

LOCAL

DID SOMEBODY SAY... Starship in Sunderland

Starship Technologies Robot Delivery Pilot Launches in the North East



Just Eat UK has today launched a pilot in Sunderland with world-leading ground robotics company Starship Technologies. This latest test and learn will begin with 12* Just Eat partners offering 'delivery by robot' to more than 11,000 households in the city centre. A diverse range of cuisines will be available for customers to choose from including Burgers, British and Bubble Tea, all delivered autonomously in minutes.

Sunderland is an important city for Just Eat. The company's Customer Service Team relocated to the region in 2021 and last year moved into the new [Maker development](#) at Riverside. Research from the Centre for Economics and Business shows that [Just Eat contributes £20.8m to the local Sunderland economy from its operations in the city.](#)

As well as delivering food, Starship's robots, already popular in communities worldwide, are set to bring some fun to a damp February. They'll be "singing" the well-known "Did Somebody Say" jingle upon arrival at a customer's door.

Starship is the global leader in autonomous delivery, with over 2,700 robots operating across 270 locations around the world. Founded in 2014, the firm's robots have been serving UK customers since 2018, and have completed over 9 million deliveries to date. Starship is the only autonomous delivery firm operating in the UK whose robots have industry-leading Level 4 autonomy, meaning they operate without the need for human intervention 99 per cent of the time. This makes Starship robots uniquely cost-effective and safe, crossing 125,000 roads every day around the world.

Mert Öztekin, Chief Technology Officer at Just Eat said: *"Our ground robotics trials are all about innovating to improve the customer experience. We've teamed up with a diverse range of local independent restaurants to trial the Starship robots and we'll be listening to their feedback closely, as well as that of our customers."*

Ahti Heinla, Founder and Chief Executive of Starship Technologies, said: *"We're excited to announce a new partnership with Just Eat, and to kick it off by launching in Sunderland.*

Thousands of people across the UK already love Starship robots which provide a cherished service to local communities. We're confident Sunderland will too - particularly when a singing robot delivers their Friday night takeaway! We expect our partnership to expand rapidly to other towns and cities across the UK and beyond."

Patrick Melia, Chief Executive, Sunderland City Council said: *"Sunderland is already one of the UK's most tech-forward and smart cities – and it's great to have a major local employer like Just Eat involved in this latest innovation. We're sure these robots will bring extra convenience for residents, especially people who are less mobile or unable to leave home. We look forward to seeing them supporting residents across Sunderland."*

Peter Richardson, General Manager at Koji, a local Japanese Restaurant participating in the pilot, said: *"At Koji we're proud to serve those visiting the City Centre, as well as offering delivery to locals via Just Eat. We have no doubt some of our regulars will enjoy receiving their ramen via robot!"*

Ends

Notes to Editors

About Starship Technologies

- Starship Technologies was launched in 2014 by two of Skype's co-founders, Janus Friis and Ahti Heinla, who is also its CEO. The company has so far raised over \$230mn from investors.
- Before founding the company, Ahti had entered a competition to design a robot for Nasa. He didn't win, but Ahti and Janus went on to patent the technology and launch Starship Technologies.
- Starship is now the global leader in autonomous delivery. Its fleet of more than 2,700 robots has driven over 12 million miles and completed over 9 million deliveries around the world – the first and only robot delivery service to do so.
- The robots cross 125,000 roads globally every day, or 2 per second.
- Starship has offices in London, Milton Keynes and San Francisco, and engineering offices in Estonia and Helsinki.
- The company now operates in the USA, UK, Finland, Estonia, Sweden Switzerland, Czechia and Germany.
- In the UK, Starship currently works with the Co-op delivering to thousands of households in Leeds, Wakefield, Greater Manchester, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes. The company also operates on dozens of university campuses in the United States.
- Starship is focused on a UK-wide expansion programme, rolling its service out to towns and cities across the country.

