

Year-Round Outdoor Trading Reshapes Lighting Requirements for UK Hospitality Venues, Festive Lights Reports

An overview of how pubs, bars, restaurants and hotels are specifying commercial-grade exterior lighting to extend outdoor use beyond the summer season.

CHORLEY, CHARNAROCK RICHARD, UNITED KINGDOM, August 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Festive Lights, a United Kingdom-based supplier of domestic and commercial decorative lighting, has released an overview of how the hospitality sector is using exterior lighting to support the extension of outdoor trading into the darker months of the year. The assessment examines the specification differences between commercial and domestic lighting, the durability standards required for permanent installation, and the operational considerations that apply when licensed premises light gardens, terraces and forecourts for use after dusk across a longer trading season.

The review is directed at a market in which outdoor space has moved from a seasonal supplement to a year-round commercial asset. Following a period in which many venues developed outdoor areas in response to changed operating conditions, the use of gardens, courtyards, terraces and pavement seating has become an established part of hospitality trading. A temporary pavement-licence regime introduced in 2020 to support the sector was subsequently placed on a permanent statutory footing, providing venues with a continuing framework for on-street and outdoor seating and

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Wall-mounted outdoor lantern glowing on a brick house exterior at dusk.

reducing the uncertainty that previously discouraged longer-term investment in these areas.

Outdoor Space as a Year-Round Commercial Asset

Industry commentary on the hospitality sector consistently identifies well-designed outdoor areas as a factor in guest spending and dwell time, with venues reporting that comfortable exterior spaces encourage customers to remain longer. The extension of this use beyond the summer months depends on making outdoor areas usable in lower temperatures and shorter daylight, which has prompted investment in covered and heated structures such as pergolas, awnings and umbrellas, alongside the lighting required to make those spaces functional and inviting once natural light fades.



Solar garden lights illuminating wooden deck at night

Lighting occupies a specific position within this combination. Where heating and cover determine physical comfort, illumination determines whether an outdoor area can be used at all after dusk, a consideration that grows in significance as daylight hours contract through autumn and winter. During the period of standard winter time, usable outdoor trading in the early evening depends entirely on installed lighting, both for the atmosphere that draws customers into a space and for the practical visibility required to move safely across it.

"For a licensed venue, an unlit outdoor area effectively closes at sunset for much of the year," said Stephen Alty, General Manager at Festive Lights. "Lighting is what keeps that space in use through the afternoon and evening once the clocks change. The commercial question is no longer whether to light an outdoor area, but how to specify a system that will operate reliably, night after night, across every season rather than only through the summer."

The Specification Gap Between Commercial and Domestic Lighting

The overview places particular emphasis on the distinction between lighting intended for occasional domestic use and lighting specified for continuous commercial operation, a difference that is frequently underestimated. Decorative lighting sold for garden use is often designed for intermittent, seasonal deployment and lower-voltage operation, whereas

hospitality installations are typically left in place year-round and operate for extended hours every day, placing substantially greater demands on components and connections.

Commercial specification centres on mains-voltage systems built for permanent installation. Festive Lights identifies its heavy-duty, mains-powered ranges as the category suited to this use: the [ConnectPro](#) system, a 240-volt connectable range carrying an IP65 weatherproof rating and a two-year guarantee, is described by the company as intended for permanent, all-year-round outdoor displays and commercial use, with lengths of several hundred metres capable of running from a single supply point. For festoon lighting specifically, the [FestoonPro](#) range provides a 240-volt commercial system with individually replaceable bulbs and customisable belt lengths, a configuration the company associates with hospitality venues and event operators seeking a durable, long-term installation.

The practical significance of this distinction lies in maintenance and continuity of service. Systems with replaceable bulbs and belts allow a single failed component to be exchanged rather than requiring the replacement of an entire set, which reduces both cost and disruption for a venue that cannot easily take an installation out of service. Secure, weather-sealed connectors and heavy-gauge cabling maintain performance across long runs, allowing a continuous canopy of light across a garden or terrace without the voltage drop that causes fixtures at the end of a chain to dim.

