



CAST

Driving social change
with digital technology

Fuse for Smaller Charities

At CAST, we help charities to develop digital products and services that improve the lives of their service users.

Our programmes combine the best of Human-Centred Design with Lean Startup and Agile methodologies. That means we work by engaging service users, understanding their needs, then rapidly developing new service ideas which combine service users' needs, the charity's domain knowledge and our expertise in digital service delivery.

Where possible, we work with charities through funded programmes, however we also offer bespoke consultancy and training.

About the Programme

Our Fuse programme is a digital accelerator designed to help charities get to grips with and learn the practices and activities involved in digital product and service design.

Over the course of 4 months (starting in July 2018), charities, along with our team of digital experts, interrogate a problem space, generate ideas for solving a well-identified problem within that space and then build a prototype service or product to take to pilot which typically extends after the accelerator programme.

A nominated individual from the charity is designated 'charity lead' on the accelerator and is the key participant from the charity, committing approximately 2 days a week over the course of the programme. We know that for a new digital product or service to be successful, it also needs senior support. So we ask that the Charity CEO devotes time to the programme, though the exact time commitment depends on the nature of the charity.

This focus and commitment by the charity helps ensure a successful outcome: a well researched, user-centred solution to the identified problem.

Throughout the programme, the tools and techniques of Lean and Agile digital product development, which are the mainstay of tech innovation, are introduced to the charity lead. CAST has an ethos of “learn by doing” with full support from our own product lead and programme coordinator.

During the Fuse accelerator, it is common for CAST to run workshops with the wider team of the charity on our proven tools and techniques; the aim being to embed these practices and thinking across the organisation.

“I had been pretty confident that I had a good grasp of what our services needed, from my privileged position as part of the digital team at head office working with the charity’s services team. How wrong I was. I very quickly became aware that actually I knew very little about what our services – and most importantly our service users – really want and need from us.”

Rachael Townley, Action for Children

“The time I’ve spent with the Fuse team has been a revelation. I’ve begun to understand that ongoing and pervasive agile design, and the importance of embedding user insight into every stage of the process, are intrinsic in helping NCT to overcome immediate and more long term challenges and in enabling us to drive forward towards our goals over the next decade.”

Tamara Bavin, NCT