

TOWER HAMLETS

Best Bar None (BBN)
Evaluation

2019

By BBN Co-ordinator
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Acknowledgements

Tower Hamlets introduced the Best Bar None scheme in 2014 with the help, support, and guidance from our many stakeholders. I wish to thank various services for their contribution to this project, Metropolitan Police Licensing Police, Public Health, Drug and Alcohol Action Team and the Team at Best Bar None

I am particularly grateful for the assistance given by the Canary Wharf Group whose support in the scheme allowed many other venues to take part.

Also grateful for the assistance given by The Old Truman Brewery and all the Chairs of the various pub watches throughout the borough whose support and partner work also helped to boost the scheme within the Borough.

We would like to thank the Bank of England for the partnership work to help promote the Bank Note checking scheme.

I am particularly thankful and appreciative for the teamwork given to the scheme by the Health & Safety and Licensing Team for their combined ability to be committed in their support and co-operation without reserve or hesitation and helped make the Award Ceremony a success with the record number of venues taking part.

Finally I would like to show my appreciation to Mr David Tolley Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standard and Tom Lewis Health & Safety and Licensing Team Leader. Thank you for the opportunity, support, and guidance throughout this project.

Best Bar None

The Best Bar None (BBN) Award seeks to raise standards within premises that are licensed for on sales of alcohol. Applicants wishing to achieve the award are required to demonstrate to assessors that they are above the minimum standard for compliance with Licensing and Health and Safety legislation, and are at least broadly compliant with Food Safety legislation.

BBN also provides practical methods that uphold the four licensing objectives and aid in the prevention of alcohol related ASB. The sustained improvement and management of the venues across the Borough therefore encourages an environment where public nuisance is not tolerated. The system of assessment and awards is highly sought after by businesses and premises will be allocated into certain categories according to their overall score. Premises with outstanding and highest scores are acknowledged as the best in their respective categories during an award ceremony.

Aims and Objectives

The Best Bar None scheme had focused primarily around the Brick Lane which consists of the most Alcohol related Crime and ASB in Tower Hamlets. The main bars from the first two year agreed to take part but at the same time did not understand the benefit of the scheme if it was to be held on such a small scale.

In general, the Bars all wish the scheme to have an effect on their business income. It was very difficult to explain that the primary reason to take part was to improve management of their premises. This is not seen as an attractive quality of the scheme especially with the relationship between licensing and licensee being very guarded.

There is a need to gain incentive for businesses to take part for reasons that could appeal to their income and status.

Another need to make the scheme more popular had arisen. This meant to seek a strong amount of venues outside of the Brick Lane area and outreach to Bars in other parts of the borough with a concentration on alcohol licensed premises.

Project Summary

This year the BBN scheme been successful in its partnership work and its assessments carving a path for growth in the borough.

The strategies in place over the year has granted the scheme its highest number of accreditations and lowest dropout rate the Best Bar None and has managed to reach across the borough, in the business areas and with chain and independent venues alike.

Partnership work with the Bank of England has allowed the scheme to gain in stature to its users and partners highlighting the benefits of partnership working. It also opens up the potential partnerships that can be created when working with licensed premises and commerce.

The greatest gains have been the number of businesses building relationships with their local area and neighbouring businesses whilst also accepting greater responsible retailing and promoting responsible drinking. One of the most important trends taking place is the need for security staff to act not just as doormen but as more security for a licensed premise which also includes upholding the 4 licensing objectives for the venue.

The applications have reached a plateau prompting new strategies to be brought into play if the applications are to break the plateau preventing the scheme from stagnation.

Due to the success of the 2018-2019 scheme the Canary Wharf Group is now adopting the Best Bar None as a part of their terms and conditions for Tenants as an open endorsement of the scheme and the standards that it sets and also extending the partnership work to ensure Canary Wharf is a safe and responsible place to enjoy a good night out. This is an evolution in partnership work and an example of how landlords and local authority services can work together. This means that the number premises in the scheme will grow and the standard in the entire Canary wharf ward will grow and asserting the scheme as a recognised and endorsed standard.

