

Title: The changing shape of Nottinghamshire's economy: From manufacturing to services and public to private

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Publication of the Top 200 for 2018 gives us an ideal opportunity to reflect on the changing nature of our local economy and the businesses on which we all depend. Other contributions to this special issue have focussed on particular industry sectors like biotech, education and health. This article considers the Top 200 for what it can tell us about the changing nature of our economy as a whole. From this perspective, two things stand out:

1. The continuing shift from manufacturing to service sector, and;
2. The increasing prominence of companies wholly or largely involved in the provision of public services.

The first of these statements is perhaps the most obvious. If we were to step back, in World Cup year, to another World Cup year of 1966, what might the Top 200 have looked like? Front and centre in the Top 200 of 1966 would have been the three large manufacturers who dominated the City at that time: Boots, Players and Raleigh. Each would have employed in excess of 10,000 people in their manufacturing operations based in the City. These were 30,000 relatively well paid skilled and semi-skilled manufacturing jobs accessible to local people. Today manufacturing employment in Nottingham stands at less than 5% - that is roughly 10,000 jobs. The quality of the manufacturing that we have left is often very high - illustrated by the presence of Rolls Royce in Annesley and Hucknall. But manufacturing is not the mass employment sector of the 1960s. Of these 'big three' manufacturing employers, only Boots remains. It is still a major anchor employer locally and deservedly occupies the top spot in the Top 200, but the focus of its operations have changed. In 2017 parent company, Walgreens Boots Alliance, sold the manufacturing division, BCM (formerly Boots Contract Manufacturing), to the French owned Fareva.

This is not to suggest that Nottingham has not been successful in creating jobs over the long term, but that the nature of these jobs have changed as the sectoral make-up of the local economy has shifted. In common with many other former manufacturing cities in the North and Midlands, Nottingham has become a regional centre for business services, education and health. These sectors now provide 23%, 10% and 14% respectively of jobs in the City. This shift is clearly evidenced in the presence of companies like Experian at the top of the list. It is also evident in the prominence of the County's Universities and NHS Trusts in our list of Top 20 local employers.

Turning now to the thorny issue of shifting boundaries between public and private sector activity and the increasing number of Top 200 firms involved in delivering public services, we enter more complex terrain. It is important to recognise that the use of private sector companies to deliver public services is far from new. Indeed Governments of all parties have sought to promote private sector involvement in public service delivery over the last 40 years. From the Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) of the 1980s, the outsourcing and public private partnerships of New Labour, to the restructuring of the NHS and accelerating 'academisation' of schools in recent years, opportunities for private sector involvement in public sector activity have grown. This is clearly reflected in the Top 200.

Perhaps the most obvious manifestation of this trend is the growing number of Academy Trusts present in the Top 200. Both the LEAD Academy Trust and the Greenwood Dale Foundation comfortably make it into the top 50 companies in the list – both with annual turnover in excess of

£100million. Developments in the health sector are exemplified by the presence of Nottingham Citycare Partnership CIC in the Top 200. Citycare are a large social enterprise and provider of NHS services in Nottingham. One could question the inclusion of organisations like this in the Top 200, but we have taken the view that they should be listed because they are registered companies and sizeable economic entities in their own right. More than that, they may be seen as emblematic of the ways in which our economy continues to be shaped and re-shaped over time.

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