BuDDies

60. Set up in 2020 as an emergency response to Covid-19 lockdowns to support isolated and lonely disabled people in Buckinghamshire, in 2021-22, it was opened up to any lonely or isolated disabled person in Buckinghamshire. The BuDDies project was the only fully safeguarded, professionally managed befriending service in Buckinghamshire, and one of the few voluntary schemes supporting people with complex mental health conditions.

## Covid-19 Information, Advice, and Guidance

61. This project supported disabled people in Buckinghamshire and nationally with information advice and guidance about Covid-19 and Long Covid. This was the biggest and busiest BuDS project in 2021-22, supported by grants from the National Lottery, Heart of Bucks Foundation and others. Over the year, we maintained our reputation as a highly respected and reliable source of Covid-19 information used by tens of thousands of people, presenting information in written, video, infographic and easy read formats.

62. The Covid-19 project was led by Trustees according to policies agreed by the entire Trustee Board. While BuDS information and updates regularly were critical of the Government or of individual Government officials or office-holders, great care was taken to never express any party-political views and for BuDS to remain scrupulously party-politically neutral.

63. The following statistics for the Covid-19 project illustrate the huge scale of this project:

- Published 190 articles on 17 separate topics. When posted on social media, each reached a minimum of a thousand people on average.
- Topics covered included shielding, lockdowns, vaccines, testing, mask wearing, schools and children, new variants and how to keep yourself safer.
- 90 Covid weekly risk assessments published – on average, 3000 read each assessment.
- Received over 5000 reactions on social media, some posts generating over 400 reactions.
- Received over 100,000 engagements across the 190 main posts
- Information was shared into 23 local community groups across Buckinghamshire
- BuDS' own Covid-19 Facebook group grew to nearly 470 members.
- BuDS was one of the first charities to sound the alarm about Long Covid

## Enquiries

64. This project 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. Demand for this service diminished in 2020, but the project was relaunched during Summer 2021. Work behind the scenes was completed, including putting in place systems and procedures needed to run a professional enquiries service such as secure software, telephone system and safeguarding. This made the project a highly professional, fully safeguarded project which, over 2021, was handling an ever-increasing number of enquiries with a high satisfaction rate from users. In 2022, the service was able to expand further with new volunteers coming forward.

## Fair4All

65. BuDS' Fair4All projects aim to build an inclusive world which is free of barriers which disable people: a Fair4All world in which disability is effectively abolished.

## Fair4All Attitudes and Hate Crime

66. Hostility and hatred towards disabled people have long been constants in today's society, but the pandemic saw increased hostility towards disabled people, whose lives were increasingly seen as disposable, or the acceptable cost of everyone else getting back to normal. BuDS has worked to oppose that hostility at every opportunity, and has supported around 30 victims of hate crime each year. BuDS was the only disability organisation represented on official Buckinghamshire police liaison groups, including the Chief Constable's Independent Advisory Group, Community Safety Partnerships and a Crown Prosecution Service working party.
67. In a new development for 2022, in partnership with Buckinghamshire Council and Thames Valley Police, BuDS is creating a county-wide hub for disability hate crimes and incidents, meaning disabled people who are victims of hate crime will be able to come directly to BuDS for support, including support to take the matter to the police.

## Fair4All Card Scheme

68. BuDS aims to support disabled people to get the help they need and are legally entitled to in the community. The Fair4All Card Scheme evolved from the "Letters of Authority Scheme", which was set up at the start of the first lockdown in March 2020. It is now fully up and running and rapidly expanding, with supermarkets such as Waitrose and the Co-Op signing up as Card Partners. A new Partners+ scheme is due to be trialled in 2022 which offers the prospect of thousands more disabled people being able to access Fair4All Cards.

## Fair4All Education

69. The Fair4All Education project promotes the interests of disabled children and young people in the education system. Traditionally, BuDS had not had a SEND project, leaving this work to the many other charities and organisations that supported disabled children and parents. However, Fair4All Education was established in late 2021, following calls for a fully independent, disabled people-led approach, that could respond to the challenges being faced by the system.
70. An expert project team, including SEND professionals, parents and disabled young people, is being built, with a strong focus on safeguarding. Although in its infancy, the project team, combined with the skill and passion of many volunteers, has already made an impact, building influence with schools, academy trusts and the council, and creating a working community to identify the most pressing needs within SEND education.

