Night Time Economy Market Monitor

November 2025

The night time economy in Q3: Five key takeaways

1. Contrasting fortunes for the evening and late-night economies. Venues operating in the evenings grew by **0.8%** quarter-quarter, while those opening late at night dropped by **2.2%**.

2. Major challenges for independents. Indie-run venues are closing at a notably faster rate than managed groups, largely because of cost and resilience gaps.

3. Pressure on participation. Demand for late-night leisure is being dampened by economic constraints and preferences for earlier and shorter social experiences.

4. Regional variations in resilience. Cities in Northern England and Scotland are currently better insulated against challenges than London.

5. Support needed on safety and transport. The night time economy is being hamstrung by consumers' concerns about their safety and travel. Allaying fears would help sustain fragile late-night venues.

–4.6%
Net decline in late-night venues, September 2024 to September 2025

Overview: A dividing line between evening and late-night

The third quarter of 2025 reinforced a major structural divide in the UK's night time economy: between venues operating in the evening and those opening later into the night.

The first of these has shown reasonable stability this year. The number of venues in the evening economy segment of our Monitor increased by **0.8%** between June and September, and it now stands only **7.4%** behind the pre-COVID levels of March 2020.

By contrast, the late-night economy is under strain. Venue numbers here fell by **2.2%** in the three months to September, on the back of a **1.7%** drop in the second quarter. This means that the late-night segment—which covers clubs, casinos, late bars and similar venues—is now down by **4.6%** year-on-year, and is **28.0%** smaller than in March 2020.

–28.0%
Net decline in late-night venues, March 2020 to September 2025

The contraction rate may have slowed since COVID-era peaks, but it still represents a prolonged period of consolidation. As we see elsewhere in this report, it's the result of a powerful combination of factors, including declining demand for late-night leisure, cost-of-living pressures, sharp rises in operating costs and persistent safety and transport challenges.

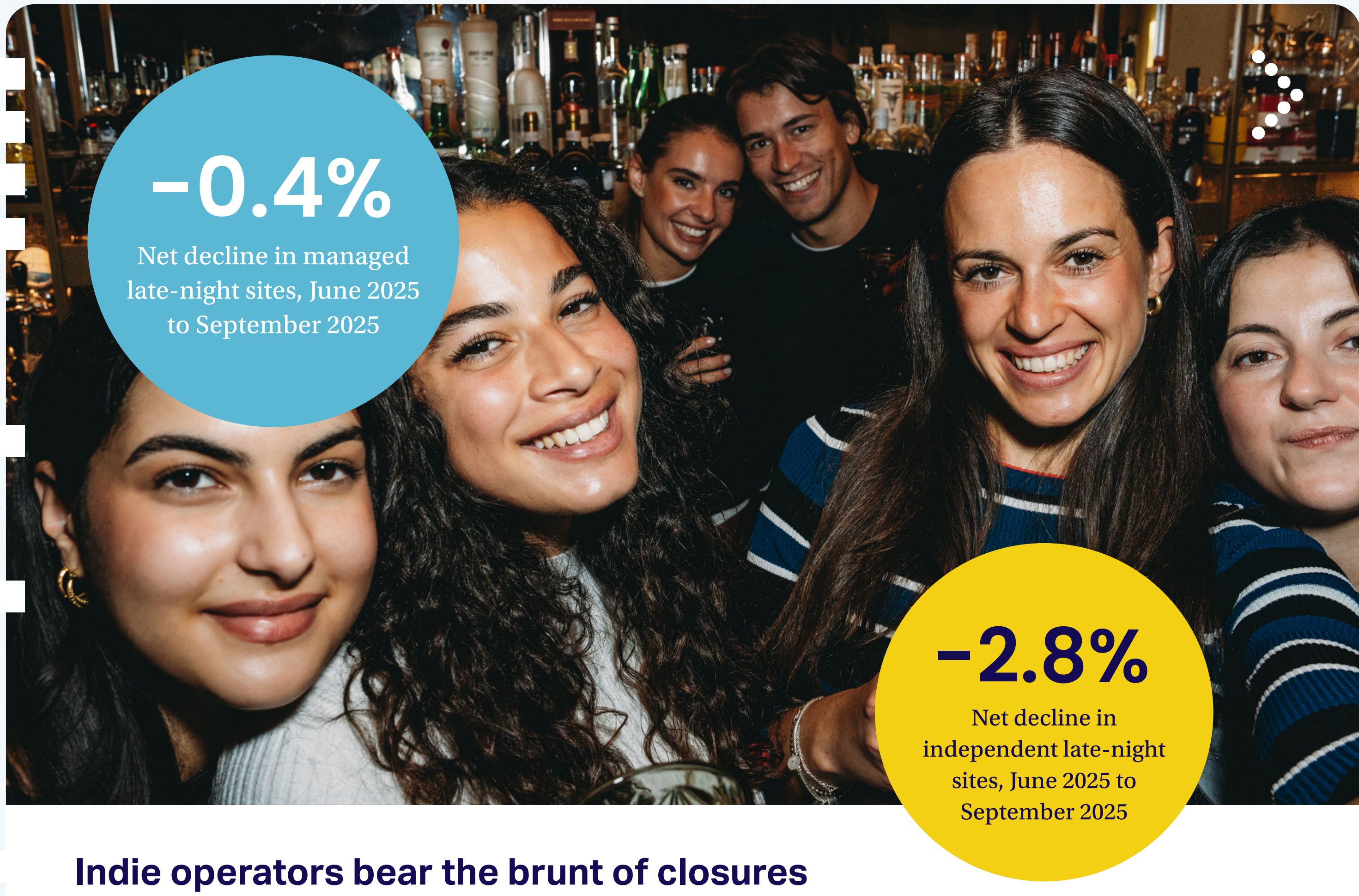
All these drivers are particularly prevalent among those who go out on high-energy nights out, which are at the core of the late-night economy. CGA by NIQ's research shows that more than a quarter **(27%)** of consumers have stopped or reduced their high-tempo visits to bars and nightclubs—usually for cost reasons. Among those who have stopped or cut their visits, nearly a third say it is because prices have risen too much **(32%)** or they can no longer afford to do so **(30%)**.