The 2019 Best Bar None scheme accomplished the following:

1. A total of 44 venues applied to the Best Bar None scheme for 2019 this is a 10% rise in applications to the scheme.
2. 36 venues were awarded the National Standard in Tower Hamlets. This is an increase of 33% from the previous year of venues awarded Best Bar None Status.
3. 8 venues dropped out before assessment stage. This is decrease from 32.50% in 2018 to 18.18% drop out rate.
4. Free Annual training including Counter Terrorism continued for 2019.
5. Categories were sponsored by partners and internal teams.
6. A networking reception was introduced to allow accredited venues to get to know each other.
7. Canary Wharf adopted the Best Bar None scheme as part of its terms and conditions for all licensed premises.

Action Plan

Reduce number of drop outs between registration and assessment

In 2017 the number of businesses that applied to the scheme and were unable to be assessed was over 57% of applicants. In 2019 this number reduced to 32% but improvements could still be made. Insuring a swift follow up briefing after application helped to figuratively escort the licensed premises through the Best Bar None process all the way to accreditation.

Reciprocate

The Best Bar None scheme has been successfully growing year on year not just in the number of licensed premises but also in standards. Licensing officers are able to see the approaches to businesses changing for the requirements, meeting those needs and taking extra steps to creatively meet those requirements. As the BBN is Voluntary scheme recognition for these positive changes have to be acknowledged. This was done by trying to improve the Council provision to acknowledge the efforts made by reciprocating the efforts to improve the current council provision.

Networking Session

From the feedback from the venues that were accredited wanted to have a chance to meet each other and have chance to talk and network. Therefore a cost effective way to include this in the award ceremony had to be found.

Results

Workshop on the criteria: Hold individual and group workshops on the criteria to help businesses understand the criteria, answer questions and to help them to be assessment ready.

A total of 44 venues applied to the Best Bar None scheme for 2019 leading to 36 venues being awarded the National Standard in Tower Hamlets. This can be seen in Table 1.1

Table 1.1

BBN	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Applications	8	22	40	40	44
Awarded	8	9	17	27	36
Dropout	0	13	23	13	8

This led to a 33% growth in the number of venues awarded with the Best Bar None Accreditation and a reduction in the number of venues that dropped out of the scheme from 32.5% to 18.8% as seen in Table 1.2.

