



Market Report

A Snapshot of your Market Sector

Window Cleaning

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 **Window Cleaning** 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 **March 2022**. 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 Window Cleaning 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:

- ◆ Escaping from home cleaning activities is almost an impossible task, but cleaning time can vary as many factors influence it. For example, professionals who work at a mix of at-home and out-of-home locations spend more time cleaning the home in a typical week compared to people with different employment locations. (Mintel, *Cleaning for the Family – UK*, 2021).
- ◆ Demand from households has been supported by busier consumer lifestyles, which have led to people having less time to commit to cleaning windows themselves. Additionally, as the population has aged, more elderly people have been unable to clean their own windows. However, ongoing economic uncertainty and subdued disposable income growth since the EU referendum has constrained demand from this market over the past five years. (IBISWorld, *Window Cleaning Services in the UK*, August 2021).
- ◆ Window cleaning services are anticipated to account for 22.8% of industry revenue in 2021-22. Operators provide cleaning services to houses, apartment buildings, commercial buildings, factories and other public-sector buildings. Various types of equipment are used to provide window cleaning services, including cradles, traditional ladders and safety harnesses. Larger apartment buildings and offices generally have pre-installed window cleaning equipment to suspend workers at heights. This requires special training, licensing and insurance. (IBISWorld, *Industrial Cleaning Activities in the UK*, May 2021).
- ◆ Industry revenue is expected to **rise** at a compound annual rate of 0.6% over the five years through **2026-27 to £5.5 billion**. Residential and commercial construction activity is anticipated to rise over the next five years, recovering from a significant decline over 2020-21, following the easing of lockdown measures. This is anticipated to increase demand for general building cleaning. The number of businesses operating in the United Kingdom is also projected to trend upwards and support industry demand, although growth is expected to remain subdued in the short term as a result of the economic effects of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. (IBISWorld, *General Building Cleaning in the UK*, May 2021).
- ◆ The national organisation for this industry is the [Federation of Window Cleaners](#). Other industry bodies include the [British Window Cleaning Academy](#), the [Window Cleaners Alliance](#), the [International Window Cleaning Association](#) and the [British Cleaning Council](#).

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.

- ◆ **IBISWorld – Window Cleaning Services in the UK (August 2021).** Industry revenue is forecast to grow at a compound annual rate of 9.4% over the five years through 2026-27 to reach £343.7 million. However, in the short term, growth will be highly dependent on the economy recovering from the downturn caused by the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Commercial and residential construction building is anticipated to pick up in the coming years, aiding demand.
- ◆ **IBISWorld – Industrial Cleaning Activities (May 2021).** Industry profitability has declined over the past five years, negatively affected by competition between operators, which intensified pricing pressure and hampered margins. Input costs also rose, primarily due to the fall of the pound following the EU referendum, further hindering profit. In addition, the National Living Wage (NLW) was introduced in April 2016 and raised the minimum wage paid for non-apprentices aged 25 and over to £7.20 an hour from £6.70 an hour in 2015.
- ◆ **IBISWorld – General Building Cleaning in the UK (May 2021).** The General Building Cleaning industry's performance has been weak over the past five years. Industry revenue is expected to fall at a compound annual rate of 3.1% over the five years through 2021-22 to £5.3 billion. Revenue fell in the first year of the period owing to uncertainty following the EU referendum in June 2016 causing businesses to be more cautious with their budgets and reduce spending on value-added cleaning services.

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

- ◆ **National Careers Service, Job Profiles: Window Cleaner** (tinyurl.com/mpsmnxwt). This job profile gives an overview of the window cleaning industry in the UK, with information on average salary, working hours and conditions, entry requirements and training opportunities.
- ◆ **Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Window Cleaning** (tinyurl.com/mp6b5jz3). This page will help you to identify the risks involved with window cleaning and help you to choose the right equipment for the job.
- ◆ **Window Cleaning Magazine** (tinyurl.com/48met5xe). This magazine and online blog discusses trends in the Window Cleaning industry, including market drivers, advances in technology and profiles on key leading companies.
- ◆ **National Records of Scotland (NRS), Council Area Profiles** (tinyurl.com/278auy69). These profiles will tell you how many households there are in each Local Authority in Scotland. This can be useful in estimating the size of your potential residential market.

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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 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 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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