But moves away from late-night are about more than just price. Lifestyle changes have driven change too, and a fifth **(20%)** of those cutting or ending their high-tempo visits have done so due to altered commitments, while nearly as many **(17%)** now prefer to go out earlier in the day. CGA by NIQ's trading data confirms this trend, with the 5pm-to-7pm slot having overtaken 7pm-to-10pm as the biggest earning trading period. Post-7pm trading now generates **31.5%** of all sales—a substantial drop from **34.3%** just two years ago.

This convergence of venue contraction and consumer retrenchment suggests the late-night economy is being rapidly reshaped—not just by supply pressures but by a fundamental shift in social behaviour and spending confidence.

Britain's licensed premises at September 2025

	March 2020	Sep 2024	June 2025	Sep 2025	Post-COVID change: Sep 2025 v Mar 2020	YoY change: Sep 2025 v Sep 2024	QoQ change: Sep 2025 v June 2025
Late-night economy	3,026	2,285	2,228	2,180	-28.0%	-4.6%	-2.2%
Evening economy	17,405	15,971	15,993	16,117	-7.4%	+0.9%	+0.8%
Wider night time economy	102,446	89,392	88,493	88,927	-13.2%	-0.5%	+0.5%
Total hospitality sector	115,108	99,868	98,746	99,296	-13.7%	-0.6%	+0.6%



Indie operators bear the brunt of closures

Continuing a pattern established during COVID, independently owned venues remain the most vulnerable part of the late-night economy.

In the third quarter, the number of indies in this segment fell by **2.8%**, bringing the total drop since the onset of the pandemic to **30.6%**. In other words, the independent late-night economy is nearly a third smaller than it was just five and a half years ago.

Trends in the managed sector are very different. Venues operated by larger hospitality groups have fallen by only **0.4%** quarter-on-quarter, and by **14.5%** since March 2020.

This gap reflects the very different capacities to absorb inflationary costs, regulatory pressures and fluctuating demand. Larger operators have benefited from economies of scale, brand visibility and greater access to finance at times of stress. Many small independents—often anchors of their communities and centres for creativity—have faced unsustainable fixed costs in energy, labour, taxes and much more, reducing margins in their late-night trade.

