

Clean skincare, seaweed packaging and religious well-being apps in this week's MaddyMoney

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

Total

£623.5M

Number of deals

20

Vinehealth secures £4.15M to improve platform for cancer patient care

Vinehealth has raised £4.15M to help improve the quality of life of people

suffering with cancer. Founded in 2018, the healthtech uses a combination of behavioural science and AI to collect new data and provide personalised patient support programmes. Using Vinehealth's app, patients can manage their medications, side-effects and symptoms, and can regularly enter new data to support clinical research.

The round, which was led by Talis Capital, alongside Playfair Capital, Ascension and other angel investors, will be used to develop the platform, scale its team and expand into the US.

Beatrice Aliprandi, principal at Talis Capital, said: "We'd been keeping a close eye on Vinehealth's growth for several months before we invested in the company, given its unique value proposition where healthcare outcomes work in direct correlation with financial outcomes. It's a win-win-win for patients, hospitals and pharmaceutical companies, which is rarely the case in the healthcare space where parties are often at odds with one another."

Read also

[Unsexy industries, new trends and timing it just right: Meet Playfair Capital's Jeevan Sunner](#)

Christian well-being app raises \$40M from celebrity investors to provide an alternative to closed church services

Subscription-based apps for Christians, *Glorify*, has raised \$40M in a Series A funding round led by Andreessen Horowitz, alongside SoftBank Latin America Fund, K5 Global and a host of celebrity investors including Kris Jenner, Corey Gamble, Michael Ovitz, Jason Derulo and Michael Bublé.

Since churches and places of worship have been forced to close, the subscription-based "well-being" app now offers an alternative through guided meditation, audio bible passages and Christian music.

Tulipshare bags £8.14M to drive shareholder activism

An activist investment platform has raised £8.14M to allow more people to push for positive change within some of the world's leading household names. Tulipshare allows people to invest and advocate for social and environmental changes within multinational corporations, including Apple, Amazon, JPMorgan and Coca-Cola.

The round, which was led by Eurazeo, Speedinvest, and Frst, as well as the co-founders of social app Zenly and game-studio Voodoo, will allow the platform to expand its team across engineering, marketing and into new markets, having recently applied for registration as a broker-dealer in the US.

Antoine Argouges, Founder and CEO of Tulipshare, said: "Through shareholder activism, Tulipshare enables activists to take a stance on major social and environmental issues by grouping their shareholder rights. This is a first in the industry and this record breaking seed round will help bring the everyday investors into the board rooms. Our goal is to help people globally realise that with a £1 investment you can be a part of a major change."

Facetheory raises £10M to bring clean, affordable skincare products to consumers around the world

Facetheory, a direct-to-consumer clean skincare brand has raised £10M in a Series A round. The investment from Active Partners will be used to drive growth into key markets, recruit new talent, and invest in product research and development.

Founded in South Yorkshire in 2014 by Jamie Shuker, Facetheory aims to provide consumers with clean skincare products at an affordable price.

Shuker said: "I founded Facetheory on the belief that consumers deserved better for their skin: better ingredients, better results and better prices. It's been an incredible journey to date, and I'm so proud of the amazing community we have built so far from our home in South Yorkshire. I couldn't be more excited to have Active Partners on board for this next phase of growth, and their deep expertise and experience in building exceptional, ethical consumer brands will be invaluable as we look to further build out our brilliant team and bring Facetheory's products to a global audience."

Learnerbly secures £7.5M to encourage employees to upskill

An online marketplace for workplace learning and development, has secured £7.5M in a Series A round led by Beringea. Learnerbly's platform helps employees access resources, including books, podcasts, conferences and courses across a breadth of topics areas.

The funding – which also saw participation from Digital Horizon Ventures, BY Venture Partners, GO Ventures, and FJ Labs, alongside existing investors – will be used to drive international growth. The platform is currently used by leading tech companies including Hellofresh, King, and GoCardless.

Rajeeb Dey MBE, founder and CEO of Learnerbly, said: “An increasingly competitive hiring market and the rise of the ‘great resignation’ mean employers worldwide are concerned about how they recruit and retain top talent. The focus on learning and development has, therefore, never been greater.

“And yet, many HR teams struggle to keep up with the breadth of content and pace of change required for L&D in the digital economy. At Learnerbly, we tackle these challenges head on. Our platform provides employees with the tools to discover exceptional content from more than 250 providers and tailor their own learning plans.”

Notpla raises £10M to cut single use plastic with seaweed alternatives

A sustainable packaging using seaweed to make eco-friendly alternatives has raised £10M in a Series A round. Notpla – a play on “not plastic” – was founded in 2014 by two Imperial College London and Royal College of Art alumni, Rodrigo Garcia Gonzalez and Pierre-Yves Paslier, and aims to slash reliance on plastic packaging by creating alternatives including flexible films and seaweed paper.

