

10 biggest buyouts with fastest growing profits

	Company and activity	Location of HQ	Financial year end	Annual profit growth	Latest profit £000s	Base-year profit, £000s	Latest sales £000s	Staff	Main shareholders	Comment
1	Infinis Renewable energy generator	Northampton	Mar 11	52.74%	100,477	43,071	191,427	386	Terra Firma Capital Partners (100%)	Infinis constructs and runs renewable power plants. Last year the company's landfill gas, onshore wind and hydroelectric facilities generated 10% of the UK's renewable power, under chief executive Eric Machiels. Wholly owned by Terra Firma, in 2006 Infinis was spun out of the waste-disposal company WRG.
2	Markit Financial information provider	Central London	Dec 10	51.74%	177,412	77,047	432,524	1,736	Employees, individual investors, General Atlantic and other financial institutions	Markit is a global financial-information-services company that provides data, valuations and trade-processing services for the over-the-counter markets. The company is owned by its staff, investors and financial institutions, including General Atlantic, which bought a 7.5% stake in January 2010 for £155m. The company is led by Lance Uggla.
3	Nando's Restaurant operator	Southwest London	Feb 11	38.96%	60,908	31,544	333,760	8,328	Capricorn Ventures International (95%), others (5%)	Serving a variety of chicken dishes, Nando's is a familiar sight on Britain's high streets after opening 260 restaurants since 1992. The company is owned by Capricorn Ventures and led by chief executive David Niven. It swooped on rival restaurant group Clapham House in 2010, acquiring Gourmet Burger Kitchen in a £30.4m deal.
4	Harrods Department store operator	Central London	Jan 11	34.10%	113,300	*63,005	623,200	3,675	Qatar Holding (100%)	Harrods' Knightsbridge landmark is England's largest department store, selling an array of fashion, food and luxury goods. When concessions and Vat are included, more than £1 billion was spent in its London store last year. Qatar Holding bought the company for a reported £1.5 billion in 2010. Harrods is led by managing director Michael Ward.
5	Card Factory Greeting card retailer	Wakefield	Jan 11	33.81%	*58,811	32,847	*231,983	5,903	Charterhouse (above 50%), management (below 50%)	Card Factory has recently reached an impressive 600 UK stores, having expanded rapidly after a buyout by Charterhouse in April 2010 in a £350m deal. Last year, led by chief executive Richard Hayes, the company also acquired Gettingpersonal, an online retailer of personalised cards and gifts, to further develop its offering.
6	Barchester Healthcare Care home operator	Southwest London	Dec 10	28.04%	62,197	37,941	432,724	14,504	Grove Investments (100%)	This company was set up by chief executive Mike Parsons in 1993 and now runs more than 200 nursing homes. It cares for 10,000 people, and offers dementia care and assisted living along with support for younger people with disabilities. Irish entrepreneurs John Magnier, JP McManus and Dermot Desmond acquired the business in 1994.
7	Phones 4u Mobile telephone retailer	Staffordshire	Dec 10	25.24%	158,559	101,083	911,729	4,973	BC Partners (93%), management (7%)	Phones 4u runs 586 mobile-phone stores in the UK. Led by chief executive Tim Whiting, the company has grown profits partly as a result of economies of scale, and partly due to the uptake of smartphones by its target market, 16- to 24-year-olds. The company completed a £700m secondary buyout in April 2011, backed by BC Partners.
8	Vue Entertainment Cinema operator	West London	Nov 10	24.51%	64,980	41,918	308,415	3,234	Doughty Hanson (73%), management (27%)	The company claims that 60% of the population live within a 30-minute drive of a Vue cinema. Vue Entertainment was formed in 2003, when it bought 36 cinemas from Warner Village for £250m, and was sold to Doughty Hanson in December 2010 for a reported £450m, including debt. The company is led by chief executive Tim Richards.
9	Wood Mackenzie Energy research consultancy	Edinburgh	Dec 10	22.47%	56,400	37,600	128,141	649	Charterhouse (85%), management and staff (15%)	This Edinburgh company provides market research and consulting services to the oil, gas, coal, metals, and mining industries, with clients including all the big oil companies. It is headed by chief executive Stephen Halliday. In June 2009 Charterhouse backed a £553m tertiary buyout from Candover, taking an 85% stake.
10	Towergate Insurance Insurance underwriter and broker	Maidstone	Dec 10	20.35%	124,702	86,096	359,593	4,064	Advent International (below 50%), management (above 50%)	Since its launch in 1997, founder Peter Cullum has expanded the insurance firm Towergate with more than 100 acquisitions. The group's activities extend to more than £2 billion in gross premiums annually, making it Europe's largest independently owned insurance intermediary. Advent acquired a minority stake for £200m a year ago.

This table shows the fastest-growing private-equity-backed companies with profits of more than £50m, ranked by profit growth over a two-year period

Notes: * Annualised figure † Accounts not filed at Companies House