vinetur

Spirits sales in British pubs fell more than 20% in early November

NielsenIQ said cautious consumer spending also pushed wine and beer lower, leaving hospitality operators reliant on a stronger festive season

Monday, November 23, 2026



Drinks sales in Britain’s pubs, bars and other on-premise venues weakened in the first half of November, with spirits posting the sharpest declines, according to an analysis published by NielsenIQ on November 20.

NielsenIQ said the month got off to a soft start as cautious consumer spending weighed on hospitality sales. Its figures showed spirits sales fell 23.5% from a year earlier in the week ended November 7 and 20.9% in the week ended November 14.

Wine and beer also declined, though by less than spirits. Wine sales were down 11.2% year over year in the week ended November 7 and 6% in the week ended November 14. Beer sales fell 6.2% in the first of those weeks and 2.8% in the second.

The figures point to pressure across the main drinks categories at venues where people consume alcohol on site. The pace of decline eased in the second reported week, but all three categories remained below the same periods a year earlier. Spirits stayed the weakest segment in both weeks.

That pattern suggests spending on higher-priced drinks orders may have come under particular strain at the start of the month. Pubs and bars rely heavily on sales of cocktails, mixed drinks and shots during busy trading periods, and a sharper pullback in spirits can weigh more heavily on revenue than a softer decline in beer.

NielsenIQ described the period as a weak opening to November and said the trade was looking to the festive season for support. That makes the coming weeks important for operators across Britain’s hospitality industry, which typically builds momentum toward year-end through holiday gatherings and celebrations.

The slowdown also matters beyond pubs and bars. A softer on-premise market before Christmas can affect expectations for order volumes, inventory levels and promotional activity for producers, wholesalers and distributors of beer, wine and spirits. That may be especially true for spirits suppliers, given that the category recorded the largest drop in both weeks measured by NielsenIQ.

The data also showed that any recovery in on-premise demand remained uneven. Beer and wine posted smaller year-over-year declines in the week ended November 14 than they did a week earlier, but neither category returned to growth. Spirits also improved slightly from the prior week, yet sales were still down by more than one-fifth from the same period a year earlier.

For Britain’s hospitality businesses, the early-November figures add to signs that consumers remain careful with discretionary spending. For drinks companies, the numbers could shape decisions on how much stock to commit to pubs, bars and restaurants during the run-up to Christmas, when stronger trading would normally help lift sales across the sector.