

Want a Drinks Licence?

Part Two: A Tour of the Premises Licence Application Process



Having taken the Guided Tour of the Personal Licence application process in Part One, you will have stumbled across the Licensing Act 2003. You will also have encountered the gateway milestone of Alcohol Licensing, known as the Level 2 National Certificate of Personal Licence Holders (NCPLH) examination.

The Path Narrows - Red Tape Alert

Upon successful negotiation of the Personal Licence process, your objective to sell alcohol to the public is now within sight, albeit through hurdles of red tape. Take a moment to consider the twenty page Premises Licence application. Then wish you hadn't.

Considerable preparation is required for this form and you will require information to hand such as your Premises' rateable value, your Designated Premises Supervisor (if not you) as well as a detailed understanding as to how the Four Licensing Objectives relate to your business. This form is not to be undertaken lightly.



Through the Looking Glass of Closer Scrutiny – Will your Application be found wanting?



Your journey with red tape does not stop when the Premises Licence Application with hefty cheque is filed with your local Licensing Authority. You will need to notify the public in a newspaper column and on your shop front that your application has been made. It does not end here. It should be noted that the Local Licensing Authority is also classified as an interested party.

You may find an inspectorate of police officers, environmental health, licensing authority staff and trading standards come calling. These 'Responsible Persons' could have difficult questions for you to answer to their satisfaction, or else.



Further along, you may also encounter a selection of angry residents and local business people who are not happy with your application and wish to complain. Licensing law calls these individuals “Interested Parties” and they have a right to formally object to your plans to sell alcohol.

Take your local community into account before making your application or you may have an unpleasant fight on your hands.

The Unexpected Deviation from Route: The Impasse



You may find that despite your best efforts, an objection (or several) has been raised by a Responsible Person, an Interested Party or both.

If negotiations to settle these objections come to nothing, the only way forward is to allow your local licensing authority to decide. At this point, consideration should be given as to whether to instruct an experienced representative to present your case at the Licensing Hearing. Or are you confident enough to step out alone?

Success at last – Last Stop: The Cellar



Trusting all goes smoothly or any issues have been resolved at local authority hearing stage or at the Magistrates Court, your local authority will grant your application and you will receive your Premises Licence. This means you can start to trade!

This is a major accomplishment and a celebration is clearly in order.

Nevertheless, as a Personal and Premises Licence Holder, you have continuing responsibilities to fulfil to ensure the Four Licensing Objectives are met. Catch the next Tour Bus for the low-down.



The Follow On Tour: “Got a Drinks Licence? – A Tour of Continuing Responsibilities” (COMING SOON...)

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