City of Westminster

Night Stars

The Night Stars Overview

The Night Stars provide support and assistance to those who are vulnerable or need help getting home. Volunteers provide a highly visible street presence, working in teams of three or more within the City of Westminster. The volunteers provide on-the-spot information and assistance to visitors to the area. Whether it's helping someone get public transport, reconnecting them with their friends, or handing out bottles of water. This initiative focuses on supporting women's safety and helps those who are vulnerable while out at night.

The Night Star Objectives

The Night Stars operating aims are:

- Promote and support women's safety at night by preventing poor or illegal behaviour, waiting with lone women whilst they await transport home or providing a safe space if required.
- Provide a safer and more inclusive night-time environment for targeted communities
- Help keep people safe at night and prevent harm.
- Work with the police and ambulance service to reduce the demand and pressure on the emergency services at night by supporting people who are vulnerable due to intoxication.
- Help businesses to support vulnerable customers and visitors.
- Increase the safety and sustainability of nightlife in Westminster.

The Night Star Role

The Night Star role is to provide a highly visible uniformed on street presence in and around the West End area of Westminster. Night Stars are volunteers that are vetted and deployed to provide a Night Safety service for visitors to the West End.

We operate from 7pm – 4am on Friday and/or Saturday Nights. Volunteers can choose between three different shift times to attend: 7pm – 11:30pm, 10pm – 2:30 am, and 11:30pm – 4am. We ask for a minimum commitment of 4.5 volunteering hours a month.

The Night Star will carry out their role as part of a team of volunteers. They will be directed by the shift lead to patrol areas of the West End or target specific known hotspot areas. In carrying out their role, the Night Stars will engage with the public and local businesses, and local services such as the Metropolitan Police and London Ambulance Service.

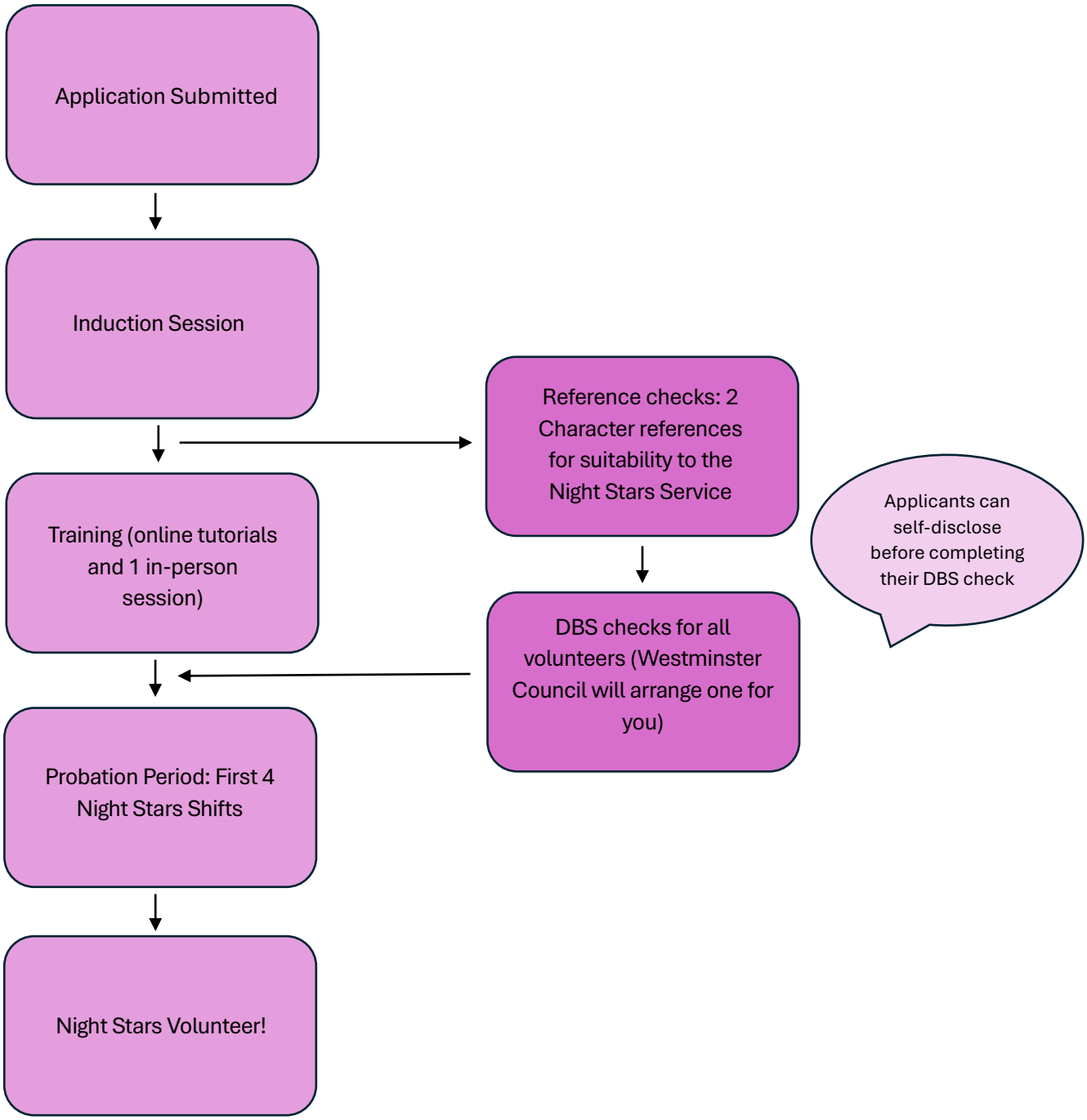
If a person is identified as requiring support, the Night Star team will try to provide that support as best as possible Those who are barefoot or are struggling to walk in their shoes, may be provided with flipflops or slippers to wear to avoid injury. Water may be provided to people who are intoxicated and need hydration to reduce the impact of alcohol. Vomit bags may be provided to people who are significantly intoxicated if they've shown signs of illness, they attempt to make their way home. Any person who is found to be significantly vulnerable, the Night Stars team will support that person to either get them home safely or contact their friends or family. If the service user is alone or there is a significant risk to their health, the Night Stars will call for emergency services, such as the police or ambulance, to take them to a place of safety to receive any medical attention they require. Additionally, volunteers can bring service users back to the hub if they require help that

cannot be solved on-street. For example, if they need a safe space to rest or retreat, if they need to charge their phone, or if they require some emotional support.

