

FOCUS ON North Tyneside

Summer 2024

North East Fund

Supported by the European Regional Development Fund

Dozens of North Tyneside companies have received investment from The North East Fund



By Jason Hobbs,
Chief Executive, The North East Fund



North East Funds' £1 billion impact

Since it was launched in 2018, the North East Fund has built on the work of its two predecessors. Over the last two decades, the three schemes have generated more than £1 billion

of investment in local companies – boosting business growth and creating thousands of jobs.

In total they've invested almost £400 million in 2,275 North East companies across multiple sectors. The investments have

helped these businesses to secure a further £700 million from other funding partners – generating a £1.1 billion impact in the region.

I don't think any of us who were involved in setting up the funds in the early 2000s could have imagined that they would make such a big impact. The three programmes have invested on average £50 million a year, helping hundreds of companies to launch and grow and acting as a catalyst to the

Since 2003



£400m
invested

2,275 North East companies secured investment



10,994
new jobs created



£1.1bn
total funding secured



Over
12,600
jobs safeguarded

Since 2018



£128m
invested

435 North East companies secured investment



3,125
new jobs created



£391m
total funding secured



Over
2,200
jobs safeguarded

investment ecosystem in the North East.

The funds have worked alongside multiple partners, including the region's universities, professional advisors and business support agencies, to provide backing for companies which wouldn't otherwise have had the opportunity to develop innovative projects in key sectors including clean energy, manufacturing, digital and low carbon technologies and life sciences.

Providing funding on commercial terms rather than as grants means that the financial returns from successful investments are re-used to support new companies and with the aim of making the funds self-sustaining. Almost £40 million of the current programme's funding has come from returns on previous investments.

Some of that was generated by **Kykloud**, a North Shields based company which received proof of concept investment in 2011 to help develop its innovative property portfolio asset management app. It scaled rapidly as many surveyors and property managers became customers, leading to Kykloud being bought by a US company which continues to grow the North Tyneside operation.

Dozens of North Tyneside companies have received investment from The North East Fund, some of which are profiled in this newsletter. They range from online home design start-up **Peek Home**, to health and safety software company **Notify Technology** to financial services firm **Cascade Cash Management**. We have also invested in companies which have subsequently moved into the borough

to take advantage of the facilities North Tyneside has to offer. These include robotic fruit picking machine maker **Wootzano**, which recently took up 14,000 sq ft of the Cobalt building formerly occupied by Siemens.

It's nearly 20 years since the former regional development agency, One North East, set up the predecessor to the North East Fund and tasked it with increasing the supply of finance for local SMEs. I'm proud that we've successfully delivered on this vision.

Further information on the North East Fund can be found at www.northeastfund.org. Contact details can be found there and at the end of this newsletter.

Notify Technology's health & safety solution

Duncan Davies and Andy Dumbell had a theory that if workers were given the right platform to have a voice about workplace safety issues, they would use it.

So they launched **Notify Technology** in 2017 and the company's app is now used by clients including Siemens, Wickes and Travis Perkins. Based at Cobalt Business Exchange in Wallsend, the business now helps to improve the safety of over 200,000 employees.

Workers can easily use Notify's app to instantly report accidents, incidents or near-misses in all types of workplace – generating a safety-focused culture. That information enables companies to monitor and proactively reduce risks and to improve risk assessment exercises. The software also helps companies to plan, automate and manage health and safety audits and the associated records management processes, simplifying and improving compliance with health and safety regulations.

Our Venture Fund first invested in Notify Technology in 2018 and has subsequently helped the company to raise over £4m of finance to help develop its product, grow its team and significantly increase its client base and turnover. It has been great to support the company's mission: to make workers and the work environment safe and healthy through simple, smart, secure technology.

Investment brings Nirvana to America solution



L-R: Jane Siddle of NEL Fund Managers, Steven Foley of CCBS Group and Nigel Morris of Nirvana Europe

Based at Silverlink Business Park, Nirvana Europe organises travel and accommodation for a range of major global sporting organisations and events, including the European and Global Ironman series and British, US and World Triathlon events.

