

Best Bar None 2026

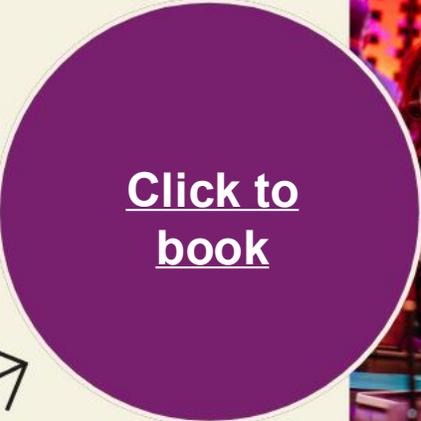
A guide for venues



IT'S IN NOTTINGHAM



Ready to get started?



About the Best Bar None scheme

Best Bar None is a national initiative supported by the Home Office and drinks industry that aims to improve standards in the evening and night-time economy.

The accreditation evaluates licensed venues across four main themes –

- **Venue management** – assesses security measures and steps taken to reduce noise, litter and other effects the business may have on customers and the environment near the venue
- **Staff training and care** – considers how staff are supported by the business to perform their role, develop and grow, and to protect their wellbeing
- **Customer safety and welfare** – reviews how well the venue takes care of its customers including preventing alcohol being sold to those under 18
- **Customer service and community** – recognises that businesses work hard to provide a warm welcome to their customers and the communities they are part of



Premises are audited for operational standards, policies and procedures, as well as the education and training of staff with the aim of identifying and promoting the best and most innovative practice.

Accreditation lasts for one year, and the assessment is regularly updated to ensure current priorities, such as the safety of women and girls, are included.

Each accredited venue will receive a report detailing specific recommendations and things it can do to create an even safer and more welcoming environment for customers.

What are the benefits?

The Best Bar None scheme has the following benefits for the city centre and the businesses within it –

- Provides businesses with an independently assessed, nationally recognised award that shows customers how hard they work to provide a safe and welcoming place to visit
- Builds a positive relationship between businesses and all partners that work together to ensure Nottingham is a safe place to socialise
- Supports partners across the city centre to reduce the impact of crime and disorder
- Gives businesses ideas to enhance the work they already do, together with free tools and resources to implement them
- Each accredited venue can access additional free support inc. Safe Space Notts, First Aid and Bleed Kit training
- Window stickers and marketing materials to promote your achievement as an accredited venue - PLUS the opportunity to attend our annual Best Bar None Awards night



Nottingham is home to one of the largest city-based Best Bar None schemes in the UK with 89 city centre venues participating in 2025.

Joining the Best Bar None community means you'll be contributing to the improvement of safety in Nottingham, directly supporting the city's Purple Flag Award for safety in the night-time economy.

What is the aim of the assessment?

Premises are audited for operational standards, policies and procedures, as well as the education and training of staff, with the aim of identifying and promoting the best and most innovative practice –

- The assessment isn't a test – it is designed to inspire improvement, collaboration, best practice, and constructive feedback – we also provide free staff training which you may find beneficial
- An accredited Best Bar None Assessor will visit your venue to conduct the electronic assessment, which includes essential and bonus criteria – meeting all essential criteria is required for accreditation
- Through collaboration with licensed venues and a focus on enhanced professionalism and customer safety, the scheme reduces alcohol related crime, anti-social behaviour and health harms in Nottingham

We're here to help you through the assessment process and to meet the criteria for venue accreditation. Keep your assessor's contact details handy and reach out if you need anything. You can also email us at BCRP@itsinnottingham.com.

Whilst not all policies may apply to every venue, completing the required criteria is essential for accreditation.



To ensure you achieve the highest possible score in your assessment, we recommend scheduling it for approximately 90 minutes.

The assessment should be completed by a designated venue supervisor or manager who is familiar with your venue's policies and procedures

To help you prepare adequately, we will send you email reminders before any meetings.

At the agreed time, one of our team members will come to your venue and guide you through the online assessment.

Scheme changes in 2026

The national scoring system remains the same for 2026, and essential criteria will be on a pass or fail basis.

