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International Trade
& Investment

The Power of Place

Celebrating British SME exporters

"As Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Trade and Investment, I've seen first-hand where Britain's growth begins. Not just in the City or Canary Wharf, but in the workshops, industrial units and high streets of every town and region across the UK.

The businesses in this report show that world-class exporters are being built far beyond our financial centres. If we're serious about growth, we need to back more small firms to deliver what they do best into global markets. That's why I'll keep pressing for SMEs to sit at the heart of the Government's growth and trade agenda."



Mike Reader MP

Chair of the APPG for International
Trade & Investment

Introduction

In November 2025, the APPG for International Trade and Investment launched The Power of Place, a national spotlight on the contribution that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) make to local communities and the wider UK economy. At a time when economic growth, investment and exports are central to the UK's ambitions, The Power of Place shines a light on the businesses driving prosperity across the country, showing how local enterprise underpins national success.

Across the country, SMEs form the backbone of the local and national economy. They generate employment, support high streets and supply chains, and foster innovation in every sector; their contribution extends far beyond their immediate communities. For many firms, exporting is the route through which local success becomes national and international impact.

The opportunity is significant: constant advances in technology, logistics and connectivity mean that businesses of all sizes can now reach customers thousands of miles away. Despite these opportunities, however, only around 314,000 of the UK's 5.5 million SMEs currently export. Closing that gap could unlock new sources of growth for businesses, strengthen local economies and help realise the UK's wider economic ambitions.

This spotlight is both a celebration and a call to action. It highlights the achievements of SME exporters across the UK whilst encouraging more businesses to explore international markets. At its heart is a simple but powerful message: Britain's export success begins locally, and by supporting more SMEs to take that next step, we can unlock growth and opportunity in every part of the country.

“

The Power of Place can help small businesses in Scotland and elsewhere to increase their global exports.

”

Rt Hon Douglas Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Scotland and
former Trade Minister

Overview

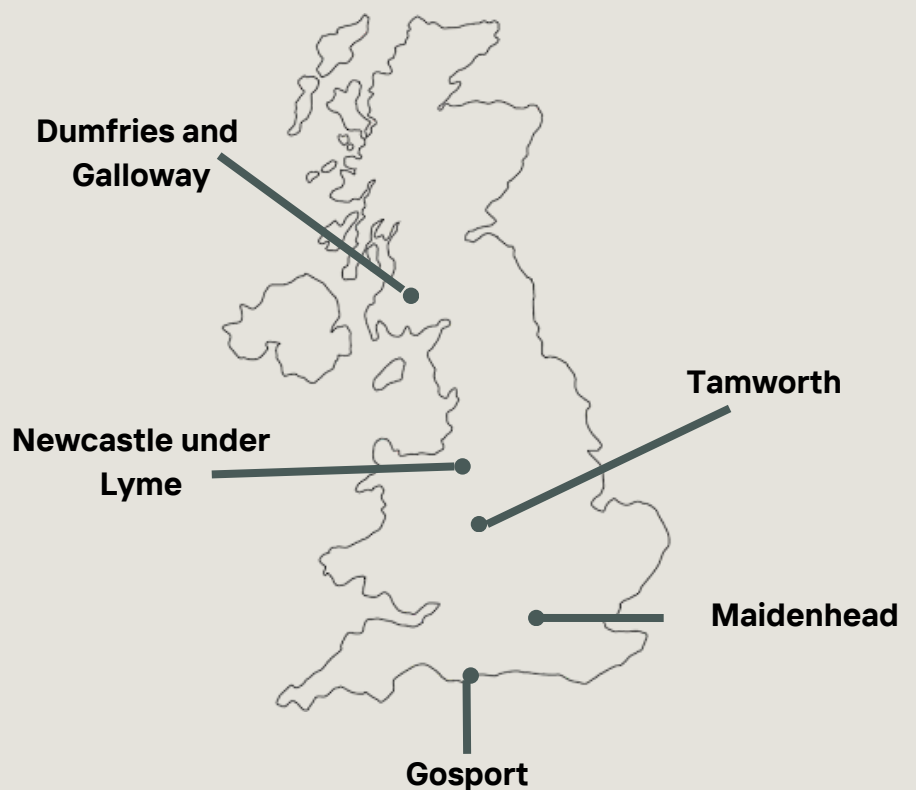
Through The Power of Place, the APPG for International Trade and Investment has worked with five MPs to champion SME exporters from their constituencies, highlighting the businesses that are driving growth, creating jobs and shaping local economic identity.

Each MP has selected a firm that reflects the strengths, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit of their area, demonstrating how businesses rooted in communities across the UK are succeeding in international markets. Their stories show how local businesses, supported by local champions, can strengthen communities while contributing to Britain's competitiveness and reputation as a global trading nation.



