

Health Optimisation and a social travel network for adults over 50 in this week's MaddyMoney

Every week, Maddyness brings you the latest investment news from the UK startup ecosystem. Here's a recap of this week's investments.

Temps de lecture : minute

8 November 2024

Montant

£7M

Nombre d'opérations

4

Health Optimisation startup OptimallyMe secures investment from The Player's Fund

OptimallyMe has secured investment from The Players Fund, the UK's first athlete-led VC firm. The partnership links OptimallyMe, known for AI-driven health insights and personalisation, with elite athletes such as Ben Stokes and Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill. Founded by Edward van Harmelen in 2022, OptimallyMe offers personalised health tech, including blood testing and AI-guided recommendations for fitness, nutrition, sleep, and mood.

With an advisory board of top health experts, OptimallyMe aims to expand its influence in health and wellness, supported by partnerships with HYROX and Recharge Health. CEO van Harmelen said the collaboration with The Players Fund will drive innovation in health optimisation, especially for athletes and health-conscious users.



À lire aussi

A fund founded by athletes, a profile of The Players Fund

Freebird Club takes flight to combat loneliness through social connection and travel for older adults

Freebird Club, a social travel network for adults over 50, has relaunched with €500K in new funding from Enterprise Ireland and Ageas Foundation. Originally launched in 2017, the platform connects older adults through

local meet-ups, travel companions, group trips, and homestays.

Inspired by founder Peter Mangan's father's positive hosting experiences, Freebird Club aims to combat loneliness among seniors through shared travel and social experiences. Recognised by the European Commission and the UNWTO for its social impact, the club's updated subscription model will now expand its reach across Europe.

"Our mission goes beyond travel," says Mangan. "Freebird Club is a community for older adults to build companionship and find a sense of belonging."

Games studio set to forge ahead and create 15 jobs after £2.6M NPIF II fundraise

Middlesbrough-based games studio *Radical Forge* has raised £2.6M from NPIF II – Mercia Equity Finance, managed by Mercia Ventures as part of the Northern Powerhouse Investment Fund II (NPIF II). This funding will enable Radical Forge to expand its team by 15 new hires, secure larger contracts, and launch its farming game *Southfield* early next year. Founded in 2017 by Teesside University graduates Bruce Slater and Freddie Babord, the studio currently employs around 70 people and has collaborated on notable titles like *Gang Beasts* and *Sea of Thieves*.

In addition to collaborations, Radical Forge develops its own games, establishing a publishing division that launched its first title, *Bright Paw*, in 2020, winning Best Puzzle Game at the NYX Game Awards. CEO Bruce Slater expressed excitement about the funding, which supports the studio's growth while preserving its unique culture.

Chris McCourt of Mercia Ventures noted that Radical Forge's vibrant culture and talent have positioned it to attract top industry talent amid

industry changes. The NPIF II funding will help the studio pursue larger projects, further contributing to Middlesbrough's expanding games industry.

AllFocal Optics raises £4.09M for lenses that recreate human vision

AllFocal Optics, the Cambridge-based startup advancing nanophotonic lens technology for focus-free viewing, has secured \$5.3 million in funding, including a £4.09M equity raise led by SpeedInvest and grants from Innovate UK. This investment supports AllFocal's mission to revolutionise augmented and virtual reality experiences by eliminating the nausea and eye strain commonly associated with XR technology. The company's ultra-thin lenses are designed to recreate human vision, allowing users to shift between physical and virtual environments without discomfort, paving the way for practical, everyday XR applications.

AllFocal's innovative lenses could transform industries from automotive to healthcare. Early trials with Jaguar Land Rover will use their technology in heads-up displays to project navigation information directly on car windscreens. Other potential applications include medical smart glasses for displaying vital information and consumer headsets that enhance virtual gameplay. CEO Dr Pawan Shretha explains that AllFocal's lenses, compatible with LCD, OLED, and other displays, allow digital images to remain sharp as the eyes refocus, offering a seamless mixed-reality experience.

With this new funding, AllFocal welcomes Dr Ash Salusbury, a former Microsoft VP and leader in Meta's AR division, as chair. Dr Salusbury lauds AllFocal's "magical" technology, which achieves precise vision without moving parts, solving an industry-wide challenge. SpeedInvest partner Rick Hao added, "AllFocal is fundamentally changing nanophotonic

design, enabling applications in smart glasses, heads-up displays, and defence. We're thrilled to support their push into the future of visual technology."

