Part L and *chandeliers*: do decorative fittings have to meet the efficacy limits?

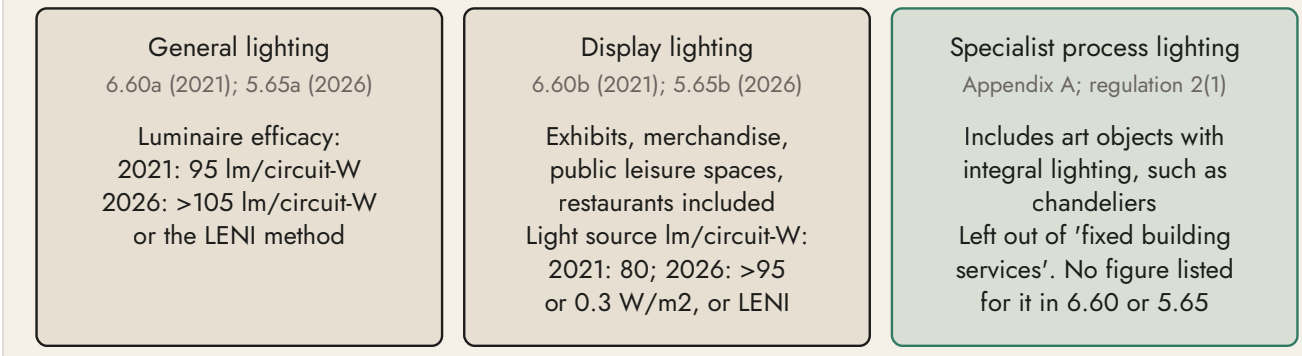
What Approved Document L (England) says about chandeliers: the two definitions that matter, the 2021 and 2026 figures with paragraph numbers, and wording for building control. A reading of the text, not a ruling.

Compliance guidance. Figures and quotations are from the editions named, read on 5 November 2026. Check the current edition and your project's transitional arrangements (a new edition takes effect on 24 March 2027), and have building control and a lighting designer or electrical engineer confirm how your fittings are treated. Guidance, not legal or engineering advice. England only unless stated.

AT A GLANCE

Topic	2021 edition (incl. 2023 amendments)	2026 edition	Where
Status in England	In use since 15 June 2022 (2023 amendments).	Takes effect 24 March 2027 (24 September 2027, higher-risk work); see Circular Letter 01/2026.	Edition statements
Chandeliers and fixed building services	Chandeliers are named in specialist process lighting; fixed building services leave specialist process lighting out.	Same wording, same exclusion.	App. A: pp. 86, 89 (2021); 88, 91 (2026); reg. 2(1)
General lighting	Average luminaire efficacy of 95 luminaire lm per circuit-W, or LENI (Appendix B).	Greater than 105 luminaire lm per circuit-W, or LENI (Appendix B).	6.60a, p. 53; 5.65a, p. 55
Display lighting (restaurants included)	Any one of: 80 light source lm per circuit-W; 0.3 W/m2; LENI (Appendix B).	Any one of: greater than 95 light source lm per circuit-W; 0.3 W/m2; LENI (Appendix B).	6.60b, p. 53; 5.65b, p. 56
Metering and controls	Metering (6.61); BRE Digest 498; automatic off when unoccupied; daylight controls; display circuits switched separately (6.62 to 6.65).	As 2021, plus new 5.70: hotel bedroom controls to turn lights off when unoccupied.	6.61 to 6.65, p. 53; 5.66 to 5.72, p. 56
Dwellings (Volume 1)	Each internal light fitting: lamps of at least 75 light source lm per circuit-W.	Each internal luminaire: light sources of at least 105; lower for some specialist sources (Table 5.7).	Vol 1: 6.58, p. 50; 5.57, p. 55; App. A pp. 76, 94

Volume 2, England, unless stated. lm per circuit-W is lumens per circuit-watt; luminaire lm = light source lm × the fitting's light output ratio. LENI is the Lighting Energy Numeric Indicator method. Page numbers are as printed in the PDFs read on 5 Nov 2026.