## Fair4All Events

71. 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. However, our highly successful Fair4All Events project has been dormant since the end of 2019, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
72. BuDS has issued regular advice on how to keep safe, especially if clinically vulnerable, in the changing requirements set out by the Government, and this included advising people not to attend indoor events, and outdoor events where social distancing couldn't be maintained, throughout 2021. Covid will continue to present challenges for the foreseeable future, and in 2022 BuDS plans to produce guidance for event organisers on how to stage Covid-safer events, to enable disabled and clinically vulnerable people to attend. If possible, BuDS will itself attend some events to trial how this can be done in a more Covid-safe way.

## Fair4All Public Spaces

73. Despite the pandemic, BuDS has continued its work to make Buckinghamshire's public spaces more accessible and inclusive for disabled people, contributing to a range of public space projects in 2021. These included the design of the GardenWay around Aylesbury, the refurbishment of Market Square and Kingsbury in Aylesbury, the town centre in High Wycombe, three new housing estates, various road and rail crossings, flood defences in south Buckinghamshire, two heritage properties and a church.

## Fair4All Services

74. BuDS has always worked to improve council, NHS and private-sector services for disabled people in Buckinghamshire. F4A Services is the only independent disabled-led monitoring and campaigning group in Buckinghamshire. A skeleton service was maintained through the worst of the pandemic, and Fair4All Services was relaunched in late 2021, re-establishing important links with service providers. Looking to the future, in 2022 significant changes are expected for services that disabled people rely on, including social care, transport and education, and this project will seek to influence and safeguard the interests of disabled people as decisions are made. From March 2022, responding to needs expressed by disabled people themselves, there will be a new sub-project focussing on services for learning disabled and neurodivergent people.

## Reach4Work

### BucksWorkability

75. The BucksWorkability Partnership was originally formed in 2016 by BuDS, TalkBack, the NHS community head injuries service and the DWP disability employment service. Led by BuDS volunteers, the partnership was fully relaunched in 2018 and started to expand to include new disability employment schemes in the public, voluntary and private sectors. In 2019, the BucksWorkability website was relaunched with a new service-finder tool for disabled jobseekers. This website was designed and coded by the BuDS Reach4Work Digital Team, made up of disabled jobseekers.

76. In 2021-22, despite the pandemic, the partnership has grown and diversified, reaching 39 members. The aim remains to bring together disability employment schemes and statutory services to work together to increase the employment opportunities for disabled people in Buckinghamshire.

77. BuDS recognises that unemployment and changes to job patterns arising from the pandemic are a particular threat to disabled employees. Amongst plans for 2022-23 is further outreach to employers, particularly those who traditionally have not taken on disabled employees.

## Reach4Work

78. Since 2010, BuDS has helped its volunteers towards work. Our Reach4Work project, created in 2018, has codified and developed that help, creating a professional wrap-around service for our disabled volunteers who want to move into or closer to work. Reach4Work is the only Buckinghamshire disability employment scheme which remained fully open and expanded during the pandemic.

79. The key elements of Reach4Work are:

- BuDS is 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.

- 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.
- Reach4Work provides disabled jobseekers with professional employment support elements such as training, mentoring, interview and CV skills, job placements, etc
- Through the work of the BucksWorkability project, jobseekers are brought into contact with local employers who are already being helped to create inclusive workplaces and opportunities for disabled workers.

80. Unsurprisingly, BuDS is exceptionally successful at moving disabled jobseeker volunteers into or closer to work, with 95% reporting positive progress and, even during the pandemic, around a third of our disabled job seeker volunteers moved into work or vocational training within a year of starting with BuDS.

