

**John Greenall** shares the stories of six Catalyst Team leaders from around the UK to help explain their role at the core of CMF's ministry to members

# WHAT ARE CATALYST TEAMS?

## key points

- Catalyst Teams are local or regional networks of CMF members volunteering to work together to bring the vision and mission of CMF to life at a local level.
- While there are common aims and vision across all 13 teams currently running, each team works out what this mission and ministry looks like locally, within the team members' needs, gifts, and capacities.
- Setting up a Catalyst Team in your area is a rewarding and exciting opportunity to see God work among health professionals in your workplace and community.

**C**MF is global, national, and local. Our mission is broad and inspiring as we seek to see gospel transformation in our nation, our hospitals, our GP surgeries, our universities, and above all, in the lives of individuals. But mission and activity happen through people who live in real places with real connections. In this article, you will read about the experience of our team leaders in three Catalyst Teams.

But what are Catalyst Teams about, and why are we so keen to see one in every region of the UK?

Catalyst Teams are local teams of volunteers who carry a **VISION** of what CMF can look like at a local level and work it out in practice. They recognise the diversity of geography, emphases, gifts, and passions of our members around the British Isles. Currently, we have 13 teams from Kent to the Highlands and Islands. Extending Catalyst Teams across the country is one of the ways we aim

Catalyst Teams are not simply a means to an end but... a vibrant community of people

to go 'Wider' in our current three-year plan, as well as bringing CMF 'Closer' and more relevant to local needs.

Catalyst Teams are also true **TEAMS**, where we see people working to their gifting and strengths. It is also where we invest in people. They are not simply a means to an end but are meant to be a vibrant community of people who encourage and sharpen one another.

To help understand this, I wonder how many of you followed the England football team's progress in this year's Euro football tournament? I was struck watching successful teams (of course, we include the UK's other national teams in this!) and how we can learn from them at CMF.



## Catalyst Team Christmas initiative in the Highlands

*Shona McClure, Highlands & Islands Catalyst Team Leader*

**W**e decided to deliver gospels to people in the run-up to Christmas: firstly, to be a blessing to our colleagues and co-workers; secondly, to remind people about the real meaning of Christmas; and thirdly, to distribute information about local church services.

We used an established WhatsApp group to find out about local church services and liaised with the Hospital Chaplain who was happy for us to include chaplaincy contact details. Others volunteered to distribute the packs, and yet others volunteered to finance the materials. Many were praying – so everyone was working together to distribute 500 gospel packs around our area. This included the local hospital, GPs' surgeries, the community hospital, and remote district general hospitals.

The packs were enclosed in a Christmassy paper bag and included a copy of Luke's Gospel – a special edition with cartoons and quotes from children about Christmas and information about local churches and the chaplaincy. We even put some chocolates in as well!

The Christmas packs were generally very well received, and we are confident that seeds were planted. It was a good initiative where everyone could play their part.

- **The aim** – what does it mean for our team to win? What are our 'goals'?
- **The rules** – do our team members know the rules of the game and know when they are being broken?
- **The end** – when is halftime? Full time? How do we mark when things are completed or come to their conclusion? Do we know what and when to celebrate?
- **The tactics** – how do we want to play the game? How do we build a 'team'? And how do we adapt CMF's mission to local circumstances and people?
- **The players** – are our people in the correct positions that play to their strengths? Do players support one another and work together?

At present, we have developed ten team roles which we are increasingly supporting and networking. That leads to our third principle of **EQUIPPING**. The Catalyst Team network is characterised by connecting those in team roles to be equipped in the following ways. These are all optional, as our aim isn't to add meetings to busy schedules but to help people fulfil their calling and roles:

- **Training** – we offer online training for all those in the Catalyst network. This includes a half-day online conference every six months and bi-monthly webinars on a weekday evening.
- **Joint events** – by networking together, we can more easily coordinate joint events, eg regional online retreats adapted to the region's needs.
- **Resources** – we are growing resources for different team roles, such as developing and leading Workplace Groups, supporting Juniors, Pastoral Care, and more. Being in the 'Catalyst Family' makes being aware of these and accessing them easier.
- **Ideas** – linking to the wider Catalyst network means new ideas and resources become available to all. 'Stealing' ideas for sessions and local work is strongly encouraged!

If you would like to learn more about Catalyst Teams visit our website and you can email [volunteer@cmf.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@cmf.org.uk) or visit [cmf.org.uk/catalyst-teams](http://cmf.org.uk/catalyst-teams) to start a conversation about starting a team in your region, or to be put in touch with an existing team near you.

Next you can read my interview with four Catalyst Team Leaders about their role, the challenges and the rewards.

## WHY BECOME A CATALYST TEAM LEADER?

Team leaders included:



Becks Bayana  
in West Yorkshire

Ed & Sarah Tulloch  
in SE Scotland

Angela Wilkinson  
in Mersey

### Why did you take on the role?

**Sarah:** I had some involvement with local CMF already but felt the need for a coordinated effort to bring people together with a common purpose – recognising the potential for good through the work of CMF, fulfilling a role that churches alone can't. I also saw it as a way to actively think about the connection between work and faith in my own life.