We've introduced enhanced bonus questions to maximise your chances of winning an award. The more schemes you're part of, the better your chances of achieving a higher score and being selected to attend the Best Bar None Awards.

Bonus questions for 2026 include –

- Safe Space Notts
- Alert! app
- Shop Safe radio scheme
- No Place for Hate charter
- VIVA scheme
- Bleed Control Kits
- Accessibility
- Ask for Angela
- Awareness of city centre defibrillators

These categories highlight vital contributions to safety, inclusivity, and community well-being, to find out more, please email us at BCRP@itsinnottingham.com.



2026 Award Categories

- **Best Independent* Bar or Pub**
- **Best National Bar or Pub**
- **Best Restaurant**
- **Best Independent* Restaurant**
- **Best Club**
- **Best Live Music Venue**
- **Best Leisure Venue**
- **Best Hotel**
- **Best Scheme Newcomer**
- **Best Initiative**
- **Best Accessible Venue**
- **Safe Space Pledge Contribution Award**
- **Outstanding Contribution Award**

*An independent business is a privately owned enterprise operating without external control, corporate chain affiliation, or publicly traded shares. These businesses are managed by local owners, founders, or small groups who retain full decision-making authority over operations, branding and finances. They are typically self-reliant and not part of national chains, with no more than three associated venues.

Additional benefits...

To say thank you for taking part in Best Bar None 2026, we've a few incentives to help smooth the process for your venue!

Complete your assessment by **31 March 2026** and receive a Nottingham Gift Card as our way of saying thanks!

Complete and pass your assessment before **31 July 2026** and you will automatically be entered into our prize draw to win exclusive hospitality experiences in Nottingham, inc. Notts County FC and Motorpoint Arena.

After completing and passing your assessment within the given period, venues will be automatically entered into the Best Bar None Awards.

This year, businesses will have the opportunity to enter bonus categories, providing multiple chances for recognition. An independent judging panel will shortlist winners for each category, with the results announced at the awards night on Tuesday 8 September 2026.



Ready to get started?

If you would like to participate in this year's Best Bar None scheme, please use the link below to access the calendar and book your preferred date and time.

Assessments are scheduled to begin on Monday 2 March 2026 and run until Friday 31 July 2026.

If this is your first time completing an assessment, don't worry! You will receive help throughout the process, read on for a list of documents required on your assessment day.



[Click to book your Assessment.](#)

After booking your assessment we recommend that you start preparing for it straight away. All participants must complete their assessment before the deadline. Failing to do so will disqualify you from winning at the awards night.

Required documents

The Best Bar None assessment is carried out by a trained assessor who will visit you to walk around your venue with you and talk to you about how you manage the venue and keep customers and colleagues safe.

They will also ask to see some documents to support the processes which you have in place so please have the following information and documents ready for your assessor –

- Venue DPS and Premises Licence Holder
- Full premises licence or certified copy including licence conditions
- Gas and electrical safety certificates
- PAT testing records (if completed)
- Employers Liability Insurance certificate
- Public Liability Insurance certificate
- SIA log or register
- Evacuation procedure (fire and terrorism/violent incident)
- Fire Safety risk assessment
- Legal capacity of the venue (inside and out)
- GDPR or Data Protection policy
- Information Commissioner Officer registration (this could be covered by head office for CCTV)
- Risk assessment for noise for staff in the workplace
- Crime & Disorder policy
- Staff training records
- Sexual Exploitation or Harassment Policy
- If you are part of Safe Space Notts, the names of the two trained ambassadors for your venue

Helpful information...

The following common issues were noted by assessors in 2025, they are all essential, and legal requirements –

- The Section 57 Notice which gives details of the individual responsible for the custody of the licence must be displayed prominently on the premises
- Ensure there is at least one visible no smoking sign in your premises
- Ensure there is a visible, readable sign of an appropriate size notifying customers of CCTV operation
- Ensure the CCTV sign contains details of the organisation operating the system, the purpose for use, and who to contact
- Ensure you are registered with the Information Commissioner's Office if you own CCTV. If the CCTV is owned by Head Office, then please check you are covered by their registration

Best Bar None have developed a range of template policies, procedures and other resources that are free for any venue to download and use. [Find them here.](#)



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