

# Meet Aide Health, creating conversations with patients to help them manage their health

As part of our quick fire questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Ian Wharton, Founder and CEO of Aide Health about the importance of data in healthcare, becoming the demonstrable digital leader in driving patient engagement in the NHS and the unpredictability of fundraising.

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One of the two conditions that affected me in childhood made an abrupt reappearance in my mid-thirties. I was active, otherwise healthy, and asthma started impacting my day-to-day life for the first time since being a teenager.

My GP gave me a peak flow meter to monitor lung function. There was no system for capturing the readings, sharing them with the doctor, or for either of us to see and discuss trends and insights easily. I put all the readings and my adherence to the medicine into a spreadsheet and saw exactly what should happen; my peak flow became less erratic and stronger over time. I took all of the data plus possible triggers from stress to diet back to my doctor to the response of, “no one ever does this...if only.” This base level of insight made me more informed, our conversation more meaningful, and clinical decision-making a little easier. Four months later, no medicine, no asthma.

Our view today is that you can't manage what you don't measure; we just need

the right tools. This experience was the foundation for starting *Aide*.

## Tell me about the business – what it is, what it aims to achieve, who you work with, how you reach customers and so on?

Aide is a digital health service that helps patients and their clinicians better understand and manage long-term conditions. Chronic disease accounts for roughly 70% of all primary and acute care spending and half of all hospital bed days. The majority of this rising human and economic cost can be avoided with better self-management.

Using natural language, Aide has short, daily conversations with patients to help them manage their day-to-day health. From helping improve their relationship with their medicine to structured monitoring of things such as blood pressure and blood glucose to structured education. Insights from these interactions are designed to make the moment of patient and clinician coming back together more valuable.

We launched a pilot of Aide in NHS England for people living with asthma or type 2 diabetes in May 2022 and are now beginning to work with other organisations in the NHS to help support their patient population.

## How has the business evolved since its launch? When was this?

We spent 14 months in R&D, validating Aide at a conceptual, product and commercial level across the UK and US healthcare systems. Our most significant shift was from focusing solely on improving medical non-adherence, which causes 50% of treatment failures, to catering to long-term conditions more broadly, in particular comorbidity — people who have two or more conditions. Comorbidity leads to higher mortality, increased inpatient and ambulatory care and significantly more GP time. It is critically underserved in traditional models of healthcare.

## Tell us about the working culture at Aide

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The idealist's view is to have everything codified from day one and build immaculately from that point on. I'm not sure that's ever the reality. We're young, we're forming this as we go. We started Aide with a small team of experienced, multidisciplinary practitioners. We're design-led and don't pretend to have all the answers. Above all, we have a shared duty of care to the people using Aide.

## How are you funded?

Aide was a bootstrapped company for the first 18 months. In December 2021, we completed a small F&F round of £100K led by Emilie Choi, COO and President of Coinbase. In November this year, we closed our £1.1M pre-seed funding round led by Hambro Perks with participation from Fuel Ventures, 1818 Ventures and APX.

## What has been your biggest challenge so far, and how have you overcome this?

I imagine what is true of every early-stage startup with limited resources: deciding on the correct order of events. We have no shortage of possible applications for Aide, but we can't follow them all. Our clinical advisors and the network built around them help determine distraction from direction.

## What's in store for the future?

Our goal is 100 million lives supported by Aide globally and to be the demonstrable digital leader in driving patient engagement in the NHS. In the short term, we continue to add support for additional conditions, starting with hypertension.

## What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

Fundraising has the appearance of being a process with set rituals, expectations and rules for founders. It isn't. It's contrary and unpredictable. You can go from abject confusion to hysterics in the space of hours. Make friends with that reality — you'll enjoy it more and be less caught off guard.

Ian Wharton is the founder and CEO of *Aide Health*.

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