



Issue 55

NIQ powered by **CGA** intelligence

HospitalityMarketMonitor

Review of GB pub, bar and restaurant supply

October 2026



98,319

Total outlets in Britain at
September 2026

Hospitality loses 19 sites a week ahead of crunch Christmas

Market overview

Britain's number of licensed premises has fallen by **977** in the last 12 months, the latest Hospitality Market Monitor reveals.

Data from NIQ, powered by CGA intelligence, shows there were **98,319** outlets at the end of September 2026. This is down by **1.0%** from September 2025 and equivalent to nearly 19 net closures per week.

-0.2% Net change in outlets between
June 2026 and September 2026

The quarter-on-quarter drop of **0.2%** since June represents an acceleration of closures after the second quarter, when numbers were virtually flat. It follows intense pressure on hospitality operators from a combination of rising costs and weak consumer confidence, which has led to an uptick in churn across the sector. The three months to end-September saw **2,436** venues close their

doors—around **27** per day—while 2,191 new ones opened, often in the same vacated premises.

-1.0% Net change in outlets between
September 2025 and September 2026

A steady stream of openings suggests some entrepreneurs and investors remain confident about the long-term future of hospitality, and the accommodation-led sector is notably buoyant. However, many other businesses have been weakened, especially in food-led channels including casual dining and food pubs (see page 2). NIQ's latest Business Confidence Survey with Zonal found that only **37%** of leaders feel optimistic about prospects for their business over the next 12 months—a quarter-on-quarter drop of **14** percentage points. It leaves fragile operators hoping relief on costs and an improvement in consumers' spending confidence in November and December.

Outlets by segment, September 2026 v June 2026 and September 2025

	Sites at Sep 2025	Sites at June 2026	Sites at Sep 2026	% change, Sep 2026 v June 2026	% change, Sep 2026 v Sep 2025
Bar	4,674	4,695	4,675	-0.4%	0.0%
Bar restaurant	3,405	3,334	3,326	-0.2%	-2.3%
Casual dining restaurant	5,189	5,057	5,077	+0.4%	-2.2%
Community pub	18,028	17,810	17,675	-0.8%	-2.0%
Food pub	11,204	11,086	10,862	-2.0%	-3.1%
High street pub	6,170	6,158	6,146	-0.2%	-0.4%
Hotel	7,421	7,413	7,434	+0.3%	+0.2%
Large venue	4,375	4,440	4,459	+0.4%	+1.9%
Nightclub	799	792	776	-2.0%	-2.9%
Restaurant	14,824	14,631	14,742	+0.8%	-0.6%
Sports / social club	19,514	19,473	19,460	-0.1%	-0.3%
Other*	3,692	3,674	3,686	-0.1%	-0.5%
Total	99,296	98,564	98,319	-0.2%	-1.0%

Comment from Karl Chessell, director – hospitality operators and food, EMEA at NIQ

Net closures of nearly 1,000 licensed premises in the last 12 months highlight the pile-up of challenges facing hospitality.

Trends are far from even, with some businesses and channels thriving while others struggle to sustain sales and protect margins. NIQ’s data shows that while underlying demand for pubs, bars and restaurants remains good, many consumers are cutting back on their visits and moderating their spending when they do go out. There are pockets of growth, but the general direction of travel is obvious.

Hospitality is now entering a critical couple of months. Christmas and New Year celebrations should boost spending in the short-term, but this won’t offset long-term structural costs like rising energy prices. Meaningful support on this burden of costs is needed to protect thousands of vulnerable businesses from closure. With the right backing, alongside a stimulus to consumer spending, hospitality can give the UK economy the injection of growth and job creation that it needs.

In focus: Casual dining and food pubs

NIQ’s latest Hospitality Market Monitor data suggests recent tribulations in hospitality are hitting food-led venues harder than drink-led ones.

Britain’s number of eating venues fell by **1.7%** in the 12 months to September—equivalent to 620 net closures, or 12 per week. This is a steeper drop than the figure of **0.7%** for drinking venues.

All parts of the food-led market have contracted in the last year, with casual dining restaurants dropping by **2.2%** year-on-year. It follows news of closures by some high-profile restaurant and pub brands, and the managed segment has dropped by **4.6%**. It’s a brighter picture in the independent channel, where numbers have increased **0.3%**—a sign that some closed restaurants are being picked up by new concepts.

The casual dining sector has had a rollercoaster ride in the last decade. It grew substantially in the years before COVID-19, with numerous brands rolling out amid strong demand. But there were suggestions that the channel had



reached saturation point towards the end of the 2010s, and hundreds of restaurants closed during and after extended periods of trading restrictions. The casual dining segment has now contracted by nearly a quarter (**23.4%**) since the start of the pandemic in 2020, while the restaurant channel, dominated by independents, has dropped by **21.5%** (see table).

Nevertheless, bars face many of the same challenges as other segments – especially moves by some consumers to scale back their visits and spending. It’s a fine balance of supply and demand, and more churn is likely. Sustaining net growth will be difficult, but for now this is one of hospitality’s most dynamic channels.

After the pandemic, some of the demand for eating out was redirected towards food pubs. This channel has been

more resilient than casual dining since COVID, having contracted by **13.7%**, though its drop in the last 12 months has been sharper than restaurants at **3.1%**.

All food operators have been grappling with steep inflation in ingredient prices, along with other tax, energy and labour costs. These have sapped margins, while the increases to menu prices that restaurants have been forced to make have led some diners to cut back on their visits. The NIQ RSM Hospitality Business Tracker shows Britain’s managed restaurant groups have not achieved above-inflation growth in any month since the start of 2025. Whether they can buck this trend in November and December will depend on consumers’ spending confidence.

