BUSY IN DEALS

PE-backed consolidators, particularly in financial services, dominate UK mid-market M&A. Jason Sinclair gets the lowdown on 2026's most acquisitive businesses

Of the top 10 mid-market trade acquirers in the UK so far this year – regardless of geography and sector – nine are private equity backed. Six of the top 10 businesses on the 2025 list have retained their places through the first half of 2026, with Perspective Financial Group topping both lists, while British Garden Centres stands out as the sole family-owned company. Read on to find out more about the UK's busiest mid-market buyers.

		Deals completed: H1 2026	2025
1	Perspective Financial	13	19
2	Finli Group	13	17
3	Punch Pubs	9	12
4	Ranger Fire & Security	9	7
5	Absolute Financial	9	1
6	TC Group	8	13
7	JMG Group	6	14
8	Kids Planet Day Nurseries	6	12
9	MKC Wealth	6	6
10	British Garden Centres	6	5

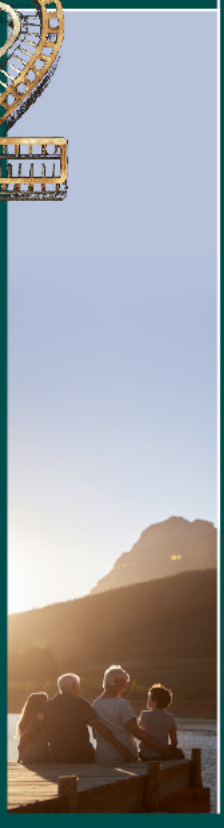
SOURCE: MARKTOMARKET

Perspective Financial

BACKER: Charlesbank
KEY PEOPLE: Ian Wilkinson, CEO; David Hesketh, CFO; Sam Ward, head of M&A
PROFILE: Financial planning and wealth management specialists serving individuals, families, companies and trustees. WIth an aggressive M&A strategy, the group has expanded to 70 local offices, UK-wide. Acquired firms generally retain management, client relationships and regional presence and gain access to central tech services and specialist expertise. Founded as a group in 2008 and headquartered in Lancashire, Perspective has become one of the market's most active consolidators since Charlesbank began backing it in 2024. As of June 2026, Perspective had completed 133 acquisitions in 18 years.
RECENT DEALS: Perspective completed six acquisitions in the first quarter of 2026: Freedom Advice, Clearwater Wealth Management, Cockburn Lucas Independent Financial Consulting, Crown Wealth Management, Devonshire Wealth Management and Mackrill Financial Management, adding £825m of AUM. A further six deals were announced in April: Grosvenor Wealth Management, Graham Investment Management, Professional Financial Centre (Cumbria), Sapphire Wealth Management, Belper Independent Financial Solutions and the Throgmorton client bank, adding a further £550m. In July, Perspective made its first Scottish acquisition, buying Glasgow-based Phoenix Wealth Solutions to establish a platform for further growth in Scotland. "We anticipate completing further acquisitions in Scotland in the coming months," said Perspective CEO Ian Wilkinson.

Finli Group

BACKER: JC Flowers
KEY PEOPLE: Andy Thompson, CEO; Darren Sharke, CFO; James Bryce, chief acquisitions officer
COMPANY PROFILE: National financial-planning and wealth-management consolidator Finli Group was established in 2021 as Solomon Capital Holdings by former Quilter Financial Planning executives Andy Thompson and Darren Sharke. Backed by US PE financial services specialist JC Flowers, the group has pursued a buy-and-build strategy since completing its first acquisitions in 2022. Rebranded Finli Group in 2024, it advises on pensions, investments, tax planning, mortgages and protection. Its model offers retiring or succession-minded advisers an exit, preserving relationships while providing central operational support services. By July 2026, Finli supported more than 20,000 clients and had more than £8.7bn AUM.
RECENT DEALS: In the first quarter of 2026, Finli acquired Adrian Smith Wealth Management in Lancashire, GM Wealth Management in Wrexham, JSP Financial Services in Birmingham, and Roxborough Wealth Management in Cobham. The group's first-half transactions together contributed more than £500m AUM.

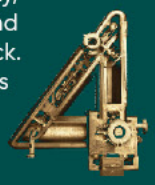


Punch Pubs

BACKER: Fortress
KEY PEOPLE: Andy Spencer, CEO; Matt Ward, CFO; Steve Dando, chief financial strategist
COMPANY PROFILE: Formerly Punch Taverns, Punch Pubs is one of Britain's largest pub operators, with around 1,300 sites across the UK. Headquartered in Burton upon Trent, it has been owned by US PE firm Fortress Investment Group since 2021. Punch operates principally through leased/tenanted agreements, working with independent publicans and management partners. Punch combines property ownership with regular capital investment and bolt-on acquisitions.
RECENT DEALS: Punch has acquired 50 pubs in 2026, including a 30-site portfolio from Hertfordshire brewer McMullen's and a 13-pub portfolio from Oaktree Capital-backed RedCat.

