News story: Bionic arm start up secures £4.6 million to go global

Bristol-based Open Bionics will take its bespoke 3D-printed prosthetic arms to even more children and young people, after attracting £4.6 million from investors.

The Williams F1 team's Foresight Williams, Downing LLP and Ananda Impact Ventures co-led the investment with £1.5 million each, with additional funding from Rathbone Nominees.

This deal will allow Open Bionics to scale up its manufacturing capabilities to serve the UK and overseas markets, including the United States.

For the individual

Prostheses for children and young people need to meet their changing requirements as they grow and be suitable for a diverse range of activities while they learn and play.

Open Bionics developed its Hero Arm to meet this challenge. Using 3D printing, it has created a low-cost bionic arm that is lightweight, adjustable and offers multi-grip capabilities.

Control is via sensors that detect and respond to movement in the upper arm muscles. The device can be used by children as young as 9-years-old.

Used by the NHS and other healthcare providers

Development of the Hero Arm was supported by a contract with NHS England that used SBRI Healthcare – part of the Innovate UK Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI), which helps innovative businesses work with big public sector organisations to implement new technologies.

Open Bionics was awarded £697,464 to support clinical trials of its bionic limbs for child amputees. This helped to get the product medically-certified. It is now available through the NHS and other national healthcare systems including in France and Germany, as well as private sales.

The business also enjoys commercial licences with Disney, Marvel and Pixar to accessorise its prosthetics with superhero characters and further its appeal to children.

Reaching a global market

Samantha Payne, co-founder and COO of Open Bionics, said:

> This funding enables us to serve multiple international markets.

We’re thrilled to finally be able to deliver bionic hands to amputees and people with limb differences in the USA.