Westminster Business Handbook

Information and support for your business

2019 – 2020
Introduction from Councillor David Harvey


At Westminster, our vision is to build a City for All. A place where all our residents and businesses have the opportunities to thrive. To do this, we want to encourage potential, support growth and work together to overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of progress.

I’m proud to say that Westminster is home to more than 50,000 businesses with positive impacts on the lives of our residents. This rich, diverse community is essential to creating a Westminster that has become renowned for its vibrancy and we remain committed to investing in our services that support you.

Our investment in creating affordable enterprise spaces has been a significant highlight for me. Opening the doors to creative hubs such as Paddington Works marks a significant step forward in encouraging the entrepreneurship and innovative spirit that lies in the heart of modern business. Combined with the range of services that are run by a team of dedicated council officers, we will continue to ensure that our businesses have what they need to thrive, no matter their size.

This becomes even more important in a time where much is changing around us. The council is finding ways to create new opportunities that bridge the gaps across education, training and employment so that our local community has the confidence and security to be prosperous as it continues to play a vital role in our local economy.

To do this, we’re working with employers and education professionals to identify the skills needed to fulfil the jobs of the future. We will shift perceptions tied to vocational routes so that more learners can use them as secure routes into work.

We’re also working together with local employers to connect them to a wider, more diverse pool of talent within the borough through our employment service and adult education service – that way our residents can continue to benefit from living in the city.

Our plans for a new skills partnership will extend what we do to support employers and job seekers, to fill skilled job vacancies and build successful enterprises.

With your support, I believe we can realise our vision. We can create a city of opportunity – one that is and remains one of the best places in the world to live and do business.

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Councillor David Harvey
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Education and Skills

✉️ business@westminster.gov.uk
Services available to businesses in Westminster

Westminster City Council’s Business Unit provides a single contact for all your business needs, making it easier to navigate through council and external services and get the information and advice you need.

Whether you’re just starting out, or an established business looking to grow, the Business Unit will provide advice and guidance adapted to your needs.

The Business Unit can work with you by:

- **Supporting local employers** by opening up jobs to our residents
- **Providing affordable and supportive spaces** for start-ups to grow
- **Offering superfast broadband** for businesses in Westminster
- **Working together to give young people** the skills and experience they need for the world of work
- **Recognising businesses that give back** to the community
- **Providing services, advice and guidance** to help businesses thrive

Visit our Business Unit website – businesswestminster.com
Direct debit your business rates

The easiest and most convenient way to pay your business rates

- easy to set up
  online [westminster.gov.uk/paying-your-business-rates](http://westminster.gov.uk/paying-your-business-rates)
or phone [020 8315 2050](tel:02083152050)
- saves time
- eBilling possible for direct debit payers
- prevents late payment and reminders
- secure and protected by the direct debit guarantee
- three direct debit dates to choose from 1st, 5th, 15th
Business rates

Non-domestic rates, otherwise known as business rates, is a tax levied on non-domestic properties.

Westminster City Council collects around £2.2bn in business rates per annum from its 38,708 non-domestic properties.

However, the council currently only retains a small proportion of this sum around £125m or 6% of what the council collects in business rates.

From the £125m the Council receives it is spent on Adults Services (£37m); Children’s Services (£21m); City Management & Communities (£2.7m); Growth Planning & Housing (£16m); and Corporate Services (£53m).

Viewing and paying your business rates online

It’s quick and easy to view your Westminster business rates online. The most convenient way to pay is by direct debit and you can apply online at westminster.gov.uk/paying-your-business-rates

You can also pay online using your debit/credit card, over the phone or by bank transfer.

You can also switch to paper-free e-billing or apply for exemptions and relief.

westminster.gov.uk/paying-your-business-rates

Sign up to our business e-newsletter

Filled with the latest business news, special offers and training, the business e-newsletter will provide you with the information you need to promote and grow your business in Westminster.

westminster.gov.uk/business-e-newsletter
Westminster Employment Service

Westminster Employment Service is a free to use recruitment service for Westminster businesses and residents. The service is managed by Westminster City Council and supported by local agencies. The service aims to work with businesses to help our residents to get back to work and stay in employment.

We work with local employers to fill a wide range of vacancies ensuring that residents benefit from opportunities on their doorstep. We’ve already helped over 2,000 people into work in the last three years.

Our team is made up of people that care about helping you find the right staff, whilst also helping you make a positive contribution in your community and your corporate social responsibility programme.

We offer businesses an opportunity to make a difference in the community by providing people with work experience, job tasters and employer led workshops for job-seekers.

