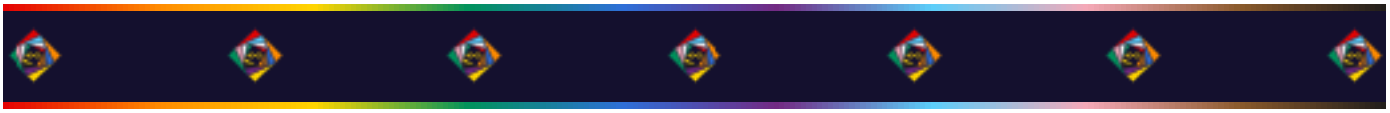
THE GLITTER STANDARD · DOCUMENT

# Testing Protocol

Who tests, when, what is checked and how Ask for Angela is tested safely.

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How Glittered venues are verified and visited: who checks the evidence, who the Ambassadors are, what they check, how Ask for Angela is tested without causing an emergency, and what happens with the result.

## 1. Purpose

The badge means a venue does the Ten on an ordinary night, not on the day it uploaded its evidence. The Ambassador visit is how The Glitter Standard knows. This protocol is public so that venues know exactly what is checked and nothing else, so that Ambassadors behave the same way everywhere, and so that the police and partners know what a testing night looks like.

## 2. Verification: who checks the evidence

The Glitter Standard checks the evidence for the six core competencies and the Ten for every venue at a desk, before any visit. Where the people who already assess a venue for Best Bar None, or an estate's area managers, have checked it in the same desktop exercise, we check their report against the evidence uploaded rather than starting again. That is what makes the scheme affordable and what lets it spread quickly. The Ambassador visit in section 3 is what keeps it honest.

| ROUTE | WHO CHECKS THE EVIDENCE | WHAT THE GLITTER STANDARD DOES |
|---|---|---|
| A venue in a Best Bar None area scheme or the Central Scheme | The local Best Bar None assessor, during the assessment they are already carrying out, with the Ten as an optional inclusion section | Accepts the assessor's report and awards the badge. No second inspection. |
| A venue in a pub or bar estate | The estate's own area manager, who already carries out its Best Bar None assessments, checking the Ten in the same desktop exercise | Accepts the area manager's report and awards the badge across the estate. |
| A students' union venue | NUS, which assesses Best Bar None for unions, or the local Best Bar None assessor where the union sits in an area scheme | Accepts the report and awards the badge. |
| A venue with no scheme at all | The venue itself, self-assessed with evidence uploaded | Checks every item of evidence at a desk. |

## 2.1 What The Glitter Standard asks in return

- **A written agreement** with the scheme, estate or NUS that its assessors or area managers will check the Ten as published. Checking the evidence is a desktop exercise and needs no further training beyond the checklist we supply. The training in the Ten is separate: it is online, it is for the venue's own people, and it is evidenced by the completion record.
- **A signed declaration** with each report: that the evidence was seen, by whom, on what date.
- **A check of every report** against the evidence on the platform.
- **One consequence for a false report.** If evidence is found not to be true, the venue is delisted and, for an estate, every venue checked by the same area manager is suspended until re-verified. The scheme or estate is told in writing.

This is verification on trust, and it is stated plainly here so that nobody is misled about it. The badge is not awarded because The Glitter Standard inspected the venue. It is awarded because whoever already assesses that venue confirmed the Ten, and because the venue then has to survive an Ambassador visit it cannot predict.

### 2.2 Independent assessors later

As income allows, The Glitter Standard will train and pay a small number of independent assessors for venues outside any scheme and for spot audits of delegated reports. Until then the routes above are the only ones, and this page says so.

## 3. Ambassadors: who visits

Ambassadors are volunteers from the communities The Glitter Standard serves who visit accredited venues in their own city as ordinary guests, on a night of their choosing from the dates offered, and report what they found. They are the reason the badge means something.

- **Volunteers, not staff.** There is no contract, no obligation to attend any night and no penalty for not attending. Ambassadors are free to stop at any time and to leave any venue at any moment.
- **Never out of pocket.** The Glitter Standard reimburses actual costs on receipt, agreed in advance before the night: travel to and from the venue, a soft drink and a tap water in each venue, a meal where the night runs past nine, and accommodation where the area is not reachable from home that night. Nothing else is paid, and no allowance is paid without a receipt, because Ambassadors are volunteers and payments beyond actual expenses would change that.
- **Recruited by area**, through LGBTQIA+, neurodivergent, disabled and minority ethnic community groups, students' union societies, Pride volunteer networks and inclusive sports clubs.
- **Trained** on a short online session and a first night alongside an experienced Ambassador. They sign a volunteer agreement and a conflict declaration, and they agree to the conduct rules in section 3.1.
- **Always in pairs.** They never visit alone.

- **Never a venue they work at, have worked at, or have a personal connection with**, and never the same venue twice in twelve months.

## 3.1 Conduct

- Ambassadors never identify themselves during a visit, never reveal a result, and never discuss a venue outside the report.
- No photographs, no audio, no video, and no member of staff named. Reports describe roles and behaviour.
- No alcohol on a visit. No visit after the Ambassador has been drinking.
- Ambassadors are adults visiting licensed premises as guests, so no DBS check is required or taken.

