



# Market Report

A Snapshot of your Marketing Sector

## Alternative & Complimentary Therapy

This pack has been designed to provide information on setting up a business in the **Alternative & Complimentary Therapy** industry in Scotland, as well as helping to inform the market research section of your business plan. You can find more information on how to write a business plan from the Business Gateway website ([www.bgateway.com/businessplan](http://www.bgateway.com/businessplan)), including an interactive template and tips to get you started.

This market report was updated by Business Gateway in **November 2024**.

## What do I need to know about the Alternative & Complimentary Therapy market?

The following summary statistics have been taken from market research reports and reliable resources that the Information Service uses to compile industry information. They should give you an indication of how your industry is faring at present and whether there is demand for your type of business:

- ◆ Over the five years through **2029-30, industry revenue is forecast to expand** at a compound annual rate of **3.6% to reach £6.1 billion**. Demand for services will continue to be pulled up by the increasing pool of the ageing population. Under the NHS plan, the government has committed to funding increases for allied healthcare services, hoping to recruit 71,000 more allied health professionals by 2036-37. Continued pressure on the NHS and lengthy waiting lists for underfunded NHS services will encourage more consumers to switch to private healthcare services, which could boost industry revenue and profitability. (*IBISWorld, Allied Health-Care Services in the UK July 2024*)
- ◆ Healthcare organisations in the UK are exploring non-pharmaceutical treatments for managing mental wellbeing and sleep disorders. The switches indicate that healthcare organisations are embracing more mindfulness and wellbeing techniques which could help open consumer eyes to alternative treatments. (*Mintel, Managing Stress and Wellbeing in the UK, November 2023*)
- ◆ Aged-based participation in mindfulness programs has become a prominent trend in the global mindfulness meditation application market. These programs are used by people of all ages, from teenagers to seniors to reduce stress, sharpen attention and improve general wellbeing. (*Technavio Global Mindfulness Meditation Application Market 2024-2028*)
- ◆ In **October 2023, 63%** of UK adults expressed interest in holidays specifically to improve their health and wellness. While young people remain the industry's primary demographic, older travellers show the strongest new growth potential. Wellness travellers are skewed towards the younger demographic and those with children. Around **55% of 16-34 Year Olds** went on a wellness holiday compared with just **7% of over 55's**. (*Mintel The Wellness Traveller UK 2024*.)
- ◆ There are a number of industry bodies for this industry including [The General Regulatory Council for Complementary Therapies](#); [Complementary & Natural Healthcare Council](#); [National Council for Osteopathic Research](#); [British Homeopathic Association](#) and [The British Reflexology Association](#).



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## Where can I find more information on my market?

The Information Service has access to a number of databases which can offer more detail on this industry. Some of these reports are listed below - if you would like to be sent extracts from any of these reports, please contact us on **0300 013 4753** or email [info@bgateway.com](mailto:info@bgateway.com).

- ◆ **British Acupuncture Council** article from March 2023. The results of a new consumer opinion poll\*, released as part of the launch of [Acupuncture Awareness Week: Getting to the Point of it](#) has shown that 70% of people would prefer to try a complementary therapy before being prescribed a prescription painkiller – rising to 82% in those aged 35 and under. Indeed, [a recent study](#) amongst more than 4,000 adults aged 16-75, carried out exclusively for BBC News, suggests that a quarter of people in the UK are living with chronic pain – an often hidden and misunderstood condition. And previous reports have also suggested that the UK is in the grip of an opioid crisis with the Covid pandemic likely to have exacerbated the regular use of prescription painkillers, as millions of patients suffered with chronic pain as elective surgeries were cancelled.
- ◆ **Euromonitor Passport – Blurring Wellness Concepts (July 2023)**. According to Euromonitor’s Voice of the Consumer: Health and Nutrition Survey, consumers treat stress and anxiety in various ways that open pathways for consumer goods. These include traditional medical and consumer health options (seeing a doctor or therapist, taking vitamins or supplements, OTC medicines, or prescription medicines). But consumers are also increasingly looking to lifestyle-based treatments such as exercise/physical activity, rest, and alternative medicine/therapies, as well as product-aligned options such as natural/traditional solutions, cannabis, or special diets

There are also a number of online resources you may find helpful:

- ◆ **Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council** provides updated information on latest government announcements as well as research publications and guidance on registration. ([Home Page | CNHC](#)).
- ◆ **National Library of Scotland** – free registration for library eResources ([www.nls.uk/business](http://www.nls.uk/business)) gives access to a number of COBRA start-up guides which contain useful market summaries and links to further information. Some of the reports available are: **Acupuncturist; Aromatherapist; Herbalist; Homeopath; Nutritional Therapist; Reflexologist; Reiki Practitioner and Yoga Teacher**.
- ◆ **NHS, Complementary and alternative medicine**. The NHS has produced a guide to complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), including information on finding a practitioner, professional associations and accredited registers for CAMs and questions to ask before starting treatment. ([Complementary and alternative medicine - NHS](#))

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## How can I find out about my competitors?

