

International Track 200 regional press release

Thursday 8 June 2017



32 COMPANIES IN THE SOUTHEAST WIN PLACES ON LEAGUE TABLE OF BRITAIN'S FASTEST-GROWING INTERNATIONAL SALES STARS

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

The 32 companies headquartered in the **southeast of England** (compared to 30 last year) include 13 new entrants to the league table. Their international sales have grown by an average of 65% a year over the last two years to a total of £1.4bn, and together they now employ more than 14,000 people.

The new entrants include Ashford-based **Jacksons Fencing**, which manufactures a range of timber and metal fences, gates, garden storage and from temporary barriers. International sales reached £8.6m in 2016, buoyed by strong demand in Russia and establishing operations in Dubai.

Childrenswear retailer **Childrensalon** features for the third time. Started in 1952 as a single store in Tunbridge Wells, it has evolved to become a global online retailer, stocking luxury childrenswear from 270 brands. A surge in sales of traditional styles after the births of Prince George and Princess Charlotte helped exports hit £52.5m last year.

The companies in the southeast appear with businesses from around Britain, including cinema chain **Vue**, beauty products retailer **Space.NK**, appliance manufacturer **Gtech**, and sandwich shop chain **Pret**. Past stars range from drinks maker **Fever-Tree** to travel search engine **Skyscanner**.

The league table reflects the importance of Europe to Britain's mid-market exporters ahead of the Brexit negotiations. Almost 85% of the companies (167) sell to the continent, the most popular market, followed by North America (112) and Asia (75).

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

Amanda Murphy, UK head of commercial banking at HSBC, commented:

"This year's Sunday Times HSBC International Track 200 is testament to the exciting opportunities available to ambitious UK businesses with appetite to grow their goods and services abroad. The 32 companies in the southeast of England are putting the region firmly on the map as a thriving business hub. We work very closely with our business customers to help them achieve their goals, so it makes me immensely proud to see so many of them succeed."

Private companies in the southeast with the fastest-growing int'l sales – ordered by county then rank

HQ location and county	Rank [2016 rank]	Company Activity	Annual int'l sales growth over 2 yrs	Int'l sales (£m)	Total sales (£m)	Staff	Year end	Comment
Luton, Bedfordshire	87 [70]	Comline Auto Parts Automotive parts supplier	47%	24.8	42.6	130	Mar 16	Supplies car parts to more than 40 countries and has subsidiaries in Spain and Greece
Reading, Berkshire	14	Austin Fraser Recruitment consultancy	117%	*11.0	*40.5	121	Feb 17	Launched an office in Berlin, its second in Germany, in March

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Slough, Berkshire	61	Chiltern International Group Contract research provider	65%	*331.3	*400.2	4,500	Dec 16	Four acquisitions since 2014 have helped strengthen its presence in the Americas and Asia
Reading, Berkshire	69	Westcoast Electronic product distributor	59%	321.2	1,912.5	1,195	Dec 16	Established operations in Lyon after buying out a division of Spanish distributor Adveo
Binfield, Berkshire	86 [17]	Alfa Technical Industries Chemicals distributor	48%	9.0	28.6	60	Dec 15	Supplies speciality chemicals across Ireland and the Nordic countries
Reading, Berkshire	131	Teneo IT services consultancy	33%	15.4	29.2	75	Jun 16	Bought a consultancy in Nebraska this year, which doubles its US headcount
Reading, Berkshire	161	Bullitt Group Consumer electronics designer	26%	*92.1	*99.7	98	Dec 16	Has offices in the US and China and sells to more than 70 countries
High Wycombe, Bucks	In top 3	GreenTech Distribution Mobile phone recycler and distributor	298%	*106.7	*160.2	28	Feb 17	Operates more than 40 Samsung service desks in Belgium and the Netherlands
High Wycombe, Bucks	35 [84]	Optima Contracting Glass partitioning manufacturer	80%	9.7	52.5	352	Jan 16	Has offices in Dubai, Singapore and Australia and manufactures in Malaysia and the UK
Eastbourne, East Sussex	165 [160]	The Little Group Book, film and music wholesaler	24%	83.5	236.1	956	Feb 16	Supplies retailers internationally from more than 500,000 products
Basildon, Essex	30	Contechs Design and engineering consultancy	87%	10.0	41.5	101	Dec 15	Opened its second German facility, in Munich, last year
Stansted, Essex	37 [28]	Titan Airways Airline	78%	*23.3	*89.5	277	Mar 17	Provides aircraft to European carriers such as Aer Lingus and Eurowings
Basildon, Essex	63	Whitehouse Leisure Soft toy distributor	64%	*†23.5	*†58.1	40	Dec 15	Holds the leisure licence to distribute Disney soft toys across the UK, Middle East and Africa
Brentwood, Essex	92	Matchroom Sport Sporting events promoter	45%	15.3	70.5	73	Jun 16	Its snooker tournaments have proved popular in mainland Europe and China
Brentwood, Essex	198 [182]	Fox International Group Fishing tackle supplier	17%	*24.7	*35.3	116	Dec 16	Snapped up Salmo, a Polish fishing bait company, in 2016
Portsmouth, Hampshire	27	Portsmouth Aviation Engineering services provider	97%	2.2	26.7	170	Dec 15	Has established businesses in Canada, Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia
Sutton Scotney, Hampshire	52	3V Natural Foods Natural food and drink producer	70%	3.4	25.7	112	Sep 16	Sells its British-made products to 19 countries, including Norway and Japan
Hertford, Hertfordshire	102	Reach Active Group Specialist engineering contractor	41%	8.0	25.6	144	Apr 16	Customers in Ireland include the Electricity Supply Board, IDA Ireland and Fitbit
St Albans, Hertfordshire	125 [58]	Dragonfly Venture Group Branded footwear manufacturer	34%	55.1	74.8	15	Mar 16	Set up a US subsidiary last year to sell its branded footwear directly to retailers