81. During 2021, BuDS received funding from Children in Need and the Youth Work Foundation for its work to support disabled school leavers and young people towards work. This enabled us to support an additional 30 disabled young people, all of whom made good progress and some of whom entered employment despite the constraints of the pandemic. We also supported virtual school career fairs, as well as working with employers interested in employing young disabled people. Working with disabled young jobseekers will continue to be a priority in 2022-23, especially building more relationships with local schools, colleges, youth charities and Pupil Referral Units, and developing a specific service for disabled school leavers.

### Reach4Work Digital

82. This project is unique to BuDS and offers disabled young people gain key skills and experience to get jobs in the digital sector. The team 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, including creating the BucksWorkability website, as well as working on the development version of the Reach4Work website.

83. BuDS is working to launch another digital team in 2022-23 in order to meet demand for support. The project also aims to diversify into other areas such the digital creative sector, including gaming.

### Reach4Work Work Experience

84. This project, new for 2021-22, provides disabled students with high quality work experience. As a first venture, it offered a unique work experience for disabled law students in summer 2021, offering them the chance to work on a range of issues relating to disability and the law. The project was very successful with over 100 applicants, 30 of whom were selected. The students produced high quality work across a range of fields including benefit, mental health and SEND law, which will be published in 2022. All participating students gave great feedback, and BuDS is delighted that four of them subsequently stayed as long-term volunteers. Another law summer work experience project will be held in 2022.

85. The project also offered virtual work experience opportunities for disabled students from Buckinghamshire SEND schools and colleges. Take up was low owing to Covid pressure inside schools, but the project was generally successful and will be repeated in 2022.

#### Comms, Website and Creative:

86. In 2022, BuDS had no less than four websites and eleven social media channels to communicate with the public, its supporters and disabled people across Buckinghamshire. These were all created, maintained and developed by disabled staff and volunteer members of the very busy Communications, Websites and Creative teams. To help BuDS maintain a consistent look across these multiple accounts, an editorial policy and brand guide were introduced.

87. During 2021, the BuDS main website was relaunched with new functionality and better accessibility, and a Fair4All website was created and launched. BuDS' social media following on all platforms grew strongly during 2021. One of our videos even achieved viral status, with over 85,000 views on Twitter.

88. In 2022-23, BuDS will seek funding to appoint a Communications Officer who can support our ever-growing volunteer team.

### Plans for 2022-23

89. BuDS' theme for 2022-23 is: **Bigger, Bolder, Better**. By this, we mean that we will secure the volunteers and funding not only to maintain the services and projects we already have, but also to innovate, develop and expand. This theme is expressed in the following specific strategic objectives:

- a. Secure longer-term strategic grants to fully fund the core functions of the charity and its essential staff and infrastructure over a 5-year period. This includes the charity housekeeping functions, fundraising and senior manager post.
- b. Secure project funding to ensure that BuDS can properly support volunteers in project teams and fund the operational costs of projects.
- c. When it is safe to do so, develop an office and project base to support a hybrid working model where staff and volunteers have choice about where they wish to work.
- d. Continue Covid-related projects which are still of high value to disabled people.
- e. Maintain existing Fair4All projects and develop dormant or evolving Fair4All projects. Appoint a paid Fair4All Project Manager when needed.
- f. Maintain existing Disability Services and evolve new or additional services as opportunity arises. Appoint a paid Disability Services Manager when needed.
- g. Continue to develop and expand Reach4Work. Appoint a paid Reach4Work manager when needed.
- h. Continue to develop housekeeping functions and build up volunteer teams in these areas. Appoint a paid Charity Manager when needed.
- i. Build BuDS as a social community through starting to develop the BuDS Include function.
- j. Maintain and increase the size, skills and commitment of the Trustee Board including planning a successful transition to a new Chair.

90. The key strategic unknown for 2022 is Covid-19. It is impossible to predict how the pandemic will develop and how BuDS will need to act to continue to support disabled and clinically vulnerable

people. Within the broad strategic framework above, decisions on Covid-19 projects will need to be made on a reactive basis.