Business Gateway's online guide to [Competitor Analysis](#) explains how to find your competitors, how to research what they're doing and how to act on what you learn about them.

Immediate competition will be from other businesses in your local area. There are several online directories which can be used to find company information and generate lists easily and at no expense. Many Local Authorities also publish local business directories on the web. Below are some key web resources:

- ◆ General business directories such as [Yell](#) ,[Thomson Local](#) or [Google Maps](#)
- ◆ Trade specialists like [EuroPages](#) (European directory), [The Wholesaler](#) or [Free Index](#)
- ◆ Business to business (B2B) specialists such as [Kompass](#)

Likewise, your local Chamber of Commerce may publish a members' directory; find your local Chamber on the [Scottish Chambers](#) website.

Once you've identified who your competitors are, the next step is to gather information on the way they do business. Which services do they provide? How do they market themselves? How much do they charge?

To learn about your competitors:

- ◆ Look for articles or adverts in local newspapers, trade press and directories.
- ◆ Try to read their marketing material; if the company has an online presence, visit the company's website as a first port of call. Not only does it give you a better understanding of the company's activities, it can also offer a wealth of information such as a company history or staff biographies, as well as the company's partners or suppliers
- ◆ Search for information on limited UK companies via the [Companies House](#) website
- ◆ Gain an insight into your competitor's performance using credit checks and the accounts that limited companies are required to submit to Companies House each year.

We can provide credit checks free of charge; if you are interested in using this resource, or looking for us to help you find relevant publications, please contact us by emailing [info@bgateway.com](mailto:info@bgateway.com) or by calling **0300 013 4753**



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## What about suppliers?

[Choosing and Managing Suppliers](#) can help you decide what you need from a supplier, how to identify one and how to choose one to deal with.

Trade associations or industry specific organisations may also be able to recommend suppliers or contacts. You can also use the aforementioned resources for finding competitors to find suppliers.

Once you have decided on a supplier, we can run a credit check on the company to help assess their financial stability. We provide credit checks free of charge; if you are interested in using the resource please [info@bgateway.com](mailto:info@bgateway.com) or by calling **0300 013 4753**.

## Who are my customers?

Your business plan should include information about the customers you would expect. Business Gateway's guides on [Market and customer research](#) will help you to identify new trends, opportunities, customers and competitors.

It can be useful to group your customers by geographical location, age or lifestyle. The websites listed below are freely available and can provide most of this information. If you can't find what you're looking for from these websites, please contact us and one of the team will be happy to help:

- ◆ Access the latest population estimates from the [National Records of Scotland \(NRS\)](#). NRS also offers demographic factsheets for each council area in Scotland, which can provide summary statistics for the area you will be based in.
- ◆ Information from the most recent census in 2011 is released via the official website. See in particular the [Census Area Profiles](#). Clicking on your area of interest will give the latest population figures, including estimates by age.
- ◆ [Understanding Scottish Places](#) has interactive profiles of towns and cities across Scotland. It can be useful for understanding the interrelationships and flows between towns, and also gives comparisons between two or more places.
- ◆ [Scottish Government Statistics](#) provide accurate and up-to-date statistics on Scotland, covering population, health, education and housing.
- ◆ [The Scottish Household Survey](#) provides information on the structure, characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of Scottish households, both at a national and local level.
- ◆ [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#) is the recognised national statistical body for the UK. ONS covers a wide range of demographic, economic and social issues at a UK level.



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## How can you help me with other aspects of starting my business?

The Business Gateway website has guides, videos, online tutorials and tips on all aspects of starting up a business in Scotland. Follow the links below to explore each resource:

### Accountancy

Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland's (ICAS) ["Find a Chartered Accountant"](#) tool

### Funding

[Practical information](#) on finance and funding for starting and growing your business

### Insurance

[Business insurance guide](#)

### Legal Help

Gov.uk ["Licence Finder"](#) tool

Law Society of Scotland's ["Find a Solicitor"](#) tool

### Pricing

Business Companion [Pricing & payment guide](#).

**Please note:** the most effective way to research pricing is to conduct your own research – visit wholesalers or suppliers to obtain price lists, find quotes from similar companies and work out what other businesses in your area are charging

### Promotion

[BG guides to Marketing](#)

### Training

[Skills Development Scotland's My World of Work](#)

[Funding for training](#)

[Small Business Bonus Scheme \(Scotland\)](#)

Your local Business Gateway can offer events, workshops and 1:2:1 support on all aspects of starting and developing your business. Call the helpline on **0300 013 4753** to find out what is available in your area.

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You must not rely on the information in the report as an alternative to advice from an appropriately qualified professional. If you have any specific questions speak to your Business Gateway Advisor or consult an appropriately qualified professional.

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**Updated by: Sue**

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