

International Track 200 regional press release

Thursday 18 February 2021



TWENTY COMPANIES IN THE NORTHEAST WIN PLACES ON SPECIAL COVID-19 EDITION OF LEAGUE TABLE OF FASTEST-GROWING INTERNATIONAL SALES STARS

Published this weekend, the 12th annual **Sunday Times HSBC International Track 200** league table ranks Britain's mid-market private companies with the fastest-growing international sales.

20 companies headquartered in the **Northeast** (compared to 18 last year) have won places on the league table, including **five new entrants**. These regional stars have grown their international sales by an average of 40% a year over the last two years to a total of £746m, all are profitable and together they employ more than 8,500 people. The figures largely relate to financial periods before Covid-19 struck.

The region's top-ranked company is subsea equipment engineer **Express Engineering** (No 11), which saw international sales grow an average of 131% per year over its last two years to reach £21.3m in the year to September 2020, on gross total sales of £36.1m.

County Durham is home to craft products retailer **Crafter's Companion** – which was founded by Dragons' Den panelist Sara Davies from her university bedroom in 2006. Its international sales grew at 27% a year, reaching £21.4m in 2020, on total sales of £34.1m. It sells 4,000 craft items across 40 countries, online and via retailers and shopping channels.

The companies in the Northeast appear alongside well-known British brands based across the UK including **Sweaty Betty**, the women's activewear brand sold in 195 countries; **BrewDog**, which was valued at £1bn in 2017 and now has 100 bars worldwide; and **Brompton**, the bicycle manufacturer, which ships to 47 markets.

International Track 200 star alumni include **Skyscanner**, **Fever-Tree** and **Dr Martens** – which featured on the league table in 2013 with exports of £100m and floated last month valued at £3.7bn.

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

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

"After a challenging start to 2021, all eyes are on the companies that will drive a return to growth in 2021. We are confident that the innovation and entrepreneurial spirit of businesses such as those in the Northeast listed on International Track 200 will carry them forward. These companies show the strength, ambition and resilience of businesses across the UK and are the sort of businesses we are proud 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 [2020 rank]	Company Activity	Average annual int'l sales growth over 2 yrs	Int'l sales (£m)	Total sales (£m)	Staff	Year end	Comment
Newton Aycliffe County Durham	154 [122]	Crafter's Companion Craft products retailer	27%	*21.4	*34.1	217	Mar 20	Founder Sara Davies has featured regularly on American shopping channels

HQ location and county	Rank [2020 rank]	Company Activity	Average annual int'l sales growth over 2 yrs	Int'l sales (£m)	Total sales (£m)	Staff	Year end	Comment
Bridlington East Yorkshire	108 [176]	Bee Health <i>Food supplement manufacturer</i>	37%	2.3	28.6	267	Dec 19	Produces 400m vitamin capsules and tablets a week at its Yorkshire factory
Skipton North Yorkshire	152	JBA Group <i>Environmental consultancy</i>	27%	7.8	38.7	665	Oct 19	Its 650 engineers, consultants and scientists work on projects from offices in nine countries
Harrogate North Yorkshire	187	Techbuyer <i>IT hardware supplier</i>	20%	*27.9	*40.8	123	Sep 20	Has an inventory of 225,000 computer parts, worth £10m and sold to 100 countries
Barnsley South Yorkshire	39	Naylor Industries <i>Construction products manufacturer</i>	76%	3.6	55.6	380	Feb 20	Its clay drainage system was used to build a Fruit of the Loom factory in Morocco
Sheffield South Yorkshire	58 [172]	Cooper Turner Beck <i>Industrial fastener manufacturer</i>	60%	*†118.0	*†135.6	1,142	Dec 19	Deemed an essential manufacturer, more than a century after it made rivets for battleships
Rotherham South Yorkshire	67	X-Cel Superturn <i>Precision engineer</i>	56%	†20.2	†32.3	202	Mar 20	Produces precision engineered components for the oil and gas, nuclear and renewables sectors
Sheffield South Yorkshire	131	Woolley Brothers Wholesale Meats <i>Meat wholesaler</i>	30%	9.5	54.0	115	Dec 19	Supplies deboned meat to wholesalers across Europe
Sheffield South Yorkshire	136	SSS Super Alloys <i>Nickel alloy distributor</i>	30%	19.2	27.4	27	Dec 19	Exports nickel alloys from Sheffield to customers in the global aerospace industry
Sheffield South Yorkshire	183	Abbey Forged Products <i>Steel products forger</i>	22%	5.6	33.4	201	Oct 19	Forges steel parts used to build rigs and refineries at its Sheffield plant
Gateshead Tyne and Wear	11	Express Engineering <i>Subsea equipment engineer</i>	131%	*21.3	*36.1	217	Sep 20	Manufactures turnkey products that control and connect subsea equipment
Washington Tyne and Wear	134 [119]	Oil Consultants <i>Recruitment consultancy</i>	30%	49.1	53.8	49	Dec 19	Its overseas offices from Aberdeen to Indonesia help place energy sector technicians
Newcastle-upon-Tyne Tyne and Wear	189 [177]	END. <i>Designer menswear retailer</i>	20%	101.6	170.5	628	Mar 20	Its menswear website and apps receive more than 10m visitors each month
Newcastle-upon-Tyne Tyne and Wear	195 [105]	Tenth Revolution Group <i>Recruitment consultancy</i>	19%	*189.1	*297.1	1,640	Nov 19	Opened its latest international office, in Switzerland, in January
Wakefield West Yorkshire	41	Thurston Group <i>Modular building manufacturer</i>	76%	3.2	33.0	242	Oct 19	Develops blast resistant buildings and mobile labs for the petrochemical industry
Leeds West Yorkshire	121 [147]	Ligentia <i>Supply chain manager</i>	32%	55.6	123.7	410	Dec 19	Offered clients free storage space in China as the pandemic curtailed supply chains

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Elland, Halifax West Yorkshire	130 [133]	A-Safe <i>Safety barrier manufacturer</i>	30%	61.4	70.4	489	Dec 19	Its safety barriers have been installed in more than 30 international airports
Leeds West Yorkshire	148	Star Brands <i>Cleaning products supplier</i>	28%	2.6	30.9	111	Aug 19	Its The Pink Stuff cleaning brand has close to 100,000 Instagram followers
Leeds West Yorkshire	169	BJSS <i>IT & business consultancy</i>	24%	8.8	164.8	1,116	Apr 20	Opened offices in Australia and Portugal in 2020
Newton Aycliffe County Durham	154 [122]	Crafter's Companion <i>Craft products retailer</i>	27%	*21.4	*34.1	217	Mar 20	Founder Sara Davies has featured regularly on American shopping channels

*Supplied by company

† Annualised

The national picture

The average international sales growth for the 200 companies was 55% a year, to a total of £8.7bn on combined total sales of £19.2bn. Together they employ 107,000 staff, having added 32,000 employees to their workforce over the period, some as a result of acquisitions.

London is the most popular location for company headquarters with 62, followed by the southeast (39). There are 27 companies in the Midlands and 21 in the northwest. Of the remainder, 20 are based in the northeast of England (including Yorkshire), 10 in Scotland, seven in the east, seven in the southwest, five in Wales and two in Northern Ireland.

The full league table is published as an eight-page supplement with the business section of The Sunday Times on 21 February, both in print and in the tablet 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 24 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.

The research was carried out by Fast Track principally between August and December 2020. 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

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