In other news

London-based healthtech Patchwork Health acquires L2P to create healthcare workforce leader

Patchwork Health, a leader in workforce management technology for healthcare, has announced the acquisition of L2P Enterprise Ltd, the UK's top provider of medical appraisal and fast-growing job planning software. This acquisition will create a comprehensive healthcare platform designed to support over 100,000 clinicians across 200+ NHS and private healthcare organisations, streamlining staffing, planning, and appraisal processes. Patchwork's digital tools have already helped over 55,000 healthcare workers and saved the NHS £120 million.

Founded by NHS doctors Dr. Anas Nader and Dr. Jing Ouyang in 2016, Patchwork Health provides digital rostering, flexible staff banks, and data insights for improved staffing. Integrating L2P's expertise, particularly in appraisal and job planning, enhances Patchwork's offerings, allowing healthcare providers to deploy teams strategically and reduce reliance on external agencies. This merger will offer healthcare organisations a unified, efficient solution, supporting high-quality patient care and cost savings.

The acquisition is backed by a shared mission of optimising healthcare workforce management. Dr. Anas Nader expressed excitement about combining the strengths of both companies to deliver smarter staffing

solutions, while L2P's CEO, Jim McLaughlin, emphasised the potential for productivity gains and streamlined processes. Together, Patchwork and L2P aim to empower healthcare staff and organisations with tools to overcome workforce challenges.



À lire aussi

Meet Patchwork Health, the comprehensive, tech-enabled workforce solution for healthcare organisations

In other international investment news

Plato secures \$6.5M to transform \$53T global wholesale industry with AI innovation

Plato, a Berlin-based AI-driven ERP automation platform, has raised \$6.5 million in pre-seed funding to transform the \$53T wholesale industry. Led

by Cherry Ventures and supported by prominent tech investors from companies like Microsoft and SAP, Plato's platform is designed to enhance wholesale efficiency through AI-powered sales intelligence and workflow automation. The platform integrates with existing ERP systems to automate tasks like quote creation and provide data-driven sales recommendations, enabling wholesalers to boost productivity and streamline operations.

Founded by Benedikt Nolte, Matthias Heinrich, and Oliver Birch, Plato emerged from a need to save Nolte's family wholesale business from closure. As the wholesale sector faces labour shortages, rising competition, and a pressing need for digital transformation, Plato aims to empower distributors with tools to process five times more information and increase customer-facing activities by 65%. Notable clients like Layer Grosshandel report significant operational improvements, with Plato's solutions saving sales teams up to 20% of their time.

With this funding, Plato plans to expand its team and scale its offerings across Europe, aiming to establish itself as a leader in AI-driven wholesale solutions. Cherry Ventures Partner Jasper Masemann notes that Plato's innovative approach and industry expertise position it as a key player in Europe's evolving wholesale landscape.

Ampd Energy secures oversubscribed \$27.3M in Series B funding to accelerate clean battery energy storage

Ampd Energy, an innovator in battery energy storage systems (ESS) for heavy industries, has raised \$27.3 million in an oversubscribed Series B funding round. The investment was co-led by Kibo Invest and Openspace, with additional support from existing investors MTR Lab, Taronga

Ventures, and 2150, who participated above their pro-rata allocation. The funding will accelerate Ampd Energy's expansion into new industries, including mining and manufacturing, as well as new regions such as the Middle East, Europe, the United States, and Southeast Asia.

Ampd Energy's flagship products, the Ampd Silo™ and Enertainer ESS, offer a cleaner, more efficient alternative to diesel-powered generators. They reduce carbon footprints by up to 90%, are quieter, and eliminate diesel handling and usage risks. With over 300 units deployed across seven countries, primarily in construction, Ampd Energy has already abated over 69,000 tons of CO₂—equivalent to removing more than 88,000 cars from the road.

The company's expansion will be supported by strategic partnerships with Kibo Invest and Openspace, both of which are keen to back Ampd Energy's vision of reducing diesel reliance in industries globally. Ampd Energy's advanced energy storage systems provide not only cleaner energy but also valuable data-driven insights, offering 24/7 monitoring and problem diagnostics through proprietary software.



À lire aussi
Founders first and investors second, a portrait of Cherry
Ventures



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