

Durham firm Applied Monitoring raises £600,000 to commercialise drug test

A North East firm is set to commercialise its non-invasive drug test to market on the back of a £600,000 investment.

Durham based Applied Monitoring has developed technology that can detect alcohol and drugs in a person's blood by scanning their skin – tech that is much quicker and cheaper than current onsite workplace tests.

The firm is now looking to commercialise its product on the back of a funding round co-led by the North East Venture Fund (NEVF), supported by the European Regional Development Fund and managed by Mercia, and the Finance Durham Fund, managed by Maven Capital Partners, established by Durham County Council and overseen by Business Durham.

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The deal includes a £100,000 investment from the [Centre of Processing Innovation](#) which will back further research and development of its technology.

Applied Monitoring's sensor system identifies the presence and concentration of alcohol, cocaine and cannabis in a person's bloodstream by scanning their skin. It generates electromagnetic waves at different frequencies that pass through the skin, interacting with chemicals in the blood that are reflected back, analysed and recorded.

The company is developing desk-based arm scanning equipment, using electronic components similar to those used in mobile phones.

At the moment, drug testing is carried out by collecting bodily fluid samples which are either sent to a lab for testing or set against dipstick test strips that confirm if drugs are present but not the amount.

Applied Monitoring's sensor technology software can analyse chemicals in the blood in seconds, to confirm if a specific chemical is present and if so, at what levels.

The global alcohol and drug testing market which Applied Monitoring is targeting is a lucrative one, projected to be \$10bn by 2025. The UK alcohol and drug testing market alone was estimated to be worth £250m in 2020 and the global on-site testing market is expected to grow from \$485m in 2020 to \$950m in 2025.

Two non-executive directors – Carl Barratt and Neil Hayward – were introduced to the company by Mercia as part of the deal.

Thea Tebble, investment associate at Mercia, said: "Mercia are delighted to support Applied Monitoring in the continued development of their market disrupting technology, which will significantly increase the speed and ease of alcohol and drugs of abuse testing. We look forward to collaborating with Jon and Rob on the exciting growth journey that lies ahead."

Jon Dixon, CEO of Applied Monitoring, said: "We are confident that Applied Monitoring has truly innovative and transformational technology offering the business strong competitive advantage versus the current market offerings. As a validation of our technology and business plan it is wonderful to have Maven and Mercia on-board and it has been a pleasure working with Michael Dickens and Thea Tebble of Mercia over the past few months. The financial support provided by Maven and Mercia, alongside the guidance of our highly experienced advisory Executive team of Dr Carl Barratt and Neil Hayward, ensures the business is best placed for an exciting future."

Michael Dickens, investment manager at Maven, said: “Applied Monitoring has developed remarkable technology to enable qualitative and quantitative onsite workplace test results in seconds. Jon and his team all have significant experience developing and launching new software products and operating large sales teams as well as diagnostic sector knowledge. We’re delighted the Fund can support the business as it embarks on its exciting next phase of development.”

Coun James Rowlandson, portfolio holder for resources, investment and assets at Durham County Council, said: “Applied Monitoring are an excellent example of the innovative companies at NETPark, it’s fantastic to be able to provide finance through Finance Durham to enable the company to solve real world problems with novel applications of technology. Last year we announced plans to expand NETPark, we will be investing circa £50m to finance the expansion providing new laboratory, office, production and storage space to help companies, like Applied Monitoring, grow at NETPark, creating more and better jobs in County Durham.”

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