

# AI for HR, decentralised healthcare and solar management 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

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29 November 2024

Total

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**£322.5M**

Number of deals

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**8**

## Vente AI automates business development for recruiters, cutting sales costs by 90%

*Vente AI*, a London-based startup leveraging AI to automate business development for recruitment agencies, has successfully raised £500K in its first funding round, just six months after its founding. The investment comes from Antler, one of Europe's most active early-stage VCs, along with angel investors including Thomas Vose, founder of the HRtech

startup HireAra, which was recently acquired by The Access Group. This funding will help accelerate product development, team expansion, and the integration of AI-powered automation into existing recruitment tools.

Vente AI's platform automates key business development tasks such as lead identification, analysis, and prioritisation, which traditionally consume up to 40% of a recruiter's time. By streamlining these processes, Vente AI enables recruiters to focus on high-value tasks, dramatically reducing costs and increasing productivity. In just two months of product launch, early adopters have already generated over £300K in additional revenue, saved 1,500 hours of manual processing, and processed 250 candidates. In the highly competitive UK recruitment market, where 80% of agencies earn less than £1M annually, Vente AI's AI technology levels the playing field, enabling smaller agencies to compete more effectively with larger rivals.

Cameron Briggs, CEO and cofounder of Vente AI, shared, "Recruiters often rely on time-consuming manual processes. By automating these tasks, we can help recruiters reduce costs and increase productivity, which will have a significant impact on the UK's recruitment industry." The founding team, which met during an Antler residency in London, combines deep industry expertise with technical skills. Cameron Briggs brings over 12 years of recruitment experience, Itamar Yeshua (COO) has a strong background in commercial strategy, and Octavian Neguletu (CTO) brings a decade of software engineering leadership. With this new funding, Vente AI will continue to expand its product features and integrate more seamlessly with existing recruitment systems, further accelerating the adoption of its innovative platform.

## Lighthouse announces £294M Series C

# Investment led by KKR to accelerate platform innovation and growth

*Lighthouse*, a leading commercial intelligence platform for the travel and hospitality industry, has raised £294M in a Series C funding round led by global investment firm KKR. The investment will fuel Lighthouse's AI-driven platform innovation, strategic acquisitions, and global expansion, supporting its mission to reshape the \$15B hospitality technology market. Trusted by over 70,000 hospitality providers, the platform processes 400 terabytes of data daily to deliver real-time insights that enhance operational efficiency, drive incremental bookings, and improve guest experiences.

With this investment, Lighthouse plans to expand its AI and business intelligence capabilities, allowing hoteliers of all sizes to make smarter, data-driven decisions. CEO Sean Fitzpatrick emphasised the potential of KKR's backing to accelerate Lighthouse's mission, enabling broader access to its tools and insights. Stephen Shanley, Partner at KKR, highlighted Lighthouse's strong market position and ability to deliver tailored solutions to global hospitality providers as key factors in the firm's support.

The funding marks a significant milestone following Lighthouse's \$80M Series B in 2021. Existing investors, including Spectrum Equity and F-Prime Capital, have reaffirmed their commitment to the business. With over 700 employees and a best-in-class NPS score of 70+, Lighthouse is poised for growth as it expands globally, enhances its platform capabilities, and redefines commercial strategy in the hospitality industry.

# Laennec AI secures pre-seed funding to transform remote healthcare monitoring

*Cardiff-based Laennec AI Limited*, a pioneering medical AI startup, has closed its pre-seed funding round with investment from SFC Capital and OVC Ventures, alongside grant funding from the Welsh Government, Innovate UK, and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The funding will accelerate the development of Laennec AI's affordable diagnostic tools, enabling decentralised healthcare through remote patient monitoring and self-care. This innovation aims to address global healthcare challenges by improving accessibility and reducing healthcare inequalities.

The company's platform integrates AI-powered algorithms into a user-friendly mobile app, allowing patients to monitor chronic conditions like asthma from home while remaining connected to clinicians through remote oversight. This decentralised model facilitates early detection, continuous care, and personalised treatment, making advanced healthcare more accessible. CEO Dr Jase John highlighted the transformative potential of Laennec AI's technology, stating: "With this funding, we're bringing healthcare closer to patients and shaping a future where advanced care begins at home."

