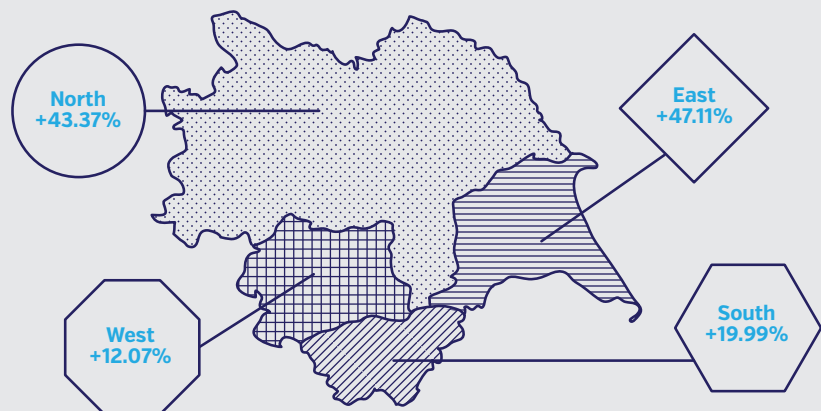


TOP 10 INDUSTRIES BY PROFIT

SUB-REGION BY TURNOVER

	2017 £'000	2016 £'000	Movement %
North	335,342	233,896	43.37%
South	503,519	419,638	19.99%
East	75,618	51,403	47.11%
West	685,626	611,788	12.07%



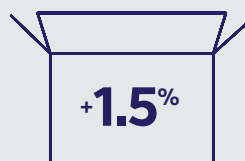
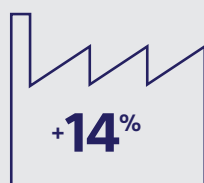
Manufacturing
2016: 3,972
2017: 4,528

Services
2016: 2,328
2017: 2,876

Wholesale
2016: 532
2017: 540

Retail
2016: 429
2017: 451

PEOPLE EMPLOYED BY SECTOR



	2017 Count	2016 Count	Movement %
Manufacturing	4,528	3,972	14.00%
Retail	451	429	5.13%
Services	2,876	2,328	23.54%
Wholesale	540	532	1.50%

	2017 £'000	2016 £'000	Growth/ [Decline] %
Total			
Turnover	1,600,105	1,316,724	21.52%
Profit before tax	296,981	206,657	43.71%
Number of employees	8,395	7,261	15.62%

Net profit up by
43.71%

Turnover up by
21.52%

What a difference a year makes!

In the past 12 months we have seen a referendum vote to leave the European Union, a change of Prime Minister, a challenge to the opposition leader, a new President of the US (arriving straight from his reality TV show!) and Leeds United making a meteoric rise up the championship table but excruciatingly fall out of the FA cup to a team from the Conference.

It is therefore with some trepidation that I once again comment on the results of the Yorkshire Post Top 100 SMEs survey and offer my thoughts on the year ahead.

My over-riding comment last year was that I expected the companies in our region who had performed well in 2015 to continue to do so in 2016. Many companies had adjusted over the last few years to the new economic climate and there was a general sense of cautious optimism at the start of 2016.

The results of this year's survey seem to bear this out. All of our regions and all of the sectors within those regions appear to have done better in 2016 than the previous year. Furthermore, our top SMEs in Yorkshire appear to be beating the national averages where growth in 2016 slowed to 2%. There is some commonality with the national picture in that significant growth has been driven by the service sector.

So a pleasing picture for our region as we enter a new year and further uncertain times. However, the British Chamber of Commerce, which represents many of our SME businesses, is predicting growth of just 1.1% in 2017. There appears to be increasing uncertainty weighing on investment expectations and financial confidence. We certainly hear this from some of our SME clients but we probably hear as many talking very positively about the year ahead. I do think it is fair to say that the lower value of Sterling and rising inflationary pressures are now impacting on latest financial performance. I do believe expectations on export business arising from the lower value of Sterling following Brexit, were overstated.

There are a lot of positives coming from the survey. Of course, there are changes in the make-up of the Top 100 companies year on year, and therefore a direct comparison between the years can only give a general indication of regional performance. The companies entering the list this year – of which there were over 40 – came into the list largely because of significant increases in reported profitability in 2016. The value of Sterling in 2015/16 allowed companies to import at lower than predicted prices. This benefit for importers will of course have reversed entirely in the last 7 months.