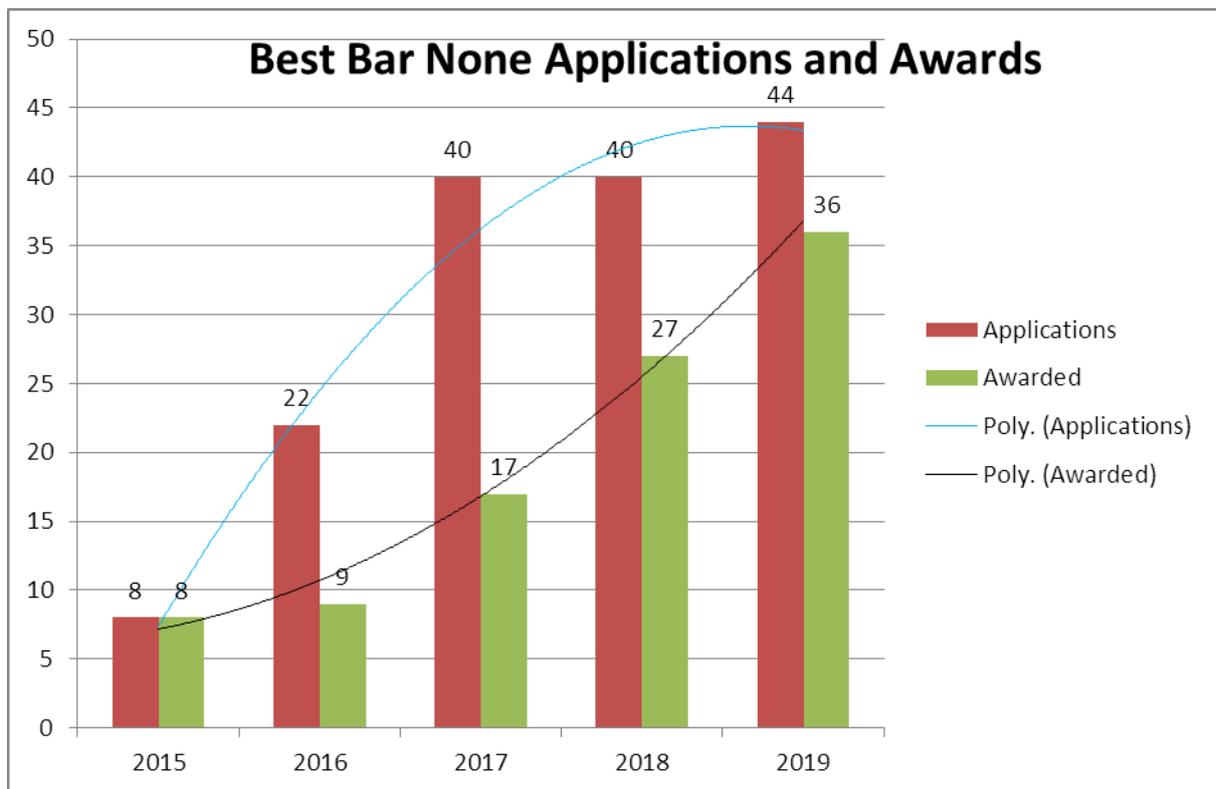
Table 1.2

BBN	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Application %	0.00%	175.00%	81.82%	0.00%	10.00%
% Growth from previous year	0.00%	12.50%	88.89%	58.82%	33.33%
Drop Out % from Applications	0	59.09%	57.50%	32.50%	18.18%

Graph 1.1 shows us that whilst the number of accreditations has risen the number of applications have reached a plateau. It indicates that the current tactics in gaining application can only reach so far and we can see that the focus has been in improving the number of venues being awarded the Best Bar None Accreditation.

If the trend of applications were to change then the approach for applications will need to evolve if other premises are to buy into the BBN scheme.

Graph 1.1.



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Table 1.3 List of venues awarded with the Best Bar None accreditation

28West Bar & Grill	Rocket
Backyard Bar	Sager & Wilde
Boisdale of Canary Wharf	Silver Barracuda
Cafe 1001	Silver Sturgeon
Casa Blue	The Big Chill Bar
Crate Brewery and Pizzeria	The Boiler House
Drapers Arms Bar & E1 Venue Bar	The Coborn
East London Liquor Company Ltd	The Craft Cocktail Company
Hawksmoor	The Culpeper
Hilton London Canary Wharf	The Griff Inn
Holiday Inn	The Henry Addington
Jack's Shack	The Horn of Plenty
Juju's	The Medieval Banquet
London Cocktail Bar	The Old George
Manjal	The Ship Inn
Ninety One - 1st Floor	The Ten Bells
Redchurch	Wiltons Music Hall