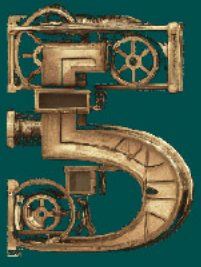
Ranger Fire & Security

BACKERS: Hyperion; Inflexion
KEY PEOPLE: Mark Bridges, CEO; David Lee, CFO
COMPANY PROFILE: Ranger Fire & Security is a London-based buy-and-build platform providing fire protection, electronic security and compliance services. Backed by Hyperion and Inflexion, it acquires 'local hero' businesses, retaining their brands and leadership teams but integrating them into a national platform of shared resources, expertise and cross-selling opportunities. In June 2026, Inflexion made a majority investment through Enterprise Fund VI, with Hyperion substantially reinvesting. Ranger has 500+ employees, and generates £75m+ in revenue. A £150m debt facility from Apera Asset Management, announced in January, added capacity for continued expansion.
RECENT DEALS: Ranger started 2026 with five acquisitions: Partnership Fire & Security in Dorset, Huddersfield-based Centurion Fire & Security; West Midlands-based MarkOne Safety Solutions, Bolton-headquartered fire-risk consultancy Total Fire Group and Orpington-based Fidelity Integrated Systems. In May it added Edinburgh's iFire Fire and Security, Galway-based Henderson Fire and Safety and Warrington's FireCheck. Since Inflexion's investment, it has acquired Scion Communications and Emerald Fire Technology.



Absolute Financial

BACKERS: Inflexion; Tatton
KEY PEOPLE: David Carter, CEO; Louise Coleman, CFO
COMPANY PROFILE: Independent financial-advice consolidator Absolute Financial launched in the UK in August 2025 with £100m of equity from Inflexion and £15m from Tatton. The vehicle's first acquisition was Kent-based Absolute Financial, which brought £1.1bn of AUM, and became the group's lead brand and platform for investment. The aim is to build a national network of regional hubs, avoiding vertical integration used by some consolidators. Absolute also offers a partnership programme, where it initially takes a minority stake and agrees a future buyout. The model seeks to preserve independent advice, local relationships and adviser autonomy, while providing central infrastructure.
RECENT DEALS: In May, Absolute bought Allied Financial Services, RSJ Financial Planning, Millcroft Wealth Management and Mackenzie Financial Planning, adding £577m of AUM. With four additional South East acquisitions announced in July, Absolute moves to 14 acquisitions since launch, and AUM of £2.4bn.



TC Group

BACKER: Inflexion
KEY PEOPLE: Grant Bartholomew, chairman; Peter Shaw, CFO; Shiv Shah, chief growth officer
COMPANY PROFILE: TC Group is a UK accountancy and business-advisory firm serving SMEs, owner-managed companies and private clients. Inflexion acquired a majority stake in 2023, accelerating its buy-and-build programme. TC plans to combine local ownership and partner-led relationships with national infrastructure, specialist expertise and international reach. Acquired firms can remain autonomous partner businesses or integrate into established regional offices as part of a succession plan, preserving local brands, staff and client relationships. The group now has more than 2,000 people across more than 70 offices.
RECENT DEALS: TC began 2026 with two January acquisitions: West Midlands-based BSN Associates, which became TC BSN, and North East practice Clarkes. February added seven Scottish offices with the acquisition of MMG, followed by North West firm Smith and Goulding (three offices). County Durham's Little and Neal, Cambridgeshire's Thompson Taraz Rand, and Thames Valley firm Stiles & Co, were acquired in March, as TC continued to expand its footprint across the UK.

