

TWO COMPANIES IN THE EAST FEATURE ON LEAGUE TABLE OF BRITAIN'S BIGGEST PRIVATE COMPANIES

Published this weekend, the 17th annual **Sunday Times HSBC Top Track 100** league table ranks Britain's 100 private companies with the biggest sales.

The two companies headquartered in the East have made a significant contribution to the regional economy. Together they achieved sales of **£4.0bn** and profits of **£746m** in their last financial year, and collectively employ more than **10,900 people**.

Cambridge-based **Marshall Group** is again ranked No 19 with sales growth of 15% to £2.6bn for 2017. This is helped by the group's acquisition in 2016 of Ridgeway, a Newbury car dealership group. Group chief executive Robert Marshall, 55, is the fourth generation to lead the conglomerate, which was founded in 1909.

Anglian Water, ranked No 43, serves 6m customers in the East of England and Hartlepool from its Huntingdon headquarters. Managing director Peter Simpson, 51, oversaw 11% sales growth to £1.3bn in 2017.

The companies in the East appear with businesses from around the UK, including high-profile, national brands such as **Aston Martin, Dyson, JCB** and **Specsavers**.

This year, the 100 companies reached a record £205bn in total sales, up an average of 16% on the prior year, with record total profits of £23.5bn, up by 10%. An impressive 90 companies increased sales in their latest financial year.

The league table is sponsored by **HSBC, Linklaters** and **PwC** and compiled by **Fast Track**, the Oxford-based research and networking events company.

Amanda Murphy, Head of Commercial Banking at HSBC UK, said:

"Once again, Britain's most ambitious private enterprises have shown their mettle by shrugging off uncertainty to grow at an even faster rate than the year before. The businesses in the Top Track 100 are an inspiration to all, showing just what can be achieved with entrepreneurial spirit and a determination to succeed."

Biggest private companies in the East, by rank

HQ location County	Rank [2017 rank]	Company Activity	Sales £m	Profits £m ‡	Staff	Year end	Main shareholders
Cambridge Cambridgeshire	19 [19]	Marshall Group Conglomerate	*2,604	*74	6,211	Dec 17	Sir Michael Marshall, Robert Marshall & family trusts (71%), others (29%)
Huntingdon Cambridgeshire	43 [48]	Anglian Water Group Water services provider	1,348	672	4,726	Mar 17	CPPIB (32.9%), CFSGAM (32.3%), IFM Investors (19.8%), Dalmore Capital and GLIL Infrastructure (15%)

Profits = EBITDA (Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation)

* Supplied by the company

The national picture

This year's Top Track 100 achieved combined sales growth of 16% to a total of £205bn, a record for the league table, compared with last year's 7% growth and total sales of £185bn. Profits this year grew 10% to a total of

£23.5bn, also a record for the table. The companies employ 938,100 staff, having added 49,000 employees to their combined work force in their latest year. Combined debts remained high at £100bn.

The dominant region for company HQs is London (32), followed by the southeast (21) and the Midlands (16). Of the remainder, 11 companies are based in the northwest, six in Scotland, five in the southwest, four in Yorkshire and Humberside, two each in Northern Ireland and the east, and one in Wales.

The full league table is published as a six-page supplement with the business section of **The Sunday Times** on 8 July, 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 21 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 have to be registered in the UK, unquoted, and not subsidiaries. Companies may have their ultimate holding company offshore.

Companies are ranked by sales as reported in their latest available accounts, or by more up-to-date figures as reported directly to Fast Track by the companies. Due to its activity, Pension Insurance Corporation (No 41) is ranked on its gross profit.

Companies with fewer than 100 employees are excluded, as are not-for-profit companies, cooperative societies, member-owned buying groups, mutual societies, provident associations, and partnerships such as lawyers and accountants. The research was carried out by Fast Track between 1 March and 3 July 2018; more than one third (35) of the companies provided up-to-date figures not yet publically available.

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