There's another factor behind independents' difficulties: changing late-night behaviours. Consumers whose spending has been constrained are increasingly selective about their nights out, often choosing fewer and more meaningful visits and favouring curated experiences or themed venues over spontaneous late-night sessions.

This preference for controlled and high quality social time has made it harder for some smaller operators to sustain spontaneous late-evening visits, which were crucial to pre-pandemic models. Earlier in 2025, CGA's Business Leaders' Survey found that two thirds **(65%)** of sector leaders had seen their late-night footfall drop, with just **4%** noting an increase.

	Sites at March 2020	Sites at June 2025	Sites at Sep 2025	Change in sites, Sep 2025 v March 2020	Change in sites, Sep 2025 v June 2025
Independent	2,219	1,583	1,539	-30.6%	-2.8%
Managed	600	515	513	-14.5%	-0.4%
Tenanted	207	130	128	-38.2%	-1.5%

The shape of the market: Bars stronger than clubs

A breakdown of Britain's night time venues shows a clear bifurcation between bars and clubs in recent years.

Themed bars **(+29.8%)**, craft bars **(+4.7%)**, and cocktail bars **(+3.0%)** have all grown year-on-year and now exceed their pre-COVID footprints. In contrast, nightclubs **(-4.2%)**, late-night bars **(-5.3%)** and educational bars **(-3.0%)** have shrunk significantly over the same period. Challenges have been especially acute in the nightclub sector, which is now **35.9%** smaller than it was before COVID.

This is not just cyclical decline, but structural. It also chimes with CGA by NIQ's research into consumer attitudes that highlights the desire for socialisation and human connection. Well over half **(57%)** of those going out for high-tempo occasions say it is because they want to socialise with friends, while **37%** do so to meet new people.

To satisfy these needs, younger adults in particular are gravitating away from high-intensity late-night environments towards venues that provide more mindful and meaningful experiences. 'Light clubbing', early evening cultural events and themed social activities are just three beneficiaries of this recalibration. It's clear that demand for going out is fragmenting, and moving towards specific formats that feel more purposeful and affordable.

Bars and clubs at September 2025: Selected segments

	Sites at Sep 2024	Sites at June 2025	Sites at Sep 2025	Change in sites, Sep 2025 v Sep 2024	Change in sites, Sep 2025 v June 2025
Bar restaurants	3,308	3,285	3,399	+2.8%	+3.5%
Cocktail bars	927	932	955	+3.0%	+2.5%
Craft bars	780	814	817	+4.7%	+0.4%
Educational bars	631	628	612	-3.0%	-2.5%
Late-night bars	1,333	1,279	1,263	-5.3%	-1.3%
Nightclubs	834	823	799	-4.2%	-2.9%
Themed bars	292	340	379	+29.8%	+11.5%
Wine bars	651	654	645	-0.9%	-1.4%

−4.2%
Net decline in nightclubs, September 2024 to September 2025

+29.8%
Net growth in themed bars, September 2024 to September 2025

Regional dynamics

CGA by NIQ's data for the Night Time Economy Market Monitor shows fluctuations in venue numbers around Britain, with key cities in northern England and Scotland proving more resilient than London and elsewhere.

While seeing some closures in the evening economy over the last year, Edinburgh and Liverpool held steadier than the capital. Meanwhile Leeds, Manchester, Glasgow and Newcastle displayed even stronger performance, growing the size of their evening economy on last year—a sign of the vibrancy of these hubs and an impressive recovery from the turmoil of COVID and its aftermath. All five of these places benefit from compact urban cores, strong student and visitor populations, and cohesive local strategies that support night time culture and safety.

London, by contrast, has a smaller night time footprint than 12 months ago, with notable weakness in the late-night segment. The capital's operators face higher fixed costs, staff shortages and higher transport prices, which have all contributed to difficult trading conditions after midnight.

+0.9%
Net growth in evening economy venues in Glasgow, September 2024 to September 2025

The safety and transport factors

Two of the biggest barriers to late-night hospitality visits in recent years have been safety and transport. Research for CGA by NIQ's Evolving High Tempo Occasions report found that around a quarter **(24%)** of high-tempo consumers take safety and security into consideration when planning a visit, while even more **(28%)** think about travel, including the availability of public transport late at night.

