



Market Report

A Snapshot of your Market Sector

Pet Services

Cost of Doing Business Support

For information on **reducing the cost of running your business**, the [Find Business Support](#) website has links to advice, funding and regional support.

This pack has been designed to provide information on setting up a business in the **Pet Services** 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 **December 2023**. 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 Pet Services 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:

- ◆ During the cost-of-living crisis, **62%** of cat/dog owners have tried to reduce or limit their spending on pet food, offering yet another demonstration of how widely the squeeze on incomes has been felt. While the financial pressures felt by households have been a key driver in such efforts to economise, the current uncertainty has also seen many do so. While such steps were reported by **72%** of cat/dog food buyers describing their finances as tight or struggling, half (**52%**) of those in 'healthy' finances also had tried to economise. (Mintel, *Pet Food UK*, 2023).
- ◆ IBISWorld forecasts that the number of pets will increase at a compound annual rate of **0.7% to 18.5 million** over the five years through 2028-29. The number of pet cats and dogs is expected to increase to 18 million over 2024-25. The rising number of households and bigger population are expected to contribute to the expected growth in the pet population over the coming years. (IBISWorld, *Number of Pets UK*, June 2023).
- ◆ **56% of pet owners** would rather cut back on money spent on themselves than on their pet (Mintel, *Household Care Habits Of Pet Owners, UK – 2022*).
- ◆ Online Pet Food and Pet Supply Retailing industry revenue is forecast to grow at a compound annual rate of **0.7%**. Unsurprisingly, our furry friends offer companionship and pet numbers have increased – with a spike during the peak-pandemic periods as people spent more time at home. Pet humanisation and premiumisation are rising, translating into higher-value baskets. (IBISWorld, *Online Pet Food & Pet Supply Retailing in the UK*, October 2023).
- ◆ How many dog walkers are there in the UK?... In the period from July 2020 to July 2021, there were a total of 79,200 people employed in this category in the UK (85% of which are female).
- ◆ There are several national organisations for pet services industries, depending on your specific market. You may be interested in [The Pet Industry Federation](#), [The Pet Food Manufacturers' Association](#), [Association of Private Pet Cemeteries and Crematoria](#). Other industry bodies include [The National Association of Professional Pet Sitters and Dog Walkers](#) and [The Association of Professional Dog Walkers](#).



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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 – Pet Insurance UK (2023): “According to ONS CPI data, the cost of veterinary and other pet services rose by **12.4%** in the 12 months to July 2023”
- ◆ IBISWorld – Garden Centres & Pet Shops in the UK (November 2023). “Over the five years through 2022-23, the Garden Centres and Pet Shops industry's revenue is expected to grow at a compound annual rate of 4% to reach £7.1 billion. In 2023-24, revenue is slated to expand by 0.3%. Pet ownership picked up after the COVID-19 outbreak, but as people return to work and the cost-of-living crisis constrains disposable income, more pets are being put up for adoption, hurting demand for pet supplies.”

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

- ◆ The UK Pet Food Manufacturers Association (PFMA) has published their annual report for 2023 (ukpetfood-reports.co.uk) which gives a broad overview of industry developments and ongoing initiatives, as well as events coming up in the new year.
- ◆ [COBRA Reports](#), Accessed from National Library of Scotland, have several Business Opportunity Profiles on a range of pet services. These contain key market issues and trends, trading, commercial and legal issues and legislation. Titles available include:
 - **Boarding Kennels**
 - **Dog Walker**
 - **Pet Grooming Services**
 - **Pet Sitter/Home Boarding Service**
 - **Pet Dog Trainer**
- ◆ The [PDSA Animal Wellbeing Report 2023](#) has information on pet populations in the UK; trends in pet acquisition; the impact of the cost of living crisis; as well as animal-specific information for cats, dogs, and rabbits (the three most common animals to have as pets in the UK).

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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**



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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 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.

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

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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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