



Market Report

A Snapshot of your Marketing 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 2025**.

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:

- ◆ 53% expressed interest in alternative approaches to health management (e.g. acupuncture, herbal remedies), indicating that over half of UK adults are receptive to non-traditional methods (Mintel, *Attitudes towards Health Management – UK – 2024*, February 2024).
- ◆ Over the five years through 2024-25, Health and Wellness Spas industry revenue in the UK is anticipated to decline at a compound annual rate of 1.6% to £7.9 billion. Over the five years through 2029-30, industry revenue is anticipated to grow at a compound annual rate of 3.2% to reach £9.3 billion. Rising living costs will persist in the short term, limiting industry growth. Nonetheless, consumers are expected to become increasingly concerned about their physical and psychological wellbeing, relying on spas to relieve stress and anxiety (businesses in this industry include day spas, spas located at resorts, hotel spas and medical spas which offer spa services such as massages, facials and body treatments) (IBISWorld, *Health and Wellness Spas in the UK*, September 2024).
- ◆ Corporate wellness industry revenue in the UK is projected to grow at a compound annual rate of 1.4% over the five years through 2024-25 to £679.2 million. The sector is expected to see a compound annual growth rate of 5.4% over the five years through 2029-30 to £885 million. Higher levels of health consciousness and efforts by businesses to enhance productivity by reducing the costs of poor health, and growth in the online delivery of industry services will boost demand. On-site therapies, such as physiotherapy sessions, massages and alternative therapies, are vital for some companies (IBISWorld, *Corporate Wellness Services in the UK*, September 2024).
- ◆ 58% of consumers reported interest in natural alternatives to medicated remedies and 41% think natural remedies are just as effective as mediated products (Mintel - *OTC Analgesics and Cough, Cold and Flu Remedies – UK – 2024*, June 2024).
- ◆ The [Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council \(CNHC\)](https://www.cnhc.org.uk) is a [PSA-accredited](https://www.nhs.uk/psa) UK voluntary register for complementary and alternative therapy practitioners, covering therapies such as reflexology, aromatherapy, Reiki, and hypnotherapy. The CNHC has a list of [professional associations by therapy](https://www.cnhc.org.uk/professional-associations-by-therapy).
- ◆ Osteopaths and chiropractors require statutory registration by law. For more information see the General Osteopathic Council (OsC) www.osteopathy.org.uk and the Chiropractic Council (GCC) www.gcc-uk.org.



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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 - *Attitudes towards Health Management – UK – 2024* (February 2024). Young adults are more exposed to health content and trends on social media, much of which has to be eye-catching enough to gain attention. This type of content is more likely to reveal alternative approaches to health management which could range from acupuncture and herbal medicines to ice-baths and infrared saunas. Indeed, under-35s show greater awareness and understanding of wellbeing concepts, such as adaptogens, circadian rhythms and mindfulness, and will be a key group to target in the evolving wellness space.
- ◆ Mintel - *Attitudes towards Health Management – UK – 2024* (February 2024). Getting enough sleep is the most common health area of focus for men (62%) and women (72%), but just 32% say they have improved their sleep quality to manage their health in the last year. Whilst traditional advice has centred around the need to get 7-9 hours sleep a night, recent research has discovered that the quality of the sleep, which is generally considered the ability to fall asleep quickly and stay asleep, has a bigger influence on quality of life, than the duration of sleep. A more holistic approach to sleep being adopted is evidenced in NICE now recommending Sleepio, an app-based, AI and CBT powered, programme instead of sleeping pills to treat sleeping disorders.
- ◆ IBISWorld - *Corporate Wellness Services in the UK* (September 2024). Large wellness services continue to take over smaller services to expand their reach. The two largest companies Bupa and Nuffield Health have significant market shares in the corporate wellness services industry. Large services continue to acquire smaller players that have successfully penetrated the market by offering complementary services, and have established a loyal client following to boost their competitiveness without needing to establish facilities from the ground up.

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

- ◆ Free registration for National Library of Scotland eResources (auth.nls.uk/eresources) 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.
- ◆ The Complementary Medical Association (CMA), a UK-based professional body supporting complementary and natural healthcare practitioners, has a free downloadable [Business Start-Up Toolkit & Workbook](#) designed to help individuals launch and grow a complementary or holistic therapy practice.

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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.

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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.

Last updated: September 2025

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