GO Technology research from CGA by NIQ and Zonal stresses the size of safety as an issue. Among those who are going out earlier than they did, well over a quarter **(29%)** say it is because they feel safer, and **18%** cite easier public transport. This is conclusive proof that poor safety measures and transport infrastructure are excluding millions of British consumers from going out late.

Safety and travel concerns directly intersect with the structural economics of late-night business. Venues that rely on post-midnight trade have seen reduced dwell time and earlier dispersal, as consumers increasingly opt to complete their nights before transport services wind down, or before areas feel unsafe. This effectively shrinks the 'active' hours of late-night bars, clubs and similar venues, adding to the stress of rising operational costs and putting hundreds of venues at risk of closure.

Fixing these issues would be a major step towards reviving late-night visits—especially from younger adults. More than a fifth **(21%)** of 18 to 34 year-olds say safer venues would encourage them to go out for more high-tempo occasions, while Gen Z is **9** percentage points more likely to go out later if there were better public transport links.

Measures like better street lighting and later-running, more reliable and cheaper public transport would be big steps towards the reinvigoration of the late-night economy. Venue-level performance data already shows that it's the areas with good lighting, active night time management and stronger transport connectivity where trading has held up best. These are the spots where the late-night economy has the brightest future, and they set the standards for the rest of the country to follow.

−1.6%
Net decline in evening economy venues in London, September 2024 to September 2025

The view from the NTIA

"For Britain's night time economy, the story of the third quarter of 2025 is of adaptation and uneven recovery. The industry continues to evolve at pace, with consumers' spending constraints and preferences for earlier, more purposeful visits reshaping the landscape of late-night bars and clubs.

These and other shifts have given stability to hospitality's evening trading, which has adapted well through diversification and the integration of dining, entertainment and cultural experiences. But they have caused another contraction in venue numbers and visits in the late-night segment, where the rising costs of doing business, along with reduced visits and dwell times, have deepened the problems facing operators.

Despite all the headwinds, the night time economy remains an integral part of the country's social and economic infrastructure. It contributes more than £153 bn in GDP and supports more than 2.1 million jobs. And while the late-night segment is fragile, it also holds the greatest potential for targeted growth—but only if systemic barriers to participation are addressed.

The most important of these obstacles are safety and transport, which are now central determinants of economic performance. Stabilising and growing the late-night economy depends on coordinated measures between central government, local authorities, transport operators and the private sector, particularly around late-night mobility, lighting and policing visibility.

These changes will take time, but night time operators also require urgent government intervention to reduce their burden of costs and stimulate consumer spending. The November Budget would be a great moment to recognise the value of this vibrant sector and give it the targeted and sustained support it deserves."

Michael Kill, CEO - Night Time Industries Association

About our report

The Night Time Economy Market Monitor was launched by the **Night Time Industries Association** and **CGA by NIQ** to take a quarterly temperature check of the evening and late-night economies. Data is sourced from CGA by NIQ's Outlet Index, the leading database of licensed premises in Britain, with further insight from CGA's range of consumer, business leader and sales measurement solutions. To learn more, visit www.nielseniq.com or email Reuben Pullan, senior insight consultant, at **reuben.pullan@nielseniq.com**.

Definitions

'Late-night economy sites' includes venues in the Outlet Index that explicitly operate at late-night hours. They include late-night bars, nightclubs and casinos.

'Evening-economy sites' are defined as venues that are focused on evening operations and entertainment. In addition to the above venues, they include arenas, ballrooms, bar restaurants, bingo halls, cocktail bars, craft bars, educational bars, theatres, themed bars, themed pubs, unthemed high street pubs and wine bars.

Wider night time economy sites' provide the broadest view of the industry. In addition to the above, they include food-led and activity-led venues that operate in the evening as well as daytime, like restaurants, local sports clubs, social clubs, cinemas, snooker clubs, street markets, bowling alleys, hotels, casual dining restaurants, community pubs, branded food pubs and unbranded food pubs.

'Total market' includes all licensed premises in Great Britain.

The Night Time Industries Association is the voice of the night time community in the UK. For more about the NTIA and membership, visit **www.ntia.co.uk**