



COMPANY OVERVIEW

Cancer Awareness in Teenagers and young people Society (CATS)

Founded by James Adams

MRes Student in Public Health, Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health

Funding Received: £2,000 Ignition Award

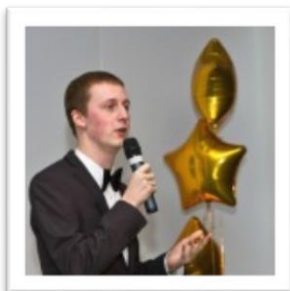
~ £25,000 from The University of Manchester, the Christie Hospital and the Teenage Cancer Trust

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Three words to describe your journey so far... Exciting, Challenging, Rollercoaster!



Tell us a little bit about yourself, the Social Enterprise and your journey so far. I'm James Adams and I'm an intercalating medical student, taking time out between my third and fourth year to undertake an MRes in Public Health. The research focus of my MRes evaluates the effectiveness of CATS. I founded CATS, a charity which ensures young people know the common signs and symptoms of cancer. I've previously co-founded the national charity 'Pregnancy Twinning', a scheme aimed at improving maternal health in Malawi by twinning pregnant mothers in Malawi with women in the UK who provide the cost (£40 per pregnancy) of safe treatment.

How was your idea conceived? In my first year of university I became aware of the marked delay in diagnosis of cancer in young people. I was sitting in a pub with my friends and we were talking about how most people don't know the common signs and symptoms of cancer in young people. The reasons for this delay are multifactorial but are in part due to delays in help seeking on the part of the patient. As such in 2014 I founded CATS (Cancer Awareness in Teenagers and young people Society) with an aim to tackle this problem.

What is your company mission? The aim of CATS is to provide awareness of cancer in young people in creative and engaging ways with students and other young people aged between 16 - 24. We do this through hosting events and publicising information on social media, or other student based channels. Events are focus around students, and range from acoustic or comedy nights, to society battles, training workshops and revision pub quizzes (especially popular). One of the key philosophies of CATS is we try to be very innovative and engaging. We put all our

information on beer mats and we're very informal with our language. The whole aim of CATS is we engage students, it's run by students, for students.

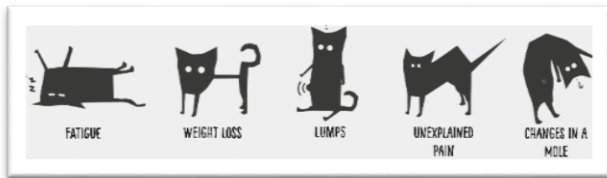
At what point, did you realise that the idea had the potential for a Social Enterprise? Cancer is the second biggest cause of death in 18 - 24 year old's, just behind road traffic accidents. Obviously, this shows it's a significant issue. Seven young people are diagnosed with cancer every single day yet most don't know the common signs and symptoms of cancer. The feedback we got immediately was fantastic and it became clear that there was something unique about CATS in its ability to engage the student population with health information.

What approaches did you first employ to develop the idea? We initially developed CATS in Manchester in 2014 running various events to engage with the student body, like pub quizzes and comedy nights. CATS quickly signed up over 600 people who wanted to get involved and know more. Over the year, CATS Manchester ran several events which were attended by hundreds of students. It soon became clear that

Something about CATS was different. One year later, CATS launched its second branch at The University of Cambridge. This was followed by CATS London East and then in October 2016, the fourth CATS site in Liverpool.

How did you get involved with the Innovation Optimiser?

I first came in to contact with UMIP at the start of the 2016/17 academic year. I started going along to the Just Social sessions as I'd applied for a UMIP Social Enterprise Ignition Award and successfully secured £2,000.



How did this engagement help you? That award was incredibly helpful as it gave us seed funding to explore our ideas, and access to people who have been instrumental in helping us scale up. Any questions that I had, I just got in touch with Laura Etchells and Ellie Buckley and they always either had the answers or put me in touch with someone who could help.

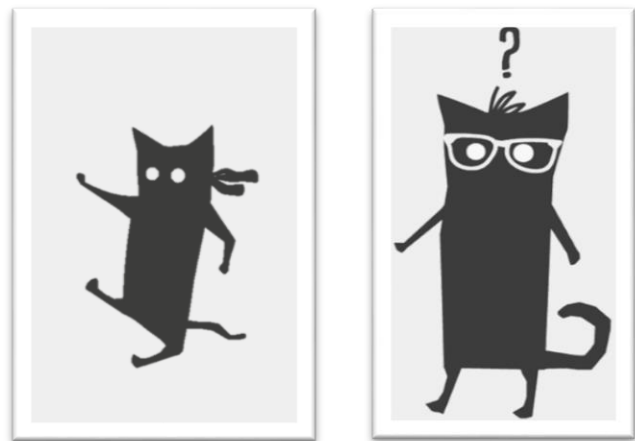
What would you say was the greatest hurdle you overcame during the process? The biggest challenge we face is having the capacity to do all the things we want to do. There are lots of things we could do but we don't necessarily have enough people to make it happen. We're now working on recruiting several people to ensure we can grow and expand. Other than that, we've not had too many issues (touch wood!) as we've had great support from people.

Were there any standout moments from Innovation Optimiser that helped to propel your Charity forward? The support I've received here has been fantastic and I've learnt a lot about things I'd never really considered. I had lots of questions about things and I didn't know where to go at first. Not only did the team here help me to create a bit of strategy and direction, but the Just Social sessions really gave me a supportive environment to expand on my thinking. It's a really open environment in which you can share your experiences and receive some fantastic advice from experts and your peers.

What have been your major milestones and achievements so far? We secured over £10,000 in funding from the Teenage Cancer Trust and the Christie Hospital to undertake a formal evaluation of not just the engagement,

but the effectiveness of CATS, and to establish whether it does have an impact on awareness and whether it increase the likelihood of young people going to see their GP. We have now reached a point where we are engaging with a wider population than Manchester, to ensure all students around the UK are aware of the common signs and symptoms of cancer, and when to seek help. We have also recently established our fifth CATS site in Leicester, and have now registered as a charity.

How has being involved with entrepreneurial activity benefitted you? It's been so beneficial for my personal growth and it's made me much more confident. Being involved in entrepreneurial activity has given me opportunities to do things that I never would have had chance to do if I hadn't started CATS. It's given me the opportunity to follow something that I'm passionate about and it enables me to be a driver of change. I can go to work every morning and enjoy the work that I do.



What future support are you looking for to progress your business? Over the next 5 years we will develop over 10 sites around the UK. To do this, we're writing grant applications to develop a staff team to grow CATS. We want to take what we've developed over the last 3 years and spread it wider. The aim now is to employ an Operations Manager who can run CATS and coordinate activity across the various UK sites. We're also looking for a Creative Content Lead who can develop infographics, videos and social media content so that we can expand our digital media portfolio and get our messages out to as many people as possible. Finally, we're looking for more support with income generation so that we have the funds to build our capacity and develop a sustainable business model.

Would you encourage other staff, academics and research students to seek support for their ideas through the Innovation Optimiser? I'd definitely encourage anyone to get involved in the Innovation Optimiser. It's been hugely beneficial and allowed us to take CATS to the next level and scale up.