Adam Jogee MP

Newcastle under Lyme
Vice Chair of the APPG for
International Trade and Investment



John Cooper MP

Dumfries and Galloway



**Caroline Dinenage
MP**

Gosport



Sarah Edwards MP

Tamworth



**Joshua Reynolds
MP**

Maidenhead

Dumfries and Galloway

Bladnoch

Though its history stretches back to 1817, the Bladnoch distillery is nothing less than reborn. Its modern whiskies are shipped to Australia, the United States, South-East Asia and Europe. Britain's new Free Trade Agreement with India sees tariffs drastically reduced and opens a vast potential market for Scotch, into which Scotland's most southerly distillery can tap.



Galloway Cheddar

Part of the Lactalis dairy company, Stranraer's Galloway Creamery sits right in the heart of some of the most productive grassland in the UK. Their Galloway Cheddar is already a major name on high streets across Britain, but innovative new products - such as pre-sliced - are increasingly in demand abroad, especially in Germany.

Mylar

The specialist films produced by Mylar on the edge of Dumfries have a host of applications – not least in the cash cards, ID and licences which you probably have in your wallet or purse right now. The current energy revolution sees Mylar's products play an increasing role in electrical insulation in the global renewable generation and electric vehicle markets.

Newcastle-under-Lyme

Broxap

Broxap, a family business led by Mr Robert Lee, is a proud British manufacturer shaping public spaces across the UK and rooted in Newcastle-under-Lyme. Renowned for its quality, innovation and sustainability, the business designs and delivers street furniture and public realm solutions that enhance everyday life. These solutions can be seen on many streets around the United Kingdom. Combining skilled craftsmanship with modern technology, Broxap invests in its people, its community and pursues continuous improvement. With a strong local heritage and a national reputation, the company works in partnership with customers to create safer, more inclusive and more attractive places. Broxap exemplifies how local roots and ambitious vision drive lasting success.



There are over 3,600 SMEs operating in Newcastle under Lyme, all of which are part of the thriving Staffordshire economy



With an interesting history of trade spanning silk weaving, pottery and coal mining, Newcastle-under-Lyme now boasts innovation tech, construction, and cultural hubs

Incap

Incap, listed on the Nasdaq stock exchange, is a leading electronics manufacturing business delivering high-quality, reliable solutions to customers worldwide. Incap exports across Europe and to North American markets. With a strong focus on precision, innovation and relentless progress, Incap combines advanced technology with a highly skilled workforce to support complex, mission-critical industries. The business is committed to sustainability, operational excellence and long-term partnerships, ensuring value at every stage of the manufacturing process. Proud of its local roots and global reach, Incap exemplifies how a Newcastle-under-Lyme company can compete, grow and succeed on an international stage.

Tamworth

PI-KEM

This is a family owned and led specialist science and technology company based in Tamworth which exports around the world. This includes over 40 countries across Europe, North America, South America, Asia, Africa, and Australia They support scientific research by businesses and academics by supplying a range of materials. The key to their success is the depth of their product knowledge which enables them to supply bespoke materials where appropriate. Their work supports research in areas such as thin film and nano technology; photonics and optoelectronics; hydrogen technology and energy. To achieve their success, they have always operated as a team and focused on showing colleagues and stakeholders that they are valued.

Success #1

Having expanded their offices in 2024, PI-KEM have recently won the Tamworth Business of the Year 2026, sponsored by Lichfield City Council.

Success #2

The company has supported the development of advanced battery pilot-line facilities, including work with University College London (UCL) and the Łukasiewicz Research Network in Poland.

Success #3

As energy storage becomes an important part of the energy transition debate, PI-KEM has been broadening its battery research toolkit.



Maidenhead

Ultra Cyber Ltd

“When we talk about British excellence on the world stage, Ultra Cyber Ltd is exactly the kind of company I have in mind. Based right here in our region, they are doing genuinely remarkable work, protecting classified government and defence information at the very highest security levels, certified by the National Cyber Security Centre itself. Their technology is trusted by NATO allies and Five Eyes partners across the globe, and rightly so. In a world where cybersecurity has never mattered more, it is a real privilege to have a company of this calibre in our corner, flying the flag for British innovation.”



- Ultra Cyber Ltd boasts clients from the US to New Zealand
- AVK-SEG has truly impressive global reach; its parent company operates across 41 countries
- Created from the minds of three friends, Christopher Ward now commands a significant part of the global timepiece market, and has won WatchPro British Watch Brand of the Year in three consecutive years

Joshua Reynolds MP Maidenhead

AVK-SEG Ltd

“I find it extraordinary that a company operating quietly out of the UK is the nation's single largest supplier of backup power systems for data centres and AI infrastructure. As we navigate an era of rapid digital transformation, AVK/SEG Ltd is the kind of business that makes it all possible, keeping the lights on, literally, for some of the most critical infrastructure in the country. This is exactly the sort of homegrown industrial success story I want to be shouting about in Parliament.”

