

# Fast Track 100 regional press release

Thursday 28 November 2019



## NINETEEN COMPANIES IN THE SOUTHEAST WIN PLACES ON LEAGUE TABLE OF BRITAIN'S FASTEST-GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES

Published this weekend, the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual **Sunday Times Virgin Atlantic Fast Track 100** league table ranks Britain's private companies with the fastest-growing sales.

The 19 companies headquartered in the **southeast** (compared to 20 last year) include **13 new entrants** to the league table. Their sales have grown by an average of 88% a year over three years to a total of £499.2m, and together they employ more than 2,539 people.

The region's top-ranked company is workplace design and construction firm **Curve**, is in the top three nationally. Based in Bracknell, Berkshire, its previous clients include Merlin Entertainment, BNP Paribas and the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead. Its sales over the past three years have grown by an average of 186% a year to £9.2m in 2019.

Other new entrants include Hampshire-based toiletries brand **Childs Farm**, which featured as a One to Watch in 2018. Founder Joanna Jensen left investment banking to set up the company after she struggled to find products suitable for her daughter's sensitive skin. Last year sales grew to £12.8m when it became the country's second-largest baby toiletries brand.

The companies in the southeast appear with businesses from around Britain, including fitness clothing retailer **Gymshark**, beauty products retailer **Charlotte Tilbury**, and brewer **BrewDog**. Past stars include chip designer **ARM**, which featured in 1997 with sales of £17m, floated and was acquired by Japan's SoftBank in 2016 for £24bn; and mixer drinks maker **Fever-Tree**, which floated in 2014 at £154m and is now worth £2.6bn.

The Fast Track 100 is sponsored by **Virgin Atlantic**, **Barclays**, **BDO**, **BGF** and **N+1 Singer**, and is compiled by **Fast Track**, the Oxford-based research and networking events firm.

Sir Richard Branson, founder of Virgin Atlantic and Virgin Group, which has supported Fast Track 100 for all 23 years, said:

*"While these are uncertain times, there is one thing I am certain of: entrepreneurs are the ones driving innovation, chasing improvements and challenging the norm. There are so many inspiring examples of this on the Fast Track 100 league table and it's heartening to see the power of entrepreneurship to create jobs and positive change across Britain."*

### Private companies in the southeast with the fastest-growing sales, by county and rank

HQ location County	Rank [2018 rank]	Company Activity	Annual sales growth over 3 years	Sales £m	Staff	Year end ‡	Comment
Bracknell Berkshire	Top 3	<b>Curve</b> Workplace design and construction	186%	*9.2	16	Sep 19	Designed an office with a star-shaped entrance and a racetrack carpet for children's charity Make-A-Wish