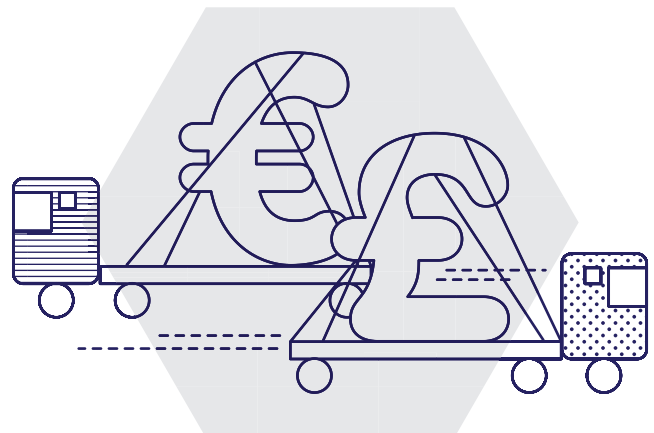
On the other hand, almost 50% of those companies no longer appearing in the list have been excluded because they are now part of larger groups – the transactional world of corporate finance has clearly been busy of late!

Included within the Top 100 group of SMEs this year (measured by profitability) are 41 manufacturing businesses, five retail businesses, 46 service businesses and eight wholesale businesses. Similar to the national position, the service sector showed good growth with a 36% increase in turnover and 60% growth in profits. The wholesale sector showed very flat results in terms of growth and employee numbers but still showed a credible increase in profitability.

Special mention to the Barnsley area of our region; nine of the companies in the list come from that part of our county, more than any other town/city, other than Leeds. The Barnsley area includes some great companies which performed extremely well, including Haywood & Padgett Limited, a family run baker producing over 4.5 million scones each week! Also special mention to another Barnsley company, Bartec Auto ID Ltd which is a world leader in the manufacture of vehicle tyre pressure monitoring tools and related products.

Well done to all companies making the Top 100 this year. Our region depends on the continued success of our SME businesses and they certainly didn't let us down in 2016.

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Businesses can't afford to keep missing out on R&D tax breaks

Many of the region's SMEs are still failing to take advantage of the generous tax breaks that are available when it comes to Research and Development (R&D), and we regularly see companies only claiming back a fraction of what's actually available to them.

Sometimes businesses have preconceptions that they 'don't do' R&D, or that it's such a small investment that it's not worth making a claim, but often it's surprising how much a claim can be worth. Others are put off by the fact they believe it's only heavily scientific or technological projects that qualify – but that is simply not the case.

The idea of these tax incentives is to encourage innovation among UK businesses and at BHP we have a hugely successful track-record of working with

companies to ensure they take full advantage of all the relief available to them.

The tax relief is available across all types of initiatives including patents, new manufacturing processes, environmental improvements, software development and product development. It can cover the costs of staff working on R&D projects, expenses relating to materials and equipment as well as costs for subcontractors that have assisted with such projects. Even R&D projects that have been unsuccessful are eligible for the relief.

Since the incentive was first introduced in 2000, the rates have gradually become more generous and are now worth up to 230% for SMEs. This means that for every £100 of qualifying costs, an SME

could reduce its Corporation Tax by an additional £130 on top of the £100 spent.

R&D tax relief is something all SMEs should investigate as a matter of course. The first thing that needs qualifying is a company's status as an SME, as this definition for R&D purposes isn't necessarily the same as that used by HMRC in relation to other tax areas such as Corporation Tax or PAYE.



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The importance of a people plan

As an experienced business leader and head of BHP Consulting's expert team of corporate advisors, who specialise in delivering business growth across all industries, I often find myself talking to people about the benefits of planning. It seems a simple concept that many assume should be a given in most businesses, but many companies simply don't plan properly, and that can lead to all types of problems.

A business plan is of course essential, but it's surprising how many SMEs don't have one in place. It's often even more important in family-run businesses where succession is a possibility and in companies that have grown very quickly and not had the time to take stock. A business plan that covers sales, costs and margins should be a basic staple that is both essential, and with the right guidance, easy to develop. Ideally, this should also include key growth opportunities for the business too.

Another area that SMEs really need to consider is a people plan, which can address everything from the future business structure to the development

of existing staff. The success of any business lies in the people that work for it and lead it, yet it's an area that is often ignored when it comes to planning for growth.

Future management structures and senior leadership succession planning really are a must when it comes to securing the successful long-term development of a business. Sometimes it's an area people find hard to talk about, especially if it's a family-run firm or a business that has several owners and directors, but it's important to recognise that senior leadership will inevitably change, and the best way to manage that, is through planning ahead. That's why a management development plan detailing possible future business leaders, that also maps out their personal growth, is a great way of supporting the vision and future aims of a business. If it is put together well, it can also be a great way of engaging with more junior members of a business too.

Once a business has a management development plan, it should be possible for the business to understand where

there are gaps in its existing team and therefore, the recruitment that needs to be planned for. This can be addressed either through external recruitment or internal promotion. As a result, new people can be identified for the roles well in advance of them becoming available. This forward-thinking approach will ensure smooth handovers, a continuity of knowledge and of course benefit both the people working within the organisation and its clients.