To find out how the Westminster Employment Service could benefit your business visit westminster.gov.uk/employment
Get yourself connected

Connect Westminster is the council’s broadband connection programme providing small and medium sized companies in the borough and the West End Partnership area of Camden with gigabit capable broadband connectivity. The project has received £2.8m from the European Regional Development Fund to provide vouchers worth up to £2000 to cover the costs of upgrading to ultrafast broadband with one of our 100+ registered suppliers.

To date, over 100 businesses in Westminster have benefitted from an upgrade in connectivity and there is still time to apply.

To find out if you are eligible, download the application form and view the available suppliers, at businesswestminster.com/connect

Become a healthy workplace business

Westminster City Council is offering free support to help your business develop a wellbeing culture in your organisation and, as a result, boost performance through the London Healthy Workplace Charter.

The Healthy Workplace Charter is a framework for action that helps employers build good practice in health and wellbeing in their organisation.

There are many benefits of having a healthy and happy workforce including:

• saving money
• enhancing engagement
• improving productivity
• lowering sickness absences
• heavily discounted mental health and wellbeing training for managers
• free local support from a healthy workplace advisor
• prestigious accreditation to help you stand out.

To get involved – sign up at westminster.gov.uk/healthy-workplace
Affordable space to grow your business

The council is committed to offering the right support and environment for start-up businesses. Through our network of enterprise spaces, we’ve supported 2,000 businesses across 10 locations. This year, the council is opening new creative spaces to support entrepreneurs.

**Paddington Works**

Located in the heart of London’s Paddington, Paddington Works is a brand new state-of-the-art shared work environment offering coworking, meeting and event space. It has the capacity to accommodate over 200 small businesses. Combining inspirational, cutting-edge technology with ergonomic workplace wellbeing, Paddington Works also features editing facilities, as well as a variety of meeting rooms and an 80-person auditorium. Business rates are included in all membership costs.

Find out more: [paddingtonworks.com/PaddingtonWorks](http://paddingtonworks.com/PaddingtonWorks)

**Pop Hub Leicester Square**

Operated by Interim Spaces, Pop Up Leicester Square offers simple and affordable co-working space in Leicester Square. With a focus on performing arts businesses, the space offers day passes as well as fixed desk spaces.

Find out more: [interimspaces.co.uk/pophub](http://interimspaces.co.uk/pophub)
Huckletree Soho

Huckletree Soho, based at Ingestre Court in Soho is opening this autumn, bringing together brands, venture capitalists and global innovation teams in London’s original creative district. Facilities include private offices, co-working space and event space.

Find out more: huckletree.com/locations/soho

Other office and coworking spaces:

More information about our other enterprise spaces can be found on page 19.

Please visit: businesswestminster.com/business-enterprise/world-class-location-business/
Do you have what it takes to be a Westminster Lion?

Westminster is a place of opportunity where aspirations can become reality for a great number of people. We want to recognise businesses who work hard to make a positive impact in Westminster through responsible business practices.

That’s why we launched the Westminster Lion accreditation and awards.

Applications for 2019 will open later this year.

To find out more, visit businesswestminster.com/csr

Kick-start your responsible business journey

Heart of the City Westminster is a free two-year programme open to local small and medium sized enterprises looking to make a positive difference.

Run in partnership with Heart of the City, the programme offers training events, one to one account management support, access to online resources and a network of like-minded peers to help you get activate responsible business practices.

Applications will re-open later this year.

To find out more, visit theheartofthecity.com/westminster
Engaging with Westminster’s young people

Real life encounters with the world of work help young people understand the skills and behaviours required by employers and help them make informed career choices. It also provides a great way for businesses to get a fresh perspective and engage with a new audience. The council is its programme to offer a varied and diverse range of employers and industry sector.

Our 2019/2020 programme for will include:

Creative Industries Week
08–12 July 2019

Westminster Enterprise Week
18–24 November 2019

National Apprenticeship Week
March 2020

STEAM Week
March 2020

Contact the business unit to find out how your business could get involved with forthcoming activities on businessunit@westminster.gov.uk
Apprenticeships are changing

The council is passionate about apprenticeships becoming an integral part of Westminster’s future. As part of our work we will lobby government to make apprenticeships accessible to all SMEs.

Contact us and we can act as your guide on your apprenticeship discovery journey. Whether you are an employer hoping to make the most of the apprenticeship levy (unspent funds will expire from July 2019) or an SME considering apprenticeships to grow your business, we’re here to support you with free and impartial advice and guidance to help you figure out the best solution for you.

We would also love to hear from Westminster businesses already running apprenticeship programmes so that we can help you share your success and best practice ideas with other organisations. Please contact us at: businessunit@westminster.gov.uk

Increasing employment opportunities for our young people with special education needs

Our Supported Employment Network helps local employers support young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) through work experience, supported internships, apprenticeships and the offer of paid jobs.

In September 2019 the council will launch its supported internship programme in partnership with City of Westminster College where interns with SEND will complete three short work placements, strengthening their employability skills with the support of an expert job coach.