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Maidenhead <b>Berkshire</b>	8	<b>Evergen Group</b> Solar panel installer	143%	*9.3	25	May 19	Installed a CityTree, an anti-pollution device equivalent to 275 trees, at Piccadilly Circus
Reading <b>Berkshire</b>	33 [26]	<b>HalalBooking</b> Specialist online travel agency	81%	*17.6	49	Dec 18	This year, over 100,000 holidaymakers stayed in accommodation booked on this company's website
Brighton <b>East Sussex</b>	22 [36]	<b>Boxpark</b> Retail and leisure developer	96%	*12.8	110	Apr 19	Grime artist Stormzy launched his 2017 album Gang Signs & Prayer at Boxpark Croydon
Westtham <b>East Sussex</b>	90	<b>Identity</b> Events management agency	46%	*8.7	43	Aug 19	Says it puts on more than 1,000 events a year for the likes of Google and ITV
Colchester <b>Essex</b>	68	<b>OMG How Cheap</b> Online stationery retailer	52%	*7.1	32	Feb 19	Stationery salesman David Field founded his own company after being made redundant in 2011
Braintree <b>Essex</b>	99	<b>Airline Component Services</b> Aircraft parts and repairs	44%	*6.2	10	Mar 19	Supplies and repairs aircraft parts for customers including British Airways, TUI and Easyjet
Sherborne St John <b>Hampshire</b>	9	<b>Childs Farm</b> Children's toiletries maker	143%	12.8	28	Dec 18	Its products are now available in more than 7,500 stores nationwide and launched in New Zealand this August
Basingstoke <b>Hampshire</b>	51	<b>Envisage Dental</b> Dental practice	61%	*6.3	68	Mar 19	Offers a sedation service for nervous patients with dental phobia
Romsey <b>Hampshire</b>	53 [74]	<b>Highwood Group</b> Construction contractor and developer	60%	66.7	62	Feb 19	There are currently 4,000 development plots under this group's control
Basingstoke <b>Hampshire</b>	59	<b>Reassured</b> Life insurance broker	56%	37.8	411	Jan 19	Says that it has sold over £46bn of life insurance policies, covering over 440,000 UK families
Hook <b>Hampshire</b>	77	<b>Intevi</b> Display and software supplier	50%	*5.5	24	Dec 18	Its interactive displays can detect the user's age and gender and change content accordingly
Hemel Hempstead <b>Hertfordshire</b>	97 [90]	<b>Vanarama</b> Vehicle leasing broker	44%	*75.1	226	Dec 18	Positioned a "car vending machine" at London's Waterloo station to promote its car leasing website, Motorama
Queenborough <b>Kent</b>	35 [3]	<b>Revolution Beauty</b> Beauty products retailer	77%	112.6	180	Dec 18	Following its launch in Australia, fans queued up for hours to buy its new beauty products
Banbury <b>Oxfordshire</b>	5	<b>Xpress Centres</b> Car repair services	178%	*5.6	65	Jul 19	Carries out 15,000 bodywork repairs per year in supermarket car parks
Oxford <b>Oxfordshire</b>	50 [20]	<b>Oxford Summer Courses</b> Educational course provider	62%	*9.3	36	Sep 19	Students from 112 countries have enlisted in its summer courses
Camberley <b>Surrey</b>	4	<b>Performance54</b> Golf marketing agency	181%	*6.2	16	Apr 19	The number '54' represents the perfect round of golf; 18 birdies
Windsor <b>Surrey</b>	65	<b>Nurture Landscapes</b> Landscape maintenance	53%	73.1	1,093	Mar 19	Maintains three of London's Royal Parks – Richmond Park, Bushy Park and Greenwich Park

HQ location County	Rank [2018 rank]	Company Activity	Annual sales growth over 3 years	Sales £m	Staff	Year end ‡	Comment
Chichester West Sussex	78	<b>Rinkit</b> Online home and garden retailer	49%	*17.1	45	Feb 19	Started life in a spare bedroom and now receives more than 1.5m orders a year

‡ Financial year end of latest available accounts \* Supplied by the company

## The national picture

This year's Fast Track 100 achieved, on average, sales growth of 78% a year over three years to a total of £3bn. Together they employ 16,818 staff, having more than tripled their combined workforce over the period.

**Regions:** The region with the most company HQs is London (30), followed by the southeast (19). The second most dominant region is the north of England – 22 companies are based there, with 11 each located in the northwest and the northeast. There are nine companies based in the Midlands, eight in Scotland, four each in the southwest and Wales, three in the East of England and one in Northern Ireland.

The full league table is published on 1 December as a 10-page supplement with the business section of **The Sunday Times** both in print and in the digital edition, and on

[www.fasttrack.co.uk](http://www.fasttrack.co.uk)

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**PLEASE CREDIT IN FULL: “SUNDAY TIMES VIRGIN ATLANTIC FAST TRACK 100”**

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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 23 years. The company was founded and is run by Dr Hamish Stevenson, who also retains 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. Sales growth was measured by compound annual growth rate (CAGR) over the latest three financial years. A minimum of 25 weeks' trading in their base and latest years was required. For accounting periods not equal to a year, financials have been presented on a pro-rated, annualised basis.