## Achievements and Performance

### Achievements

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

Project	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 (unique)	Information, advice, guidance and analysis about the pandemic for disabled and clinically vulnerable people, including a weekly risk assessment
Benefits (unique)	Provided otherwise-unavailable free specialist information about disability benefits to disabled people
Fair4All Card (unique)	Helped disabled people get the help and support that they are legally entitled to in shops and public places
Fair4All Services	Improved local council and NHS services for disabled people through advocacy and campaigning
Fair4All Attitudes & Hate Crime (unique)	Represented the interests of disabled people to Thames Valley Police and the Crown Prosecution Service
Fair4All Education	Supported disabled children and young people by addressing deficiencies and problems in SEND education
Fair4All Events (unique)	Helped make large public events more accessible and inclusive for all disabled and clinically vulnerable people and educated event organisers
Fair4All Public Spaces	Worked with councils and developers to make public spaces, including urban regeneration schemes like Aylesbury Garden Town, more inclusive and accessible for disabled people
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	Offers disabled children and young people meaningful and inspiring work experience opportunities
BucksWorkability	Works with employers to foster more inclusive workplaces
Housekeeping Projects	Allowed disabled people to volunteer in vocational roles which helped move them towards work

### Cost Effectiveness

92. BuDS aims to be a highly cost-effective and efficient charity. Gifts in kind and the value of voluntary and pro bono support in 2021 amounted to circa £360,000, or £2.47 for every pound raised by BuDS. The principle ways in which this support was obtained are as follows:

- 180 active volunteers worked a total of 48,100 hours, equivalent to 28 full time staff, representing a financial contribution in kind of around £753,000.

- IT and software donations, including 183 Microsoft Office 365 licences, representing a financial contribution in kind of £38,000.
- Inhouse design and media production by volunteers saved an estimated £18,000
- Pro bono professional legal and accountancy support saved an estimated £4,000

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

## Fundraising Activities

94. BuDS expenditure on fundraising activities in 2021-22, principally the salary of a part-time grants fundraiser, was £8,521, and income generated as a result of this activity was £79,188. This represents a return of £9.29 on every pound invested.

## Financial Review for FY 2021/22

95. Financial year 2021/2022 saw a 38% decrease in BuDS' income as pandemic contingency funding came to an end, moving from an income of £133,672 in 2020-21 to £82,688 in 2021-22. This drop resulted in compensatory savings including a reduction in the number of paid staff from 13 in April 2021 to 10 in March 2022. However, a significant balance of funding (£78,373) was carried forward from 2020-21, and much of this was designated for spending in 2021-22, so the impact of the income drop was not so marked as it might seem.

## Reserves Policy

96. The formal Reserves Policy for financial year 2021-22 remained unchanged from 2020-21, i.e. to hold a balance in reserve adequate to cover all legal or employment liabilities and three month's running costs based on the pre-pandemic totals. This total was calculated at £1200 and held largely in the charity's legacy Cooperative Bank account.

97. From June 2021 to March 2022, an operational reserve of £10,000 (drawn from uncommitted funds) was held in addition to the former £1200 formal reserve, to protect the future sustainability of the charity in the event of a cessation of major grant funding.

## Charity as a Going Concern

98. 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:

- The charity treasurer is a qualified accountant and is charged specifically with warning the Board about any financial risk which may occur.
- 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
- 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
- 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 – this was the status quo



before the 2020 expansion. All contracts, including employment contracts, can be terminated with short notice if funding was to fall significantly.

- 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 2021-22. There is a small redundancy liability for one employee.
- From June 2021 to March 2022, in addition to a small statutory reserve, the charity had a policy of maintaining a working balance of uncommitted funds of £10,000 to protect the future sustainability of the charity in the event of a cessation of major grant funding.

99. As a consequence of the mitigations mentioned above, as of April 2022, Trustees had no concerns about the charity's ability to remain financially viable and a going concern for the foreseeable future.

### Principal sources of funds

100. In 2021/22, BuDS' principal sources of funding in order of size were as follows. This information is from BuDS' management accounts and is not a complete account of all income received. A number of smaller grants (below £5000) were also received.