Food-led venues, September 2026 v March 2020 and September 2025

	Sites at March 2020	Sites at Sep 2025	Sites at Sep 2026	% change, Sep 2026 v Mar 2020	% change, Sep 2026 v Sep 2025
Casual dining restaurants	6,625	5,189	5,077	-23.4%	-2.2%
Restaurants	18,770	14,824	14,742	-21.5%	-0.6%
Food pubs	12,590	11,204	10,862	-13.7%	-3.1%

In focus: Accommodation-led venues

In a tough year for hospitality, the accommodation-led sector has proved notably more resilient than restaurants and pubs.

The number of licensed hotels rose by **0.2%** in the 12 months to September, while the holiday and caravan park segment is up **0.7%**. Both these channels have also outperformed hospitality as a whole in the last six years, with numbers down by only **4.4%** and **7.3%** respectively since early 2020.

This partly reflects interest in domestic holidays during and after COVID, when restrictions prompted many people to stay closer to home. International travel has recovered since then, but pressure on discretionary incomes in recent years has also led people towards cheaper staycations. The resilience of hotels and holiday or caravan parks is also down to contraction in the guest and boarding house sector, which has shrunk by nearly half since COVID.

-23.4% Net change in casual dining restaurants between March 2020 and September 2026

-0.3% Net change in hotels between March 2020 and September 2026

Accommodation-led venues, September 2026 v March 2020 and September 2025

	Sites at March 2020	Sites at Sep 2025	Sites at Sep 2026	% change, Sep 2026 v Mar 2020	% change, Sep 2026 v Sep 2025
Hotels	7,773	7,421	7,434	-4.4%	+0.2%
Guest / boarding house	2,980	1,634	1,627	-45.4%	-0.4%
Holiday / caravan parks	926	852	858	-7.3%	+0.7%

In focus: Cities and towns

The pattern of openings and closures has been similar across Britain in the long run, but recent years have seen greater toughness in cities than in towns and rural areas.

Licensed premises in city centres have dropped by only **0.5%** in the last 12 months—about half the rate in large towns (**1.1%**) and small towns (**1.1%**). But there are small but significant nuances, with the three largest cities by site numbers—London, Edinburgh and Manchester—all in year-on-year decline, while slightly smaller ones, like Glasgow, Liverpool and Newcastle, are in healthy growth.

One factor in these places' success is their ability to draw people in from surrounding areas, especially for weekends and big events. Hospitality Market Monitor data also shows that openings in these secondary cities are being led by medium-sized brands rather than the biggest or newest

groups—an encouraging indicator of consumers' continued interest in fresh, mid-market concepts.

These trends may be impacting cities' satellite towns, where spending power can be more limited. Since March 2020, hospitality venues have dropped by **16.0%** and **14.5%** in large and small towns respectively, compared to **12.2%** in city centres.

As in retail, hospitality venues in some cities and towns have struggled for footfall in 2026, though they generated good growth during the World Cup in the summer. The NIQ RSM Hospitality Business Tracker shows that pubs had a particularly strong June and July as fans watched games together. However, this was a short-lived burst of spending, and urban venues will be pinning hopes on a release of spending on celebrations between now and Christmas.

-12.2% Net change in licensed premises in city centres between March 2020 and September 2026

-16.0% Net change in licensed premises in large towns between March 2020 and September 2026

Venues by urbanicity, September 2026 v March 2020 and September 2025

	Sites at March 2020	Sites at Sep 2025	Sites at Sep 2026	% change, Sep 2026 v Mar 2020	% change, Sep 2026 v Sep 2025
City	38,257	33,459	33,215	-13.2%	-0.7%
City centre	11,628	10,261	10,212	-12.2%	-0.5%
Large town	40,195	34,147	33,774	-16.0%	-1.1%
Small town	36,655	31,688	31,328	-14.5%	-1.1%

Market summary

	Sites at Sep 2025	Sites at June 2026	Sites at Sep 2026	Sep 2026 vs Sep 2025	% change, Sep 2026 v June 2026	% change, Sep 2026 v Sep 2025
All venues	99,296	98,564	98,319	-977	-0.2%	-1.0%
Managed	20,915	20,765	20,449	-466	-1.5%	-2.2%
Independent	62,520	62,357	62,805	+285	+0.7%	0.5%
Leased	15,861	15,442	15,065	-796	-2.4%	-5.0%
Food-led venues	35,828	35,299	35,208	-620	-0.3%	-1.7%
Drink-led venues	54,413	54,222	54,050	-363	-0.3%	-0.7%
Accommodation-led venues	9,055	9,043	9,061	+6	+0.2%	+0.1%

Sources, definitions and more information

Data in this report is sourced from NIQ's Outlet Index, the leading database of licensed premises in Britain. **'Independent'** means that the venue is owned and operated independently; **'Managed'** are sites run by operators with more than one location; and **'Leased'** outlets are run by individual tenants who pay a tenancy fee or rent to a corporate landlord, typically a pub company. **'Other'** segments include cafés, delicatessens, guest and boarding houses, and holiday and caravan parks.

NIQ provides more detailed breakdowns of Britain's licensed premises, including analysis by channel, location, segment and much more. To discuss the Hospitality Market Monitor and NIQ's research portfolio, contact Reuben Pullan at reuben.pullan@nielseniq.com.