***Local Restaurants Taking Part:**

- [BobaCat](#)
- [Cheeky Duck](#)
- [Chilinos](#)
- [Crave](#)
- [Jay's Flavours](#)
- [Koji](#)
- [Latin and British Cafe](#)
- [Magicpot9ja](#)
- [Smugglers Coffee Co](#)
- [Sugar M](#)
- [Wings 'N More](#)

How It Works:

- To utilise robot delivery customers simply click the 'get it delivered by robot' banner when on the restaurant's menu.
- The customer is then notified through the app when their goods are ready for delivery, and can track the movement of the robot through the Just Eat app.
- Once the Starship robot arrives at its destination, the customer is notified. The customer can then retrieve their goods by unlocking the lid of the robot by pressing the unique 'unlock' button on the Just Eat app.

National

Ground-breaking partnership between Starship Technologies and Just Eat in major expansion of robot delivery

- First joint service launched for Just Eat takeaway customers in Sunderland
- Partnership deepens Just Eat's investment in the city
- Starship continues UK-wide expansion with potential to add £1.3bn GVA to economy

Today (25 February, 2026), Starship Technologies and Just Eat have announced a landmark corporate partnership.

The deal will see Starship's popular autonomous robots delivering hot food for local takeaways. The first service launched under the partnership will be in Sunderland – the home of Just Eat's operations in the North East.

Following the launch, customers will have the option to select Starship deliveries through the Just Eat app. The companies say the service will grow in line with demand, and that the partnership will soon expand to other locations across the country. The new robots join hundreds of Starship robots currently operating across the UK, and the world's largest robot fleet.

Just Eat relocated its customer services hub to Sunderland in 2021. According to independent reporting by the Centre for Economic and Business Research, its operations in the city have since generated £20.8m for the local economy, with an additional £31.7m raised through supply chains and employee spending.

In a new long-term commitment to Sunderland, Just Eat signed a ten-year lease for new premises in Riverside in January.

Starship is the global leader in autonomous delivery, with over 2,700 robots operating across 270 locations in eight countries around the world. Founded in 2014, the firm invented the world's first delivery robot, and they've completed over 9 million deliveries to date.

The company has been operating in the UK since 2018 and already serves customers in Leeds, Wakefield, Greater Manchester, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes.

Starship's robots have industry-leading Level 4 autonomy, meaning they operate without the need for human intervention 99 per cent of the time. Starship say this makes the robots uniquely safe and cost-effective within the rapidly growing autonomous delivery sector.

A report by Prysm Global last year found that expanding the use of Personal Delivery Devices (PDDs) in the UK could generate £1.3 bn for the economy by 2035. The report found that Starship manufacturing its robots in the UK could create 555 new high-skilled jobs and boost grocery spending by £125 million over the same period.

Mert Öztekin, Chief Technology Officer at Just Eat said: "We're always innovating to improve the delivery experience for our customers and we're excited to have kick-started our ground robotics trial in the North East with Starship. We've teamed up with a diverse range of local independent restaurants to trial the Starship robots and we'll be listening to their feedback closely, as well as that of our customers."

Ahti Heinla, Founder and Chief Executive at Starship Technologies, said:

"We're excited to announce a new partnership with Just Eat, and to kick it off in Sunderland."

"The key to a scaled, loved delivery service is high-level autonomy. Our robots are trained to think for themselves and learn their way around the local area with ease. The economics of robot delivery only work when the robots are truly smart: robots learn with every journey, and Starship robots have completed millions of journeys."

"But it's more than that. The autonomy level of our robots means they integrate well into the community. They're not just able to operate safely. They're polite – and that's what builds a genuine connection in the community."

"That's why tens of thousands of people across the country now get their Friday night takeaways delivered by robots. That's how Starship is scaling and leading the way."

We expect our partnership to expand rapidly to other towns and cities across the UK and beyond.”

Patrick Melia, Chief Executive, Sunderland City Council said: *“Sunderland is already one of the UK’s most tech-forward and smart cities – and it’s great to have a major local employer like Just Eat involved in this latest innovation. We’re sure these robots will bring extra convenience for residents, especially people who are less mobile or unable to leave home. We look forward to seeing them supporting residents across Sunderland.”*

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