

**Date:** Embargoed until 07.00hrs, Wednesday 8 May 2013

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**Photographs:** Photographs available at:  
<http://press.next.co.uk/media/company-images/campaignimages.aspx>

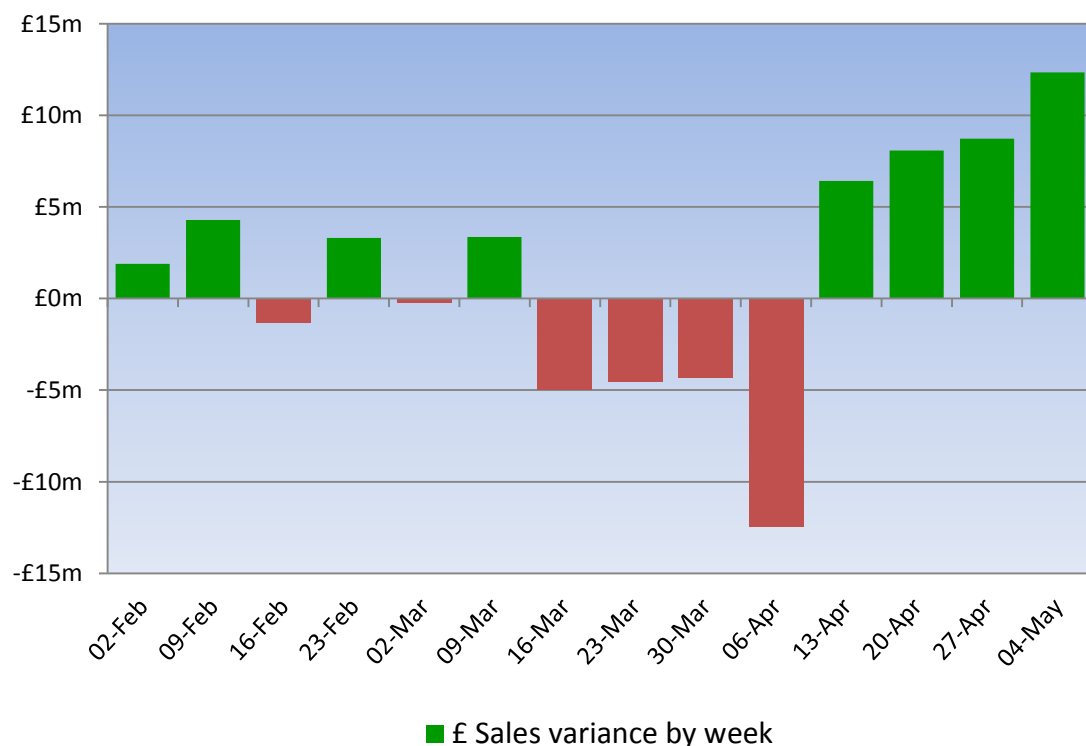
## NEXT PLC

### IMS STATEMENT 8 MAY 2013

#### Sales Performance to 4 May 2013

NEXT Brand sales excluding VAT for the first fourteen weeks of our financial year were up 2.2%, of which 1.5% came from the opening of profitable new space. NEXT Retail sales were down -1.9% whilst NEXT Directory was up +8.9%. Brand sales were therefore a little below the midpoint of the guidance range we gave in March of +1% to +4%.

The chart below sets out the Brand sales variance by week compared with last year, this shows that trading has been volatile and particularly poor through March and early April. The marked upturn in sales in mid-April corresponds to the break in the very cold weather.



It is apparent that the poor March figures were down to an abnormally cold spring, equally the good weeks since mid April have been boosted by pent up demand from the previous month. We believe that neither period is indicative of any significant change in the underlying economy.

The overall number of +2.2% is the best guide for future performance and we remain cautious about the consumer environment. We anticipate that the continuing decline in real earnings will depress discretionary spending for at least the next eighteen months, if not longer.

### **Guidance for the Full Year to January 2014**

We remain confident in our sales guidance range for the full year of +1% to +4% and profit range of £615m to £665m. The table below sets out the guidance we gave in March. Profit and EPS growth estimates are calculated on last year's underlying profit before tax of £622m and basic EPS of 297.7p, which exclude reported post tax exceptional profits of £35m.

FULL YEAR ESTIMATES	Lower Guidance	Higher Guidance
Brand sales (VAT exclusive)	+1.0%	+4.0%
Group profit before tax	£615m	£665m
Profit before tax growth	- 1%	+7%
Share buyback estimate	£250m	£250m
Estimated growth in basic EPS	+4%	+13%

**- Ends -**