## 3.2 Looking after Ambassadors

- An Ambassador may end a visit at any moment, for any reason, and expenses are still met.
- A named contact is reachable by phone for the whole of every visiting night.
- Ambassadors choose venues that work for them, may bring an assistance dog and may ask a venue for an adjustment they need. Asking for one is not part of the visit and is never recorded against the venue.
- Where a visit goes badly, someone calls the Ambassador the next day. Nothing that happened to an Ambassador personally is used against a venue without their agreement.
- If the pair is refused entry: a refusal that applies the venue's own stated rules to everyone is recorded and is not a fail. A refusal on appearance, ID likeness, gender, race or disability is a dignity fail and the venue is told within 48 hours.

## 3.3 When venues are visited

- Every Glittered venue is in the visiting pool every year and is never told when or whether it will be visited.
- In a visiting area (ten or more Glittered venues and a partner coordinator) a third of venues are visited each year on random dates weighted to peak nights.

Elsewhere one in ten. Every venue passes an unannounced visit before its badge is confirmed.

- A complaint, a third-party report, a partner referral or a belonging score flag puts a venue on the next visiting night in its area, or a standalone visit within thirty days.
- Visiting nights are notified to the area's police licensing team in advance, without naming venues.

## 4. What an Ambassador checks, in order

| STEP | WHAT THE AMBASSADORS DO | POINT |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Watch the door for ten minutes before entering. Note any refusal and the reason given, and whether the same rule is applied to the next person or group in the queue. Note how ID is handled and, where guests are searched, how the search is offered and carried out | 4 |
| 2 | Enter. One Ambassador wears a Sunflower lanyard. Note whether any member of staff acknowledges it or offers help, and how they are searched if searching is in place | 7 |
| 3 | Find the poster and the belonging QR card | 8, 10 |
| 4 | Order a soft drink and a tap water. Note whether either is met with comment or pressure | 7 |
| 5 | Make one small reasonable request from the kind of courtesy a venue lists (a quieter table, a moment outside with re-entry) with no explanation. Note whether it is granted without questioning | 6 |
| 6 | Ask a member of staff where they can use a toilet privately. Note the answer, the tone, and whether the private facility is signed and can be found | 5 |
| 7 | Ask a member of staff who is responsible for inclusion here, whether they have done inclusion training, and what they would do if a guest was abused for being gay | 1, 3, 9 |

| STEP | WHAT THE AMBASSADORS DO | POINT |
|---|---|---|
| 8 | Ask how they would report something that happened to them tonight | 8, 9 |
| 9 | In one venue in three, chosen at random before the night: ask for Angela (section 5) | 9 |
| 10 | Submit the structured report from the venue before leaving. Both Ambassadors sign | All |

Nothing else is checked. Ambassadors do not inspect kitchens, cellars, licences, capacity or anything Best Bar None or the licensing authority checks. A visit takes about twenty minutes.

## 5. Ask for Angela: the safe test

- One Ambassador goes to the bar alone and asks "Is Angela here?" or "Can I speak to Angela?", in a normal voice, without acting distressed.
- The moment a member of staff begins to respond (moves the tester away from the bar, asks if they are all right, offers somewhere to sit, fetches a manager), the Ambassador says the agreed phrase: **"Thank you, I am fine, I thought I saw someone I know."** The test is over at that point.
- No taxi is called, nobody phones the police, nobody is asked to leave, and the Ambassador does not continue the pretence. If staff insist on checking further, the Ambassador thanks them and repeats that they are fine.
- What is recorded is the first thirty seconds: was the ask recognised, did staff act calmly, did they put the guest first, did they move to somewhere private. Nothing about the venue's wider Ask for Angela delivery is judged beyond that.
- If a real incident of any kind is unfolding in the venue, the Ambassadors do not test. They become guests, help if asked, and record nothing against the venue.
- The venue learns it was a test from the report, which arrives within 48 hours whatever the result. Venues are never told in advance.

## 6. Results

| OUTCOME | WHAT IT MEANS | WHAT HAPPENS |
|---|---|---|
| Pass | Every step met | Map updated with the date of the pass. Report to the venue within 48 hours. |
| Improvement window | A fail on the door (step 1), the toilet (step 6), the courtesy (step 5) or Ask for Angela (step 9), or two other steps unmet | Report within 48 hours with what was found. Sixty days to act. One re-test included. Badge stays up during the window. |
| Delisting | A second improvement-window fail within twelve months, or a false annual declaration, or a substantiated non-inclusive incident where the venue's response failed | Badge comes down within seven days. Map updated. Fact of delisting published. Appeal available (see the Complaints, Appeals and Delisting Policy). Reapplication after six months. |

## 7. Fairness

- Every improvement-window and delisting decision is made by two people, never one, with a lived-experience member of the Standards Council on every delisting decision.
- Venues see the full report, minus anything that would identify the Ambassadors.
- Area pass rates are published annually. Venue-level results are published only as the fact of accreditation or delisting.
- This protocol changes only by decision of the Standards Council, with every accredited venue notified in writing.