Gains

Table 1.4

Criteria	17-18%	18-19%	Difference	Reason
Consults regularly with neighbourhood businesses / residents to ensure continued harmonious relationships.	11.11%	95.71%	84.60%	Indicates accepting greater community responsibility.
• Drinkaware Crew (www.drinkaware.co.uk)	0.00%	54.29%	54.29%	Usage has grown to help patrons to drink responsibly and be more self-aware.
Consider the impact of drinks promotions and special events (e.g. risk assessment).	59.26%	97.14%	37.88%	Drinks promotions are thought through with a control measure.
Where appropriate is involved in a suitable community initiative (e.g. Schools Project, CDRP, Neighbourhood Watch etc).	44.44%	80.00%	35.56%	Participation not just in corporate charity but community work.
Are aware of additional initiatives such as street marshalling, night angels, street pastors etc.	55.56%	82.86%	27.30%	LNL awareness involves the comission of the pastors especially in CIZ areas.
Must have regular gas safety (annually) and electrical (5 yearly) checks.	71.60%	97.14%	25.54%	Growth in numbers
• Sexual Harassment	55.56%	80.00%	24.44%	Ask Angela is growing in awareness and practice.
Displays customer information with regards to drug misuse. (Larger venues only).	37.04%	54.29%	17.25%	

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Information is available to customers about alcohol advice services. www.drinkaware.co.uk	31.48%	48.57%	17.09%	
• Vulnerability (What is vulnerability?)	62.96%	80.00%	17.04%	Growing trend of BBN
Uses info / leaflets / publicity to inform customers and employees about behaviours associated with alcohol / drunkenness (e.g. drink spiking, sexually transmitted diseases etc). www.drinkaware.co.uk (Larger venues only).	44.44%	60.00%	15.56%	
Clear policies and procedures specific to the protection of children are in place (e.g. risk assessments).	86.42%	100.00%	13.58%	Protect young people is being taken more seriously.

The Table 1.4 above shows the main improvements that have occurred throughout the Best Bar None scheme over the 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and some of the reasons why the improvements have taken place. The greatest improvements have been the consulting with local residents and businesses at an 84% increase. This is an indication of different strategies being employed that help reduce complaints and improve relationships in the local area. Most of the gains are in measures that protect vulnerable clients, enhance responsibility and improving relationships in the community.

Areas to improve

Table 1.5

Criteria	17-18%	18-19%	Difference	Reason
Conducts regular evacuation training exercises for fire, bomb scares etc.	81.48%	70.00%	-11.48%	The culture for the varying evacuations and defensive procedures is growing and bomb and invacuation practice is require more emphasis.
Notifies the Police Licensing / other agencies of any special events.	88.89%	75.71%	-13.17%	The 696 form no longer exists and the responsibility os now on the premises to vet their events and promoters.
Door company registered as an SIA Approved Contractor.	85.19%	71.43%	-13.76%	All SIA door staff requires SIA training. Not all providers of Door Staff are SIA Approved contractors
Has clear alcohol unit content information available to customers.	66.67%	48.57%	-18.10%	Alcohol Unit content is different from ABV. Priority for venues have been ABV.
Door staff or security management attend regular licensing meetings, and share the minutes with their door teams.	85.19%	60.00%	-25.19%	Door teams can act more professional and responsible by attending Licensing meetings in order to cope with the trends and be more prepared at the door.

The table 1.5 above indicates the criteria and the percentage of venues that met the criteria from 2017-2018 and 2018–2019. What it the table highlights are decreases in the percentage between 2017-2018 and 2018–2019 and the reasons witnessed by the officer including some possible ways forward. The two of note include future emphasis on regular evacuation training and most importantly the growing need for door teams and security management to be more in tune with licensing premises and their needs. The trends has grown where security staff that only manage the door is no longer

Reciprocation

One aspect of the Best Bar None that has lacked in past years is the being able to utilise the Communications department for various reasons including a high turnover in staff and limited space to publicise for the entire Council. The benefit of being in a scheme to help make the public domain safer with responsible venues cannot be informed to the public in which it benefits. On a very basic level the Council is struggling to share all the good news that it creates.

This being said, it is important to display to the premises that their efforts have not gone unnoticed. As it is not possible to influence the Communications department then changes and improvements would have to be made to the scheme itself and a request for help would have to go to the partners.

Vouchers from Partners

It started with the Canary Wharf Group who offered a £25 voucher for each Canary Wharf category winner. This left three other categories with no voucher for the winners. This led to reaching out to other partners for a prize match for each partners.