Weatherproofing and Continuity of Operation

The reliability of a commercial installation depends on its performance under sustained environmental exposure. Fixtures left in place year-round are subject to rain, frost, wind, ultraviolet exposure and temperature variation, and the standards governing resistance to these conditions are defined by Ingress Protection (IP) ratings. Where an IP44 rating is generally regarded as a minimum for sheltered domestic use, commercial installations intended for permanent outdoor exposure are typically specified at IP65, indicating complete protection against dust and resistance to low-pressure water jets.

"The environmental demands on a commercial installation are considerably higher than most people assume," said Jana Dalton, a specialist in exterior lighting at Festive Lights. "A domestic set might be brought indoors over winter, but a hospitality installation stays out through frost, storms and constant handling. That is why the specification moves to heavy-duty rubber cabling, sealed connectors and an IP65 rating. The objective is a system that a venue can install once and rely on, rather than one that has to be inspected and repaired repeatedly through the trading year."

The construction associated with commercial systems reflects these requirements, incorporating thick rubber cabling selected for flexibility and resilience across a wide temperature range, sealed bulb housings, and connectors designed to maintain their rating when correctly secured. Warranties of two years or more accompany many commercial ranges, providing a defined

standard of durability for installations that represent a recurring operational dependency rather than a one-off purchase.

Energy Consumption and Operating Costs

The economics of continuous operation form a further consideration for commercial users, for whom lighting that runs for extended hours every day represents an ongoing cost. The transition from incandescent to light-emitting diode (LED) technology has altered this position substantially. Modern LED festoon and string systems consume a fraction of the energy of the incandescent products they have replaced, with the company indicating that its LED festoons use up to 90 percent less energy than equivalent incandescent bulbs, allowing an extensive display to operate at a running cost measured in pence rather than pounds per evening.

This reduction in consumption changes the calculation for venues considering whether to keep outdoor areas lit throughout a trading session. Where the running cost of a large incandescent display would once have discouraged extended use, the lower draw of LED systems makes continuous evening operation economically practicable, supporting the shift towards year-round outdoor trading. Lower consumption also aligns with the broader regulatory and cost environment, in which energy efficiency has become a standing consideration for hospitality operators managing overheads across longer opening hours.

Procurement, Maintenance and the Trade Dimension

The commercial context also introduces requirements around procurement and support that differ from consumer purchasing. Venues installing lighting across multiple sites, or specifying systems intended to remain in service for several years, require consistent access to matching components, replacement parts and technical guidance. Festive Lights operates a dedicated trade function, [Festive Lights for Business](#), which provides business accounts, commercial pricing and access to the ranges specified for permanent and large-scale installation.

The modular design of commercial connectable systems supports this procurement model. Because belts, bulbs and connectors are sold as separate, compatible components, a venue can extend, reconfigure or repair an installation over time without replacing it, and can standardise on a single system across a site to maintain a consistent appearance and simplify maintenance. This approach treats lighting as a maintainable asset with a multi-year service life rather than a consumable, which is consistent with the way hospitality operators account for other fixed infrastructure.

Market Context and Outlook

The developments described in the overview sit within a wider pattern of investment in hospitality outdoor space. Commentary on the sector indicates that venues increasingly regard high-quality outdoor areas as a competitive requirement rather than an optional enhancement,

with those lacking well-appointed exterior space at a disadvantage in a market where guest expectations have shifted towards outdoor use. The permanence of the pavement-licence framework has reinforced this position by giving operators greater confidence to commit to durable, longer-term installations.

Analysts expect continued growth in outdoor and commercial lighting as this investment persists, supported by falling LED costs, improved durability standards and the extension of outdoor trading across a larger part of the year. Festive Lights states that its overview is intended to help hospitality operators and installers distinguish between lighting specified for occasional domestic use and lighting engineered for continuous commercial operation, so that specification decisions reflect the demands of year-round outdoor trading rather than seasonal decoration.

About Festive Lights

Festive Lights is a United Kingdom-based supplier of exterior and interior decorative lighting, focusing on the distribution of connectable LED string and festoon systems, solar-powered fixtures, battery-operated lighting, application-controlled smart lighting and motion-sensor units for residential and commercial use. The company supplies both consumers and professional installers, operates a dedicated trade function for business customers, and manufactures its ranges to defined weatherproofing standards. Established for over two decades and based in Charnock Richard, Chorley, the organisation maintains an emphasis on product durability, weatherproofing certification and accessible installation.

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