



Market Report

A Snapshot of your Marketing Sector

Travel Agent

This pack has been designed to provide information on setting up a business in the **Travel Agent** 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 **May 2026**.

What do I need to know about the Travel Agent 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:

- ◆ **The 2026 annual revenue of the travel agency industry is £32bn and is expected to rise to £38bn by 2031.** Online travel agencies are a go-to for budget-conscious travellers, yet traditional agencies are establishing a strong reputation for organizing detailed and dependable travel itineraries. The 2025-26 ABTA survey indicates that 25% of UK consumers prefer booking through travel agents for personalized advice and travel packages tailored to their needs. As inflation and a tighter cost-of-living impact finances, the desire to travel grows, driven by people wanting to make the most of their savings from lockdowns (IBISWorld, *Travel Agencies in the UK*, December 2025, sourced from [National Library of Scotland](#)).
- ◆ Leading online travel agencies have invested in mobile applications that enable users to book flights and accommodations, manage bookings, access real-time travel updates and check in or out remotely, facilitating instant transactions and enhanced convenience. In-app functionalities support **advanced data collection**, enabling agencies to **deliver highly targeted marketing and tailored recommendations** based on users' booking histories and stated preferences, improving conversion rates. More and more travel agencies are also using big data and AI to customise itineraries, provide real-time prices and personalise their communication with travellers. As a result, digital tools are quickly becoming the key to **building customer loyalty** and running operations more efficiently (IBISWorld, *Online Travel Agencies in the UK*, November 2025, sourced from National Library of Scotland).
- ◆ The **annual output** of travel agencies, tour operators, and other reservation services in the United Kingdom **in 2024 was £45million**. The travel agency sector in the United Kingdom consists of 4484 businesses and employed 54,229 people as of October 2024. The leading travel agencies in the UK as of January 2025 were Hays Travel Shops and TUI with 489 and 329 travel stores respectively (Statista, *Travel agencies in the United Kingdom*, 2025).
- ◆ The national organisation for this industry is [The Association of British Travel Agents \(ABTA\)](#). Industry bodies include the [Scottish Passenger Agents Association](#) (SPAA) and [Visit Scotland](#).



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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.

- ◆ **IBISWorld - Travel Agencies in the UK (December 2025, sourced from [National Library of Scotland](#))**. Low operating and overhead costs allow websites to offer better prices than bricks-and-mortar travel agencies; most don't charge booking fees. More flexible cost structures allow online travel agency (OTA) operations to rapidly respond to market downturns to preserve profitability. According to a 2023 report from the UK Travel Association, over 50% of UK travellers now book their holidays online, with a notable shift to websites and mobile apps since the COVID-19 pandemic. This has inflated the size of these services in the travel agency industry. OTAs are expanding rapidly, leading to fragmentation and opening up market niches. Notably, travel agencies like TUI and Trailfinders have invested heavily in their online platforms, streamlining booking processes and offering integrated payment systems. In the year through September 2024, app sales soared by 35% for TUI in the UK, highlighting the growth of online booking systems for travel. There's been a surge in self-service bookings, with customers choosing flexibility in managing their travel plans rather than traditional travel agency routes.
- ◆ **IBISWorld – Online Travel Agencies in the UK (November 2025, sourced from National Library of Scotland)**. Social media platforms increasingly influence how UK travellers discover and book trips. Now's the time for travel companies to work with creators, expand video content and invest in social media marketing campaigns to capture market share. Competition from tourism providers will intensify. While OTAs may not be able to compete against airlines and hotels on price and loyalty programmes, they can emphasise personalisation.

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

- ◆ **[ABTA – Reports and Publications](#)** Latest research on travel and holiday trends from the Association of British Travel Agents, including ABTA Trends Report which outlines the trends expected to shape people's travel plans over the year and their Holiday Habits Report.
- ◆ **[Office for National Statistics – Leisure and tourism statistics](#)** Tourism statistics for the UK, and UK residents travelling abroad, reasons for travel and money spent. The statistics on UK residents travelling abroad are an informal indicator of living standards.
- ◆ **[Visit Scotland – Travel Trade](#)** Visit Scotland has a range of resources to support Travel Trade industry representatives, including a supplier trade contacts database, multimedia toolkits and itineraries. **[Research & Insights](#)** on visitor interests and activities, regions, and trends may also be of interest.
- ◆ **[Deloitte – Travel Weekly Insight Annual Report 2025](#)** This report from Deloitte considers the current state of the travel market and looks ahead to how the industry might develop in the future.

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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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