

Magnitude Biosciences moves its unique COVID-19 compatible technology to a new lab at NETPark in Sedgefield, County Durham

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Specialist *C. elegans* CRO Magnitude Biosciences has completed the transfer of its operational facilities from Durham University to NETPark in Sedgefield. Following the acquisition of transgenic services provider Invermis, this move allows Magnitude Biosciences to deliver its research services in the fields of ageing, neurodegeneration, microbiome and toxicity from a single site.



The Magnitude Biosciences team, recently relocated to NETPark

COVID-19-safe working practices are enabled by the imaging technology that forms the backbone of its compound testing assays. This technology requires minimal manual involvement, and the live data on the health and ageing of the nematode *C. elegans* being monitored can be accessed remotely, allowing staff to work in small teams in the lab and otherwise work from home.

Magnitude Biosciences's CTO, Chris Saunter, explains: "From the onset, we chose platform automation for data consistency and quality, and to reach a level of operational efficiency that would facilitate future scale-ups. This made us ideally suited to continue processing orders under COVID-19. Our system can be started remotely, with end-to-end automated data acquisition and analysis. Manual operator input is only needed at the very start and end of testing, to load and unload test plates, and the quality of our data means we can use smaller test populations, which reduces the amount of manual worm culture beforehand. "



Magnitude Biosciences CEO, David Weinkove

NETPark has recently been recognised in the national Power of Place Report from the Campaign for Science and Engineering as a “strong example of local leadership bringing great benefits”, and is a great match for Magnitude Biosciences’ ambitions to establish itself as an alternative pre-clinical assay provider for the academic and pharmaceutical industry.

Janet Todd, NETPark Manager said: “Magnitude Bioscience are a highly innovative company who have identified a growing area of research and development in the field of age-related conditions. We are delighted to welcome them as they move into our science and technology community here at NETPark. The park is ideal for this type of University spin out company, where the group will be able to benefit from the facilities, support and networks as they move to the next stage of their development.”

Magnitude Biosciences also joins the growing list of young biotech companies that, thanks to the early support and guidance of Durham University’s Research and Commercialisation Team, have gone on to successfully transition from Durham University to NETPark.

Dr Tim Hammond, Director of Commercialisation and Economic Development at Durham University, and Project Lead for Northern Accelerator, added: “It’s fantastic to have supported Magnitude Biosciences from a seed of an idea in an innovative academic’s mind, through to the formation of a promising company, and now to see them ‘flying the nest’ and setting up their new base at NETPark. This journey embodies the aims of Northern Accelerator, the four university partnership that is accelerating the commercialisation of research in the North East’s universities. Through our Executives into Business programme a strong management team was formed, and now a growing team of people are employed in skilled jobs in another high potential biosciences company, here in the region. The university has a strong relationship with NETPark, to be strengthened further still with the launch of our University Enterprise Zone, ‘Orbit’, next year – where we’ll see more SMEs working closely with Durham’s academic expertise. We’re confident Magnitude will continue to go from strength to strength in their new home – a journey to inspire an upcoming pipeline of academic entrepreneurs.”



MEDIA INFORMATION

CEO available for interview

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More info about David on <https://magnitudebiosciences.com/people> or his Durham University profile: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/research/directory/staff/?id=6328>

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Editor's notes:

- Magnitude Biosciences is a Durham University spin-out founded in 2018 from the joint efforts of Dr. David Weinkove (Biosciences) and Dr. Christopher Saunters (Physics).
- Magnitude Biosciences technology platform uses invertebrates (*C. elegans* nematode worms) as a time and cost-efficient alternative to mouse studies for early pre-clinical drug development and fundamental academic research.
- Magnitude Biosciences technology is available as contract research services for the fields of ageing, age-related diseases, host-microbiome interactions and toxicity testing.
- More information is available on www.magnitudebiosciences.com
- More information on NETPark is available on <https://www.northeasttechnologypark.com/>
- More information on Durham University's Research Commercialisation Team is available on <https://www.dur.ac.uk/research.innovation/commercialisation/>