Supported by visionary investors and grant partners, Laennec AI is poised to scale its operations and revolutionise global chronic disease management. The company's mission has drawn praise from stakeholders, including Rebecca Evans, Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary, who emphasised its alignment with innovation in public health. Investors like Adam Beveridge of SFC Capital and Harrison Faull of OVC Ventures praised the team's potential to reduce healthcare costs and improve patient outcomes. Laennec AI is now inviting healthcare providers and research institutions to collaborate in advancing remote

monitoring and patient-led care solutions.



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## Volter secures £2.5M pre-seed funding to revolutionise rooftop solar management

London-based *Volter*, the operating system for commercial and industrial (C&I) rooftop solar, has raised £2.5M in pre-seed funding, led by Transition with participation from Seedcamp, Neptunia, and prominent angel investors. The funds will fuel product development, customer acquisition, and the company's expansion into a new European market.

Volter's platform addresses the growing gap between rooftop solar's rapid deployment and the software required to manage and optimise these assets. By offering end-to-end solutions for real estate owners, managers, and solar installers, Volter provides features like automated billing, performance monitoring, and portfolio optimisation. Since launching in August 2024, the platform has attracted major property clients, positioning itself as a key enabler in the transition to sustainable energy in the \$15B European solar sector, where rooftop installations could fulfil

up to 25% of electricity demand.

“This is the creation of a new asset class,” said Co-founder Luke Buhl-Nielsen, noting how rooftop solar transforms C&I properties into revenue-generating power plants. With a strong founding team, including veterans from McKinsey, Kry, and the UNFCCC, Volter aims to extend its offerings into batteries, energy usage optimisation, and renewable energy brokerage.

## Groundbreaking battery startup Molyon raises £3.6M to create a new future for sustainable batteries

*Molyon*, a University of Cambridge spinout, has raised £3.6M in seed funding co-led by IQ Capital and Plural to commercialise its breakthrough lithium-sulfur (Li-S) battery technology. These batteries offer double the energy density of conventional lithium-ion batteries, addressing the challenges of weight, range, and reliance on critical materials like cobalt and nickel. The funding will support the expansion of Molyon's pilot manufacturing facility in Cambridge and enable the hiring of battery engineers, material scientists, and operations staff.

Molyon's innovation stems from a patented cathode technology based on molybdenum disulfide (MoS<sub>2</sub>), which stabilises sulfur and extends battery life over hundreds of cycles. Founded by Dr Ismail Sami (CEO), Dr Zhuangnan Li (CTO), and Professor Manish Chhowalla (CSO), Molyon builds on 15 years of material science research and collaboration at the University of Cambridge. Early prototypes have achieved energy densities of 500 Wh per kg, showcasing potential applications in drones, robots, and eventually electric vehicles (EVs), with the technology poised to disrupt an \$85BN+ global battery market.

The new funding complements existing grants from leading institutions, including the Faraday Institution and European Research Council, positioning Molyon to scale its pioneering technology.

## Fresho secures £13.5M Series B to transform fresh food wholesale with AI-powered ordering platform

*Fresho*, the global leader in fresh food order management technology, has successfully raised £13.5M in its Series B funding, bringing total investments to \$50M. Led by Geoff Tarrant, co-founder of Payapps, the round welcomed new and returning investors in an oversubscribed close. Founded in 2015 by James Andronis and Huw Birrell, Fresho's platform digitises and streamlines the traditionally manual and chaotic process of fresh food distribution. The funding will support Fresho's expansion into the US, growth in existing markets like the UK and Australia, and further investment in AI-driven innovations.

Fresho addresses critical inefficiencies in the fresh food supply chain, where speed, accuracy, and fluctuating prices are paramount. Its technology automates order processing, turning texts and voicemails into structured data, and provides live pricing and availability through a user-friendly app. By replacing overnight manual workflows with AI-powered systems, Fresho has transformed operations for wholesalers and improved service for high-profile restaurant customers, including Michelin-starred establishments like Cote and Le Bernardin. The platform has processed over 30 million orders since its inception, with 10 million in the past year alone.

