

# Press release: Department for International Trade announces East of England Export Champions

Chief Executives, Managers and Directors from a group of East of England exporting businesses have been recognised as Export Champions by the Department for International Trade (DIT) at an event held at the Moller Centre in Cambridge on Wednesday 1st May.

The 25 Export Champions have been selected by DIT for their inspirational approach to growing their businesses through exporting, or for championing exporting in the East of England. Champions will encourage companies in their region to start exporting, offer practical advice on how to turn exporting ambitions into reality and share their experiences of how DIT helped them break into new markets.

The East of England-based Export Champions include Julie Deane from The Cambridge Satchell Company. 47% of the company's current turnover comes from exports to over 120 countries world-wide, including key markets such as the United States and China.

Other champions include Sue Jones from Hertfordshire-based Absolute Skincare, which supplies some of the world's most luxurious spas, and Dave Shanks from Water to Go in Bedfordshire, whose nano-tech filter water bottles convert any non-salt water source into instantly drinkable water.

Today's announcement comes as worldwide demand for British goods continues to grow. HMRC figures show that exports from the East of England generated more than £28 billion of income for the UK in 2018, highlighting the opportunity for British businesses to gain greater access to some of the largest and fastest growing markets in the world.

Trade Policy Minister, George Hollingbery visited Cambridge to announce the new Export Champions and to discuss opportunities for businesses to increase their exports. As part of the UK's future independent trade policy, there will be new opportunities for British businesses to gain greater access to some of the largest and fastest growing markets in the world.

To create these opportunities, the government is currently preparing to enter into negotiations on future trade agreements with the USA, Australia, New Zealand and potentially joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Last year alone, exports to the United States from the East of England were worth £3.84 billion, highlighting the potential opportunities available for the region's businesses to make the most of rapidly growing demand for British products.

Exports to Trans Pacific Partnership countries increased by 6.7% in 2017,

with exports from East Anglia to Vietnam growing by 46% and exports to Japan growing by 20%.

**Trade Policy Minister, George Hollingbery said:**

I am delighted to announce the expansion of DIT's export champion programme, with the addition to the network of 25 experienced exporters based in the East of England.

Through the programme we will continue to work with local businesses to provide expert support and advice, helping business in the East of England take advantage of the largest and fastest growing global markets, where there is high demand for quality British goods.

British businesses and exporters will play a major role in helping to forge stronger trading relationships as we leave the European Union and take control of our independent trade policy for the first time in over 40 years.

The Export Champion community, launched in March as part of the Exporting is GREAT campaign, was introduced in response to a desire from businesses to receive peer-to-peer exporting support. There are now 250 Export Champions active across England, and the Department's ambition is to expand the programme to at least 1,000 Champions by April 2020.

**Thinley Topden, DIT's Head of Region in the East of England, said:**

Whether they're a manager at an established business or founder at an entrepreneurial start up, our Export Champions are achieving international success worth shouting about. We've chosen these individuals as we know that their experiences make them the best candidates to encourage and guide other local businesses on their exporting journey.

The Export Champion event was the perfect way to celebrate and recognise exporters right across the region. For any business interested in exporting, I'd say don't hesitate to get in touch. We have a network of committed International trade advisers based on the ground to help with tailored advice, guidance and workshops on a vast range of topics and funding support.

A total of 18 Export Champions from across the East of England attended the event and shared inspiring stories of export successes.

**Stuart Gibbons, Managing Director at Le Mark Group said:**

This was an excellent, professional event and it has set the focus for much-needed professional development of export in this region. As a company, we fully support the Export Champions initiative. We are excited about our role and look forward to highlighting the importance of getting more businesses to export and take advantage of the help available for those wanting to.

**Paul Fletcher, International Sales Manager at Queen's Award winners Dura Composites said:**

Dura Composites is pleased to be part of the Export Champions initiative. We hope that our success in developing an export market for our composite timber and fibreglass products can help inspire other UK businesses who haven't yet begun to sell overseas to take the plunge.

There's a wealth of help and support out there, and we look forward to working with our fellow Export Champions in the East of England to showcase the ways in which exports can strengthen your core business.

DIT also recently launched regional Export Champion networks across the country.

Alongside the launch, DIT is inviting businesses that have taken their first steps towards exporting to become Export Advocates. Export Advocates will form part of an online exporting community where they can ask questions about overseas trade, get advice on overcoming barriers, and find out about specific support available. Any company interested in joining the Export Advocate Community can sign up via [great.gov.uk](http://great.gov.uk) where they will also get access to an exporting toolkit.

Companies looking for support should call 01707 398 398 or email [eastinfo@mobile.trade.gov.uk](mailto:eastinfo@mobile.trade.gov.uk). They can also visit [great.gov.uk](http://great.gov.uk), which has information on live export opportunities and includes general information on exporting and events.