In conclusion it's always a good idea to plan. With a clear goal you are more likely to achieve the desired outcome, be it for financial gain or for the development or enhancement of your team.



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2017 Rank	2016 Rank	Company name	Latest accounts	Location	Region	Activity	2017 Profit/[loss] £ '000	2016 Profit/[loss] £ '000	2017 Turnover £ '000	2016 Turnover £ '000	2017 No. of staff	2016 No. of staff
1	5	Sewtec Holdings	29/02/16	Dewsbury	West	Design and build of special purpose machinery to blue chip companies	11,361	7,062	21,888	15,953	72	70
2	4	EOF Holdings	31/01/16	Goole	East	Manufacturing of office furniture	7,603	7,151	20,487	21,534	130	126
3	2	Construction Marine	30/09/15	Leeds	West	Infrastructure civil engineering contractors and asset managers involved in the design and construction of rail, water, environmental and coastal structures	4,974	9,681	22,673	32,414	160	133
4	6	Melett	31/05/15	Barnsley	South	Development, manufacture and supply of turbocharger repair parts	4,638	6,537	23,181	23,343	127	110
5		Econ Engineering	31/03/16	Ripon	North	Manufacture and maintenance of commercial vehicles for highway maintenance	4,635	5,167	25,341	24,599	188	174
6	53	Haywood And Padgett	31/10/15	Barnsley	South	Production of wholesale bakery products	4,531	2,432	23,241	19,446	138	129
7	11	Cardale Asset Management	30/09/16	Harrogate	North	Provision of investment management services	4,472	4,476	9,295	9,278	51	43
8	86	The Harris Group	31/07/15	Wakefield	West	Architectural consultants, project managers and production planners	4,452	2,039	10,532	7,131	117	102
9		Keigar Homes	31/03/16	Lincolnshire	South	Residential housing developers	4,381	2,634	17,593	10,761	53	
10	12	Silkstone Finance	31/01/15	Barnsley	South	Manufacture of furniture systems	4,377	2,018	25,194	18,363	184	140
11	63	Hamsard 3120	31/12/15	Rotherham	South	Manufacture and sale of cable management systems	4,193	2,306	21,979	19,776	171	161
12	19	Glass Recycling [UK]	30/09/15	Barnsley	South	Recovery and treatment of waste products	4,149	3,556	14,586	16,514	58	63
13	13	Wykeland Group	31/03/15	Hull	North	Building, property development, buildings investment and property management	4,038	3,414	6,507	6,442	18	17
14		Bartec Auto ID	31/05/15	Barnsley	South	Development and manufacture of tyre	3,929	1,301	12,009	8,545	70	63
15	44	Bramall Properties	31/12/15	Harrogate	North	Property investment and arable farming	3,749	2,547	9,735	4,852	8	5
16		Xiros	31/03/16	Leeds	West	Development, manufacture and supply of implantable medical devices	3,691	4,626	10,869	9,435	104	100
17		Hague Print Media Supplies	31/12/15	Normanton	West	General commercial activity	3,690	1,275	16,168	12,067	47	45
18	17	L Jackson & CO	31/08/15	Doncaster	South	Sale of ex-military vehicles, plant and machinery	3,633	3,716	8,966	9,867	9	8
19	45	G.R. Electrical Services	30/04/16	Leeds	West	Manufacture of electrical switchgear and control panels	3,587	2,544	11,154	8,709	49	42
20	21	High Point Estates	31/07/15	Leeds	West	Property investment and development	3,416	3,214	8,565	7,528	2	2
21		Shorewood Leisure Group	31/12/15	Bridlington	North	Operation of a caravan and leisure parks	3,413	76	17,486	15,755	100	106
22	28	Clee Hill Plant Holdings	31/12/15	Chesterfield	South	Provision of plant for hire to the civil engineering industry	3,402	2,988	17,046	15,866	175	166
23		Queens Staith Leisure	30/04/16	York	North	Operation of hotels	3,289	1,068	7,412	4,188	170	128
24		Penmoor U K	31/01/16	Huddersfield	West	Supply of soft drinks and plastic bottles	3,261	1,445	16,471	15,518	63	62
25	37	Team 17 Software	31/12/15	Wakefield	West	Development and publishing of computer games for the digital market	3,260	2,723	10,382	6,609	83	64