We then gained the following:

- Best of Canary Wharf category sponsored by the Canary Wharf Group
- Best of Brick Lane CIZ category sponsored by Tower Hamlets Town Teams
- Best of the Rest category sponsored by The Algate Partnership
- Best of the Best category sponsored by Fever Tree

Fever Tree

Fever-Tree is the world's leading supplier of premium carbonated mixers for alcoholic spirits by retail sales value, with distribution to over 70 countries internationally.

I reached out to Fever Tree and requested if they were happy to sponsor a category and not only did they accept but they also offered to be part of the Networking session showcasing their products along with other drinks providers.



Bank of England

I met the Bank of England whilst finding drinks providers for the networking session. They were trying increase the publicity of the Bank Note Checking scheme as the £20 and £50 note were changing to polymer. This meant that there would be an influx of fake paper notes to be spent by organised crime to be used before the changeover.

As the Best Bar None had over 30 businesses being present I invited the Bank of England to the Award Ceremony as a guest and speak to the businesses. The led to the Bank of England providing promotional merchandise for the award ceremony, being the special guest speaker, having a tailored question in the pub quiz and being introduced to the national co-ordinator of the Best Bar None.

The Bank of England then became a National Sponsor of the Best Bar None.

Networking Session

Feedback from the 2018 Award ceremony was the desire to have a networking session so that other venues had the chance to meet their peers.

In my research I discovered that companies would pay to attend trade shows in order to promote their products at trade fairs. If I could offer a free place to these companies to offer their products to the Best Bar None accredited venues then we could set an atmosphere that was different to the previous years.

The prospect attracted the following venues with no extra cost to Tower Hamlets:

- Fever Tree Tonics
- Diageo – Gordon’s low G&T
- Hoxton Spirits - Gin
- East London Liquor Company - Gin
- World Beers – Low & No alcohol Beer
- Adnams – – Low & No alcohol Cider & Beer
- Brazzx – Low & No alcohol Beer



AWARDS

Table 2.1 The winners of each category

Names	Category	Area Trophy	Best of the Best
Big Chill Bar	Best Bar	Best of Brick Lane CIZ	Best of the Best
Draper's Bar & Grill	Best Bar	Best of the Rest	
28West	Best Bar	Best of Canary Wharf	
Hilton Canary Wharf	Best Hotel		Best of the Best
The Henry Addington	Best Pub	Best of Canary Wharf	Best of the Best
The Ten Bells	Best Pub	Best of Brick Lane CIZ	
The Old George	Best Pub	Best of the Rest	
The Medieval Banquet	Best Restaurant	Best of the Rest	Best of the Best
Boisdale Canary Wharf	Best Restaurant	Best of Canary Wharf	
Hawksmoor	Best Restaurant	Best of Brick Lane CIZ	

The Future

Social Media strategy

With social media playing a greater part in exposure and the need to help more independent venues asking for more exposure a social media strategy has been designed to marry the two.

BBN Videos:

This is a 30sec to 1min video produced by the Best Bar None venue according to the following criteria:

Venues given a brief:

- 30secod to 1min video.
- Video does not have to be professionally made.

- Must be suitable for all. If not, the video will be rejected.
- Must follow format
 1. States name of venue and location
 2. States it is a best bar none venue and if it has won a Best Bar None trophy
 3. States food safety rating 4 and above.
 4. States that police and street pastors etc keep the place safe. (Optional)
 5. States unique selling point and/or welcome tagline.
- Tower Hamlets may edit product to insure suitable for all.
- Video is sent and a top and tail logo of TH and Best Bar None is added.
- When shall products be released ? – Instagram stories – facebook stories and Twitter.

Instagram Campaign #THBBN

On the social platform Instagram a competition can be launched. This has 3 purposes:

- 1. To create awareness and attract businesses to the BBN scheme*
- 2. Promote a friendly competition between venues*
- 3. Create social media content and engagement*

A campaign via Instagram for venues to promote to their customers with the hashtag #THBBN and @towerhamletsnow.

