

## **TECH NATION BOARD FOCUSES ON FOUNDERS WITH FIVE NEW DIRECTORS FROM ACROSS THE UK**

- **New board members from Sheffield, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London reflect Tech Nation's expanded UK-wide mission**
- **Tech Nation now counts five founders on its board**

**London, 19 July 2018**

Tech Nation is delighted to announce that five of the UK's most successful entrepreneurs and founders will join the Tech Nation board this summer, to help guide the organisation in its role of accelerating the growth of the UK's digital tech sector.

Tech Nation is refreshing its board at a critical point for the UK digital technology sector which has seen dramatic growth in the last seven years. Recent research from Dealroom.co and Tech Nation showed that the UK received \$7.8bn in venture capital funding in 2017, more than Germany, France and Sweden combined. The UK has 37% of Europe's unicorns or 13 private sector businesses valued at at least \$1bn. Together the 13 companies have a potential value of \$23bn and a further 51 companies have been identified by Dealroom.co as possible unicorns, with values ranging from \$250m to \$1bn.

Tech Nation's role was expanded by the Government in 2018 and the organisation is working to connect experts and ambitious digital tech entrepreneurs across the nation, with the aim of building an even stronger tech sector that continues to compete at the highest levels globally.

The new recruits to the Tech Nation board are:

- Lesley Eccles - co-founder of FanDuel, founder and CEO of Relish
- Adam Hale - chairman of DevOpsGroup and former CEO of Fairsail
- Emma Jones - founder of Enterprise Nation
- David Richards - founder and CEO of WANdisco
- Sarah Wood - co-founder and chair of Unruly

The Tech Nation board is chaired by Eileen Burbidge, partner at Passion Capital and HM Treasury's special envoy on fintech. Previous board members Tim Luke and Wendy Tan-White will be rejoining the board.

**The full board is as follows:**

- Eileen Burbidge - partner at Passion Capital
- Lesley Eccles - co-founder of FanDuel, founder and CEO of Relish
- Gerard Grech - Chief executive, Tech Nation
- Adam Hale - chairman, DevOpsGroup and former CEO of Fairsail
- Emma Jones - founder, Enterprise Nation
- Tim Luke - Vice President, Technology, Media and Telecoms, Barclays
- David Richards - founder and CEO of WANdisco
- Wendy Tan-White - advisor, BGF and co-founder and former CEO of Moonfruit
- Sarah Wood - co-founder and chair of Unruly

**Eileen Burbidge, chair Tech Nation**, said: “Right across the nation, communities are seeing startups forming and scale-ups growing, providing great jobs and opportunities. One of the best things about the UK tech industry is that those who have already had success are willing to pay it back and work with others to make their ambitions come true. With thanks to Robin Klein and Herb Kim who have recently completed their tenure, I’m looking forward to our new board continuing to inspire and help accelerate the next generation of UK digital tech talent.”

**Gerard Grech, chief executive Tech Nation**, said: “I’m delighted to announce this very strong board that is passionate about promoting the digital tech sector right across the United Kingdom. Tech Nation has ambitious plans to step up its support of UK entrepreneurs in digital tech and to build digital skills and connect expertise across the country to make sure we continue to be a global tech powerhouse. I would also like to thank Eileen Burbidge, Wendy Tan-White and Tim Luke who have agreed to continue their excellent and much-valued work on the Tech Nation board.”

**Lesley Eccles, co-founder of FanDuel**, said: “Building a business takes courage, grit, smarts and resilience. If you have a network of advisors who have been there and done it before you, that will make your path easier. So it is immensely gratifying to be able to share some of what you have learned along the way to help others scale the heights.”

**Adam Hale, chairman, DevOpsGroup and former CEO of Fairsail**, said: “As someone whose company has benefitted from Tech Nation’s Future Fifty, I’m delighted to be joining Eileen and Gerard as they broaden Tech Nation’s important work connecting and supporting ambitious entrepreneurs, right across the country.”

**Minister for Digital Margot James**, said:

"We are already Europe's leading tech hub with our founders and firms attracting huge investment into the economy.

"Tech Nation's mission is to accelerate this success and make sure the huge benefits of digital technology are spread across the country.

"It is fantastic to see these passionate tech advocates volunteer their insight and local knowledge to help us achieve our aim of building a Britain that is fit for the future."

**Emma Jones, founder, Enterprise Nation,** said: "Ambitious entrepreneurs are the backbone of the UK's digital tech sector and are the key to us retaining global leadership of this industry. Tech Nation's work to support these risk takers is vital and I can't wait to get started working with the talent that is future-proofing our economy."

**David Richards, founder and CEO of WANdisco,** said: "Digital businesses are outperforming the wider economy, but there's no room for complacency. We must look to build on this success. Attracting the most skilled people from across the world to work in British tech is paramount, but equally important is ensuring that a steady pipeline of talent develops alongside this. Education is key here. There is quite rightly a great deal to be optimistic about and I'm confident that European tech will continue to flourish"

**Wendy Tan-White, advisor, BGF and co-founder and former CEO of Moonfruit,** said: "I'm rejoining the Tech Nation board because I believe this organisation has made great progress in accelerating the growth of the digital tech sector over the past three years and I am very excited about the next phase of its mission, to make sure that entrepreneurs right across the country are connected and supported to build the best digital tech businesses they can."