



Top Track 250 regional press release

Thursday 24 September

EIGHT COMPANIES IN THE EAST FEATURE IN THE LEAGUE TABLE OF BRITAIN'S LEADING MID-MARKET PRIVATE COMPANIES

Published this weekend, the 16th annual **Sunday Times PwC Top Track 250** league table ranks Britain's leading mid-market private companies with the biggest sales – before the pandemic struck.

Although some are making job cuts as a result of the crisis, it highlights their continuing contribution to the economy at this difficult time. It also gives examples of how they have stepped up to support their communities and the NHS.

The eight companies headquartered in the **East of England** (the same number as 2019) increased their combined sales by 14% to £1.7bn and operating profits 11% to £224m, and employed more than 8,000 people.

Examples of their positive responses to the crisis include financial services firm **BGL Group** (No 5), which launched a £1.5m campaign to support community causes affected by the pandemic; and construction services firm **Mick George** (No 116), which worked for free on a new Covid-19 testing laboratory at the University of Cambridge.

The companies in the East appear alongside businesses from around the UK, including **Barbour**, **BrewDog** and **Gymshark**, which was valued at more than £1bn in August.

The Top Track 250 is sponsored by **PwC** and **Lloyds Bank**, and compiled by **Fast Track**, the Oxford-based research and networking events firm.

Arif Ahmad, a Private Business Partner at PwC UK, the title sponsor of the league table, commented:

“There’s no doubt that 2020 has posed unprecedented challenges. But time and again, we’ve seen business leaders rising to that challenge, adapting their plans and taking the opportunity to innovate. This year, it’s more important than ever to recognise and congratulate the companies featured in the Top Track 250. They are the backbone of the UK economy and it’s our pleasure to work with them, at every stage of their journeys.”

East of England mid-market private companies, ordered by county and rank

HQ location and county	Rank [2019 rank]	Company Activity	Sales £m	Profit £m [^]	Staff	Year end	Main shareholders
Peterborough Cambridgeshire	5 [4]	BGL Group <i>Insurance/price comparison provider</i>	714	172	2,852	Jun 19	BHL (65.25%), CPPIB (30%), management & others (4.75%)
Huntingdon Cambridgeshire	116 [178]	Mick George <i>Construction services provider</i>	†192	†12	1,231	Sep 19	Mick George (75%), other family and management (25%)
Peterborough Cambridgeshire	247	Yours Clothing <i>Plus-size clothing retailer</i>	106	13	1,319	Feb 19	Andrew Killingsworth (100%)
Lincoln Lincolnshire	160	Branston <i>Potato packer</i>	152	5	729	Jul 19	James Dean (21%), Chris Howard (20%), John Ward (11%), others (48%)
Gainsborough Lincolnshire	197	Hexadex <i>Steel systems manufacturer</i>	*128	*5	1,163	Dec 19	Milles family (90%), Hexadex Employee Benefit Trust (10%)
Dereham Norfolk	166	The Recruit Venture Group <i>Recruitment consultancy</i>	148	5	328	Mar 19	Preston Andrews (49%), John Buckman (49%), other (2%)

HQ location and county	Rank [2019 rank]	Company Activity	Sales £m	Profit £m [^]	Staff	Year end	Main shareholders
Stowmarket Suffolk	149	TruckEast <i>Used truck dealer</i>	163	‡4	401	Dec 19	John Biggin (100%)
Newmarket Suffolk	191 [210]	AJN Steelstock <i>Steel stockholder</i>	*132	*8	375	Apr 20	Boyden Family (100%)

[^] Profit = operating profit

* Supplied by company

‡ Annualised figure

The national picture

Top Track 250 complements our **Top Track 100**, published in July, which features Britain's private companies with the biggest sales. It ranks the next 250-biggest companies by sales, provided they meet our criteria of min. 5% growth in sales or profits (see below). The 250 companies grew combined sales by 17% to £59.7bn, operating profits by 25% to £5.1bn and employees by 15% to 405,000, prior to the pandemic.

The 250 companies are headquartered across the country. London is home to the highest number of companies, with 60 businesses, followed by the southeast with 44. Of the remainder, 36 are based in the Midlands, 33 in the northeast and Yorkshire, 24 in the northwest of England, 24 in Scotland, 8 each in the southwest and the East of England, 7 in Northern Ireland and 6 in Wales.

16 years of Top Track 250

Over the 16 years, the **Top Track 250** league table has featured many of Britain's most successful mid-market private companies. Past stars include appliance maker **Dyson**, which first featured in 2005 with sales of just £277m, and this year featured on our Top Track 100 with sales of £4.4bn. **Ocado**, which last appeared in 2008 with sales of £273m, listed in 2010 and has since seen its value increase more than 20 times to £20bn. **The Hut Group** first featured in 2013 with sales of £157m, and floated this month valued at £5.4bn.

The full league table is published as a 10-page broadsheet supplement within the business section of **The Sunday Times** on 27 September, both in print and in the digital edition, and on www.fasttrack.co.uk.

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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 are ranked by sales in their latest available accounts.

Companies are required to have operating margins that exceed 2%. Sales in the latest year must have grown by 5% or more for companies with the highest sales, graduated to 10% or more for those with lower sales; or profit growth must have been more 5% or more.

Companies have to be limited and registered in the UK, unquoted, and not subsidiaries. Companies may have their ultimate holding company offshore. Companies where the majority of turnover is generated by a quoted subsidiary are excluded, as are not-for-profit companies, cooperative societies, member-owned buying groups, mutual societies, provident associations, betting exchanges, and partnerships such as lawyers and accountants. Some exceptions were made to the qualification criteria.

The research was carried out by Fast Track and accounts filed later than 17 July 2020 may not have been considered in compiling the league table.

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