



TwinklHive invests in eargym as they combat hearing deterioration across the country

TwinklHive is a business accelerator based in Sheffield that provides space, investment and support to accelerate the growth of EdTech companies. Backed by Educational resource provider Twinkl, TwinklHive recently invested in eargym, a company which is actively exploring the correlation between hearing loss and dementia, giving people the ability to track their hearing health to prevent long-term hearing problems.

Founded in early May 2020 by Amanda Philpott and Andy Shanks, eargym is an innovative digital hearing fitness platform which uses patent-pending auditory training combined with realistic immersive (360 degree) audio to stimulate the ears and parts of the brain responsible for hearing.

Eargym was formed after both Population Health and Strategy Specialist and ex-NHS Chief Officer, Amanda Philpott and award-winning ex-DJ and Digital Product Expert, Andy Shanks, joined the Zinc.vc accelerator in 2019.

The Mission 3 Zinc.vc accelerator is aimed at building businesses in order to improve the quality of later life for 100 million older people. It was here where they listened as an Audiologist from the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID), who spoke about the impact of hearing loss throughout life and its correlation with social isolation, cognitive impairment and dementia.

Amanda, founder of eargym, said: "I was stunned. I'd worked in population health for close to three decades. I'm incredibly passionate and interested in public health and social care, yet I still wasn't aware that hearing is the biggest amenable factor in 9% of all dementia. I thought about the impact of my parents' unaddressed hearing loss, and then I realised I hadn't even considered the impact of my own moderate hearing loss."

Eargym's aim is for its new technology to allow its users to take control of their hearing health by delivering personalised hearing training through their easy-to-use app.

The eargym app allows users to factor their hearing health into their daily life and is designed to improve hearing skills, as well as improving their long-term wellbeing. The app has a unique place in the market as it is specifically designed as a preventative approach to hearing degradation. Eargym focus on addressing the problem with early, proactive measures rather than treatment-based solutions. The eargym app is currently in its early stages and is expected to become available as a paid for app on Google Store and Apple Store in the upcoming year.

Hearing loss has been shown to be linked with social isolation, loneliness, depression, cognitive impairment, and dementia. With mild hearing loss, doubling the risk of developing dementia; whilst moderate hearing loss triples the risk and severe hearing loss increases the risk of developing dementia by 5 times.

A recent study conducted by *Age UK has shown that in the UK, 2 in 5 people aged over 50 have some form of hearing loss. Whereas, a similar study conducted by *WHO showed that there are 433million adults worldwide living with disabling hearing loss, and a further 1.1billion young people aged 12-35 are at risk of prolonged noise exposure.

These findings show that a proactive approach is required to tackle hearing loss worldwide. As it stands, hearing loss is costing the UK economy *£25bn a year due to lost productivity, unemployment, and early retirement with those suffering from hearing loss on average retiring 7-9 years earlier (National Institute on Ageing).

The only current solution for hearing loss is the use of hearing aids, which are designed for people with severe levels of loss. Studies have shown that early signs of hearing loss often start in our 30s, showing there is a need for preventative measures, specifically for the younger generation who are more at risk of prolonged exposure to loud noise.

TwinklHive's investment into eargym will support them as they start a crucial stage of product development and improvement. It will also give them the platform to spread the word about what they're working to achieve and the tools needed to build their user base and start collecting the valuable data needed to enable them to support those facing challenges due to hearing loss.

David Angrave, Chief Operating Officer at Twinkl and Investment Director of TwinklHive, said "We are very excited about this new investment and believe eargym will change the way people view their hearing health. Eargym offers a unique platform which will allow its users to improve their hearing health and reduce their risks of developing long-term health issues. Our investment into eargym will support their company's growth as they expand to improve the hearing health of people across the country."

Eargym's long-term goal is to be the global standard digital hearing health companion and expand out of the UK to reach global markets in order to build partnerships with national health providers to bring better hearing health to the world.

For further information about eargym and how they could help you on your journey to better hearing health, please visit their website www.eargym.world

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For more information please contact media@twinkl.co.uk or call 0114 360 0225