

Rewarding Industries 2025



Case study: Buckinghamshire Disability Service (BuDS)

HOWDEN

Championing diversity and inclusion through lived experience



About BuDS

BuDS is a user-led disability charity driven by a mission to empower and support disabled individuals through direct services, systemic advocacy, and employment-focused volunteering. With at least 75% of its trustees and a significant portion of staff and volunteers identifying as disabled, BuDS embodies lived experience at the core of its operations and governance.

Inclusive culture in practice

Inclusion at BuDS goes far beyond policy – it is embedded in daily practice. The organisation's commitment to intersectional diversity is reflected in a workplace culture where, as volunteers say, "it doesn't matter how weird you are to join BuDS". This attitude underpins an environment where individuality is valued and everyone is supported to thrive in their own way, regardless of social, neurological, or physical differences.



Tailored volunteer and employment support

BuDS' Reach for Work programme provides a personalised pathway for volunteers into employment. Participants receive one-to-one guidance, tailored performance plans, and long-term support, all at their own pace. Whether someone needs confidence-building or prefers behind-the-scenes tasks like data analysis, BuDS adapts roles to suit each individual.



Flexible working and wellbeing

Without a physical office, BuDS offers a fully remote and results-driven model, allowing staff to work in ways that align with their health, accessibility needs, and personal commitments. Flexibility is central, with staff supported through illness, family duties, or fluctuating capacity. A “Support Manager” role was created specifically to maintain morale and ensure everyone in the BuDS community feels heard and valued.

Outcomes and impact

Despite sector-wide funding pressures and the high cost of living, BuDS has sustained growth, from an income of £7,000 in 2019 to over £500,000 in 2025. They’ve done so by securing values-aligned grants and prioritising fair wages for staff. While volunteer numbers have declined due to financial pressures, their model continues to thrive through strategic scaling and a strong focus on mission-driven recruitment and retention.





Get in touch

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