26	72	Sirdar Holdings	30/06/15	Wakefield	West	Marketing and distribution of specialist yarns and textile products	3,206	2,209	21,963	23,364	132	133
27		East Coast Construction [N.E.]	30/04/16	Bridlington	North	Construction, civil engineering and groundwork contracting	3,169		18,574		9	
28	42	The Skills Network	31/07/15	Selby	North	An educational service provider	3,126	351	10,698	3,040	119	114
29	24	Cathelco	31/03/15	Chesterfield	South	Provision of iccp and anti-fouling equipment for the marine industry	3,110	2,902	18,279	17,431	106	98
30	26	Gettheworldmoving	30/09/14	Leeds	West	Corporate health and well-being services for business	3,089	3,095	12,413	10,776	95	70
31	32	Cyden Homes	31/10/15	Grimsby	South	Property and land development and management	3,087	2,880	13,948	14,807	32	26
32	46	Arena Group Holdings	30/09/15	Wakefield	West	Electronic document management and it solutions for business	3,068	2,498	19,030	17,725	160	152
33		Pure Retirement	31/12/15	Leeds	West	Lender, administrator & servicer of home loan mortgage contracts	3,057	1,299	8,735	3,786	27	10
34		K And C Love	31/03/15	Selby	North	Plant hire	3,018		8,749		37	
35		Cidon Group [UK]	29/02/16	Barnsley	South	Construction contracts	2,921		17,701		43	
36		SRS Rail System [Holdings]	30/04/15	Chesterfield	South	Specialist services to the railway industry	2,882	1,057	11,808	8,048	73	66
37	51	Morco Products	31/03/16	Beverley	North	Import and distribution of gas water heating and central heating equipment	2,879	2,452	13,676	12,254	18	17
38	56	Timothy Taylor & Co.,	30/09/15	Keighley	West	Brewing and pub management	2,830	2,388	21,334	19,533	109	109
39	98	S Harrison Group	31/12/15	York	North	Land and property development and construction	2,823	1,977	17,658	6,180	11	10
40	20	Emsley Brothers	31/12/15	Harrogate	North	Craneage services	2,805	3,422	10,160	10,262	69	70
41	68	Wooltex U.K.	31/12/15	Huddersfield	West	Design, manufacture and sale of fabrics for the contract upholstery market	2,803	2,266	20,221	17,448	81	73
42		Daniel Gath Homes	31/10/15	York	North	Residential housebuilders and property developers	2,793		9,107		14	
43		J.W. Crowther & Son	30/09/15	Leeds	West	Excavation and plant hire contracting and the construction of property for resale	2,760	1,675	8,678	6,470	48	42
44		Altia Holdings	30/09/15	Goole	East	Supply of decorative aggregates paving and associated garden products	2,754		13,566		51	
45		Ceramica Impex	30/09/15	Doncaster	South	Import and distribution of ceramic tiles	2,703	1,527	18,930	17,937	20	20
46		Paw [Holdings]	30/09/15	Skipton	North	Structural engineers	2,695	28	15,881	13,746	73	47
47	41	Holmfirth Dyers	30/09/15	Holmfirth	West	Textile fabric dyers and finishers	2,693	2,591	7,560	7,660	72	69
48		Griffingold	31/12/15	Sheffield	South	UPVC window manufacture	2,680	1,169	21,708	18,965	205	192
49	18	Global Autocare	29/02/16	Leeds	West	Vehicle repairs, movements of vehicles and contract hire	2,668	3,662	16,272	13,131	76	75
50	78	Flower of May Holiday Parks	31/10/15	Bridlington	North	Caravan and camping holiday parks	2,663	2,160	10,295	9,483	87	76
51	52	Astonish Holdings	31/05/16	Bradford	West	Manufacture and distribution of cleaning chemicals and materials	2,646	2,436	16,353	17,055	73	70
52	57	SCX	31/03/16	Sheffield	South	Design, manufacture and maintenance of materials handling and access equipment	2,630	2,380	19,727	19,678	143	131
53		Dransfield Properties	30/09/15	Sheffield	South	Retail property development and investment	2,626	1,765	9,537	13,497	21	19
54	34	Carlton Main Brickworks	31/03/16	Barnsley	South	Manufacture and sale of bricks	2,621	2,814	13,130	14,322	65	69
55	85	Diagmed Healthcare	30/11/15	Thirsk	North	Supply of pharmaceuticals principally to local health authorities	2,620	2,042	14,002	12,745	38	36

