



## COMPANY OVERVIEW

### IMPACT CIC

#### (Interaction Methods for Paediatric Autism Communication Therapy)

Founded by Dr Catherine Aldred & Prof. Jonathan Green

School of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Biology, Medicine & Health

Funding Received: £5,000 Innovation Optimiser

<http://research.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/pact/>

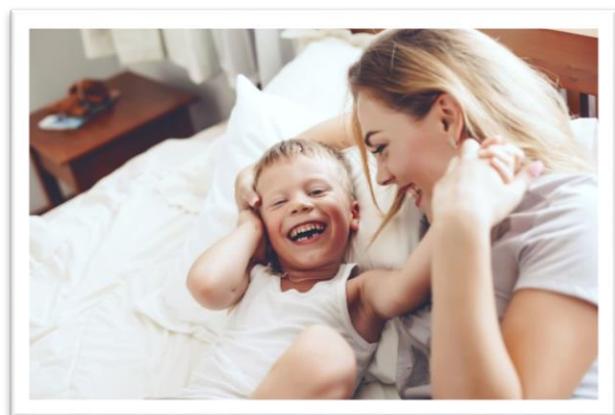
**Three words to describe your journey so far...** Innovative, Rigorous, Creative!



**Tell us a little bit about yourself, the Social Enterprise and your journey so far.** I'm Catherine Aldred, an Honorary Lecturer & Consultant Speech & Language Therapist, here at The University of Manchester. IMPACT (Interaction Methods for Paediatric Autism Communication Therapy) CIC is a Social Enterprise which has been set up to deliver PACT (Paediatric Autism Communication Therapy) global training. Young children with autism face enduring difficulties with social communication: PACT is a low intensity, parent-led, video feedback intervention, improving the social communication skills of children (aged 2-10 years) on the autistic spectrum. We've developed a toolkit consisting of the PACT treatment manual, training materials, videos and other materials which enables parents to interact in innovative ways, effectively improving the communication skills of children who have different communication styles resulting from their autism. This intervention identifies the child's individual profile and parent's existing skills, to build and extend current communication techniques. It encourages and empowers parents to feel confident and competent in maximising their support of their child with autism, enabling them to develop their own communication skills and ultimately become advocates for their child themselves.

**How was your idea conceived?** IMPACT grew from the global treatment gap for autism. There are many claims for treatments, but they often involve considerable time and expense for families, with little evidence of effectiveness. A series of communication focused autism intervention trials based at The University of Manchester with collaborators in Newcastle and London, led to the first substantial evidence based intervention for autism. IMPACT cascades this high-quality research to train professional experts, to implement PACT with parent/ carers of children with autism in the child's community environment.

**What is your company mission?** Our mission is to provide the maximum reach of PACT intervention, for the benefit of children with autism, to improve communication skills and quality of life, driven by parental advocacy. IMPACT addresses the worldwide treatment gap for children with autism, taking intervention from specialist centres into the child's community and environment through UK wide and global PACT training.



**At what point, did you realise that the idea had the potential for a Social Enterprise?** After attending the Just Social sessions I knew a Social Enterprise was the best organisational structure to achieve our goals. I realised it also provides returns for community benefit to reach middle and low economic communities independently of their means.

**What approaches did you first employ to develop the idea?** PACT began as a Medical Research Council trial, running

between 2006-2010, resulting from a major collaboration between The University of Manchester, University of Newcastle, Institute of Child Health, London, Guys Hospital, London, Institute of Psychiatry, Stockport Primary Care Trust, Lewisham Primary Care Trust, Southwark Primary Care Trust & North Tyneside Primary Care Trust. As it grew, I knew I needed to connect people who could deliver PACT training globally through professional partnerships.



**Why did you want to set up a Social Enterprise?** I wanted to deliver equitable access to early autism intervention across global communities through a ‘train the trainer’ programme. After attending the Just Social sessions, I knew a Social Enterprise was the right model to do this.

**How did you get involved with the Innovation Optimiser?** I engaged with UMIP, attending the Just Social and Roadmap sessions, and received individual mentoring in developing the thinking around IMPACT and its organisational goals. UMIP provided links to a supportive network of professionals including a student project at the Alliance Manchester Business School. Within the first year IMPACT received an Innovation Optimiser award and ‘Awards for All’ grant.

**How did this engagement help you?** The sessions changed and focused my thinking from research orientation to implementation, developing a business model by identifying stakeholders, routes to delivery and organisational infrastructure.

**What would you say was the greatest hurdle you overcame during the process?** We’re still working our way through and over them! The largest hurdle is the different commissioning routes to NHS services, each requiring an individual approach, compared with global and EU policy in which PACT is advocated.

**Were there any standout moments from Innovation Optimiser that helped to propel your Social Enterprise forward?** Learning how quality academic research can be operationalised for worldwide dissemination to achieve health care goals and help address a global priority health agenda was a pivotal moment.

**What have been your major milestones and achievements so far?** Our Social Enterprise has opened new and innovative channels to address the challenging health care needs of children with autism, and created opportunities to take careers in other rewarding directions. It takes, on average, 15 years for research to reach health care implementation, if it ever does! IMPACT CIC has been successful in taking the best quality research and created an implementation structure to deliver training. This has created jobs for professionals, increased professional recognition and demonstrated the need for the delivery of evidence-based autism interventions. The organisational development has occurred concurrently with training and implementation, e.g. training in Hong Kong, France, Italy, Australia, India, enabling us to test the feasibility and progression of our Social Enterprise model.

**How has being involved with entrepreneurial activity benefitted you?** This has changed my career direction beyond my vision, opening new, rewarding and creative career progression. The impact for me is the large-scale growth potential of an idea that started very small. The experience, with support from UMIP, has radically changed my thinking.

**What future support are you looking for to progress your business?** To progress the infrastructure of IMPACT, we need to identify funding streams, grants, and sponsorship to help deliver training. Through research, we also aim to continue innovative development of PACT, in collaboration with University partners. We’ll test it across cultures, through international partnerships and implementation trials. We’re seeking collaboration to grow into a global social organisation, and we’re working with experienced teams, through The University of Manchester introductions and partnerships, to creatively explore diverse cultural needs and opportunities.

**Would you encourage other staff, academics and research students to seek support for their ideas through the Innovation Optimiser?** Yes definitely! My advice is, share your innovation and high-quality research by identifying a structure to benefit society. By engaging with UMIP, you may extend the knowledge and skills gained through academic research to reach implementation in society.