Source	Type	Amount
Children in Need/Youth Futures Fund	Restricted grant for Reach4Work	£20,605
The National Lottery Awards for All	Unrestricted grant	£10,000
Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust	Restricted grant for BuDDies	£10,000
Childwick Trust	Unrestricted grant	£9500
Thomas Wall Trust	Restricted grant for Reach4Work	£5000
Shanly Foundation	Restricted grant for Reach4Work	£5000
Rectory Foundation	Restricted grant for BuDDies	£5000

### Investment Policy

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

### Principal risks facing the charity

102. 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 charitable limited company and Trustees are moving ahead with this change in 2022-23.	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	The size and composition of the Trustee Board is actively	All significant risks

Interest	managed to avoid conflicts of interest and only two Trustees of 10 are related. Conflicts of interest are transparently managed by Trustees without a conflict, eg relating to the employment of family members of Trustees.	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	The Senior Management Team actively manages all current contracts, and 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. A Staffing Committee of the Trustee Board meets as needed. 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

## 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 and Carver Ltd	Chandos House, School Lane, Buckingham, MK18 1HD
Solicitor	B P Collins	B P Collins LLP, Collins House, 20 Station Road, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire, SL9 8EL

## Declarations

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Andrew Clark	Ann Hedges
Position	Chair of Trustees	Executive Trustee
Date	28/01/2022	28/01/2022

## 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 2022.

### 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: 31 January 2023



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name		No (if any)	CC16 a
Buckinghamshire Disability Service (BuDS)		110251	
		1	
<b>Receipts and payments accounts</b>			
For the period from	01.04. 2021	To	31.03. 2022

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Grants Unrestricted	16,500	-	-	16,500	89,176
Grants Restricted		55,105	-	55,105	9,436
Reach4Work -Restricted		7,583	-	7,583	32,152
Fair4All Projects - Restricted			-	-	-
Disability Services - Restricted	-		-	-	-
Other	3,100		-	3,100	2,908
Digital & Internet			-	-	-
Earned Income	400		-	400	-
<b>Sub total(Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>62,688</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>82,688</b>	<b>133,672</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>62,688</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>82,688</b>	<b>133,672</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Reach4Work		40,915		40,915	18,201

Fair4All Projects			27,038		27,038	6,347
Disability Services			33,781		33,781	21,459
Governance		29,290			29,290	11,756
Digital & Internet		1,531		-	1,531	6,426
Other			-		-	235
				-	-	-
		-		-	-	-
				-	-	-
				-	-	-
				-	-	-
				-	-	-
				-	-	-
				-	-	-
				-	-	-
				-	-	-
				-	-	-
				-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>		30,821	101,734	-	132,555	64,424

<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>						
		-	-	-	-	
		-	-	-	-	
<b>Sub total</b>		-	-	-	-	-

**Total payments**

30,821	101,734	-	132,555	64,424
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**Net of receipts/(payments)**

-	-	-	-	-
10,821	39,046	-	49,867	69,248

**A5 Transfers between funds**

-	-	-	-	-
46,705	46,705	-	-	-

**A6 Cash funds last year end**

61,448	17,747	-	79,195	9,947
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**Cash funds this year end**

3,922	25,406	-	29,328	79,195
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**Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period**

Categories

B1 Cash funds

Details	Unrestriced funds to nearest £	Restrict ed funds to nearest £	Endow ment funds to nearest £
Bank	3,922	25,406	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>3,922</b>	<b>25,406</b>	<b>-</b>
(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

B2 Other monetary assets

Details	Unrestriced funds to nearest £	Restrict ed funds to nearest £	Endow ment funds to nearest £
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

B3 Investment assets

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Curren t value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

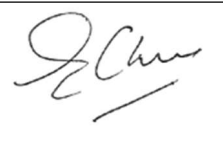
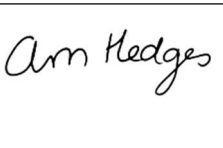
**B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use**

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

**B5 Liabilities**

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	ANDREW CLARK	28/01/2023
	ANN HEDGES	28/01/2023



