

Top Track 250 regional press release

Thursday 4 October 2018



TWENTY-THREE COMPANIES IN YORKSHIRE FEATURE IN LEAGUE TABLE OF BRITAIN'S LEADING PRIVATE MID-MARKET GROWTH COMPANIES

Published this weekend, the 14th annual **Sunday Times Grant Thornton Top Track 250** league table ranks Britain's private mid-market growth companies with the biggest sales.

The 23 companies headquartered in **Yorkshire** (compared to 26 last year) have made a strong contribution to the regional economy. The companies increased combined sales 15% to £6.8bn and operating profits 29% to £466m, and they employ almost 30,000 people.

The biggest mid-market growth company in the region is Malton-based **Karro Food Group**, the pork processor. It employs more than 4,000 people and is one of only a few meat processors licensed to export to China and America. Sales grew 24% to an annualised £639m.

There were seven new entrants in Yorkshire, including car supermarket **Motordepot** and seafood trader **Andrew Marr International**, both of which are based in Hessle, East Yorkshire, and cafe operator and food maker **Bettys & Taylors of Harrogate**, which owns brands that include Yorkshire Tea and Taylors of Harrogate coffee, and increased sales 9% to £190m in 2017 on profits of £15m.

The companies in Yorkshire appear with businesses from around the UK, including **Travelodge**, **Trainline**, **Dr Martens** and **The White Company**.

The Top Track 250 is sponsored by **Grant Thornton** and **Lloyds Banking Group**, and compiled by **Fast Track**, the Oxford-based research and networking events firm.

Rachel Engwell, Partner at Grant Thornton UK LLP, the title sponsor of the league table, praised the companies for their performance:

“Advances in robotics and artificial intelligence, the pervasive challenge of cybercrime, and the uncertain impacts of Brexit are among the significant issues facing Britain today. If we are to continue turning innovative ideas into businesses with international scale, we all need to play our part in shaping a vibrant economy that thrives. In this, the role of the mid-market is crucial. Resilient despite the headwinds, the Top Track 250 are innovating, winning business and adapting to generate value. There is much to learn from them.”

Ordered by county and rank: Mid-market private growth companies in Yorkshire

HQ location County	Rank [2017 rank]	Company Activity	Sales £m	Profit £m [^]	Staff	Year end	Main shareholders
Hessle East Yorkshire	24	Andrew Marr International Seafood trader	528	19	272	Mar 17	Andrew Marr and family (100%)
Hull East Yorkshire	62 [69]	MKM Building Supplies Builders' merchant	332	20	1,167	Sep 17	Management, Bain Capital
Cottingham East Yorkshire	88 [85]	The Swift Group Caravan and motorhome manufacturer	273	18	1,200	Aug 17	Management (59%), Smith family (33%), other (8%)

