

# Press release: Board of Trade Meets in Northern Ireland for the first time



Dr Liam Fox with students at a National Trade Academy Programme event ahead of a previous Board of Trade meeting

**The global success Northern Ireland firms is celebrated as the International Trade Secretary takes the Board of Trade to Northern Ireland for the first time.**

- International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP will back businesses in Northern Ireland by taking the Board of Trade to Belfast for the first time in its almost 400 year history
- Firms selling overseas urged to become Export Advocates to provide advice, encouragement and support to other businesses looking to sell abroad
- Six companies presented with Board of Trade Awards (BOFTAs) for their exceptional performance in international trade
- Three new advisers appointed to the Board of Trade

The global success of businesses in Northern Ireland will today (Thursday 16th May) be celebrated as International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP takes the Board of Trade to Northern Ireland for the first time in its almost 400 year history.

Looking to a world beyond Europe and a time beyond Brexit, Dr Fox will urge companies to become Export Advocates and to provide advice, encouragement and support to other companies looking to sell their products and services overseas.

The Export Advocate community is a network of UK companies acting as ambassadors for exporting, sharing their success stories, offering practical advice and leading by example. They can be contacted via [great.gov.uk](https://great.gov.uk) and on the Exporting is GREAT Facebook group. Businesses in Northern Ireland can sign up to become Export Advocates via [great.gov.uk/community](https://great.gov.uk/community)

Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade, The Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP, said:

This is a very historic time for Northern Ireland and the Board of Trade (BoT) is meeting here for the first time in our history. The BoT was specifically set up to ensure that all parts of the UK are able to share in the prosperity generated by trade. Today's visit makes that commitment clear.

I am encouraged by the success of Northern Ireland's Export Advocates and I urge more businesses who have successfully entered overseas markets to join this community and help guide other firms on to their first international sale.

Northern Ireland is a cornerstone of the UK economy and plays a vital role in securing the United Kingdom's shared prosperity. That's why my international economic department offers a full range of services to exporters from Northern Ireland, including £33 million of UK Export Finance support last year alone, which has already resulted in more than £46 million worth of overseas sales – underpinning jobs and growth.

At the historic meeting in Belfast, Dr Fox will also present six firms with Board of Trade Awards (BOFTAs) for their exceptional performance in international trade.

A hallmark of quality, these awards have become a globally-recognised certificate of excellence, shown on product labels of successful businesses from every part of the UK.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, The Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP, said:

I am delighted the Board of Trade is being held in Northern Ireland. We have so many fantastic local companies that already export overseas – worth an impressive £8.9 billion in 2018.

Our aim is to support many more businesses with global potential to expand and export across the world. That is why these events are so important and vital to boost continued growth and global impact for Northern Ireland.

The six companies presented with BOFTAs today are:

- **STATSports:** STATSports combines cutting edge GPS technology and patented sports science to change the way elite sport is played, coached and measured.
- **CDE:** The world's largest company dedicated to the wet processing of materials in the sand & aggregates, mining, construction and demolition waste recycling, industrial sands and environmental sectors.
- **Datactics:** Belfast-based Datactics provides RegTech solutions for the banking and financial services sector to comply with regulatory requirements for managing and reporting of large quantities of data.
- **Deluxe Group:** The Portadown company specialises in the design, manufacture and fitting of leisure, entertainment, hospitality, theme parks and prime residential developments.
- **First Derivatives:** First Derivatives provides specialist software development and consulting services that address the capture and analysis of large volumes of real time data.
- **MJM Marine:** Headquartered in Newry, MJM Marine has become a leading global maritime fitting company delivering innovative interior fit-outs to the majority of the world's cruise, ferry and superyacht companies.

Ahead of receiving their BOFTA, STATSports CEO and co-founder Alan Clarke said:

We are thrilled to be presented with this exclusive award. This is a hugely exciting time for us at STATSports as we embark on the next stage of our journey.

We have already established our performance monitoring technology with some of the biggest and best-known sporting organisations in the world and this international recognition will help us to expand our reach even further in both the elite and everyday field sports sector.

Three new advisers will also be appointed to the Board of Trade to be the 'eyes and ears' of the modern business community, ensuring that the benefits of free trade are spread equally across the UK.

