

# Children's clothing company secures Wales' first General Export Facility

- Character.com sells a range of character themed clothing worldwide including Harry Potter, Star Wars, Peppa Pig and their own brand Harry Bear.
- UKEF and Barclays are committed to supporting the continued growth of Character.com, which employs 85 people locally.
- £3 million trade loan facility will help Character.com boost exports by scaling up their business operation.

Swansea-based clothing company [Character.com](#) exports children's clothing and accessories across the world with recognisable characters from film and TV shows such as Harry Potter, Star Wars and Peppa Pig. The UK's television and film industry is a creative powerhouse, and the popularity of these products demonstrates its importance.

Husband and wife team Stephen and Karen Hewitt set up the business in 2009. It is one of the fastest growing companies in Wales with an annual turnover of more than £50 million. Character.com exports its products to markets all over the world including in Europe and North America.

Working with its bank Barclays, Character.com has benefited from UKEF's new [General Export Facility \(GEF\)](#), securing a £3 million trade loan facility. GEF allows the UK government to guarantee up to 80% of a facility offered by a bank to finance exports. It is aimed at supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as they scale up their business operations.

Character.com took advantage of this facility, providing the company with additional working capital to support and optimise the business's growth strategy.

## **Character.com's Finance Director, Helen Morgan said:**

The opportunity that the collaboration brings to Character.com is paramount to our ambitious and exciting growth trajectory. It supports us and other organisations in putting Wales on the map as serious contenders in the export market. We look forward to working with the team at Barclays and UKEF as we realise our growth potential worldwide.

## **Minister for Exports, Graham Stuart MP, said:**

I am delighted that Character.com are the first of many Welsh businesses to take advantage of GEF. GEF is a gamechanger for UKEF, making it quicker and easier for SMEs to access government-backed funding to help boost their exporting capacity.

Research shows that companies that export are more productive, profitable and pay higher wages on average than their non-exporting peers, so we are determined to help more companies increase their exporting capacity in support of the Chancellor's Plan for Jobs.

**Barclays Trade Director, Amy Wilson said:**

By really understanding the business and the industry sector, Barclays with the support of UKEF has been able to deliver an innovative funding package to support this ambitious SME.

The new facility demonstrates both Barclays, UKEF and the company's confidence in the continued growth and success of the business in international markets.

**Minister for Wales Simon Hart said:**

The UK Government is backing businesses across Wales and the rest of the UK to help our economy build back from the pandemic. It's fantastic to see a growing Welsh business like Character.com successfully utilise this support, enabling them to expand their businesses further.

The General Export Facility is a great way for businesses gain access to finance to support their ambitions and I urge other firms who would benefit to apply.

**About UK Export Finance**

[UK Export Finance](#) is the UK's export credit agency and a government department, working along-side the Department for International Trade as an integral part of its strategy and operations.

Established in 1919, it exists to ensure that no viable UK export should fail for a lack of finance from the private market. It provides finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and get paid for export contracts.