The company began in 1999 by delivering travel and accommodation services for people taking part in the Great North Run. The expertise it developed resulted in it branching out to become a specialist sports travel and events firm which continues to support the Great Run events series and – with the support of a six figure North East Fund investment – is now expanding its operations in North America.

Managing Director Nigel Morris says: "Our growth in North America continues. We've been working with the IRONMAN group in delivering around 60 annual events for the last two years and we've just very recently added two really exciting partnerships to our North American portfolio – USA Triathlon & Los Angeles Marathon. Strategically these partnerships are both part of our long term plan to grow the business in the US and Canada."

Cascade Cashes in on growth opportunities

Wallsend based Cascade Cash Management developed a cloud based savings platform which provides savers with direct access to all savings accounts and all providers on the market, helping them to maximise returns on their deposits.

Co-founder Dr Emma Black says: "Cascade was set up to address the inertia in the UK savings market, which is estimated to be worth around £3 trillion, and to enable individuals, businesses and charities to get the best available returns on their cash, rather than leaving it lying inactive in the same unrewarding accounts. Our systems monitor one of the world largest sterling cash datasets on a daily basis, which makes it easy for us to identify and access the best combination of rates and returns for clients, whatever their preferences and objectives might be.

A six figure investment from our Growth Capital Fund is being used by the company to make further investments in the technologies which support its savings platform and enhance its business development activities, generating new sales, finance and administration jobs.

Dr Emma Black commented: "The investment offering was a really good fit with our requirements and the team helped to make securing this growth capital a pretty straightforward process."

Funding has enabled the firm to hire additional staff in sales, finance and administration



Dr Emma Black of Cascade Cash Management with Jane Siddle of NEL Fund Managers

Peek Home piques investment interest

Peek Home team, Roland and Jaemi Glancy



Online design start-up Peek Home developed software which allows people to easily visualise potential home extensions, redesigns or renovations, producing 3D virtual reality walkthroughs and also professionally designed sketch plans at a fraction of the cost of architect designs.

As well as helping homeowners plan alterations, the software is used by estate agents to demonstrate the potential of homes which they are selling – illustrating the result of renovations or layout reconfigurations.

Being featured on Channel 4's Love It or List It helped stimulate interest in the North Shields based company which has already designed thousands of home renovations across the UK. A six figure investment from our Innovation Fund and business angels including Zoopla and Shazam investor Simon Murdoch is helping Peek Home to further accelerate its growth and to continue innovating in the home design space.

Co-founder Jaemi Glancy said:

"We're thrilled to offer a more affordable and accessible way for homeowners to visualise the potential for their home. With this investment, we look forward to helping many more people across the UK and ultimately internationally too."

Working together to spread the word



The North East Fund exists to provide growth finance to companies in Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and County Durham and our two External Engagement Officers help to raise awareness of what we can offer across all parts of the region. They attend networking events and hold drop-in sessions at business parks and office locations – often in conjunction with representatives from local authorities and other business support providers. They also keep up to date with the current grant funds and other types of support which are available from local authorities and business support organisations such as InnovateUK and sign-post companies to those programmes and provide guidance on how to access them, as well as venture capital and loan funding.

Andrew Gibson focuses on North Tyneside and holds drop-in sessions at the likes of Wallsend's Town Hall Business Centre, the Village Hotel at Silverlink and Space@ in Whitley Bay. Andrew can be contacted by companies looking to discuss finance and support options, or by other business support agencies looking for assistance in promoting their programmes to North Tyneside based companies, on 0191 211 2300 or andrew.gibson@northeastfund.org

Businesses interested in funding should contact Andrew Gibson on 0191 211 2300 or via email at info@northeastfund.org. Further information on the North East Fund can be found at www.northeastfund.org

Andrew provides guidance on the evolving business support landscape