The new advisers to the Board of Trade are Manufacturing Northern Ireland CEO Stephen Kelly, Scotch Whisky Association CEO Karen Betts and former International Trade Minister The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP. They will join the existing twenty advisers, drawn from a cross section of business, industry and nations of the UK.

Dr Liam Fox commented:

Karen, Greg and Stephen bring first-hand experience of working in industry and sitting around the table where decisions which have a big impact for exporters are made. Their contribution will strengthen the Board of Trade's expertise even further.

The other advisers and I look forward to working with them as we take the Board around the country to ensure that the benefits of free trade are spread to every part of the UK.

Dr Fox will present businesses with BOFTAs alongside a former student of last year's National Trade Academy Programme (NTAP) which took place in Northern Ireland.

In June and July this year, NTAP will run its 2019 International Trade Summer School across Scotland, the Midlands and the South West for 16-18 year olds students to develop business skills, meet innovative exporters and participate in a national competition.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- Latest statistics from the ONS show UK firms sold more overseas in the 2018/19 financial year, £639.9 billion, than at any time since records began
- The UK has now achieved 36 consecutive months of export growth on an annual rolling basis
- Separate OECD data shows UK exports grew faster than Germany, France and Italy between 2016 and 2018

The Department for International Trade (DIT) helps businesses export, drives inward and outward investment, negotiates market access and trade deals, and champions free trade.

We are an international economic department, responsible for:

- supporting and encouraging UK businesses to drive sustainable international growth
- ensuring the UK remains a leading destination for international investment and maintains its number one position for international investment stock in Europe
- opening markets, building a trade framework with new and existing partners which is free and fair
- using trade and investment to underpin the government's agenda for a Global Britain and its ambitions for prosperity, stability and security worldwide.

The 15 existing Northern Ireland Export Advocates:

- iSensing
- Woodwin Catering Ltd (Holmes Bakery)
- Shnuggle Ltd
- Creative Composites
- Sixteen South Studios
- Denman
- Cloud M
- Sensoteg
- Vita Liberata Limited
- Rademon Estate distillery
- BM Steel Fabrications Ltd
- Shortcross Gin
- Golden Popcorn Ltd
- Quigg Golden
- Slate Supplies NI Ltd

About the six companies being presented with Board of Trade Awards (BOFTAs):

- **STATSports:** Founded in 2007, Newry-based STATSports has changed the way elite sport is played, coached and measured by combining cutting edge GPS technology and patented sports science. The company already counts many of the world's top sports clubs and franchises as clients – including English Premier League teams Manchester United, Liverpool, Arsenal, Manchester City and Champions League teams. STATSports recently secured a long-term partnership with the Chinese Football Association to provide all Chinese national teams with its devices.
- **CDE:** For over 25 years, CDE has designed, manufactured and commissioned more wet processing plants than any other company in the world. CDE's headquarters in Cookstown, Northern Ireland, is the world's largest campus dedicated to the wet processing of materials in the sand & aggregates, mining, construction and demolition waste recycling, industrial sands and environmental sectors.
- **Datactics:** Belfast-based Datactics provides RegTech solutions for the banking and financial services sector. These enable financial institutions to comply with regulatory requirements associated with managing and reporting of large quantities of data. Datactics has ambitious growth plans for Europe and the USA and revenues forecast to grow by around 50% in the current year.
- **Deluxe Group:** Established in 1969, Deluxe Group specialises in the design, manufacture and fitting of leisure, entertainment, hospitality, theme parks and prime residential developments. The company currently employs over 100 employees in its 50,000 sq ft site in Portadown, Northern Ireland.
- **First Derivatives:** The Newry-based company provides specialist software

development and consulting services that address the capture and analysis of large volumes of real time data. Today, First Derivatives has offices in 14 countries globally with plans to grow from 2,400 staff to 3,400 staff by 2021. Building on its international network, the company has plans to enter markets including Singapore, China, Hong Kong, USA and Canada.

- MJM Marine: Headquartered in Newry, MJM Marine has become a leading global maritime fitting company delivering innovative interior fit-outs to the majority of the world's cruise, ferry and superyacht companies. Established 35 years ago, the company now employs close to 600 people in Northern Ireland and operates across the USA, Europe, Singapore, Japan and China.