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## CASE STUDY: THE UPLANDS ACADEMY

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**Name:** James Metcalfe

**Age:** 35

**Occupation:** Farming in Edale, Derbyshire

Attended the Peak District Uplands Academy in the winter of 2013 – 2014

James is a National Trusts tenant farmers son in Edale. He works on the family farm along with working on another farm across the valley. He has his own pedigree flock of North Country Cheviots, is developing a boxed lamb scheme and is a qualified dry stone wall contractor. He also has a huge interest in bringing on school groups to the farm and is CEVAS accredited. He plans to take over the National Trust tenancy from his father.



### What were James' reasons for attending the academy?

"I received the Academy promotional flyer about 6 times from different sources and talked to one of the FLC Trustees at a Parish Council Meeting. I would never normally attend such things but the more I looked the more I thought well let's give it a try.

I am competent in all aspects of my livestock work but I feel that my business skills let me down. I wanted some assistance honing these skills. Another area which I feel I lack experience in is the paperwork side of things and don't feel well enough prepared to become a tenant at the moment. I'm fully aware that being a good stockman is not all that you need to be to be a good farmer."

### What do you see as the challenges before attending the academy?

"I see the main challenge as the cost! Initial 'start up' costs are astronomical. I have also been finding that getting small parcels of land to rent very difficult as they are swallowed up by more established farmers. Meaning that; making a small step on the ladder is very challenging. At the moment I am stuck in the cycle of, I can't get more sheep until I get more land but I can't get more land as I haven't got the sheep".

### What do you think Fresh Start can offer you? (asked before the academy started)

"I would like to think that by the end of my time engaging with the academy, should I be accepted, I will have a clearer awareness of my business ambitions. At the moment I know where I want to be but not sure how I will get there. I envisage that the academy provides with good mentoring and the tools to achieve my ambition which I need to have a bright future in farming."

## What are your thoughts post attending the academy?

"It wasn't what I expected at all! I thought it was brilliant, really brilliant"

"It has really opened my eyes to the business and financial side of things. Before the academy I was on one level awaiting my chance of a tenancy one day. It has made life less frightening and I now accept that I am important in my own right with a whole range of options open to me now rather than just waiting for the tenancy in the distant future. It has empowered me to get on with my life and has totally changed my attitude to business and what I can do for myself and family"

## Has it changed your business decisions?

"Yes, totally and from the day I started attending. I come home buzzing from the meetings and where as I am normally tucked up in bed by 9.30 pm I am up until 1.00 am scoping out new business ideas and sharing these with my partner.

I have already altered some of the ways I run my business. It has opened things up re the education visits and what I would like to do with these. I have also just taken on a school student for work experience which before I would never have seen the importance of doing this or have the confidence to do so.

I am now looking way beyond sheep! We are already looking for a small piece of land to start a pig enterprise, something that would never have crossed my mind at all as an option before the academy. Financing is possible if you take the right approaches and research your figure well. The tenancy exercise was also incredibly valuable and has taken the fear out of that for me now.

I have met many inspiring people in the form of other academy members and speakers and gained a whole new level of business support and networking. I already have meetings booked to look at my business plans in more depth. What I didn't expect either is the new social elements to my life, I have made new friends which will give me so much support.

Every meeting has been an absolute joy to attend and I have learnt so much. I will go somewhere in life now and would love to encourage others to attend the academies and offer my services freely if I can do this. My thanks go to Fresh Start and PCF for making this happen."

## Value for money?

"£50 was an absolute bargain, what I have gained is worth so much more"