2017 Rank	2016 Rank	Company name	Latest accounts	Location	Region	Activity	2017 Profit/ (loss) £ '000	2016 Profit/ (loss) £ '000	2017 Turnover £ '000	2016 Turnover £ '000	2017 No. of staff	2016 No. of staff
56		Bannisters Arable Products	30/09/15	Driffield	North	Frozen food sales	2,614	2,189	20,796	20,527	253	253
57		Platinum Rails Holdings	31/03/15	Huddersfield	West	Manufacture distribution and service of stairlifts	2,605		13,017		103	
58	74	Abraham Moon Holdings	31/12/15	Leeds	West	Woollen manufacture	2,605	2,203	21,184	21,847	220	213
59		Future Energy Group	31/12/15	Batley	West	Utility supply	2,590	873	17,443	16,474	142	141
60	43	Wolf Safety Lamp Company (The)	30/06/15	Sheffield	South	Manufacture and sale of safety lamps	2,564	1,973	12,217	10,714	39	36
61		Peaspring	31/12/15	Keighley	West	Manufacture, merchant and wholesale of clothing and fabric, together with worsted spanning	2,556	1,622	25,038	21,842	104	94
62		YBS Holdings	30/06/16	Batley	West	Design, installation and servicing of heating and ventilation systems for a wide range of buildings	2,536	1,781	29,505	24,668	70	60
63		P V H Holdings	31/05/15	Goole	East	Property letting and the management	2,436	1,016	23,689	14,819	22	19
64		Overna	31/12/15	Harrogate	North	Manufacture and distributor of horticultural and agrochemical products	2,406		13,915		105	
65	80	Intermarketing Group (Formerly Nooko)	31/03/16	Leeds	West	Print management and marketing consultancy and brokerage and holding company	2,393	2,147	18,900	12,910	117	85
66		Samuel Hodge Holdings	31/03/16	Sheffield	South	Gas pressure valves and dispensing equipment	2,379	975	25,558	22,037	183	170
67		B A K	31/12/15	Pudsey	West	Retail sale	2,365	1,234	23,656	21,549	150	144
68		Sargent Electrical Services	30/11/15	Beverley	North	Design, supply and manufacture of electrical and electronic assemblies	2,360	1,920	13,065	11,512	127	122
69		Cromar Building Products	31/05/16	Goole	East	Manufacture and distribution of roofing and waterproofing products to the building trade	2,346	1,665	17,876	15,050	48	41
70	83	Phoenix Textiles	31/12/15	Huddersfield	West	Manufacture and sale of floor coverings and home furnishings	2,346	2,059	8,936	8,536	70	70
71	91	D.G. Taylor Commercial Vehicles	31/10/15	Driffield	North	Purchase, resale and hire of commercial vehicles	2,344	2,018	21,404	23,078	14	14
72	92	Liberty Group Holdings	30/06/15	Sheffield	South	Manufacture, sale and hiring out of site cabins and related equipment	2,334	2,017	9,662	8,835	72	68
73		Colortronic (U.K.)	31/12/15	Chesterfield	South	Manufacturers agents connection plastics industry, and the installation maintenance this machinery	2,330	1,415	12,704	10,023	26	25
74	64	Robinson Healthcare Group	30/06/15	Worksop	West	Manufacture, marketing and distribution of personal hygiene, healthcare and veterinary products and medical devices	2,297	1,578	21,308	20,956	168	166
75	65	Carver Engineering Holdings	31/03/15	Doncaster	South	Provision of general engineering & fabrications	2,293	286	8,007	2,301	49	47
76	49	A-Fax	31/12/15	Elland	West	Sale of building protection and safety products	2,280	2,470	19,670	17,359	160	106
77	35	Yorkwold Pigpro	29/02/16	Driffield	North	Pig farming	2,277	2,772	20,371	20,238	71	73
78		Autobrokers	30/04/15	Batley	West	Motor dealers	2,265	481	31,308	22,963	39	32
79	50	Nationwide Retail Systems	31/12/15	Barnsley	South	Sale of cashless catering management systems	2,257	2,453	6,108	6,031		57
80		Compass Engineering Holdings	31/12/15	Barnsley	South	Management and establishment services	2,253	n.a.	18,737	n.a.	59	n.a.
81		Carver Engineering Services	31/03/15	Doncaster	South	General engineering and fabrications	2,243	1,764	8,007	7,124	48	49
82	69	First 4 Lawyers	31/03/15	Huddersfield	West	Advertising, marketing and other services provided to the legal sector	2,220	2,626	11,473	13,320	19	13
83	71	Styrene Packaging & Insulation	31/05/15	Bradford	West	Manufacture of polystyrene packaging and insulation products	2,209	1,608	17,101	14,750	101	90
84		Go Green	31/12/15	Doncaster	South	Waste management brokers	2,174	1,670	19,206	17,139	71	57
85	76	Strawson Group Investments	28/02/15	Retford	South	Property investment	2,171	2,197	2,960	2,938	5	5
86		Dennis Baldwin Group	31/12/15	Keighley	West	Manufacture, maintenance and hire of steam producing boilers	2,144	1,755	13,376	13,548	110	98
87		Tours Abroad Group	31/12/15	Rotherham	South	Specialist holidays tour operator and wholesaler	2,130	1,750	32,408	32,789	119	112
88	33	High Grove Beds	31/12/15	Liversedge	West	Manufacture of beds	2,126	2,849	20,641	16,540	216	171
89		Jack Lunn (Holdings)	30/09/15	Harrogate	North	Contracting, the development, sale and letting of properties, housebuilding, joinery manufacture and installation	2,101	38	2,387	2,224	8	11
90	82	Delta Caravans Holdings	29/02/16	Hull	North	Manufacture and sale of caravans	2,078	2,068	24,337	23,492	160	149
91	97	John Horsfall & Sons(Greetland),	31/12/15	Huddersfield	West	Blanket and textile manufacturers and blade and wire for the carpet industry	2,039	1,993	15,236	15,654	45	47
92		Dearnside Fabrications	31/03/16	Sheffield	South	Metal fabricators	2,030	698	13,604	8,545	102	96
93	89	Troy Foods (Salads)	27/09/15	Leeds	West	Food manufacturer	2,019	1,732	23,618	24,320	75	61
94	93	Talk Direct (Leeds)	31/03/15	Batley	West	Mobile telephone sales	2,010	2,558	19,410	19,466	129	127
95		Wilson Power Solutions Group	30/04/15	Leeds	West	Trade of electrical transformer, switchgears, battery chargers and hire	2,002	1,073	14,204	10,425	96	92
96		Money Made Simple (UK)	29/06/15	Bradford	West	Regulated claims management, insurance brokerage and personal debt management	1,965	-252	5,767	9,775	75	104
97		H P Construction	31/03/16	Sheffield	South	General construction and civil engineering	1,942	452	14,231	11,989	15	
98		Lablogic Group Holdings	30/06/16	Sheffield	South	Supply of scientific data systems	1,942	1,614	11,547	12,006	72	69
99	67	Zenith International Freight	31/03/16	Bradford	West	Freight forwarding	1,928	2,277	33,574	32,573	25	21
100		Dam Structures	31/10/15	Bridlington	North	Manufacture of metal structures	1,927		14,491		39	