This latest funding round reflects growing industry demand for digitisation amid challenges such as margin pressures and workforce shortages. With

a vision to support wholesalers and reduce food waste, Fresho is positioned to lead the evolution of fresh food logistics globally.

## Elbow Beach Capital Leads £2.4M Funding Round into Carbon Utilisation Company, Barton Blakeley

*Elbow Beach Capital* has led a £2.4M funding round in *Barton Blakeley*, a carbon utilisation company pioneering technology that transforms industrial CO<sub>2</sub> emissions into clean energy and synthetic silica. The innovation addresses the significant carbon intensity of traditional silica production, which emits 30kg of CO<sub>2</sub>e per kilogram produced. Barton Blakeley's process uses waste emissions to create silica at lower costs and environmental impact, catering to industries reliant on this essential material, such as high-speed internet, semiconductors, and optical fibres, while producing clean energy as a by-product.

The funding will enable Barton Blakeley to deploy its first commercial system at an industrial site, scaling operations to remove 1 kilo-tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> per year per system. The company estimates a further 15.5 kilo-tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> savings annually by replacing conventional silica production methods with its sustainable process. With a \$500B global market for synthetic silica, the company aims to disrupt this industry while contributing to significant decarbonisation across sectors. In the medium term, Barton Blakeley plans to diversify its applications, leveraging the versatility of its technology to expand into broader markets.

To support its growth, Barton Blakeley has appointed Volker Beckers, CBE, as Chair, bringing decades of energy sector expertise, including as the former CEO of RWE Npower. Beckers will guide the company through its commercialisation phase alongside Elbow Beach Capital, whose track



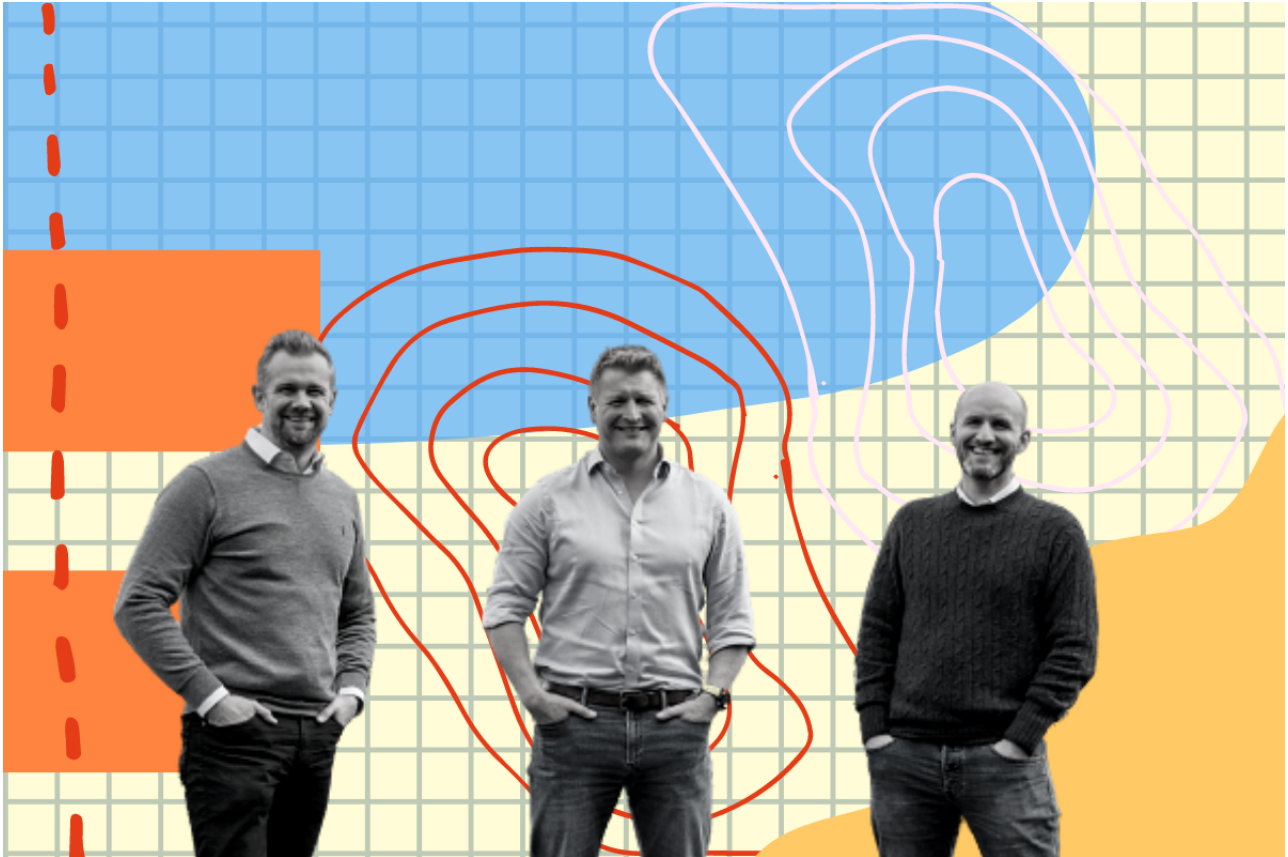
record in scaling early-stage startups adds strategic value. Jonathan Pollock, CEO of Elbow Beach, highlighted the transformative potential of Barton Blakeley's technology, calling it a game-changer for decarbonising industries while tapping into vast market opportunities.

