

HM Homegrown: showcasing Northern Ireland's leading SMEs

Harbinson Mulholland has launched this year's HM Homegrown Top 50, a showcase of some of Northern Ireland's leading SMEs and a chance to shine a light on the strength of locally-owned and family-run firms

Whether it's something in the soil or maybe just the mindset of the people, Northern Ireland is home to its fair share of homegrown businesses.

Hard work, entrepreneurship and knowledge has helped these businesses grow into respected local and internationally acclaimed organisations which have maintained a commitment to Northern Ireland and its people.

There's a very clear and understated strand that runs through the economic foundation of Northern Ireland fuelled by the often unheard of multi-generational success stories of our SMEs.

The HM Homegrown Top 50 is another fresh look at the strength of locally-owned and family-run businesses, many of which fly under

the radar and just get on with doing business. This year's list was compiled by employee numbers.

Harbinson Mulholland hosted a major launch event for the 2022 campaign at Ulster University's Jordanstown campus at the end of April. The HM Homegrown list has been published alongside Ulster University Business School, with the research carried out by the University's Economic Policy Centre.

Northern Ireland's SMEs continue to flourish right across the sector. Manufacturing, for example, showcases a host of giants of industry across fields such as agri-business, while there are a slew of top producers right across the sector making this year's list.

SMEs are typically defined as those businesses with up to 250 employees and a turnover of £50m.



Sian Farrell from StimOxyGen and Catagen's Andrew Woods

This year's Homegrown list shows the firms employ a total of more than 10,000 people, with overall total turnover of £925m and profits of £50m.

Family-run firms and SMEs as a whole remain key components and a firm bedrock for Northern Ireland, providing a significant opportunity to make a great impact

Harbinson Mulholland has helped cultivate the Homegrown initiative as it encapsulates all it stands for as a firm.

For almost 25 years it has been at the root of Northern Ireland business providing business advice and helping SMEs grow in all conditions.

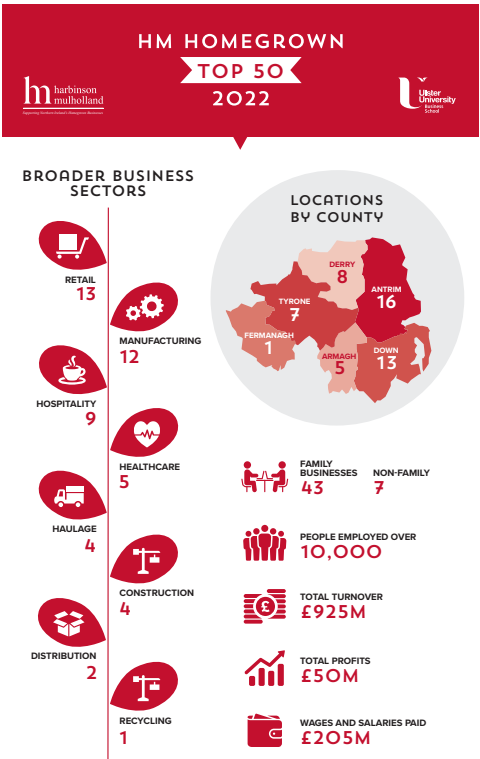
The crop of 2022 includes businesses from across NI including AG, CFM NI, Deli Lites, Denroy Group, Irwin M&E Ltd, Kane Group, Kingsbridge Healthcare Group, Mash Direct, Manor Healthcare Ltd, Milestone Rathfriland, Mooney Hotel Group, Newell Stores, Re-Gen Group, Roe Park Resort and SMF Toytown, along with others which will be profiled later in the campaign.



Darren McDowell with Dr Judith Woods and Dr Ian Smyth, Ulster University



Some of the family firms at the launch of the HM Homegrown event at Ulster University



shared the stories of their businesses, changing the face of emissions testing in the global automotive industry and therapeutic systems in cancer treatment.

"The Harbinson Mulholland Homegrown initiative helps to shine a light on these businesses who make a huge contribution to our economy and communities," Darren McDowell, senior partner, Harbinson Mulholland said.

Andrew Woods of Catagen said the "ability to spot opportunities and act quickly is a key benefit of being an SME". "Customers need to feel the personality of the company," he said.

Judith Woods of Ulster University said: "We need to be better about shouting about what we do. SMEs can benefit from collaborating for mutual benefit and exchange."

Food on offer at the event included produce from some of Northern Ireland's leading high-end artisan producers.

That included Monto Chocolates, Corndale Farm, Brighter Gold rapeseed oils and Irish Black Butter, with its founder, Alastair Bell, on hand to share recipes with guests for his innovative butter and fudge products.

There are more than 77,000 VAT/PAYE registered businesses in Northern Ireland,

according to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. And of those, just 2% of those businesses employ more than 50 staff.

Based on that, in the room on the event day, there were just over 3,000 employees represented with £260m of around turnover.

That's a huge contribution to the overall Northern Ireland economy, providing income for families, key input into a host of local communities and helping provide important opportunities.

The overarching theme of the morning was the importance of the Homegrown businesses to the economy, nurturing talent and bringing forth opportunities.

Celebrating the wide breadth of talent and innovation across our private sector is something we should all embrace.

The Homegrown campaign will run throughout the rest of 2022 to support and profile these businesses who are the largest employers within our SME sector. ■

If you are interested in hearing news and updates about the campaign and events we are hosting please email Treena Clarke to be included tclarke@harbinson-mulholland.com. You can also follow the social media updates on Twitter @harbinsonmul or LinkedIn @harbinsonmulholland.