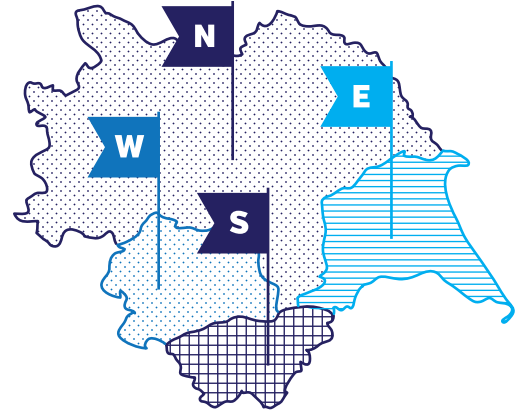
Notes on Top 100 SMEs Yorkshire

Results finalised 12/1/17

Figures compiled by BHP Chartered Accountants using latest published financial information at the time of carrying out this survey filed at Companies House and financial data provided by Bureau van Dijk's Fame. To qualify for inclusion, businesses must: • be an independent company OR the ultimate holding company of a UK group • be an SME, i.e. meets two of the following measures - less than 250 employees - less than £25.9m turnover - less than £12.9m gross assets • not be a charity, academy, Limited Liability Partnership or listed Public Limited Company • be up-to-date filing accounts at Companies House • have a registered or primary trading address in Yorkshire and Humberside. NOTE: Due to the way in which regions are allocated in Fame, some neighbouring towns to the region have also been included in this survey. For financial periods of more than or fewer than 52 weeks, the figures have been annualised on a pro-rata basis. Private company information can be incomplete: in preparing this table every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that no qualifying companies have been omitted. In certain circumstances the compilers of the table have made exceptions to the qualification criteria and their decision is final.

Review by Region

The Yorkshire Post



North

NORTH YORKSHIRE grew its presence in this year's Top 100 SME list from ten entrants to twelve, proving that its geographical vastness and lower population density is no barrier to success.

Often inaccurately stereotyped as a predominantly tourism and rural-focused economy, North Yorkshire's top firms run the gamut of industries from financial advice to education services, home building and pharmaceuticals, showing off a highly diverse economy which is growing its balance sheets and helping to create jobs.

Top of the list this year is Econ Engineering in Ripon, which is the highest new entrant and both manufactures and maintain commercial vehicles for highway maintenance.

Investment management services firm Cardale Asset Management shrugged off a tumultuous year for the financial sector by growing its head count and turnover, and arriving into the top ten. Ranked seventh, up from last year's 11th, it had a good year, with its most recent accounts showing that its client assets under management had grown from £572m to £764m, representing an increase of 34%.

In his remarks, the firm's Chief Executive Ashley Alger said: "We are confident the Cardale brand is well established and is recognised for its first class service, investment performance and total integrity."

He added that he was looking at future prospects with "measured excitement".

The second ranked firm was Cardale Asset Management's close neighbours Bramall Properties. The company is

located just around the corner in the same Harrogate business park and is owned by Tony Bramall, the motor sales magnate.

Doing business in property investment and arable farming, it leapt from 44th to 15th having nearly doubled its turnover and boosting its profits by a similar margin.

