

Press release: UK exports of trainers sprint to glory ahead of London Marathon

A record 414,168 runners applied to take part in this Sunday's (28th April) London Marathon and UK exports have also been smashing records, as sales of trainers and sports footwear overseas reached £392 million in 2018, a 21% increase since the previous year.

The most popular destination was the Irish Republic, which imported British products worth £94 million. Exports to other economies also raced up; China by 233% to £2.3 million, UAE 181% to £1.6 million and the largest growth came in the Thai market, with exports growing by 1157% to £1.1million.

Trainers and Sports footwear have been a high performer for British exports, increasing at an average annual growth rate of 21% and have more than tripled in value.

London took 1st place in the regional race for most footwear exports in the UK, worth over £1.8 billion in 2018. They were followed by North West England in 2nd (£1.1 billion) and the East of England in 3rd (£634 million).

Secretary of State for International Trade, Dr Liam Fox, said:

Exports of UK trainers and sports footwear are doing brilliantly all over the world, the record number of applicants for this year's London Marathon is truly inspiring, and it's encouraging to know that more runners than ever will have British made trainers on their feet.

The export success of companies like Norman WALSH and New Balance, which have large headquarters in the UK is testament to the economic benefits of selling overseas. I encourage like-minded businesses to get in touch as my international economic department stands ready to offer its expertise in helping all companies to unlock their exporting potential.

Norman WALSH Footwear are a UK exporter of specialist running shoes who were established in 1961 and based in Bolton. They have had great success exporting overseas through the help of the Department for International Trade.

A spokesperson from Norman WALSH, said:

Currently we are exporting to Japan, China, Korea, Europe and we have just opened accounts in Kuwait. The Department for International Trade has been very helpful on a number of occasions by sourcing new distributors, trade exhibitions and helping with contract negotiations.

Our turnover has increased and approximately 60% of our sales coming from exports, future plans are in place to continue our export sales drive with the USA, our next target for expansion.

New Balance, who are proud sponsors of the London Marathon, were founded over 100 years ago in the United States before investing in the UK. They employ approximately 400 people in the U.K. almost evenly split between the company's factory in Flimby and its European headquarters in Warrington, Cheshire.

A spokesperson from New Balance UK, said:

New Balance exports to all major global markets, with 80 per cent of the production from the company's manufacturing facility in Flimby, West Cumbria, going in exports.

New Balance has built a strong relationship with the DIT over a number of years with the Department offering the company assistance in areas such as exporting and international retail expansion.

As well as working with individual businesses, DIT has worked side by side with the British footwear industry to ensure people across the globe continue to enjoy British brands.

BFA and DIT have maintained a long standing and close dialogue on international trade, and of course particularly recently in relation to Brexit. We were delighted to be invited to create one of the first industry specific trade panels and continue to share information with government colleagues.

BFA is committed to working with DIT to ensure the best possible outcome and clear guidance, for our industry whatever the detail of Brexit brings.

Notes to editors

1. Norman Walsh are a British sports footwear manufacturer. Contact

info@walshsports.co.uk or visit their website www.normanwalshuk.com for more information.

2. New Balance are a US based sports footwear manufacturer, who have factories in the UK. They can be contacted on nbukcs@newbalance.co.uk.