

# International Track 200 regional press release

Thursday 13 February 2020



## SEVEN COMPANIES IN THE NORTHEAST WIN PLACES ON LEAGUE TABLE OF FASTEST-GROWING INTERNATIONAL SALES STARS

Published this weekend, the 11<sup>th</sup> annual **Sunday Times HSBC International Track 200** league table ranks Britain's mid-market private companies with the fastest-growing international sales.

The seven companies headquartered in **the Northeast** include **three new entrants to the league table**. These regional stars have grown their international sales by an average of 80% a year over the last two years to a total of £350m. Together they employ more than 2,000 people.

The region's top-ranked company is **Northern Gas & Power** (No.4), which appears on the league table for the first time. Founder Fokhrul Islam set up this energy consultancy in 2013, winning its first customers from his bedroom. International sales reached £11.4m in 2018, on total sales of £29.6m, growing an average of 248% per year over two years.

Hexham, in Northumberland, is home to drinks manufacturer **Fentimans** – which appears on the league table for a second consecutive year. Its international sales grew at an average annual growth rate of 39% over its last two years. The company has been botanically brewing soft drinks for over a century, and now sells to distributors in more than 80 countries.

Darlington-based scrap metal processor **Ward Bros** features on the league table for the first time. Established in 1974, the company processes over 100,000 tonnes of metal a year, and grew its international sales an average of 106% per year over its last two years. Exporting 50,000 tonnes of this to steel producers in Turkey and mills in Europe helped international sales reach £18.2m in 2018, on total sales of £41.7m.

The companies in the Northeast appear alongside well-known British brands based across the UK including **Mountain Warehouse**, which opened 21 shops abroad last year; **BrewDog**, which was valued at £1bn in 2017 and now has nearly 100 bars worldwide; and **Charlotte Tilbury Beauty**, the London-based cosmetics and skincare brand, which ships to 76 markets.

International Track 200 star alumni include **Skyscanner**, **Specsavers**, **Lush** and **Endava** – which first featured on the league table in 2012 with exports of £3.6m, floated on the NYSE in 2018 and is now valued at more than \$2.5bn.

The league table programme is sponsored by **HSBC**, **DHL Express** and **Oracle NetSuite**, and compiled by **Fast Track**, the Oxford-based research and networking events firm.

Amanda Murphy, Head of Commercial Banking, HSBC UK, commented:

*"The Sunday Times International Track 200 shows the strength, ambition and resilience of companies across the UK and we are delighted to be sponsoring again this year. At HSBC UK, we take great pride in recognising the contribution these businesses are making to driving growth across the UK. The three new entrants in the Northeast are making a significant contribution to employment, driving prosperity and growth and are the sort of businesses we are pleased to support every day."*

**Private companies in the Northeast with the fastest-growing international sales – ordered by county then rank**

HQ location and county	Rank [2019 rank]	Company Activity	Average annual int'l sales growth over 2 yrs	Int'l sales (£m)	Total sales (£m)	Staff	Year end	Comment
Darlington, County Durham	23	<b>Ward Bros</b> Scrap metal processor	106%	18.2	41.7	84	Sep 18	Exports nearly 50,000 tonnes of metal to steel producers in Turkey and mills in Europe
Newton Aycliffe, County Durham	122	<b>Crafter's Companion</b> Craft products retailer	43%	20.3	31.8	195	Mar 19	Has moved its American operations to a 31,000 sq ft base in California to meet growing demand
Hexham, Northumberland	145 [174]	<b>Fentimans</b> Drinks manufacturer	39%	15.6	40.4	61	Dec 18	Launched five flavours of soft drinks in the Middle East last year
Gateshead, Tyne and Wear	4	<b>Northern Gas &amp; Power</b> Energy management consultancy	248%	11.4	29.6	285	Dec 18	Has offices in Paris and Texas and technology hubs in India and Malta
Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear	105 [121]	<b>Frank Recruitment Group</b> Recruitment consultancy	46%	164.4	227.9	1,281	Nov 18	Sources IT professionals from 21 offices across America, Asia, Australia and Europe
Washington, Tyne and Wear	119	<b>Oil Consultants</b> Recruitment consultancy	43%	39.3	43.7	39	Dec 18	Works across more than 95 countries to find technical staff for the oil and gas sector
Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear	177 [68]	<b>END.</b> Designer menswear retailer	33%	80.9	134.7	464	Mar 19	Its website and apps receive more than 10m visitors each month

**The national picture**

The average international sales growth for the 200 companies was 64% a year, to a total of £10.3bn on combined total sales of £22.1bn. Together they employ 124,000 staff, having added 38,000 employees to their workforce over the period.

London is the most popular location for company headquarters with 79, followed by the southeast (36). There are 19 companies in the northwest, and 18 in the northeast (including Yorkshire). Of the remainder, 15 companies are based in the Midlands, 11 in the southwest, eight in Scotland, seven in the East of England, four in Northern Ireland and three in Wales.

The full league table is published as a ten-page supplement with the business section of The Sunday Times on 16 February, both in print and in the tablet edition, and on [www.fasttrack.co.uk](http://www.fasttrack.co.uk).

**ENDS**

**PLEASE CREDIT IN FULL: "THE SUNDAY TIMES HSBC INTERNATIONAL TRACK 200"**

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#IntTrack200

## Notes for editors

**Fast Track** has published league tables of the UK's top-performing private companies with **The Sunday Times** for the past 23 years. The company was founded and is run by Dr Hamish Stevenson, who also holds an associate fellowship at Green Templeton College, Oxford University.

### League table criteria

Companies had to be registered in the UK and be independent, unquoted and ultimate holding companies. They are ranked according to the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of their international sales over their latest two financial years.

Total sales had to be between £25m and £1bn, and international sales at least £1m in the latest financial year. Companies with sales of less than £25m are covered by our sister SME Export Track 100 league table.

The research was carried out by Fast Track principally between August and December 2019. Data on international sales can be limited. Companies filing abridged accounts are not required to disclose any geographical breakdown of sales, while firms that file full accounts can choose to not disclose a geographical breakdown of sales if it is prejudicial to their interests.

See website for full qualification criteria: [www.fasttrack.co.uk](http://www.fasttrack.co.uk)

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