## Miracle Design & Play secures game-changing investment from BGF

BGF, the largest growth capital investor in the UK and Ireland, has made a £6M investment in *Miracle Design & Play*, a Northampton-based company specialising in the design and installation of children's playgrounds, sports courts, fitness trails, and skateparks for the housebuilding sector. This funding will enable Miracle to expand its operations and strengthen its position as a leading supplier of bespoke, regulatory-compliant play solutions across the UK.

Founded in 2000 by Richard and Julie Howard, Miracle has delivered more than 3,000 projects and is trusted by over 250 housebuilders. The business has experienced significant growth, tripling its sales between 2021 and 2023, by offering innovative designs tailored to meet the needs of housing developers and local communities. The investment from BGF will be used to enhance Miracle's operational capabilities, grow its business development team, and implement advanced digital tools, including project management and CRM systems, to streamline processes.

The company is poised to benefit from the UK government's drive to increase new housing developments, ensuring that its sustainable and creative play solutions are integral to community-building efforts. The funding will also support innovation in the design of play areas, enabling Miracle to meet the evolving needs of developers and residents.



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## In other investment news

### Voyager Ventures Expands to London, Strengthening European Climate Tech Focus

US-based *Voyager Ventures*, a prominent venture capital firm specialising in early-stage climate tech, has announced the opening of its London office. This expansion reflects the firm's confidence in Europe's burgeoning climate tech ecosystem and builds on its history of supporting transformative decarbonisation technologies. Since its launch in 2021, Voyager has raised \$200M across two oversubscribed funds and invested in 28 pioneering companies.

Voyager's portfolio includes *Packfleet*, a UK-based all-electric delivery firm founded by ex-Monzo executives, and CarbonChain, a leader in carbon footprint accounting. By extending its presence to Europe, Voyager aims to further catalyse innovation across the continent, supporting startups at the Seed and Series A stages with its expertise in hardware, software, and biotech. Matthew Blain, a British national and Principal at Voyager, will lead the London operation. "The quality of founders and innovation in Europe is outstanding," Blain remarked, reinforcing the firm's ambition to support startups across sectors like manufacturing, transportation, and energy.

Sarah Sclarsic and Sierra Peterson, Voyager's co-founders, bring over 15 years of climate technology expertise each, spanning company-building, policy, and academic research. They envision a trillion-dollar opportunity for startups to replace legacy technologies with cheaper, better-performing, and emissions-cutting solutions. "This ecosystem is building multi-billion-dollar businesses transforming every industry," said Sclarsic. With its transatlantic focus, Voyager Ventures is poised to play a pivotal role in fostering innovation for a decarbonised global economy.

