

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE 2008



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BEST BAR NONE AWARD SCHEME

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WELCOME

You are invited to become involved in the 'Best Bar None' Award Scheme. The scheme has now been running in Scotland for two years and is growing in popularity with many Scottish Cities and Towns operating the scheme as an example of best practice.

The scheme is open to all pubs, bars and nightclubs in West Lothian. It focuses on public safety and customer care and offers each venue an opportunity to demonstrate that it is focused on such important issues as Prevention of Crime and Disorder, Public Safety, Prevention of Public Nuisance and Protection of children from harm. There are three levels of award, Bronze, Silver and Gold, in each category of venue.

This booklet summarises good practice developed within the licensed trade and evaluated by inspection within the award scheme. It is designed to help you to achieve an award this year.

The booklet aims to clarify the process, identify minimum standards and highlight good practice where it exists. Participation in the scheme shows a willingness by partners in the licensed trade to set standards and to encourage other operators to follow. The partners in the award scheme set out to promote continuous improvement and the element of competition within the scheme supports this ethos.

The Police, Licensing Boards, BEDA Scotland, Scottish Licensed Trade Association and many other local partners support Best Bar None. Its aim is to work together with the licensed trade to create a safer and more welcoming licensing environment. Support also comes from the licensed trade as shown in the following comments from BEDA.

EDDIE TOBIN, CHAIRMAN, BEDA SCOTLAND

“Best Bar None offers you a significant opportunity to demonstrate the hard work and commitment your staff put into ensuring that your premises is a safe and friendly environment and will help generate a more positive image of the night time economy. I encourage all pubs, bars and night clubs to take part this year.”

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT CHRIS GRIFFITHS

“This initiative presents an opportunity for the licensed trade to work with Lothian and Borders Police and West Lothian Council to reduce crime and the fear of crime in and around licensed premises. It is a genuine attempt to improve standards and create a safer environment for customers to socialise in and staff to work in. It is part of our strategy to reduce violent crime associated with alcohol abuse, and helps to promote the night time economy in West Lothian.”

COUNCILLOR JOHN COCHRANE, CHAIR OF THE WEST LOTHIAN LICENSING BOARD

“I fully support the very worthwhile Best Bar None initiative. It’s an excellent opportunity for West Lothian Council to work in partnership with both Lothian and Borders Police and the licensed trade towards the shared goal of creating a safer environment in and around bars and nightclubs in West Lothian”.

INSPECTION PROCESS

Once you have applied completed the application form, a convenient time will be arranged for the inspection process to be carried out. Each inspection lasts between one and a half to two hours and consists of a thorough examination of the procedures and processes in place within your venue.

Inspections are based on essential, desired and bonus elements. There are 21 essential elements and premises must achieve all of these to attain accreditation. In order to be considered for either a silver or gold award, venues must score highly in the desired and bonus elements.

The best three premises in each category are then remitted to a panel of judges who decide on the Gold and Silver award winners.

KEY ELEMENTS

The police will be in a position to identify premises, which show greater indicators of safety. The areas examined by inspection teams include

- Door policy
- Security briefing and reviews
- Age related issues
- Search policy
- Drugs recovery/seizure policy
- Policy on drunkenness
- Staff training
- Glass/ bottle collection
- Alcohol promotion policy
- CCTV coverage
- Risk assessment
- Incident management
- Crime prevention strategy
- Lost and found property
- Lighting
- Fire procedures
- First aid
- General safety

There is an emphasis on evidence during the inspection process. This means that all actions taken should be recorded.

Each key element is described in more detail below.

DOOR POLICY

1. All premises should have a cohesive door policy with all staff aware of the type of clientele the operator wishes to attract. This is particularly important in premises that operate without the use of stewards.
2. Evidence suggests that disorder occurs within premises, often due to overcrowding with factors being drink spillages, frustration caused by patrons being unable to obtain bar service and lack of personal space among others.
3. The Licensing Board sets capacities for those premises with an entertainment licence. Consideration should be given to deliberately running below capacity to afford a comfort factor to your patrons.
4. Door staff must be SIA licensed and should wear easily identifiable uniforms with name badges.
5. Door staff should don high visibility jackets at the end of the night and provide a presence on the street immediately outside the venue.

