

# International Track 200 regional press release

Thursday 7 February 2019



## 16 COMPANIES IN THE MIDLANDS WIN PLACES ON LEAGUE TABLE OF BRITAIN'S FASTEST-GROWING INTERNATIONAL SALES STARS

Published this weekend, the 10<sup>th</sup> annual **Sunday Times HSBC International Track 200** league table ranks Britain's mid-market private companies with the fastest-growing international sales.

The 16 companies headquartered in the **Midlands** include **eight new entrants to the league table**. These regional stars have grown their international sales by an average of 73% a year over the last two years to a total of £2.5bn. Together they employ more than 21,600 people.

The region's top-ranked company is fitness clothing brand **Gymshark**, which is also in the top 3 nationally. Founded in 2012 by Ben Francis, 26, in his parents' garage, it sells direct to customers in 178 countries via its 13 multilingual websites. It recently moved into a new Solihull headquarters, which has a Gymshark logo that can be seen on Google Earth. It grew its international sales by 228% pa to £81m, on total sales of £103.2m, in 2018.

New entrants to the table include Staffordshire-based **Busy Bees**, which looks after more than 50,000 children at its 550 nurseries from Canada to Malaysia and has announced plans for 32 nurseries to open in China. Overseas sales hit £94.9m, on total sales of £327.5m, in 2017; and Coventry's **Envisage Group**, which develops concept cars for the likes of Bentley, Jaguar and Nissan, and recorded international sales of £3.2m in 2017, on total sales of £48.5m.

The companies in the Midlands appear alongside well-known British brands, including **BrewDog**, now valued at over £1bn; and **Charlotte Tilbury Beauty**, founded by the Hollywood make-up artist. Others are connected to star names, such as **Bulk Powders**, which counts boxing champion Anthony Joshua among its athlete ambassadors. This year is the 10th anniversary of International Track. Alumni stars include **Aston Martin**, **Specsavers**, **Fever-Tree**, and **Lush** – which featured on the first league table in 2010 with exports of £151m, and which have now hit £300m.

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

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

*"We at HSBC UK are delighted to back The Sunday Times International Track 200 again this year. All the businesses it showcases have truly inspiring stories to tell about creativity, resilience and ambition to succeed. The 16 companies in the Midlands are putting the region firmly on the map. They are the kinds of enterprises we are thrilled to support and that provide the backbone of our economy, today and tomorrow."*

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

HQ location and county	Rank [2018 rank]	Company Activity	Annual int'l sales growth over 2 yrs	Int'l sales (£m)	Total sales (£m)	Staff	Year end	Comment
Ledbury, Herefordshire	173	<b>Haygrove</b> Berry producer	38%	47.2	97.8	3,273	Dec 17	Grows berries and other fruit at farms in the UK, China, Portugal and South Africa
Leicester, Leicestershire	18 [77]	<b>The Watches of Switzerland Group</b> Jewellery and watch retailer	120%	133.0	685.2	2,015	Apr 18	Opening a showroom in Hudson Yards, New York in Spring 2019

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Leicester, Leicestershire	77	<b>Cofresh Snacks</b> <i>Snack maker</i>	67%	3.2	29.8	131	Dec 17	Its "free-from" Eat Real snacks are popular in Europe and the UAE
Kettering, Northants	49	<b>Total Computers</b> <i>IT consultancy</i>	81%	5.6	65.5	111	Dec 17	Considers the Middle East as a future growth market
Wellingborough, Northants	62 [118]	<b>Whitworth Group</b> <i>Flour miller</i>	75%	20.8	321.7	536	Mar 18	Exports flour to food manufacturers and bakeries in Ireland and Europe
Nottingham, Notts	124 [120]	<b>Microlise</b> <i>Vehicle tracking developer</i>	51%	*9.8	*50.1	477	Jun 18	Has provided India's Tata Motors with 100,000 vehicle tracking systems
Newport, Shropshire	22 [17]	<b>Jupiter Group</b> <i>Fruit grower and exporter</i>	107%	*11.0	*49.3	83	Sep 18	Acquired South African fresh produce supplier Bonaire in November 2018
Telford, Shropshire	189	<b>Rosewood Pet Products</b> <i>Pet products supplier</i>	34%	4.2	29.1	67	Dec 17	Its 4,000 strong product line is sold in more than 60 countries
Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire	67	<b>Midwinter Solutions</b> <i>Clinical trials supplier</i>	73%	10.7	61.8	20	Feb 18	Helps clients comply with strict global pharmaceutical regulations
Stafford, Staffordshire	141	<b>TopCashback</b> <i>Cashback website</i>	47%	24.8	109.2	177	Dec 17	Runs cashback sites in the UK, US, India and China
Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire	180	<b>bet365</b> <i>Online bookmaker</i>	36%	2,054.3	2,857.3	4,236	Mar 18	Has an operations hub in Gibraltar and is expanding its presence in Malta
Burntwood, Staffordshire	184	<b>Busy Bees</b> <i>Nurseries operator</i>	35%	94.9	327.5	9,979	Dec 17	Plans to open 32 nurseries in China by 2023
Solihull, West Midlands	In top 3 [16]	<b>Gymshark</b> <i>Fitness clothing retailer</i>	228%	*81.0	*103.2	260	Jul 18	Queues for its Paris, LA and Toronto pop-up shops stretched around street corners
Coventry, West Midlands	81	<b>Envisage Group</b> <i>Car maker</i>	66%	3.2	48.5	157	Dec 17	Its office in San Jose, California develops electric vehicle technology
Solihull, West Midlands	90	<b>Grenade</b> <i>Sports nutrition brand</i>	62%	*11.5	*33.8	33	Dec 17	Its protein bars and weight loss supplements are sold in more than 100 countries
Coventry, West Midlands	166	<b>Lawton Tubes</b> <i>Copper tube supplier</i>	39%	11.0	133.9	100	Sep 17	Chartered an aeroplane to deliver a full cargo of 6m copper tubes

\* Supplied by the company

## The national picture

The average international sales growth for the 200 companies was 69% a year, to a total of £14.1bn on combined total sales of £30.9bn. Together they employ 140,000 staff, having added 38,000 employees to their combined workforce over the period.

London is the most popular location for company headquarters with 68, followed by the southeast (42), the Midlands (16), and northwest (21). There are 20 companies in the northeast, including Yorkshire. Of the remainder, 13 companies are based in the southwest, six in the East, six in Scotland, five in Wales and three in Northern Ireland.

The full league table is published as a ten-page supplement with the business section of **The Sunday Times** on 10 February, both in print and in the digital edition, and on [www.fasttrack.co.uk](http://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 22 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 August and December 2018. 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](http://www.fasttrack.co.uk)

### About our sponsors

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