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Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire	172 [147]	Aktrion Outsourcing provider	23%	13.3	103.5	3,027	Apr 16	Counts many of Europe's major car manufacturers among its customers
Waltham Abbey, Hertfordshire	200	Bamboo Distribution Electronic device recycler	16%	13.6	28.4	69	Jun 16	Taiwanese iPhone manufacturer Foxconn owns a 20% stake in the business
Bearsted, Kent	5	GForces Automotive software services	185%	*5.3	*25.6	219	Oct 16	More than 70% of overseas revenue is generated in the Middle East
Dover, Kent	17 [24]	Priority Freight Logistics services provider	115%	26.7	48.8	127	Dec 15	Strengthened its facilities in Spain and Germany to serve the automotive sector locally
Ashford, Kent	45	Jacksons Fencing Fencing manufacturer	74%	8.6	32.0	255	Sep 16	Provided 14,000m of security fencing in under 12 months for the Eurotunnel
Tunbridge Wells, Kent	85 [66]	Childrensalon Childrenswear retailer	48%	*52.5	*62.0	211	Dec 16	Its customer service staff speak more than 30 languages
Dartford, Kent	91 [143]	Sahara Presentation Systems Audio-visual product supplier	45%	*13.1	*48.1	73	Dec 16	Its interactive touchscreens are sold throughout the US and Europe to the education sector
Whitstable, Kent	117	The Change Organisation IT distributor	36%	5.1	33.2	39	Mar 16	Its warehouse in Kent supplies IT hardware to resellers across Britain and Europe
Gillingham, Kent	160	Wozair Ventilation equipment maker	26%	36.3	39.5	182	Dec 15	Has factories in the UK, Singapore, Malaysia, the US and South Korea
Abingdon, Oxfordshire	38 [56]	Ability Matters Healthcare product developer	78%	9.4	39.7	532	Oct 15	Has international offices in Ireland, France and the Netherlands
Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire	175	Practicus Management consultancy	22%	*10.0	*51.2	138	Dec 16	Opened an office in Hong Kong in 2013, which generated £3m overseas sales last year
Camberley, Surrey	66 [3]	Cennox Banking automation services provider	61%	30.1	43.7	526	Dec 16	Supplies some of the largest global banks with cash machines
Artington, Surrey	153 [193]	Les Caves de Pyrene Wine distributor	28%	4.5	28.8	128	Mar 16	Has expanded to Spain, Australia and Italy, where it is a distributor of artisan wines

* Supplied by the company

† Annualised figure

The national picture

This year's International Track 200 companies achieved, on average, overseas sales growth of 47% a year over two years to a total of £7.6bn. They employ 97,000 staff, having added 26,000 employees to their combined workforce over the period.

London is the most popular location for company headquarters with 74, followed by the southeast (32) and the northwest (27). Of the remainder, 20 companies are based in the Midlands, 16 in the southwest, 12 in the northeast and Yorkshire, nine in Scotland, four in the East, four 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 11 June, 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 20 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 (CAGR) in their international sales over the latest two financial years.

Total sales had to be at least £25m 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 January and May 2017. Data on international sales can be limited. Companies filing abbreviated 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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