HQ location County	Rank [2017 rank]	Company Activity	Sales £m	Profit £m^	Staff	Year end	Main shareholders
Hull East Yorkshire	177 [189]	Willerby Mobile home maker	166	15	1,007	Sep 17	Equistone Partners (80%), management (20%)
Hessle East Yorkshire	211	Motordepot Car supermarket	148	7	208	Aug 17	Wilkinson family (100%)
Malton North Yorkshire	7 [25]	Karro Food Group Pork processor	*639	*21	4,065	Dec 17	CapVest (>50%), management (<50%)
Middlesbrough North Yorkshire	69	Bulkhaul Specialist chemical logistics	315	38	978	Jun 17	Stephen Gibson (75%), Michael O'Neill (25%)
Harrogate North Yorkshire	145	Bettys & Taylors of Harrogate Cafe operator and food maker	190	15	1,411	Oct 17	Founding family and family trusts (100%)
Doncaster South Yorkshire	18	Keepmoat Homes Housebuilder	556	42	1,098	Mar 18	TDR Capital and Sun Capital (86%), management (14%)
Barnsley South Yorkshire	118 [120]	Symphony Furniture supplier	219	16	1,586	Dec 17	Douglas Gregory (100%)
Rotherham South Yorkshire	170 [180]	AESSEAL Mechanical seal manufacturer	171	24	1,694	Dec 17	Christopher Rea (57%), 3i (43%)
Doncaster South Yorkshire	202	Strata Homes Housebuilder and developer	*152	*19	216	Jun 18	Weaver family
Leeds West Yorkshire	19 [29]	Turner & Townsend Construction consultancy	549	55	5,209	Apr 18	Vincent Clancy (6%), others members of staff (94%)
Ilkley West Yorkshire	28 [27]	NG Bailey Mechanical, electrical contractor	481	14	2,764	Feb 18	Bailey family (100%)
Leeds West Yorkshire	40 [42]	Zenith Vehicle contract hire & leasing	407	35	507	Mar 17	Bridgepoint (>50%), management (<50%)
Bradford West Yorkshire	81	Barrett Steel Steel stockholder	293	8	1,026	Sep 17	Barrett family (70%), management and others (30%)
Wetherby West Yorkshire	98 [95]	Encon Insulation distributor	*258	*14	615	Jul 18	Stuart Moore (73%), management (27%)
Steeton West Yorkshire	127 [137]	Acorn Stairlifts Stairlift manufacturer	212	22	1,485	Sep 17	John Jakes (100%)
Leeds West Yorkshire	128 [121]	Lanes Group Wastewater services provider	*209	*13	2,064	Jul 18	Wayne Earnshaw (49%), management and others (53%)
Leeds West Yorkshire	137 [165]	PureGym Gym operator	198	37	763	Dec 17	Leonard Green (>50%), management (<50%)

HQ location County	Rank [2017 rank]	Company Activity	Sales £m	Profit £m [^]	Staff	Year end	Main shareholders
Huddersfield West Yorkshire	146 [192]	Buy It Direct Laptop and appliance reseller	*187	*4	330	Mar 18	Nick Glynne and family (88%), Simon Barnett (12%)
Leeds West Yorkshire	191 [204]	The Right Fuelcard Company Fuel card provider	157	6	58	Jun 17	Rontec Fuel Cards Ltd (50%), Bayford & Co Ltd (50%)
Wetherby West Yorkshire	194 [210]	Bayford Conglomerate	156	4	61	Jun 17	Jonathan Turner (100%)

[^] Profit = operating profit * Supplied by the company † Annualised figure

The national picture

The Sunday Times Grant Thornton Top Track 250 complements the 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 growth and profitability criteria (see below). The 250 companies grew combined sales by 18% to £66.7bn, operating profits by 27% to a record £6.4bn and employees by 10% to 435,000.

The 250 companies are headquartered across the country. London is home to 75 companies and the southeast 38. The northwest has 25, Yorkshire 23, West Midlands 21, Scotland 20, East 14, East Midlands 11, southwest 9, northeast 7, Northern Ireland 4, and Wales has 3.

The full league table is published on Sunday as a 10-page supplement within the business section of **The Sunday Times** on 7 October, 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.

Previous **Top Track 250** success stories 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 £3.5bn and profits of £801m. **Virgin Money** also debuted in 2005 when its sales were £241m; it floated in November 2014 and in June this year CYBG, the owner of Clydesdale Bank and Yorkshire Bank, agreed to buy the group for £1.7bn; and **B&M**, the value retailer, first featured in 2009 with sales of £256m and its market capitalisation is now £4.1bn, having floated in June 2014. Consumer data analyst **Callcredit** first appeared in 2015 with sales of £149.9m and was acquired by American group TransUnion for £1bn in April; in the same month, **Sky Betting and Gaming**, which first featured in 2016 with sales of £247m, was acquired by Canada's firm The Stars Group for £2.6bn.

League table criteria:

Companies are ranked by sales in their latest available accounts. The league table complements the Top Track 100 league table of Britain's biggest private companies by listing the next 250 growth firms.

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.

The research was carried out by Fast Track and accounts filed later than 27 July 2018 may not have been considered in compiling the league table.

The sponsors do not endorse, guarantee or recommend investment in any of the companies and some exceptions were made to the qualification criteria.

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