The Night Stars team work alongside the Police, Police volunteers, Business Improvement District Security, Venue Security or Welfare Teams, and other emergency services at night to provide support to those in need and provide a high visibility presence in the area.

New Applicant Vetting and Onboarding

Application and Vetting Process



The Night Stars service works with vulnerable individuals, and we must ensure that our checks reflect the importance we place on safeguarding the individuals we help. As a result, all applicants will have an enhanced BDS check, which Westminster Council will arrange for you. For more information, please see our Vetting and Disclosure Barring Service (BDS) information pack.

Induction, Training, Support and Supervision

Induction and initial Training

Every new volunteer will complete a mandatory induction session and training session before they can begin their Night Star role. These sessions will ensure that you have the required knowledge, information and understanding of policies, procedures, and information relevant to the Night Star role and operation. They will also give you opportunity to ask questions and meet other new volunteers.

Training materials will also be made available via the e-learning section of your Better Impact account; this will include PDF learning packs and small quizzes to aid you in your training process. A set of mandatory e-learning tasks will have to be carried out before your first Night Stars Shift, with the ability to do refresher quizzes at any point throughout your time with the Night Stars.

Training topics include:

Type of Training	General Outline
Night Stars Induction & Volunteer Role	Introduction to the Night Stars service, its aims, the role of volunteers, patrols, supporting the Hub, working as a team, uniform and equipment, and expectations while on shift.
Radio & Operational Procedures	How to use Night Stars radios, call signs and the phonetic alphabet, communicating with the Hub, emergency procedures, team structures and the importance of never working alone.
Alcohol & Intoxication Awareness	Recognising signs of alcohol intoxication and alcohol poisoning, assessing a person's condition and understanding when additional or emergency medical support is required.
Drug Awareness	Recognising potential signs that someone may be under the influence of drugs, including changes in speech, movement, behaviour and responsiveness, and knowing when to seek further help.
Drink Spiking Awareness	Understanding different forms and signs of spiking, how to respond to a suspected incident, keep someone safe, report concerns and preserve potential evidence.
Supporting Vulnerable People	How to safely approach and engage with vulnerable service users, maintain appropriate space, gather relevant information and work with friends, family, venue staff and other partners.

Emergency Response	How to respond when someone is unconscious or seriously unwell, make an initial assessment and identify when emergency assistance is required.
Conflict Resolution & Personal Safety	Recognising signs of escalating behaviour, maintaining personal and team safety, knowing when to disengage, calling for support and using dynamic risk assessments.
Communication & Active Listening	Using verbal and non-verbal communication, empathy, active listening, questioning and de-escalation techniques when supporting people who may be distressed, intoxicated or agitated.
Practical Scenario Training	Group-based scenarios allow volunteers to put their learning into practice and discuss how they would safely respond to situations they may encounter during a Night Stars shift.

When you begin your role as a Night Star, you will go through a probation period, where you'll receive an introduction to the locations covered, and onsite training relating to the operational service. The Night Stars officers and shift leader will conduct the volunteer induction with you within the first month of your volunteering to ensure that you have not missed any aspect of induction.

All volunteers are to attend requested training that will provide refresher or updates on any changes to the operational service or procedures. For example, Health and Safety and safeguarding refresher training is required every three years.

Opportunities for further training

The Council may also provide optional training sessions throughout the year in topics such as first aid, communication skills, vulnerability awareness and mental health first aid. Refresher sessions on all training topics are available year-round on the e-learning section of you Better Access dashboard.

Supervision and review

The Council's Night Stars Officers will be the day-to-day contact for all volunteers. They can be contacted for support and feedback and to be a point of contact during the volunteering onboarding, training or for any other problems or issues that may arise. When on shift, the Shift Leader will be the person responsible for the Night Star operation and the volunteers working that shift. They will be the first point of contact relating to any questions, issues or in the event of an incident.

Probation Period

Halfway through your probation period, your first two shifts, you will have an informal check in with one of the Night Stars Officers. This meeting will be a space for you to let us know how you feel about being a Night Stars volunteer, and for us to give you any pointers or advice on how to improve your skills.

At the end of you probation period, you will have another informal meeting with one of the Night Stars Officers. If there were any concerns or worries flagged in the first meeting, this will be the time when we evaluate whether those concerns have been resolved. This last check-in is also opportunity for both you and the Council Officer to review your volunteering experience and decide if continuing is appropriate. While we welcome

everyone interested in joining the Night Stars service, it's essential that volunteers are a good fit for the role, given our work with vulnerable individuals. Your comfort matters too, and we understand this role may not suit everyone.

Bi-yearly check-ins

Your wellbeing is a priority throughout your time volunteering with us. Twice a year, we'll schedule check-ins with all volunteers. These sessions are not performance reviews; they're an opportunity to discuss your volunteering journey, how you're balancing personal life and responsibilities, any support you might need, and any changes you'd like to make to your shifts or schedule. We'll also explore ways for you to progress in your role, including additional training or opportunities that may suit you.