SECURITY BRIEFING AND REVIEWS

1. Consideration should be given to daily briefing and de-briefing of all staff. This may be informal but any problems identified should be recorded and action taken. This enables managers to improve working practice in a variety of areas.
2. A more formal regular security review should be held no more than every two months and should be fully minuted with records kept in the main office.
3. Written records should be kept of problems identified during briefing sessions and action taken to resolve the issues.
4. Monthly meetings fully minuted, action taken on any issues should be fully reviewed and confirmed by head office.

AGE RELATED ISSUES

1. Training for staff is considered essential and all staff should be trained in age related issues to a recognized standard. A documented policy is considered best practice and all staff should have signed this to evidence their understanding of the policy. There should not just be a reliance on door staff to refuse entry to those under age.
2. Consideration should be given to accepting only photographic driving licences and passports as proof of age.
3. Many premises use the 'prove 21' policy as standard. This entails staff requiring proof of age from every customer under the age of 21. Clear signage should be in use at the entrance.
4. There should be a recognised training course with examinations

SEARCH POLICY

1. Most entertainment licences have conditions attached by the Licensing Board making the searching of patrons mandatory prior to entry.
2. Premises should consider the use of hand held metal detectors.
3. Venues may set their own written policy which exceeds that of the Licensing Board.
4. There should be provision of sufficient female stewards.

DRUGS RECOVERY / SEIZURE POLICY

1. Premises should have a written drugs policy with a zero tolerance.
2. The policy should give strict guidelines for staff to follow when drugs are either found or seized from patrons.
3. Documents should be available for staff to use when dealing with such incidents.
4. There should be an audit trail which protects the integrity of both the individuals concerned and the licence.
5. A guidance document is available from the police licensing officer and talks are given by the police divisional drugs awareness officer.
6. Appropriate signs should be displayed stating the venues zero tolerance policy to customers.
7. There should be a dedicated search room available with internal CCTV.
8. A full written audit trail should be available for inspection by police.

POLICY ON DRUNKENNESS

1. All staff should be trained with regard to their responsibilities under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976. Premises have a duty of care to drunk persons within their premises.
2. Drunken patrons should not be left on their own or placed into a taxi without being in the care of a suitable person.
3. Consideration should be given to calling an ambulance or the police.
4. Preferably patrons should not be allowed to deteriorate to such an extent.
5. All staff should receive training on the effects of alcohol and how to spot the early signs of excess alcohol.

STAFF TRAINING

1. All staff should receive training in relation to alcohol related issues. This should include responsibilities under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976. and the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005, prior to its introduction.
2. Supervisors and managers should have received certification from an accredited licensing course.
3. All training should be logged and signed for by the recipient.
4. There should be refresher training to a recognized standard.
5. Managers receive training to a higher standard provided by a professional body.

GLASS / BOTTLE COLLECTION

1. The minimum standard is some form of glass collection policy with designated staff given responsibility for this task.
2. Dedicated glass collectors should be considered.
3. Multi tasking of internal stewards as glass collectors has advantages. They can use this to interact with patrons and will be able to make an assessment of the levels of drunkenness.
4. There should be no open bottle bins in or near public areas.
5. Having all products served or decanted into safety glass has great advantages. One assault with glass is one too many.
6. The use of safety glass minimizes the injury sustained. Such assaults occur in up market venues as well as late night venues catering for the younger patron.
7. Electronic glass build up monitoring system should be considered.

ALCOHOL PROMOTION POLICY

1. All venues must comply with the Licensing Boards policy on alcohol promotions.
2. It is considered good practice not to promote alcohol sales that encourage patrons to purchase more than one drink at a time.
3. There should be marketing of soft drinks to designated drivers.
4. Alcohol promotions linked to the consumption of food are acceptable.

