

Over 100 delegates met yesterday, in Ipswich at the 4th Annual National Best Bar None Practitioners Conference generously sponsored by its four industry partners; Bacardi Brown-Forman Brands, Diageo, Heineken UK and Molson Coors.

In the evening prior to the conference delegates enjoyed a tour of the City's top Best Bar None accredited nightspots hosted by BBN Ipswich - 2010 Best Bar None Most Innovative Scheme Winners. The next day at the main event Lord Redesdale, Chairman of Best Bar None opened the conference, challenging attendees to learn more about how to get the most out of their schemes and expand the excellent work of Best Bar None schemes nationally.

Keynote speaker Gus Jaspert, Head of Drugs and Alcohol at the Home Office, followed sharing his support of Best Bar None and his plans to visit Best Bar None schemes nationally within his new role.

Lord Henley Minister for Crime Reduction and Antisocial Behaviour stated "The Best Bar None scheme is a fantastic example of responsible retailing in action. Every venue should be striving to raise their standards to a level that provides a safe and welcoming focal point in the community"

"Retailers who encourage their customers to drink in a responsible and safe way are not only protecting the health of the drinkers but also helping to prevent crime and disorder."

Best Bar None Canada shared their experiences of establishing Best Bar None in Alberta. Sharing their advances into using the most up to date technology to raise awareness of Best Bar None and measure its success since its launch.

Neil Robertson, Chief Executive of Best Bar None, provided delegates with an update on the national Best Bar None strategy and its successes so far including the retention of 95 active Best Bar None schemes nationally, despite budget cuts. Neil also announced the new support available from Best Bar None for new and existing schemes including additional funding, the Best Bar None Scheme Buddy Scheme, and the Best Bar None Scheme helpline. All launched at the event.

The Annual Best Bar None Most Innovative Scheme, always a highlight of this event, again provided delegates with an excellent insight into the fantastic work being undertaken by the top schemes in the country. This year Doncaster, Northampton and Sheffield provided plenty of sharing of best practice and food for thought. Best Bar None are delighted to announce the winners of the 2011 Best Bar None Most Innovative Scheme Award – Doncaster BBN who fought off competition from the other schemes with their enthusiasm, drive and innovative training strategies.

Attendees at the event stated that:

Eric Baich, Manager – Social Responsibility, Alberta Gaming & Liquor Commission said “We look forward to continuing our wonderful partnership with the UK as we work on expanding Best Bar None across Alberta and Canada.”

Scott Miles, General Manager, Couture Leisure Ltd said “As a winning venue in the Best Bar None scheme we wanted to look further outside the box to see how we can improve our application for next year whilst also feeding back to our scheme co-ordinators on how they can improve the local scheme.”

Andrew Constantine, Best Bar None Development Officer, Doncaster Council said “Everyone involved in Doncaster Best Bar None is very proud being voted the Most Innovative BBN Scheme in the country and we look forward to hosting next year’s conference. We try to keep the scheme as fresh as possible for licensees and this year we’ve also extended this best practice to the off licensed trade with the introduction of the Responsible Retailer Award. The big hit for us has been the training packages we offer, which are a real success with the trade.

The conference was a fantastic day, with speakers covering a wide range of subjects important to running a successful Best Bar None scheme.”