

Dogpatch Labs to upgrade and expand startup hub in CHQ, creating 100 extra membership places

Dogpatch Labs and Ulster Bank renew partnership, which supports innovation to improve banking for customers

13 December 2018: Dogpatch Labs, Ireland's leading startup hub, is to upgrade and expand its facilities in the historic CHQ building in the heart of Dublin's Digital Docklands, with the support of Ulster Bank. The deal will enable Dogpatch to significantly enhance its flexible hot-desking space, upgrading the Urban Garden space with the installation of a glass wall enclosure and creating 100 extra membership places, to meet growing demand from both existing and new clients.

Ulster Bank and Dogpatch Labs have also renewed their partnership to July 2021. The partnership, which supports innovation to further enhance the banking experience for our customers, began in 2015. It has seen Hackathons and Fireside Events, and has supported and incubated a number of startups. Most recently, the partnership has enabled a new internal incubator programme designed for Ulster Bank staff. This programme helps to turn the concept of innovation into reality, by harnessing ideas that can make a real impact and benefit our customers.

Dogpatch Labs is home to over 80 companies and over 400 members, including many of Ireland's fastest growing tech companies and has expanded to almost 40,000 square foot in size over three levels.

Jane Howard, Ulster Bank's CEO, said:

"Ulster Bank is a strong supporter of innovation and we are committed to finding new ways to improve the banking experience for our customers. We are delighted to renew our partnership with Dogpatch Labs, putting us together at the heart of Ireland's tech sector, while enabling Dogpatch to enhance and expand their facilities. The first phase of the partnership between Dogpatch Labs and Ulster Bank embedded us in the startup ecosystem, while driving cultural change for our colleagues and stakeholder engagement. We are now helping to turn the concept of innovation into real benefits for our customers, through Ulster Bank's Intrapreneurship Programme Start Up. The programme shows what is possible when we harness the entrepreneurial energy of our colleagues for the good of our customers."

"Dogpatch Labs is central to the startup ecosystem in Ireland, providing companies with the space, connections and support required at a crucial phase in their development. Our partnership with Patrick Walsh and the team at Dogpatch Labs is built on a solid foundation and shared ambition to drive and support innovators. I'm delighted to say that our collaboration continues to go from strength to strength."

Patrick Walsh, Managing Director, Dogpatch Labs said:

“Here at Dogpatch Labs we’re committed to supporting and accelerating the development of Ireland’s startup community, by providing a valuable space from where they can grow, share knowledge and form connections. We’re delighted to renew our partnership with Ulster Bank and have their support to further upgrade and expand this space.”

“This support will allow us to enclose the Urban Garden in glass and install a full HVAC system, which will significantly enhance its usability for clients on a year-round basis. Dogpatch is also activating 100 extra membership places to meet strong demand from both existing and new clients.

We’re very grateful for our partnership with Ulster Bank and we look forward to building on this collaboration over the coming years.”

ENDS

Notes to Editor

Dogpatch Labs

- Dogpatch Labs is a startup hub, located in the historic CHQ Building and in the heart of Dublin’s Digital Docklands.
- It opened in March 2015 and has been through three distinct stages of development. The original site allowed the opportunity to create space for up to 25 startups.
- The second phase of development, with the help of Ulster Bank, created The Vaults, the dedicated events and meeting space.
- The third phase was the construction of the Mezzanine Floor and flexible hot-desking Urban Garden space.
- This latest phase will enable Dogpatch Labs to significantly enhance its flexible hot-desking Urban Garden space, creating 100 extra membership places to meet growing demand from both existing and new clients.
- Dogpatch Labs received international attention in recent months with a visit from Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, during their trip to Dublin.

Partnership between Dogpatch Labs and Ulster Bank

- The Partnership between Dogpatch Labs and Ulster Bank began in 2015 and was set up across three key pillars: Community, Culture and Innovation. Crucial to the partnership is the creation of a platform whereby a new generation of intrapreneurs is given the opportunity to rapidly advance new ideas for the bank.
- **Ulster Bank’s innovation team** sits in Dogpatch Labs, and through this off-site presence the bank is fully integrated with the broader tech ecosystem, better enabling the bank to work with partners to build new products and solutions for the banking sector. This culture of innovation has enabled Ulster Bank to become a key player in Fintech disruption.
- The **Ulster Bank ‘Startup’ Intrapreneurship Programme** provides staff with a platform where internal ideas undergo a process of product validation, mentoring and customer development. The incubator has many benefits, allowing motivated staff to find an outlet for entrepreneurial ideas, that can potentially shape the future of the bank, boosting employee retention and promoting creativity. Supporting internal startups empowers employees with an entrepreneurial appetite by giving them the tools to accelerate their ideas and to develop innovative solutions from within the bank.
- The **Ulster Bank Hackathon** is Ulster Bank’s flagship event allowing entrepreneurs, designers and coders from across the tech ecosystem to come together and bring forward new, innovative ideas to the banking sector. Now Ireland’s largest fintech hackathon, the event always brings brilliant minds and a fun atmosphere all in the spirit of hacking the future of financial innovation
- Examples of ways that Ulster Bank has helped external startups during the partnership:
 - Providing free hot desking to new startups
 - Providing free desk space to Circuit, the winner of the Ulster Bank 2015 Hackathon.

- In 2016 Dogpatch and Ulster Bank sponsored the Enterprise Ireland Competitive Start Fund. The sponsorship gave the ten successful applicants membership to Dogpatch Labs, in partnership with Ulster Bank and access to the Ulster Bank Innovation Solutions team for the duration of the programme.
- Ulster Bank staff regularly mentor at the Google First Fridays for Startups, supporting the wider startup community.
- Ulster Bank leverage their relationship with RBS, introducing the RBS Global Head of Scouting to a number of Dogpatch residents i.e.