CCTV

1. Whilst not an essential element in the scheme, it is considered best practice for all premises to have an operational CCTV system in use.
2. It is preferable for the system to be in real time and on hard drive with the availability to copy disks for other agencies such as the police.
3. There should be a trained member of staff able to operate the system on duty at all times that the venue is open.
4. If there are designated routes for ejecting patrons, these should be covered by cameras.
5. Operators should ensure that all existing CCTV systems are fully operational at all times.
6. You may consider using a full time CCTV operator enabling you to minimize disruption caused by unruly patrons.
7. You may consider using an audio-visual facility at the front door and/or head cameras.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

Full risk assessments should be carried out for all employees, including temporary posts.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

1. Premises should consider recording most incidents.
2. All ejections should be recorded and where the intervention of stewards to remove a patron is required this should be recorded in some detail.
3. It is also a good idea to keep a record of refusals and the reasons for refusal.
4. The duty manager should be aware of all such interventions and should have signed the relevant entries.
5. A copy of each incident log should be forwarded to head office.
6. All management and staff should possess a good knowledge of what is required by the emergency services when attending their premises.
7. Basic training should be given with regard to crime scene management and the role of the police.
8. There should be a written policy to deal with all types of incident and when to contact emergency services.

CRIME PREVENTION STRATEGY

1. Premises should give consideration on how to prevent disorder and thefts within the venue. Property patrols, managed cloakrooms and toilet attendants are examples of good practice in this area.
2. Consideration should also be given to the display of crime prevention posters.
3. You should consider use of anti-drink spiking devices
4. Staff should have an awareness of the early signs of aggression and there should be clearly defined procedures in place for early intervention.
5. A clearly worded policy, stating when to call stewards, the management or the police is considered best practice.
6. Early police involvement should be considered and the autonomy for staff to contact the police should not be restricted.
7. All stewards and managers should be trained to a higher standard with recognized conflict management training.
8. Stewards are required to be SAI licensed.

LOST AND FOUND PROPERTY

1. Very few premises had robust procedures in relation to lost and found property. There should be a separate recording system for both which allows managers to cross-reference.
2. Found property should be disposed in a manner that is auditable and open to scrutiny.
3. Property of any value should be handed in to the police shortly after being found.
4. Passports should be handed in to the passport office if they cannot be returned to the holder.

LIGHTING

1. The use of dimmed or bright lighting should be considered to affect the mood of customers at the conclusion of permitted hours.

FIRE PROCEDURES

1. All staff should have received fire awareness training and have knowledge of evacuation procedures.
2. Any alarm system should be in good working order and be tested regularly with up to date records kept.
3. Fire extinguishers should be of the appropriate type and be correctly maintained.
4. Staff should be aware of the different types of extinguisher in use on the premises.
5. Fire and evacuation drills should be carried out with records kept.

FIRST AID

1. First aid boxes should be available and maintained with sufficient stock.
2. Most staff should be trained to a basic first aid standard with managers trained to a higher recognized qualification.
3. Where available a dedicated first aid room should be made available. This should be clear of any clutter and it is preferable to have running water available and some form of seating or a first aid bed. The room should have sufficient space to enable ambulance staff to work unhindered.
4. You may wish to consider supplying defibrillators in your premises with staff fully trained in their use.

GENERAL SAFETY

1. All premises should have a written accident reporting system that complies with health and safety regulations.
2. The building should be in good condition and a policy should be in place to deal with drink and other liquid spillages.

CONCLUSION

The 'Best Bar None' Awards Scheme establishes a partnership approach to licensing and community safety issues and promotes a positive side to the licensed trade. Participation in the scheme will set minimum standards and encourage best practice whilst also reducing crime and the fear of crime in and around licensed premises. It is part of a wider strategy to reduce violent crime associated with alcohol abuse.

From a business point of view the scheme helps promote the night time economy in West Lothian with the aim of making it a safer place to live, work, visit and socialise.