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Wayra UK and MSD's Velocity Health to drive innovation in healthcare through new cancer and diabetes tech start-ups

FEBRUARY 16, LONDON: Merck Sharp & Dohme Ltd (MSD), a global healthcare company, and Wayra UK, part of Telefonica Open Future, today announced the 2017 winners of Velocity Health – an initiative to create partnerships with the digital start-up community that deliver radical solutions aiming to reimagine how healthcare is delivered and improve patient outcomes.

The Velocity Health 2017 call to the start-up community focused on two verticals; *Living with and Beyond Cancer*, designed to help support people affected by cancer to self-manage their recovery, and *Delivering on Diabetes*, which aims to improve the treatment and care received by people living with Type 2 Diabetes. By helping patients better manage their disease, these verticals aim to positively impact patients' quality of life and potentially even their length of life. Additionally, helping people better manage their health is likely to have a positive impact on the sustainability of health and social care provision.

Velocity Health is proud to announce the winners of the 2017 call: **Our Path** and **Quit Genius**.

Our Path will combine the efforts of doctors, scientists, engineers, technologists and product designers to help type-2 diabetes patients gain control of their diet and lifestyle through support and health tracking tools.

Quit Genius is a unique personalised digital therapy programme to help people to stop smoking. Quit Genius combines western cognitive behavioural therapy with eastern mindfulness to give you full control over your mind and body.

The two winners will embark on a 10-month accelerator programme where a network of mentors, coaches and investors will nurture the entrepreneurial talent and technological expertise of each business to enable the development of innovative products and services that have the potential to deliver savings and efficiencies to the healthcare system.

Louise Houson, MSD's Managing Director for the UK and Ireland said *"We are delighted to be working with Quit Genius and Our Path to generate two powerful digital tools which support healthcare improvements, particularly in cancer and diabetes which continue to dominate health outcomes. MSD is continuously looking for innovations in healthcare that allow us to contribute beyond our medicines"*

Velocity Health (also known as the Velocity Health Accelerator) launched in 2015. Each year, it invests in digital innovations that seek to address the challenges outlined in the NHS Five Year Forward View, a strategy detailing how the NHS plans to improve patient outcomes, while closing the NHS funding gap – currently estimated to be £30bn.¹

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NOTES TO EDITORS

MSD

For over a century, MSD has been a global health care leader working to help the world be well. MSD is a trade name of Merck & Co., Inc., with headquarters in Kenilworth, N.J., U.S.A. Through our prescription medicines, vaccines, biologic therapies and animal health products, we work with customers and operate in more than 140 countries to deliver innovative health solutions. We also demonstrate our commitment to increasing access to health care through far-reaching policies, programs and partnerships. For more information, visit www.msd-uk.com.

Wayra UK

Wayra UK is part of Telefónica Open Future, the open programme that integrates the different initiatives of the whole Telefónica Group related to entrepreneurship and innovation.

Wayra UK gives direct funding, acceleration and pre-acceleration services (such as co-working space, connectivity services, mentoring, access to Wayra UK's network and knowhow, training in entrepreneurship and business skills) to selected start-ups. Since its launch in 2012, Wayra UK start-ups have raised close to \$100M in third-party investment.

Wayra UK has partnered with some of the world's leading organisations to offer a number of verticals that help generate growth, create positive societal impact and fuel innovation across a number of industries. These include Velocity Health with Merck Sharp & Dohme Limited (MSD), a global healthcare company transforming healthcare, and ASOS – one of the world's leading fashion destinations for 20-somethings – which is developing technology that can make the ASOS experience even better for its 11 million customers around the world.

Wayra UK are also working alongside local and regional partners to reinvigorate entrepreneurial ecosystems, energise local economies and democratise entrepreneurship. Start-ups in the Greater Manchester area have the opportunity of joining Wayra North, a new digital enterprise hub and pre-acceleration programme supported by Hack Oldham and the Oldham Council. In Birmingham, start-ups have access to a 2,500 square foot space within Wayra Midlands at the Serendip® Smart City Incubator.

www.wayra.co.uk

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About Telefónica Open Future_

Telefónica Open Future is a global programme designed to connect entrepreneurs, startups, investors and public and private partners around the world to capture innovation and business opportunities. Its goal is to support talent at all stages of growth through a comprehensive model for acceleration that is designed to connect talent with organisations, investors and companies. The programme incorporates all the Telefónica Group's open innovation, entrepreneurship and investment initiatives (Think Big, Talentum, Crowdfunding, Wayra, Américo and Telefónica Ventures) through a global network that is

open to participation by external partners that wish to develop their own entrepreneurial and investment strategies. To date, more than 49,000 proposals have been analysed, with a portfolio of 1,360 startups; it is present in 17 countries and a total of 384 million euros has been committed to investment by Telefónica and its partners.

More info: <https://www.openfuture.org/en>

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¹ Five Year Forward View. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/5yfv-web.pdf#page=37> Last accessed September 2016