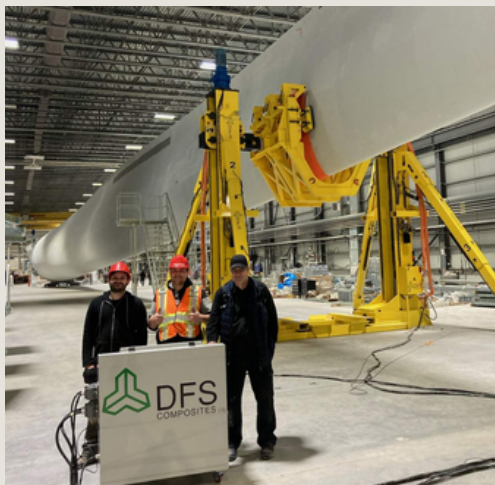
Christopher Ward

“I have a huge amount of admiration for Christopher Ward. Founded just over two decades ago, they had the ambition to take on the established luxury watch market and the courage to do it differently, starting as the world's first online-only luxury watchmaker. Today they design in England, manufacture in Switzerland, and sell to customers from New Hampshire to Hong Kong. They made the Sunday Times SME Export Track 100 for a reason. For me, they represent something important: that with the right idea, the right values, and a bit of British determination, you can build something truly world-class from scratch.”

Gosport

STS Defence

STS Defence is a Gosport-based engineering and technology company specialising in mission-critical, secure communications and networks, electronic warfare, control and instrumentation systems, operating primarily in the naval and air defence markets. They export both to Australia and the Middle East. It helps resolve complex technical challenges by designing, assembling, and integrating systems for customers including the Royal Navy. STS Defence recently secured a £12.96 million MoD contract to produce and install advanced UHF SATCOM systems aboard the Royal Navy's new Type 26 frigates, employing over 200 people in Gosport. Its deep naval expertise and long-term MoD relationships make it a cornerstone of the UK's sovereign defence electronics capability.



DFS Composites

DFS Composites specialises in providing innovative tooling solutions and composite structures in the aerospace, marine defence, and the wind energy industries, with facilities across the UK, Mexico, and India. Headquartered at Lee-on-the-Solent on the Gosport peninsula, their advanced composite materials are critical in defence and aerospace applications. DFS Composites exemplifies how UK engineering SMEs can grow from a local base to deliver world-class, globally traded industrials in strategically important sectors.

Britten-Norman

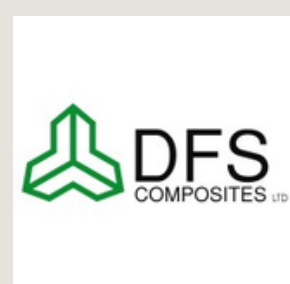
Britten-Norman is the UK's only sovereign aircraft manufacturer, having designed and delivered aircraft for over 60 years. Its primary product, the Islander, is one of the world's most successful and enduring aircraft designs. Based at Solent Airport Daedalus on the Gosport peninsula, the company delivers full Through-Life Capability Management to the British Government, with the MoD operating both the Defender 4000 and BN2T Islander in the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance role. Britten-Norman represents a rare British success story in sovereign aircraft manufacturing, exporting globally while sustaining skilled local jobs and apprenticeships.

With thanks

We are hugely grateful to the breadth of businesses that engaged with the APPG's celebration and championing of British SME exporters. This spotlight is the result of vital and insightful contributions of both the selected MPs and the local exporters utilising government trade deals and export packages to compete and grow on the international stage.

Across five regions, the APPG is fortunate enough to have had the input from 12 organisations. The variety of businesses who took time to share their stories with parliamentarians show Britain's extraordinary strength as an exporter. Our exploration of businesses country-wide ranged from defensive capabilities and emerging cyber technology to fashion and luxury and food and beverage industries.

We are also grateful to all MPs for their support, and we extend our particular thanks to our Vice Chair, Adam Jogee, for his support in spearheading the Power of Place.



Get Involved

The APPG for International Trade and Investment is committed to championing British SMEs on the national and international stage. Whether you are a business owner, trade body, policymaker, or stakeholder, there are meaningful ways to engage with our work, shape our findings, and help drive the change that British businesses deserve.



Upcoming engagements

↙ We're keen to hear from parliamentarians who'd like to lead discussions in Westminster relating to international trade and investment, especially on UK-US and UK-EU trade. This would contribute towards our Autumn drop in series and form a broader opportunity for parliamentarians and industry to engage.

We will also be continuing our work on promoting access to finance for SMEs and promoting digital trade.

Before Parliament adjourns in December, we'll be exploring the year in trade policy - please do share any themes you think should be examined.

If you'd like to get involved, then please do email using the address below.

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www.appg-trade.com