Annualised sales had to exceed £250,000 in the base year and not show a drop from the penultimate to the latest year, where total sales had to exceed £5m. Firms had to have 10 or more employees, and make operating profit of at least £500,000 in their latest available accounts. Recruitment firms, payroll services providers, energy firms and media agencies are required to have gross profits of at least £5m in their latest available accounts. Sales for recruitment and payroll firms are the total gross amount invoiced to clients.

Excluded companies include technology firms (covered by our sister league table, Tech Track 100), LLPs, pure property and financial trading companies, and companies with turnover of £500m or greater.

The research was carried out by Fast Track in 2019 between August and November. Most of companies were interviewed by telephone or visited by the Fast Track research team.

## **About our supporters and sponsors**

### **About Virgin Group**

Virgin has been a supporter of the Fast Track 100 league table since it was first published in 1997.

Virgin is a leading international investment group and one of the world's most recognised and respected brands. Conceived in 1970 by Richard Branson, the Virgin Group has gone on to grow successful businesses in multiple sectors. Today, Virgin companies employ more than 70,000 people in 35 countries. Richard spends much of his time working with the Virgin Group's foundation, Virgin Unite, on entrepreneurial ideas to drive positive change in the world.

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### **About Virgin Atlantic**

Virgin Atlantic is delighted to continue its title sponsorship of Fast Track 100, having previously been the launch title sponsors in 1997.

Sir Richard Branson started Virgin Atlantic in 1984 with one plane and the pledge that "air travel should be exciting and enjoyable". Today Virgin Atlantic is world famous for its customer experience – flying over 5.5 million passengers on business trips, dream holidays and adventures each year. With a fleet transformation reaffirming our commitment to flying the cleanest, greenest fleet in the sky, extended partnerships and loyalty programmes with Delta and Air France–KLM, joint acquisition of Virgin Connect securing the future of Europe's largest regional airline and additional capacity in Manchester, we are blazing a trail to become the nation's second flag carrier.

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### **About Barclays**

Barclays is a main sponsor for a ninth year

Barclays is a transatlantic consumer and wholesale bank offering products and services across personal, corporate and investment banking, credit cards and wealth management, with a strong presence in our two home markets of the UK and the US.

With over 325 years of history and expertise in banking, Barclays operates in over 40 countries and employs approximately 83,500 people. Barclays moves, lends, invests and protects money for customers and clients worldwide.

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### **About BDO**

Accountancy and business advisory firm BDO is a main sponsor for a sixth year.

We are proud to put our clients and their challenges at the centre of our focus. These businesses are Britain's economic engine, ambitious and high growth businesses that fuel the economy.

We take the time to understand their objectives for the future, sharing insights, solutions and ideas to help them succeed in the market. Strong, professional relationships are important to us, which is why we continue to sponsor a number of Fast Track's programmes.

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### **About BGF**

BGF is a main sponsor for a seventh year.

BGF is the most active investor in growing businesses in the UK and Ireland. An established and independent company, it has £2.5bn to support a range of growing companies – early stage, growth stage and quoted – across every region and sector of the economy. It has backed 24 Fast Track 100 companies since 2011, including Braidwater, Plantforce and Red Industries in this year's cohort. In 2019, BGF celebrated backing its 300th business, and reached a milestone of £2bn invested.

[www.bgf.co.uk](http://www.bgf.co.uk)

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### **About N+1 Singer**

N+1 Singer is a main sponsor for a second year, having previously been an awards dinner sponsor for two years.

N+1 Singer is a leading investment bank dedicated to raising capital for UK small and mid-cap companies. Since 2013, the firm has advised on and executed over 160 IPOs, secondary offerings, equity private placements and block trades, raising over £4 billion in growth equity for their clients. In 2017, N+1 Singer were recognised by the Financial Times as one of Europe's fastest-growing companies, as well as being consistently ranked as one of the top 3 Financial Advisers and Stockbrokers by number of clients on AIM – the most successful growth market in the world.

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