**Ed:** Yes, I realised I had become quite cynical about my work, and to a degree, I was going through the motions. Other Christian friends in healthcare were feeling the same way, so I wanted to think creatively about cultivating a culture of living and speaking for Jesus in healthcare.

**Angela:** I can relate to the cynicism – when John first asked me to be a Catalyst Team Leader, I had to laugh. I had been a Regional Team Leader for a couple of years, and the group felt quite tired with only two or three of us at our monthly meetings. But actually, starting a Catalyst Team allowed us to ditch the old meetings that were not serving much purpose and start again. It was exciting and daunting at the same time as I am not a natural leader, but God has been incredibly faithful.

**Becks:** I've been part of CMF for the past 16 years, and it's been an incredible journey – I've been inspired by those who have walked this road ahead of me. CMF has been a point of connection and stability as I've moved around the country. So, I've been happy to serve the fellowship in this way and give back.

### What does it mean in practice?

**Becks:** It looks like conversations – catching up and connecting with people working in the region. I'm really excited to meet up and pray with those involved in student work in the city. They also bring together people from other organisations like UCCF working within the city to discuss their plans to extend God's kingdom. It's exciting now, as a Catalyst Team Leader, to play my part in connecting, supporting, and praying with other members, both students and those in the



**[un]burden:**  
**West Midlands CMF**  
**day of prayer,**  
**5 December 2020**  
*Rod MacRorie,*  
*West Midlands*  
*Prayer Catalyst*

The West Midlands CMF Catalyst Team was concerned about the fatigue and sense of being burdened amongst members because of the sustained pressure and challenges of COVID-19. Our team leader James highlighted Jesus' invitation to the burdened and wearied, his invitation to come, learn from him and find rest. So, we initiated a series of 'un]burden' events, which will run over the next six months.

We started with a 24-hour day of prayer, using some brilliant online resources our Birmingham student members had created for a similar event. Student and graduate members in the region could sign up as individuals, host their own Zoom prayer gathering, or pair up for a socially distanced prayer walk.

A website provided resources and ideas for prayer; we set up three *padlets* to share prayer needs and encouragements. We put together an 'un]burden' playlist on Spotify to accompany prayer. We organised prayer gatherings via Zoom at the beginning and end of the 24 hours.

Over 90 people signed up covering all 24 hours, with more than 250 page views. Afterwards, many shared the value of being encouraged to draw aside in prayer. One participant shared that after the last prayer Zoom, they had a picture of a spirit level where pressures had pushed the bubble off-centre, and that spending time in prayer had helped the bubble return to the centre.

Since then, we have started facilitating seminars and plan an online retreat on the [un]burden theme.

workplace. I find it amazing that God can use all of us, with our different strengths and passions, to do the same thing – and that is to bring him glory.

**Angela:** As a team leader, you are involved in coordinating your local team and linking up regularly with CMF and the other CTLs around the country. It is challenging to make a group of busy people doing busy jobs and different things for CMF really feel like a team. However, it is great when we meet to know that we are working together for the region. Like Becks, I'll try to meet or speak to each of them once or twice. The monthly Zoom meetings with other CTLs are a wonderful source of support, encouragement, and wisdom. It really feels like there has been a revitalisation of regional groups. This is really exciting, especially in the current climate where healthcare workers are exhausted and overstretched.

**Ed:** As Angela said, the monthly CTL Zoom meetings are really helpful, as we encourage one another, share ideas, and hear from someone on a topic of interest to us – for example, something on developing pastoral care locally or thinking about Christian staff networks in hospitals. I always come away from these times encouraged and filled with ideas for how this could play out locally. We also have less frequent nationwide Catalyst Team coaching for all team leaders and team members, which is a morning online meeting considering a topic of relevance to everyone on Catalyst Teams.

**Sarah:** I echo what has been said by the others and would add to that the challenge of recruiting people to your team – enjoyable but requiring patience, as Becks has highlighted.

**What would you say to someone considering the role?**

**Angela:** I would say go for it! It is what you make of it. God will use anything you can give. It did take

an initial investment of time to get the team up and running, but once established, the team leader role will work with as much or as little time as you can give. I always feel there is more that I could or would like to do, but God has been incredibly faithful in using my feeble attempts to lead and grow a great network in our region.

**Sarah:** I agree! Being a CTL is encouraging and helps spur you on in combining faith with work. As Angela said, it's as much work as you want it to be, but as ever, the more you put in, the more you get out.

**Becks:** When you first step into the role, it feels like you've got to be the brain and nervous system and figure out everything. But in fact, you're just one part of the whole thing. God is able to inspire and to bring people to you on that journey, so you don't have to figure out everything alone. A little bit of it is just being patient and waiting for God to raise up people who want to get on this journey with you in terms of serving where you are, so I've been encouraged to see that start to happen.

**Ed:** Yes, there are challenges and patience is needed, but it's such a joy to lead a local team with a bigger vision. Each team has the freedom to be a product of the people's passions who are part of it locally. I suppose each of us makes time for what we feel is important, and once I caught the vision of Catalyst Teams, I saw this is a priority for my time. I saw this as one way to participate in God's work in the NHS.

*John Greenall is CMF's Associate CEO and a paediatrician in Bedfordshire*