This year's list sees four other debutantes from North Yorkshire in the shape of Econ Engineering, Queens Staith Leisure in York, Paw Holdings in Skipton and Overna in Harrogate. These firms, operating in hospitality, engineering and manufacturing respectively, have all displayed hugely impressive levels of growth which has been translated into new jobs and strong potential for future growth.

South

SOUTH YORKSHIRE had a very strong year among its SME sector, with Barnsley very much leading the charge.

The town took three of the top ten slots and showed itself to be a powerful place to do business. The three movers and shakers from Barnsley were Melett, Haywood and Padgett and Silkstone Finance. The former, a group which develops, builds and supplies repair parts for turbochargers rose from sixth in last year's list and grew its headcount.

Hot on its heels in sixth place was Haywood and Padgett, a fantastic company that produces wholesale baking goods. It grew from 53rd in last year's Top SME list to sixth, having seen its turnover and profits soar during the previous 12 months.

As Mike Jackson from BHP points out, it produces an amazing 4.5m scones every week and could soon be helping South Yorkshire give its Northern counterpart a run for its money in the food and drink sector.

Away from brilliant Barnsley, Rotherham's Hamsard 3120 had an amazing year, demonstrated by it having grown from 63rd

in last year's list to 12th. Its bosses will be eyeing a top 10 finish next year after seeing an extremely strong rise in its profitability and turnover. It is now employing 171 people.

Special mention should also be made of the fact that Bartec Auto ID has had a sensational year, rising to 15th place from 44th. The firm, is a genuine world leader in the manufacture of pressure tools in the auto motive industry and saw its profits more than double since last year's list.

Given how well-represented South Yorkshire is in this year's Top 100 SME list it was perhaps a touch surprising to see only eight companies from the giant that is Sheffield making the table. However the depth of industries and sectors represented showed that South Yorkshire's economy has much to look forward to in 2017 and beyond.

The region has seen a large amount of inward investment in the last 12 months which will only help to strengthen its prospects. All told, the region's strong list of companies are demonstrating how South Yorkshire's proud history of manufacturing is showing now.

East

THIS YEAR'S Top 100 SME list is published as Hull and East Yorkshire is well underway with what should prove to be the most important year in its recent history.

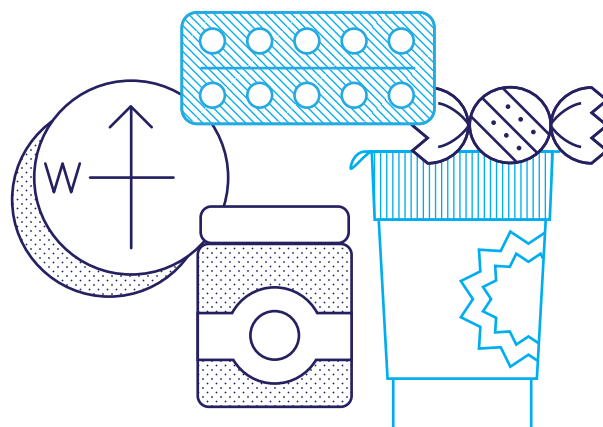
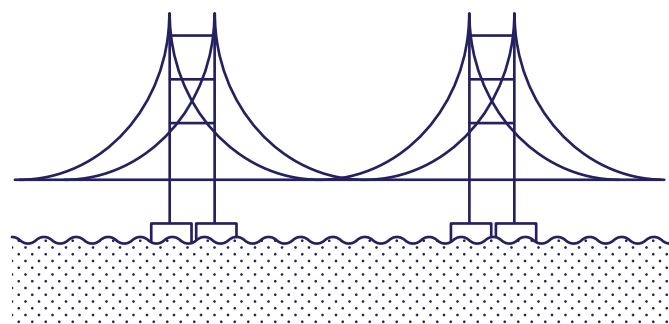
The nation's City of Culture for 2017, Hull will be looking to capitalise on the exposure and prestige the accolade brings by attracting more investment into the region. And what a varied region it is, with office furniture manufacturers, housing developers, caravan makers and civil engineers all making the Top 100 list this year. Encouraging too is the fact that there are a great many new entrants into this year's list, demonstrating that firms in the East Riding are growing already, ahead of the benefits that City of Culture will bring.

The region's highest-placed firm for the third year in a row was EOF Holdings, better known to the man in the street [or boardroom] for Elite Office Furniture. Ranked second over all for the entire Yorkshire region, it turned over £20.5m and record profits of £7.6m – an increase of close to £500,000 on the preceding year.

The business has seen genuinely strong organic growth in the last few years, as those who have been following its progress will attest. It has expanded its premises an impressive six times since moving to its Goole base in 1996 and last year marked 30 years in business. Its headquarters currently covers 200,000 sqft and is home to a showroom. The business increased its head count by four people and still boasts a show room at Clerkenwell in London.