The three classes of lighting in Approved Document L, Volume 2 (England), with the 2021 and 2026 figures and paragraph numbers. Original drawing by Make Bespoke Studio.

SPECIFICATION WORDING

PART L CLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE

Before the lighting layout is fixed, the lighting designer is to issue a schedule classing every fixed internal fitting as general, display or specialist process lighting under Approved Document L, Volume [2], [2021 edition incorporating 2023 amendments / 2026 edition], as that edition applies to this project. For each general or display fitting, state the efficacy basis (lm per circuit-watt, or LENI) and the figure achieved. For each specialist process fitting, state the reason and the reference of the building control body's written confirmation.

DECORATIVE FITTING FROM A PARTNER WORKSHOP

For the [chandelier / lit art object] at [location], the workshop is to supply: circuit-watts at full output [ ] W; light source type, number and lumens [ ]; driver and any dimming gear [ ]; and a dimensioned drawing. The fitting is not to be released for production until the classification is confirmed in writing by [building control body].

QUERY TO THE BUILDING CONTROL BODY

We are lighting [project] at [address], England. Appendix A of Approved Document L, Volume [2], defines specialist process lighting to include art objects with integral lighting, such as chandeliers. We propose to treat [fitting, size, number of light sources, circuit-watts] as specialist process lighting, outside fixed building services under regulation 2(1). Please confirm in writing whether you agree, or say which class you would count it under.

TERMS USED

Specialist process lighting

In Approved Document L, lighting that serves a specialist task rather than lighting the space itself, including theatre spotlights, illuminated signs and art objects with integral lighting such as chandeliers.

Fixed building services

Defined in regulation 2(1) of the Building Regulations 2010. For lighting, it means fixed internal or external lighting systems and their controls, leaving out emergency escape lighting and specialist process lighting. The 2026 amendments add lifts, escalators and moving footways in new buildings other than individual dwellings.

General lighting

The class tested against the general lighting efficacy figure (6.60a in 2021, 5.65a in 2026). Neither edition defines it in Appendix A, so the lighting designer and building control settle what counts.

Display lighting

In Approved Document L, lighting to highlight exhibits or merchandise, or lighting used in public leisure spaces such as restaurants, dance halls, auditoria and cinemas.

Circuit-watt

The electrical power drawn by lighting circuits for the light sources plus their drivers and any power-factor correction, used when Part L measures lighting efficiency.

LENI

A measure of a lighting scheme's annual energy use per square metre, offered in Part L as an alternative to the simple efficacy test.

STANDARDS AND SOURCES

- Approved Document L, Volume 2, 2021 edition incorporating 2023 amendments (England): read 5 Nov 2026: 0.3, 0.8, 0.11 to 0.13, 5.1, 6.59 to 6.65, 12.1, Appendices A, B, D.
- Approved Document L, Volume 2, 2026 edition (England): read 5 Nov 2026 (gov.uk version of 8 Sep 2026): 0.4, 0.9, 0.12 to 0.14, 4.1, 5.64 to 5.72, Appendices A, B.
- Approved Document L, Volume 1, 2021 edition (England): 6.58, Appendix A. 2026 edition: 5.57, Table 5.7.
- Building Regulations 2010, regulation 2(1): read 5 Nov 2026. Also Building Circular 01/2026 (commencement, transition).
- Wales: Approved Document L, Volume 2, 2021 edition: 6.60, Appendix A; WGC 006/2026.
- Scotland: technical handbook 2022, non-domestic, 6.5: standard 6.5, 6.5.1.

Full guide: https://makebespoke.com/trade/technical/part-l-and-decorative-lighting. Make Bespoke Studio coordinates manufacture through its partner workshops. Figures are guidance only and your specification governs; some may be superseded, so contact the studio to verify.