



**Ruby's**  
Helping Special  
Families Shine

# Ruby's Volunteering Strategy

2025 - 2028



## About Ruby's

Ruby's is a charity that supports children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), along with their families and carers.



## Our Mission

To provide life-changing support through specialist facilities and inclusive opportunities for children with SEND and their families living in Cheshire East.

## Our Services

Ruby's provides high quality facilities onsite at our centre in Congleton and outreach sessions at partner venues and onboard our mobile sensory bus. We offer person-centred support, by a dedicated team of staff and volunteers, who are equipped with a wide range of knowledge, expertise and lived experience. We offer coordinated support and action to improve the quality of life and wellbeing to individuals and groups in Cheshire East with some of the most vulnerable and complex needs.

## Our Organisational Vision for 2028

By 2028, Ruby's will support more children and families through:



**Expanding in-person services  
across Cheshire East**



**Enhancing virtual and online  
resources as a 24/7 platform**

At Ruby's volunteering is a vital part of how we deliver support, from the Board of Trustees to one-off volunteers. Volunteers who share the Ruby's values help us to provide purpose and connection within the community, helping Ruby's to deliver quality services and facilities, and create a warm, inclusive environment.

### Volunteering at Ruby's

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, we have seen significant changes in volunteering patterns. Many of our volunteers were among those with health vulnerabilities, which made them understandably reluctant to re-engage with in-person community activities. Over the last two years, we have worked hard to rebuild confidence, welcome back our volunteers, and encourage new people to step into our centre and community spaces.

We have secured funding that is enabling us to strengthen our capacity to coordinate, support, and grow our volunteer base. This funding will support us to continue to invest in developing our volunteering infrastructure to maximise the potential of volunteering in support of Ruby's.

At Ruby's, we involve volunteers of all abilities in a wide range of activities, including fundraising, gardening, café service, driving our community bus, SEND peer support, and more. We also collaborate with local businesses through employer-supported volunteering, which enables teams to contribute their time and skills to our work. Our approach is flexible: people can give their time regularly in ongoing roles, or participate in short-term, one-off opportunities.

Whilst we welcome volunteers of all abilities, our founder Alison is particularly proud of our SEND volunteering opportunities, that were directly inspired by her and daughter Ruby's personal experience during Ruby's transition into adulthood.

I was told by a learning disabilities community co-ordinator: "Ruby won't be coming to work with you when she's 16, she will be volunteering."

That moment sparked an idea and became the creation of our 16-25 SEND volunteering pilot. The pilot showed the need and desire for SEND volunteering opportunities, which is now an integral part of our volunteering model at Ruby's. I am proud to offer the opportunity for people of all abilities to volunteer, providing families with hope and vision for the future, that their child will be part of a vibrant community where they are welcomed, valued, and celebrated for their contributions and character.



**Alison & Ruby**

What makes volunteering at Ruby's special, is being part of a supportive team that makes a real difference to children and families benefiting from Ruby's. Volunteering at Ruby's is fun and enjoyable, whilst providing the opportunity to make new friendships, connections, and sharing and gaining skills and experience.

### **Our definition of volunteering**

At Ruby's, we define volunteering as a freely chosen unpaid activity where individuals dedicate their time and skills to support others and contribute to the community.

### **Our vision for volunteering**

People of all abilities can volunteer at Ruby's and make a difference.



My volunteer gives me confidence in myself and my abilities.

From a Supported Family

## Our Ruby's Values

We are proud of our Ruby's values and how we live them - in the way in which we work together, and to support children and families. We have four values which guide us, and you will see demonstrated at Ruby's:



### Kindness

Being Kind means that we treat others and ourselves with dignity and care



### Accountability

Being Accountable means that we understand our roles & responsibilities and take them seriously



### Inclusivity

Being Inclusive means that we are welcoming and fair



### Creativity

Being Creative means that we want to inspire and be inspired

## Strategic Priorities for Volunteering



### 01. Embedding a positive volunteering culture

“Having a culture where volunteering is valued as a core part of Ruby’s identity, supporting our mission”



#### **By 2028, we will have:**

Embedded volunteers in every area of Ruby’s work through clearly defined volunteer models

Strengthened how we measure and share the impact and stories of volunteering

Staff who are skilled, confident, with the tools they need to support and manage volunteers

#### **We will know we are making a difference when:**

We can share evidence and stories of the impact of volunteering

Volunteers say they would recommend volunteering at Ruby’s (90%)

We support volunteers who have SEND needs (25%)

## Strategic Priorities for Volunteering



### 02. Systems and Governance

“Having clear, robust policies, processes and systems to underpin a compliant and consistent approach to involving volunteers at Ruby’s”



#### By 2028, we will have:

Developed a volunteering policy to outline our commitment to involving volunteers

Developed processes to ensure a consistent approach to involving volunteers

Development and implementation of a system to manage volunteers as part of the wider organisational systems

#### We will know we are making a difference when:

Staff and volunteers are aware of the relevant volunteering policies that relate to their volunteering role

The length of time taken to onboard new volunteers has gone from 8 weeks to 6 weeks

All volunteers have completed mandatory training (upon recruitment and annual refreshers)

There is a system in place that provides oversight of the individuals journey through Ruby’s

## Strategic Priorities for Volunteering



### 03. Volunteer experience and retention

“Ruby’s is recognised as a great place to volunteer, where volunteers feel valued, supported, connected within an inclusive and accessible environment”



#### By 2028, we will have:

Embedded practice that supports volunteer progression and retention

Developed a recognition plan to celebrate the contributions of volunteers

Strengthened how we capture and listen to volunteer feedback

#### We will know we are making a difference when:

We act upon feedback from volunteers to make improvements to provide a positive volunteer experience

Volunteers feel connected to and valued by the Ruby’s community (70%)

Volunteers move on to paid employment (10%)