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Spirits sales in Britain’s hospitality sector fell more than 20% in early November

NielsenIQ tracked a 23.5% annual drop for the week ended Nov. 7, easing to 20.9% by Nov. 14 before Christmas trading

Monday, November 23, 2026



Spirits sales in Britain’s hospitality sector fell by more than 20% year over year in each of the first two reported weeks of November, according to NielsenIQ data that pointed to a weak start to a key trading period before the Christmas season.

NIQ said sales by value in the spirits category were down 23.5% in the week ended Nov. 7 compared with the same period in 2025. In the following week, ended Nov. 14, the decline narrowed to 20.9% from a year earlier.

The figures came from NIQ’s Daily Drinks Tracker, a service that monitors sales in managed hospitality outlets in Great Britain. The coverage includes England, Scotland and Wales, but not Northern Ireland. The company published the data on Nov. 20 in a report titled On-Premise hopes for festive drinks boost after soft start to November.

The second reading showed a smaller year-over-year drop than the first, a change of 2.6 percentage points. That does not mean sales rose 2.6% from one week to the next. The data only show that the rate of annual decline eased between the two reported weeks.

NIQ did not publish absolute revenue figures in pounds or sales volumes for the spirits category. Without those numbers, it is not possible to calculate how much money the sector lost in the period or to measure any cumulative change for November. The data also do not show whether the shift was driven by fewer drinks sold, lower prices, changes in promotions, or a different mix of products.

The report adds to signs of pressure in a part of the drinks trade that depends heavily on seasonal demand. November is an important month for pubs, bars and restaurants as operators move into office parties, social gatherings and other holiday spending. Two consecutive weekly declines above 20% suggest that spirits sales were under clear strain at the start of that run-up, even though the second week was less weak than the first.

The NIQ numbers should be read as panel data rather than a full measure of the entire market. The company’s tracker covers the outlets included in its monitoring service, not every hospitality business in Britain. That means the data provide a snapshot of trading conditions in the tracked managed segment, but they do not fully represent all independent venues or the broader alcohol market.

The report also does not break down performance by type of spirit. It does not show whether vodka, gin, whisky, rum or other categories were responsible for most of the drop. There is also no split between price and volume, and no separate inflation measure tied to the reported figures, which limits what can be said about physical consumption.

NIQ describes itself as a global market measurement and consumer behavior company with operations in more than 90 countries and about 23,000 clients, according to its corporate information. Its drinks tracker is used by companies across the hospitality supply chain to monitor demand in bars, pubs and restaurants.

For drinks producers, distributors and venue operators, the early November results point to a softer sales environment than a year earlier at a sensitive point in the calendar. The data do not explain the cause of the decline, but they show that spirits spending in the tracked hospitality outlets remained sharply below 2025 levels through Nov. 14.