The funding will now be used to accelerate commercialisation of these alternatives. One product, “Ooho” – a biodegradable packaging made of seaweed – has so far replaced over 500,000 single-use plastic packaging at major international events such as the London Marathon and London Cocktail Week.

Wayne Cheng, Portfolio Curator at Horizon Ventures who led the round, said:

“We are excited to join Notpla’s journey to make packaging disappear. Conscious of the urgency to act on single-use plastic pollution, we’ve been impressed by the innovative solutions offered by this team of ambitious entrepreneurs. We believe Notpla is revolutionising the packaging industry with seaweed as a raw material.”

Read also

[A startup creating sustainable packaging options raises £10M to commercialise seaweed-based products](#)

Glucose Republic raises £500,000 to build the first app focused on the impact of food

[Glucose Republic](#) has raised a £500,000 from leading equity investors Deepbridge Capital and the Development Bank of Wales. The funding will be used to build a system which will allow people to discover the impact food has on their body.

The Cardiff-headquartered company uses biology and software to measure how bodies react to food and can provide personalised feedback to users, enabling them to make better meal choices.

From the founders of the world’s first mobile-connected diabetes management platform, GR is now hopeful that at a time of surging cardiovascular disease cases, as well as the impact of COVID-19, it’s entry to the market will be timely.

Glucose Republic CEO David Haines said “We are delighted that Deepbridge and the Development Bank of Wales have joined our mission to help customers understand the impact of their food choices, and benefit from our glucose proposition.”

Read also

COVID-19: Interview with David Haines, CEO of Glucose Republic

#HEALTHTECH

Vinehealth

£4.15M

Talis Capital, Playfair Capital, Ascension & Others

#PLATFORM

Preservica

£5.1M

Gresham House Ventures

#HR

Metaview

£4.5M

Seedcamp, Abakar Saidov, Jonathan Heiliger, Sultan Murad Saidov, Fly Ventures, Matt Robinson, Jerry Ting, Village Global, Moving Capital, PrimeSet & Palumni

#GAMING

Talewind

£2.6M

PROfounders Capital, Juha Paananen, FJ Labs, firstminute capital, Animoca Brands, 1Up Ventures & Sequoia Scout

#PLATFORM

Glorify

£30.1M

Andreessen Horowitz, Michael Ovitz, Kris Jenner, K5 Global, SoftBank Latin America Fund, Jason Derulo, Corey Gamble & Michael Bubl 

#HR

Screenloop

£1.9M

Blissgrowth, Passion Capital, RLC Ventures & Others

#PLATFORM

Carwow

£41.3M

Hercules Capital

#PLATFORM

Tulipshare

£8.14M

Eurazeo, Speedinvest, Frst & Others

#BEAUTY

Facetheory

£10M

Active Partners

#FOOD

Mighty Drinks

£8M

N/A

#FOODTECH

Gardin Agritech

£8.15M

Molten Ventures, LDV Capital, MMC Ventures & Seedcamp

#EDTECH

Learnerbly

£7.5M

Beringea & Others

#GREENTECH

Notpla

£10M

Horizons Ventures, Astanor Ventures, Lupa Systems & Torch Capital

#HR

Pento

£26.5M

Tiger Global Management, General Catalyst Partners, Seedcamp, LocalGlobe & Avid Ventures

#FINTECH

Plum

£6.5M

Crowdcube

#SOFTWARE

Sorted

£30.3M

Chrysalis Investments & Arete Capital Partners

#FOODTECH

Glucose Republic

£500K

Deepbridge Capital & the Development Bank of Wales

#AI

Synthesia

£38M

Kleiner Perkins & GV

#FINTECH

Monzo

£378M

Coatue Management, Abu Dhabi Fund for Development & Alpha Wave Ventures

#CLEANTECH

Grid Edge

£2M

BP Ventures, Goldacre & Aston University

In other International investment news

Nairobi-based fintech Kwara has raised \$4M in a seed funding round to build the first credit union-powered neobank out of Africa.

The round, which follows rapid sales across Africa, Asia, Europe and the US follows rapid sales growth and the upcoming launch of their neobank app. The funding will be used to develop the app to allow credit unions to bring financial services to more people.

Cynthia Wandia, CEO of Kwara said: “We are building a solution for people – an estimated 1 billion – who do not currently have access to personalized banking services. This is the result of a gap in banking-grade technology and the lack of neobank-like experiences for the end clients. We’ve been thrilled to see the excitement around the Kwara brand among credit unions and their members, which is fast becoming synonymous with a superior user experience and the future of banking.”

Article by MADDYNESS UK