## In other international investment news

### Cloud Management Platform emma Secures \$17M in Series A Funding

emma, a leading cloud management platform, has successfully closed a \$17M Series A funding round, bringing its total funding to \$23M in just two years. The round was led by Smartfin, with participation from RTP Global and existing investors. This capital will drive emma's expansion, accelerating product development, go-to-market initiatives, and customer success programs to meet the rising demand for cloud-agnostic solutions.

Founded in 2019, emma simplifies cloud management by offering a platform that combines AI-driven automation, real-time analytics, and multicloud management capabilities. The platform enables businesses to optimise workloads, forecast usage, and manage cloud strategies with full visibility and control, helping organisations reduce costs, improve agility, and gain financial predictability. The new funding will accelerate innovation, with plans to enhance security, integrate broader cloud solutions, and add AI accelerators and advanced automation features. Additionally, emma will establish a research and development centre in Luxembourg to support its growing customer base.

CEO Dmitry Panenkov emphasised the company's vision to shape the future of cloud operations, stating, "We're building the standards to make cloud-agnostic operations a reality." Harry Haeck, Partner at Smartfin, highlighted emma's role in addressing the challenges of modern enterprises by providing a unique platform that combines automation and cost visibility. With continued growth and a rapidly expanding client base across industries such as gaming, fintech, healthcare, and retail, emma is also preparing for expansion into the US market, as demand for multicloud management solutions continues to rise.

## Predium raises €13M to decarbonise the real estate industry in an economically viable way

*Predium*, a Munich-based proptech company specialising in ESG management for the real estate and finance sectors, has secured €13M in a Series A funding round. The investment was led by Norrsken VC, a fund connected to Klarna co-founder Niklas Adalberth's Norrsken Foundation, with continued support from UVC Partners, b2venture, Mutschler Ventures, and Reimann Investors. This funding will support Predium's mission to decarbonise the real estate industry while maintaining economic viability, further developing its software platform, and

expanding into new markets.

Predium addresses the pressing challenges of the real estate sector, including regulatory pressures for climate neutrality by 2050, rising interest rates, and growing demand for transparency around sustainable and economic performance. Its platform uses AI, satellite imagery, and 3D models to process and enrich building data, offering insights into ESG metrics, stranding risks, and financial indicators. This enables clients like Deutsche Investment Group, Colliers, and Baloise to identify ESG risks, optimise renovation strategies, and decide on buying, selling, or upgrading properties to align with both sustainability goals and profitability.

The new funding will empower Predium to expand its Real Estate Intelligence Platform and increase its international footprint. CEO [Name] remarked, “This investment validates our vision of transforming real estate management into a sustainable and economically viable practice, equipping stakeholders to navigate a rapidly changing market with confidence.”

## Movopack secures £2M to launch circular E-Commerce packaging in the UK via Royal Mail

*Movopack* has successfully raised £2M in a seed funding round led by 360 Capital, with additional participation from Greiner Innoventures and Techstars. This investment will facilitate Movopack's expansion into the UK, marking its first move outside of Italy. The company aims to address the growing issue of packaging waste by providing e-commerce retailers with cost-effective, circular, and sustainable packaging solutions. With legislation in the EU requiring e-commerce packaging to be reusable by

2030, Movopack is positioning itself as a key player in helping brands meet these targets affordably.

Movopack's packaging, made from recycled plastic bottles (rPET) and woven recycled polypropylene (PP), is designed for durability and can be reused up to 20 times. The company has partnered with Royal Mail, leveraging its extensive postal network of 115,000 postboxes to ensure seamless returns of packaging. This infrastructure allows retailers to easily adopt Movopack's solution, which reduces CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 84%, energy consumption by 80%, and water usage by 76% compared to traditional single-use packaging, according to a Life Cycle Assessment.

The UK expansion comes at a time when British consumers and brands are increasingly prioritising eco-friendly alternatives. With backing from investors such as Lucrezia Lucotti from 360 Capital and Lukas Seemann from Greiner Innoventures, Movopack is poised to lead the charge in making sustainable packaging the new standard in e-commerce.



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