To find out how you can get involved by emailing localoffer@rbkc.gov.uk
THREE WAYS YOU CAN HELP SOMEONE SLEEPING ROUGH

At Westminster City Council we work hard to help people sleeping rough off the streets and into accommodation. We know many people want to help too – which is why we launched the CHAT APP TAP campaign – to help the public to give to people sleeping rough in a way that makes a genuine difference.

Do you want to help? Contact us to find out how you can get a TAP machine in your business or help us spread the word westminster.gov.uk/rough-sleeping

#ChatAppTap
Inspire a new generation of creatives

As a creative partner, being part of City Lions can help nurture new creative talent, engage employees and take your brand to new audiences in Westminster by providing its young people with life-changing opportunities.

The programme has connected young people to a number of free events and activities in Westminster that they may not have otherwise discovered.

A partner since its inception, Somerset House signed up to City Lions to support and inspire young people through engagement with cultural and creative organisations.

Catherine Ritman-Smith, Head of Skills and Engagement at Somerset House said:

“City Lions is an exciting venture that signals a step change for young people, giving them the experiences and tools needed to make the most of the cultural riches in their city.

“It has been a privilege to contribute to this agenda by sharing the unique environment of Somerset House with young people from Westminster.”

Somerset House held two sessions over a period of two weeks involving a visit to the venue, to introduce young people to the history of how the building has become a thriving centre for creativity.

Participants gained first-hand experience of exhibitions and installations, the chance to talk to resident artist-makers about their work, and a simple creative exercise in collaboration with the artists.

Ritman-Smith added:

“We can be sure that we are reaching young people who probably wouldn’t find us on their own. The outcomes for us and for the City of Westminster will be to increase the diversity of our workforce, our community and our audiences. Ultimately, through City Lions we hope to pool expertise and make a real difference to young lives.”

To find out how your organisation can get involved, please email citylions@westminster.gov.uk to register your interest.
City Lions connects young people to creative and cultural organisations in Westminster.

If your organisation can offer events, activities or experiences of work that will inspire young people to get creative, please get in touch.

Find out more at citylions.org/partners
Businesses sign-up to pollution-busting campaign

Westminster suffers from the worst air pollution in the country with almost 10 million drivers in London contributing more than half of the most deadly emissions. Research suggests that thousands of Londoners die prematurely as a result of poor air quality.

To help cut pollution Westminster City Council’s #DontBeIdle campaign encourages road users to switch off their car engines when parked at the side of the road. Over 10,000 people have already signed up to the pledge.

All business users of Westminster’s road network are invited to publicly support #DontBeIdle and train drivers not to engine idle unnecessarily.

Find out how to get involved
westminster.gov.uk/don’t-be-idle-business
Trade on our street markets

Markets are the original business incubator spaces; they provide great opportunities for residents and entrepreneurs to start and grow innovative new businesses.

Westminster is home to six diverse markets, ranging from the second biggest market in London on Church Street to one of the oldest on Berwick Street in Soho.

The council has developed a new strategy which will support the future growth and development of these markets. It will deliver improvements including making the markets more environmentally and financially sustainable, diversifying the range of products, investing in infrastructure like Wi-Fi and outdoor furniture, supporting events and much more.

There is a wealth of support available to help residents, young people and start-ups get started, including discounted application fees and training on customer service and social media.

For more information, visit westminster.gov.uk/markets
Business support

Support and networking

Business Improvement Districts

Westminster.gov.uk/bids-business-improvement-districts

The Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are business-led and business funded bodies formed to improve a geographically defined area. The BIDs provide your business with a voice in creating a more appealing environment and promoting and marketing your local area.

Business Information Points

Westminster.gov.uk/bip

Located in libraries across Westminster, Business Information Points can help you plan develop and build your business – all for free. Access market and industry reports (including Mintel), company data, case studies, create targeted mailing lists and more. Regular events and workshops with guest speakers, provide great networking opportunities.

Federation of Small Businesses

Fsbo.org.uk/benefits

IFB help family businesses remain successful for generations to come. The organisation provides a place for family businesses to share challenges and successes openly through a programme of events and a knowledge hub with access to experts from around the world.

London Chamber of Commerce

Londonchamber.co.uk

London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) is the capital’s largest independent networking and business support organisation. Representing the interests of thousands of companies, we connect thousands of business people every year and offer our members a wide range of practical and professional services.

National business support initiatives

Greatbusiness.gov.uk

Connect to expert advice and sources of information to help you build and grow your business through the government’s Great Business programme.

