

Market Report

A Snapshot of your Marketing Sector

Craft Beer

This pack has been designed to provide information on setting up a business in the **Craft Beer** 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 **November 2025**.

What do I need to know about the Craft Beer 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:

- ◆ Craft Beer Production revenue is expected to **grow at a compound annual rate of 2.1% over the five years through 2025-26 to £1.6 billion**. Shifting consumer preferences, particularly among younger drinkers, have fuelled demand for craft beer, which uses innovation and variety in flavour to drive sales. Revenue is forecast to swell at a **compound annual rate of 2.7% to £1.9 billion over the five years** through 2030-31. Brewers will continue leveraging their flexibility to respond to shifting consumer tastes, investing in fruit-flavoured beers to capture younger consumers' demand for sweeter options (IBISWorld, *Craft Beer Production in the UK*, June 2025)
- ◆ Revenue from **craft IPAs is falling in 2025–26**. According to CGA data, weaker demand for craft IPAs aligns with declining interest in ales, where sales volumes **dropped 6.2% in 2024**. The higher alcohol content of IPAs makes them more exposed to rising alcohol duty and other taxes, driving prices above other styles. CGA data shows **craft lager sales volumes dropped by 6.5% in 2024**. Younger consumers are gravitating away from traditional lagers in favour of sweeter, fruitier flavours, weighing on demand for craft lager and contributing to a revenue downturn in 2025–26. (IBISWorld, *Craft Beer Production in the UK*, June 2025)
- ◆ **Volume sales of beer fell by 15.6% over 2019-25** due to consumer spending cutbacks and growing alcohol moderation. With price rises dampened by the on-trade failing to fully recover from heavy loss of sales caused by COVID-19, value fell by 5.4%. Strong growth in value sales and near-flat volume sales are predicted for 2025-30. **66% of adults drink beer, but only 17% do so more than twice a week**. Under-35s drink beer more often than older people. People with healthy finances drink beer most often, the income squeeze thus taking a toll on the market. **Low-/no-alcohol beer has forged a firmly mainstream presence, drunk by 41% of category drinkers**. (Mintel, *Beer UK* 2025, November 2025)
- ◆ Demand for indie beer remains strong, with average **production in 2024 up 10% on 2023**. Interestingly, consumers perceive that indie beer has a 30% share of the UK beer market, roughly the same share of sales when global and independent beers freely coexist on the bar. Independent beers currently have less than a 10% share of the UK beer market. (SIBA, *SIBA Independent Beer Report 2025* [SIBA Independent Beer Report 2025](#))
- ◆ The national organisation for this industry is the [Society of Independent Brewers](#) (SIBA). Other industry bodies include, [The Scottish Beer & Pub Association](#) (SBPA), [Scottish Craft Brewers](#), [The Brewers Association UK](#) and [The British Beer and Pub 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, Beer UK, November 2025** - That so many people are concerned about the calories in beer makes it essential for brands to continue to develop lower calorie options, and to ensure that these variants deliver on taste. While women aged 18-34 are the most likely (61%) to be put off, agreement stands at 51% even among men aged under 35. This is concerning for the category, given that male 18-34s are among the key beer drinkers. Lower calorie beers launched in recent years have come mainly from craft and specialist low-/no-alcohol brands, putting pressure on mainstream brands to compete. Some 100 UK breweries closed in 2024. This brings the total down to 1,715. In addition, acquisitions of craft breweries have continued in 2025, strengthening the position of the bigger players in the category.
- ◆ **IBISWorld, Craft Beer Production in the UK, June 2025** - Demand for craft stout soars. Shifting consumer preferences, driven by the success of mainstream stout Guinness, have seen sales of craft stout climb rapidly. Bold marketing ploys grab customer attention. Producers will continue investing in bold marketing through online and in-person experiences to differentiate from mass-market alternatives and drive sales. Craft IPAs see a surge in popularity. UK beer enthusiasts are increasingly seeking out bold and experimental flavours, heightening demand for distinctively earthy craft IPAs. Craft brewers fight for shelf space. In the off-trade market, smaller craft brewers face stiff competition from giants across beer production who leverage economies of scale to secure prime-shelf locations.

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

- ◆ **The Society of Independent Brewers** (www.siba.co.uk) are a trade organisation that represents the British independent brewing industry. They publish an annual report on the state of the industry, as well as hosting news articles relevant to the industry.
- ◆ **Brewed in Scotland** has a map of Scottish breweries on their website (Scottish Breweries Map) which lists beers and the location their brewery is based in across the country. Click the markers on the map to view details of the listed breweries.
- ◆ **The British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA)** (Data & Statistics | BBPA) publishes a range of data and statistics profiling our industry. From pubs in communities across the UK to historic data on beer prices.

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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@bgateaway.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.

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