



Market Report

A Snapshot of your Market Sector

Alternative & Complementary Therapy

This pack has been designed to provide information on setting up a business in the Alternative & Complementary 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), including an interactive template and tips to get you started.

This market report was updated by Business Gateway in September 2018. If you find the information contained in this document useful, tell us about it! Send us feedback [here](#); we will use your comments to help improve our service.

What do I need to know about the Alternative & Complementary 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:

- ◆ While scientists remain largely sceptical about the efficacy of some complementary and alternative medicines (CAMs), Mintel data indicates that consumers believe complementary medicine has become more acceptable. Just a quarter of adults view CAM as no better than a placebo. Mintel Analyst Insight Traditional Chinese Medicine Gets an Olympic Boost – August 2016 discusses how the use of cupping therapy by a number of high profile athletes at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games is likely to have significantly raised awareness of previously less well-known CAM treatments, which could in turn lead to increased trust and interest in the category. (Mintel, *Healthy Lifestyles – UK*, October 2016)
- ◆ Industry growth has also been supported by the national level of obesity, which has risen over the past decade. Overweight individuals are more likely to suffer from chronic joint pain, increasing demand for physiotherapy services. Those with high BMI's are often refused surgery, due to the high risks associated with general anaesthesia, and so often turn to alternative forms of medical care. (IBISWorld, *Allied Health-Care Services in the UK*, June 2018)
- ◆ NHS spending cuts have triggered somewhat of a loss of faith in the NHS and conventional medical practices, and a growing proportion of people are turning to complementary and alternative medicines (CAM) and therapies instead. Celebrity culture is popularising lesser used treatments such as colonic irrigation and meditation, while new remedies and therapies are being trialled and approved on a regular basis. Meanwhile, mounting consumer focus on health and wellbeing has triggered a strong social trend for healthy consumers taking various supplements and herbal remedies on a regular basis, as a preventative measure against ill health rather than to combat an existing ailment. (Keynote, *Alternative Healthcare - UK*, 2016)
- ◆ 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](#) and [British Homeopathic 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.

- ◆ **Mintel – *Healthy Lifestyles - UK (October 2016)***. Opening CAM treatment centres in business districts and shopping centres could also help to improve accessibility to the market, whilst further promotion on online booking sites and apps could encourage more people to trial treatments. Offering the treatments could also provide a point of differentiation in the hugely competitive and price-driven health club market.

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

- ◆ The Telegraph, *Cancer patients who choose complementary medicine are twice as likely to die within 7 years, study suggests*, July 2018. Researchers from Yale University followed 1,290 patients who were diagnosed with breast, prostate, lung, or colorectal cancer between 2004 and 2013. Of those, they found 258 used complementary medicine and 1,032 used conventional therapies. After seven years, the research showed that around 85 per cent of people who used recommended medical treatment survived, compared with just 70 per cent of those who chose alternative methods. (tinyurl.com/y7fknxdt)
- ◆ **College of Medicine, *Complementary medicine roundup, December 2017***. The College of Medicine have put together evidence and pieces of research carried out by healthcare organisations and medical research establishments discussing the effectiveness, and cost- effectiveness of complementary and alternative medicine as a contributor to integrative medicine and healthcare. (tinyurl.com/y8rq66q8)
- ◆ **Gov.UK, *Apply for a traditional herbal registration, September 2016***. Guidance on applying for a traditional herbal registration (THR) to market a herbal medicine (remedy) in the UK. (tinyurl.com/j7g7wrh)
- ◆ **NHS, *Complementary and alternative medicine, February 2016***. 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. (tinyurl.com/y7tpwmbd)

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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 or by calling **0300 013 4753**

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 or by calling **0300 013 4753**.



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Who are my customers?

Your business plan should include information about the customers you would expect. Business Gateway's guides on [Retaining and Grow Your Customer Base](https://tinyurl.com/c2fw4o4) (tinyurl.com/c2fw4o4) will help you to identify who your customers are, how to use this information to sell more effectively and how to actively compete in your marketplace.

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 website, 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.

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 Account](#)" 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.

We hope you find this Market Report useful and we'd love to hear your feedback [here](#).

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