British accessible neonatal incubator achieves its first clinical use in the UK

- **mOm Incubators** will help to reduce the number of premature baby deaths globally
- More than 1 million premature babies die annually (World Health Organization)
- Global James Dyson Award recipient turns undergrad vision into life-saving device
- Project supported by Royal Academy of Engineering Enterprise Hub
- First impact investment by Holly Branson, Virgin Group’s Chief Purpose & Vision Officer
- Incubator designed, developed, and manufactured in the UK

A new, neonatal incubator designed, developed and manufactured in Britain -- and backed by Holly Branson and James Dyson -- saw its first ever clinical use in a UK hospital earlier this month. Created by James Roberts, Founder & CEO of mOm, and his team, this innovative accessible incubator helped to sustain a premature baby at St Peter’s Hospital, Chertsey.

One in 10 babies born around the world are premature, and one million of them die every year. Three-quarters of these deaths are easily preventable through access to thermoregulation, or consistent warmth. However, only a small minority of premature babies have access to conventional incubators, which are regularly inoperable or discarded due to a lack of servicing and spare parts, leading to ‘equipment graveyards’ in many parts of the world.

This is what inspired James to create the mOm Incubator, an alternative to conventional incubators that is cost-effective, compact, and easy to maintain. mOm not only provides a life-saving solution in challenging, low/middle income settings, but a more flexible option for neonatal care in the UK and the developed world.

James Roberts’ prototype caught the attention of the James Dyson Foundation, which in 2014 awarded him the global James Dyson Award. James Dyson himself stated that the mOm Incubator has the “potential to save thousands of lives”. Fast forward to today and the early design of 2014 has progressed into a life-saving device, which has been successfully deployed in a clinical setting for the very first time.

Upon achieving this milestone, James commented, "Sustaining a child's life in our incubator for the first time has been a humbling experience and a monumental step in transforming this dream into a practical reality. It is unacceptable that one million premature babies die each year, when most of these deaths can be easily prevented. An idea that was once scribbled down on paper now has the potential to impact many lives globally."

Peter Reynolds, Consultant Neonatologist at St Peter’s Hospital Chertsey stated, “I am delighted that we have successfully recruited the first few babies into the mOm incubator clinical trial at St. Peter’s Hospital. I am very grateful to their parents who agreed to their participation. Keeping babies warm is a fundamental part of good neonatal care and we are pleased to be leading this evaluation of the new mOm incubator."
Holly Branson, Chief Purpose and Vision Officer at Virgin, made mOm Incubators her first ever impact investment in 2016: “From the first moment I met the incredible, innovative team at mOm Incubators in 2016, I knew this was a unique, game-changing, purpose-led company that we should invest in and help grow. As a family, and a brand, we are passionate about backing individuals who are using intelligence, creativity, expertise, and sector skills to make a positive impact in the world through growing successful, purposeful businesses. James and the team at mOm are doing just that and much, much more. I’m incredibly proud of all they have achieved and don’t mind saying that the photos of ‘first baby’ being protected in a mOm Incubator made me more than a little emotional. As the mum of premature children, I know how critical those days in the incubator are. The mOm Incubator will make a positive impact to newborn children and society across the world by accelerating access to care and as my first ‘official’ impact investment, over five years ago, mOm Incubators will always hold a special place in my heart.”

mOm’s seed investment round in 2016 was led by MaSa Partners. MaSa co-founder Max Duckworth stated, “It has been a privilege to be involved with James, the company and the board since inception. The team’s vision, innovation and determination have led mOm to this significant milestone -- a working incubator that has passed all testing and now helped a premature baby to survive. We are very excited to go to market and achieve the global impact that first led MaSa Partners and our fellow early investors to fund mOm.”

Ana Avaliani, Director of Enterprise and Sustainable Development at the Royal Academy of Engineering, observed: “The solutions to today’s most complex economic and social challenges lie in the minds of the brightest engineering and tech entrepreneurs – people like James. At the Royal Academy of Engineering Enterprise Hub, we help them transform ideas into reality. We are thrilled to see the mOm incubator in clinical use in the UK.”

Gemma Singer, a Design Engineer at mOm Incubators, explains the impact on her: “It’s so exciting to see what purpose-led design has achieved at mOm. Our incubator will save lives now and also take care of the next generations as we reduce waste and landfill by taking on the ‘medical device graveyard’ through innovative engineering.”

And while this is a significant development for neonatal care, James is far from complacent: “Our mission has been for a mOm Incubator to reach everywhere it’s needed on the planet. Our first clinical use represents an exciting step towards achieving this objective. Over time, I want mOm to apply this ethos to providing access to quality healthcare around the world. It is time for our industry to start to think differently.”

Designed and developed in conjunction with eg technology, a product engineering specialist based in Cambridge, UK. Development and industrialisation led in conjunction with Cambridge Medtech Solutions, a medical device specialist in Cambridge, UK. Manufactured by Cogent Technology specialists in medical device assembly based in Felixstowe. Welding and assembly by Arrow Medical specialists in medical device manufacture based in Kington. Mouldings managed by Fenland RP based in Wisbech. Co-funded by the UK’s innovation agency, Innovate UK.

momincubators.com

ENDS
Notes to Editor:

mOm Incubators is not responsible for the content of third-party websites.

For further information please contact Lindsay Rodgers, Head of Product Management, mOm Incubators
Website: www.momincubators.com
Email: lrogers@momincubators.com / enquiries@momincubators.com
Tel: +44 (0) 115 671 6016

WHO Data on Premature Baby Deaths: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/preterm-birth

Photo courtesy of: St Peter's NICU and the baby’s parents who we thank profusely
Further photos/videos available on request

https://www.egtechnology.co.uk/
http://c-m-s.com/
https://cogent-technology.co.uk/
http://www.arrowmedical.co.uk/
https://fenlandrp.co.uk/
https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/innovate-uk