Among the new entrants were Keigar Homes, based over the River Humber and working in residential housing, Bridlington's Shorewood Group which produces caravans and East Coast Construction, which operates in civil engineering, construction and groundwork contracting, also from Bridlington.

The Wykeland Group which develops homes saw profits rise sharply to £4.04m from £3.4m 12 months previously. It has been instrumental in the City of Culture process, creating the amphitheatre in the cultural quarter around the new Central Dry Dock which has helped to breathe new life into the area around Hull's waterfront. At its heart is the Centre for Digital Innovation [C4DI] which has brought more acclaim to the city.



West

THE METEORIC rise of Sewtec Holdings shows no sign of slowing down anytime soon as the Dewsbury-based business took top slot for West Yorkshire and the region as a whole. Engaged in the design and building of special purpose machinery to a host of blue chip companies, the company tops this year's overall Top 100 SME list, having risen from fifth last year and 48th the year before.

From its base in the Ravensthorpe area it designs and installs bespoke packing lines for the food, tobacco, confectionery, personal care and pharmaceutical industries. To support its ambitions it has invested £500,000 in the establishment of a stand-alone Research & Development Centre, which it hopes will support customer projects and enable the company to further grow its business. The new facility is situated next to Sewtec's existing manufacturing HQ where it employs 72 people.

Its profits soared in 2016, up to £11.3m from £7m at the last set of accounts and off of a turnover of £21.8m. Down slightly from its second place finish in last year's list was civil engineering firm Construction Marine. The Leeds-based firm specialises in projects around rail, marine and highways and has a nationally-recognised reputation for building sea defences and dealing with landslides. It found fame for reinstating the Carlisle to Newcastle railway line after a landslide put it out of action for a month.

The Harris Group in Wakefield was another of the list's massive success stories, rising from 86th in last year's table to an impressive eighth this year after growing its profits from £2.04m to £4.5m in one year. The group, which is engaged in the services of architectural, consultants, project managers and production planners, turned over an impressive £10.5m and looks like it is going to be a firm to watch in the future.

Another notable mention must be made of fellow Wakefield company Team17, which was the subject of a large private equity deal last year and grew from 37th last year to 25 in 2017's list. The computer game developer recorded profits of £3.3m and saw its turnover rise to north of £10m from £6.6m the year before, hiring an additional 19 people in the process.

Solid foundations are key to selling a business

Every business owner requires an exit plan, and for many this will revolve around eventually selling the company that they have often spent years nurturing and growing, but it's easy to underestimate the amount of groundwork required to achieve a successful sale and maximise a company's value.

Crucially, it's never too early to think about the foundations that need to be laid to sell a business. Even people who are many years away from retirement or those who presume a company will follow a natural progression, such as staying in the family, will benefit from having the basics in place. This is especially true because it's impossible to predict what the future holds, be it health related or an attractive offer suddenly arising for the business.

One of the most important aspects in any business sale, is how it will function once the current owner has handed over the keys to the kingdom. This can also be one of the most difficult aspects to get right. The vast majority of buyers will expect to see a strong management team in place, who can run the business with minimal input from the shareholders, so an owner manager who can effectively make themselves redundant, will have a much better chance of securing a higher price.

A simple test of this is to look at how the business functions when the owner goes on holiday. If they spend their downtime glued to their phone, Skyping the office and having to continually make decisions and reply to emails, it's clear that a lot needs to change before most buyers will consider it.

The type of buyer will also have a view on this. Strategic buyers will often be interested in the company's operations and probably plan to run it themselves, whereas many investors are often more focussed on the potential returns and won't want to be involved in its day to day running.

However, regardless of who the buyer is, being able to present accurate financial statements, solid cash flows and realistic forecasts that can be supported with hard evidence, will significantly make a company more attractive to a purchaser.

It's important that everyone on the team pulls in the right direction to create a clear and transparent picture. Any conflicting messages or nasty surprises will quickly destroy a buyer's trust in the process, and this is one of the biggest reasons many deals don't go through. It's also vital that the entire team remains focussed on continuing to ensure the business runs successfully throughout the sale process – at this point there are a lot of balls to juggle.

Another key consideration is how working capital and net debt will affect the overall transaction price. During the sale, the buyer and seller will often have very different views on how much working capital should be left in the business.

The buyer will want sufficient working capital to enable them to continue to trade, without having to invest more money, but for the seller, the lower the amount of working capital left in the business, the higher their net proceeds will be.

It is usually best to negotiate a target working capital amount at an early stage and document it, alongside what is to be included and excluded in the overall calculation. This negotiation can be complex, and poorly advised sellers can often give value away without realising it. Understanding how working capital can impact on net proceeds is therefore essential.

Finally, in most cases, profitability is the key consideration for buyers so this has to be as healthy as possible, which can take several years to get right. This means driving efficiencies and looking at where costs can be reduced well in advance of a potential sale.



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