Rules

- Only venues who have joined can promote.
- Only those accredited with the Best Bar None for 2020 by 30th November 2019 can win.
- All terms and conditions apply.
- Opens from 1st January 2020 to 29th February 2020.
- Instagram platform.
- Must be a post from Instagram and not a story
- Post must be a selfie within the venue.
- One vote per instagram account
- Must include @towerhamletsnow
- Must include the hashtags #THBBN

Highlight independent venues

The feedback after the 2019 award ceremony included the desire for independent venues to be given a category where they have a better chance as they don't believe that they can achieve the same as a chain run premises.

In response to this the Independent category has been created along with the social media strategy where they are able to take a more pro-active engagement with the Best Bar None scheme.

Improve Networking Reception

The success of the networking session opened up another dimension to the award ceremony. The space can easily allow twice the number of producers to for the award ceremony. Also, instead of have food in a separate room, the food can be put in the same room as the networking and the products.

Strict assessment cut off

Assessments for the 2018-2019 scheme went in as far as February 2019 for the March ceremony. This was due to being generous with the time for venues to improve and meet the minimum criteria. This had an effect on the lead up time to the ceremony and its press release and campaign.

The dropout rate was considerably lower than previous years with training sessions being a point of contact with businesses.

Due to high demand workshops on the assessment criteria are being provided to help participants through the criteria.

To help in the training criteria and helping venues access the latest training offered by Tower Hamlets and Best Bar None partners the following training sessions have been offered:

- Welfare and Vulnerability Engagement Training (WAVE) by the Licensing Met police
- Acid Attack Awareness
- Counter Terrorism Awareness

Conclusion

The Best Bar None scheme in Tower Hamlets has grown in number and strength. With its highest number of accreditations and lowest dropout rate the Best Bar None has managed to reach across the borough, in the business areas and with chain and independent venues alike.

The feedback for greater attention for independent venues have been encouraging, indicating greater engagement from an otherwise silent group of participants allowing the scheme to grow and attract more venues.

The participation of an institute such as the Bank of England highlights the benefits of partnership working. It has increased the credibility of the scheme which can be visibly seen by the participants and also strengthens the reach of the Best Bar None scheme. Also, with the Canary Wharf Group adopting the Best Bar None scheme as a part of their terms and conditions for Tenants means that the number of venues in the Canary Wharf group will grow and asserts the scheme as a recognised and endorsed standard.

However, new methods are required to continue the promotion of the Best Bar None scheme if it is to gain new applications and break the current plateau.

Appendix 1 Application form



CANARY WHARF
GROUP PLC



BEST BAR NONE Tower Hamlets Application Form

Please click the type of premises you are applying for:

Pub

Hotel

Bar

Club

Restaurant

Premises Name:
Premises Address:
Postcode:
Name of applicant/ Manager:
Telephone Number:
Email Address:
Premises Licence Holder's Name (If different from DPS)
Area Managers Name:
Address:
Postcode:
Telephone Number:
Email Address:

Please return application form to:

Vincent Fajilagmago ,Licensing and Health & Safety Team, John Onslow House, 1 Ewart Place, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, E3 5EQ Note:

- Assessments take place from the start of May to the end of November.
- Terms and conditions apply

**NO fee is involved in this application.*

**Once we have received your application we will be in touch to arrange an appointment.*

**For further information please contact email Licensing and Safety Team: 0207 364 5008 email: Licensing@towerhamlets.gov.uk*