JMG Group

BACKERS: GTCR; Synova
KEY PEOPLE: Nick Houghton, CEO; Tim Philip, CFO; Callum Masterson, head of M&A
COMPANY PROFILE: Leeds-headquartered insurance-broking and risk-services consolidator JMG Group was established in 2020 when Nick Houghton led a management buyout of JM Glendinning, backed by Synova. US PE firm GTCR invested alongside Synova in 2025, with management retaining a substantial stake. The group provides business and personal insurance, employee benefits, underwriting, claims, health-and-safety consultancy and risk management services for SMEs, larger commercial organisations and high-net-worth individuals. Its acquisition model targets local and specialist firms, retaining their brands, leadership and client relationships while providing central services. JMG reached £500m of annual gross written premiums in April 2026, and is targeting £1bn in the next five years. It has made more than 70 acquisitions since 2020.
RECENT DEALS: JMG opened its 2026 acquisition programme in May with three Midlands brokers: Jukes Insurance Brokers, RP Lovatt and Nene Valley Insurance Practice. In June, it acquired London-based Jaggi Insurance Brokers, West Sussex firm Canfield Payne Insurance Consultants, and Aberdeen's health-and-safety consultancy Safetynet Scotland. Later that month, JMG bought Redhill-based Langton London Insurance Brokers and its associated managing general agent, Portsoken. That transaction added expertise in professional indemnity, cyber, recruitment and complex SME risks. Together, the deals "illustrate JMG's strategy of combining regional broking scale with specialist underwriting and consultancy capabilities", says head of M&A Callum Masterson.

Kids Planet Day Nurseries

BACKER: Fremman
KEY PEOPLE: Clare Roberts, CEO; Colin Anderton, CFO
COMPANY PROFILE: Kids Planet is one of the UK and Ireland's largest independent early-years education and childcare operators. Founded in 2008 by Clare Roberts and her father, John Hoban, in Warrington and Widnes, the Lymm-headquartered group has expanded through acquisitions and new openings. BGF was an early investor, retaining a minority stake when Fremman Capital and Souter Investments acquired a majority stake and backed an MBO in 2021. Fremman reinvested through a continuation fund in March 2026. The group's model targets local nurseries, retaining experienced teams, while investing in learning environments, staff development and central support. Following its May 2026 expansion into Ireland, Kids Planet operated in more than 300 locations. In the year to March 2025 it generated turnover of more than £200m.
RECENT DEALS: Blending individual and group purchases, and expanding its footprint beyond its native North West, Kids Planet acquired Abacus Day Nursery in Tyneside in February, followed by Somers House Nursery in Surrey in March. April's purchase of the Hunny Pot Day Nursery Group added nine Leicestershire sites, strengthening its East Midlands presence and taking the UK portfolio to more than 280 nurseries serving 40,000-plus children. In May, Kids Planet made its first international acquisition, with Dublin-based Tigers Childcare, and its 34 nurseries. Its strategy combines single-site purchases and regional portfolios with potential for international expansion.

MKC Wealth

BACKER: Cabot Square
KEY PEOPLE: Dominic Rose, CEO; Dan Cowland, CFO
COMPANY PROFILE: MKC Wealth is a London-headquartered independent wealth-management and financial-planning consolidator serving families, private clients and companies. Former Quilter Private Client executives Dominic Rose and Nigel Speirs acquired the business through an MBO in October 2021, backed by Cabot Square. MKC combines personal financial planning with an investment-management arm, MKC Invest, and its acquisition strategy focuses on smaller, established advice firms and client books whose founders seek retirement or succession. As of July 2026, the group had approximately £3.2bn of AUA. It has completed 12 acquisitions since the start of 2025 and 37 since Rose and Speirs took control.
RECENT DEALS: MKC announced six acquisitions in June 2026, adding more than £275m of AUM. These were: Sevenoaks-based Executive Lifestyle Planning; Daniel Richards' client book; Buckinghamshire-based Medical Investment & Financial Management; Peartree Wealth Management in Bishop's Stortford; Milton Keynes firm Wealth and Tax; and The IFA Partnership in Knutsford. Several founders retired following structured handovers, with other planners joining MKC.

British Garden Centres

BACKER: Privately owned by Stubbs family
KEY PEOPLE: Amy Stubbs, MD; Charles Stubbs, founder director; Robert Stubbs, director
COMPANY PROFILE: British Garden Centres is the UK's largest family-owned garden centre group. Brothers Charles and Robert Stubbs launched the business with Woodthorpe Garden Centre in Lincolnshire in 1990 and the second generation moved into senior leadership when Amy Stubbs became managing director in 2025. The group has garden centres, restaurants, two growing nurseries and four distribution centres. Its acquisition model typically targets established independent or family-run centres with owners seeking retirement. It retains experienced local teams and invests in refurbishment, expanded ranges and hospitality facilities. As of May 2026, British Garden Centres operated 80 locations nationwide and employed around 3,500 people.
RECENT DEALS: The group completed seven transactions in the first half of 2026, including May's acquisition of century-old St Bridget Nurseries, renamed Exeter Garden Centre, and sites in Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Essex and Kent.