Best Bar None Terms and Conditions of Entry

1. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets (“LBTH”) reserves the right to amend the judging criteria/terms and conditions if deemed necessary but will remain within the spirit of the published criteria terms & conditions.
2. The Assessors' visit is designed to verify the details on the application form and to carry out an inspection based on pre-set criteria. Applicants must make themselves and their premises available for inspection on the date agreed with the Assessors.
3. The first part of a Best Bar None (“BBN”) assessment is the assumption operators are aware of and working within; the times, licensable activities and conditions of the premises licence for the premises. If the assessor is not satisfied of this, the remainder of the assessment will not take place.
4. The assessors of the awards cannot accept responsibility for the validity of claims made by applicants, although care will be taken to verify details provided.
5. ‘Awarded’ means the Premises is deemed to have satisfied the minimum standards laid down by the Best Bar None Scheme (“Scheme”) and can display the award in the premises, being the subject of the award.
6. Application forms must be completed and returned to the :
Licensing Team
Environmental Health & Trading Standards
John Onslow House
1 Ewart Place
London
E3 5EQ

Or scanned and emailed to Licensing@towerhamlets.gov.uk

7. Applicants for Best Bar None Accreditation must be able to demonstrate good compliance with statutory obligations. To ensure this applications will be reviewed for any existing issues concerning compliance with statutory obligations, these include but are not limited to formal action such as prosecutions, simple cautions, police warnings, premises licence reviews, and ongoing complaints (of any nature) relating to the operation of the premises. LBTH reserves the right to decline or put on hold applications where it has concerns that statutory obligations have not been met.

8. Applicants for the Best Bar None (BBN) scheme must be Broadly Compliant in relation to Food Hygiene and Standards Inspections, and have achieved a score of 4 or more under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS). However LBTH may use its discretion in certain cases to allow premises who have not achieved this to improve their score before assessment. This will be done on a case by case basis but applicants are expected to demonstrate that they are actively seeking to improve their FHRS score.
9. The application form and all supporting material will become the property of LBTH.
10. All material submitted will be kept and treated in compliance with Data Protection Legislation.
11. Each premises can enter one category only. Premises with multiple capacities shall register their premises under their primary capacity. For example; a restaurant with a bar will enter as a restaurant and a hotel with a bar and restaurant will enter as a hotel.
12. Premises that achieve accreditation do not grant them immunity from prosecution for any offences, or a review of their licence, and is no guarantee of the safety of the premises.
13. The result of the competition will be kept confidential until the Awards Ceremony and any attempt to ascertain the result beforehand may result in the disqualification of the relevant entry.
14. Comments made by the assessors or independent panel (whether in the shortlisting or the final judging, or otherwise) are confidential and will not be released by the organizers

Accreditation

1. The application period for the Best Bar None accreditation starts from 1st April each year and ends on the 1st September
2. Best Bar None accreditation shall be valid for the period beginning 1st April 2019 and ending 31st March 2020 the following year.

Late Night Levy Reduction Eligibility

1. All assessed and approved venues of the Best Bar None scheme are entitled to 30 per cent reduction of the Late Night Levy charge.
2. Best Bar None accreditation shall be valid for the period beginning the following year 1st January and ending 31st December.

3. The Late Night Levy is due on the same date as the Licence Annual Fee.
4. To qualify for the Late Night Levy Reduction for 2019 the Premises must:
 - a. Register for BBN before 1 September 2018.
 - b. Sit and pass its BBN Assessment before 30th November 2018
5. If the Assessment has not been sat and passed by 30th November 2019 applicants will not be eligible for the 30 per cent reduction of the Late Night Levy charge due in the year 2019/20.

Publicity

1. By signing or submitting an entry, all applicants agree to participate in awards-related publicity.
2. Only the details of those applicants which are long listed/shortlisted will be made public.
3. LBTH reserve the right to use recordings, film, and photographs taken at the shortlisting and the Awards Ceremony and to use any non-confidential material supplied by applicants for promotional purposes.
4. Applicants who are selected as finalists may be asked at a later stage to prepare / produce further details or information to promote the Awards.

Terminology

1. The “Assessor(s)” means any representative appointed by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to carry out assessments under the Scheme.
2. “Premises” means any premises seeking an award under the Best Bar None Scheme in the area covered by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.