Westminster Business Council

Westminsterbc.org.uk

A membership organisation helping business to grow through meetings with potential clients, industry insights, networking and mentoring. Companies with a turnover of less than £1m a year can apply for free SME membership.
King’s College

King’s College is offering a variety of support services for businesses within Westminster. The King’s Legal Clinic is a new free legal advice service offered by the Dickson Poon School of Law at King’s College London. The King’s Business School is providing free business consultancy to businesses within Westminster covering topics like strategy, business planning, financial analysis, marketing, recruitment and data analysis.

Entrepreneurship Institute

King’s College London has collaborations with local businesses and the Westminster community. These include activities from the Entrepreneurship Institute to help school and college students develop enterprise skills as part of Westminster Enterprise Week and initiatives for university Business School students to help solve local business challenges.

Places to work – Enterprise Spaces

The council is committed to offering the right support and environment for start-up businesses. Through our network of enterprise spaces, we’ve been able to create workspace for residents with entrepreneurial aspirations, job opportunities for local residents, and space for new and early stage businesses who aren’t in a position yet to afford mainstream workspace.

Our newest creative spaces are featured on page 8–9, You can find a range of workspaces across the City of Westminster at:

Great Western Studios

Over 100 studio spaces with a café and gallery space in Westbourne for a thriving cluster of creative industry businesses.

Somerset House Studios

The council sponsored the development of the studios, which offer affordable creative industry studio space services and connect start-ups with audiences.

Maida Hill Place

Maida Hill Place is a not-for-profit social enterprise set up to provide training and support for early stage food businesses, with affordable kitchen and menu-testing space. It was set up to be a sustainable hub on the high street and encourage economic growth in the local area.

Westminster Enterprise Centre

Affordable hot-desking space with meeting rooms for entrepreneurial
residents combined with affordable, and sometimes free, business information, advice and guidance.

**Financial support and grants**

**Creative Industry Finance**
- [creativeindustryfinance.org.uk](http://creativeindustryfinance.org.uk)
- [@CIFinance](https://twitter.com/CIFinance)

Free expert business advice and access to loan finance from £2,500 to £2.5m+ for creative enterprises.

**Start Up Loans**
- [startuploans.co.uk](http://startuploans.co.uk)
- [@StartUpLoansUK](https://twitter.com/StartUpLoansUK)

Work with Start Up Loans’ partners to develop a business plan before securing a loan to build your business. Once you have your loan you’ll also be given access to an expert mentor, free training courses and business offers.

**Green growth**

**Cycling courses**
- [westminster.gov.uk/cycling](http://westminster.gov.uk/cycling)

Help your employees to cycle with confidence with free one-to-one City Cycle courses and bike checks.

**Electric vehicles**
- [westminster.gov.uk/electric-vehicles](http://westminster.gov.uk/electric-vehicles)

Vehicles that run on electricity benefit from discounted parking in Westminster and no congestion charge.

**Tendering for council services**

[capitalEsourcing.com](http://capitalEsourcing.com)

Stay on top of opportunities to supply services, goods or works to the council and other London boroughs by registering your company details at capitalEsourcing.

**Training**

**Food safety, health and safety, licensing**
- [westminster.gov.uk/training-programme](http://westminster.gov.uk/training-programme)

The council offers professional training courses in food safety, health and safety, licensing and more to equip you and your team with the knowledge to protect your customers and business. Online and bespoke courses are also available.

**Westminster Adult Education Service**
- [waes.ac.uk](http://waes.ac.uk)

Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) is Westminster’s adult college, offering tailored, affordable training programmes, workplace learning and apprenticeships to help small and medium businesses upskill their workforce and face business challenges.

**Volunteering**

**One Westminster**
- [onewestminster.org.uk](http://onewestminster.org.uk)

Employee volunteering activities are great for team building and boosting staff engagement, as well as a vital means of support for local organisations.

With links to 150 organisations and schools in Westminster, the Time & Talents programme offers a free consultation to assess your corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals to tailor projects in the areas that will help you make a difference.
PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS

Over 600 businesses and leading attractions across Westminster and London have provided fantastic offers and great savings to those who live, visit and work in Westminster as part of the council’s award-winning City Save scheme.

Westminster City Save already has over 80,000 members and this number is growing daily.

Promote your business for free, whether it’s a new service, an event or your existing offer. Increase enquiries, sales, web hits and attendees at events. Choose from long term or short term offers, and choose the terms and conditions that suit you.

ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES

Advertise your business in one of our award-winning magazines. Opportunities include our quarterly Reporter magazine to all homes in Westminster, as well as Children First for parents of young children, Edit for teenagers and Westminster Plus for the over 65s.

westminster.gov.uk/advertising-opportunities

Provide an offer or discount to Westminster residents, and your business could be seen by:

- 66,000 subscribers to our fortnightly e-newsletter
- over 35,000 visitors to the City Save website each month
- over 22,000 followers on social media
- thousands of households across Westminster that subscribe to our publications.

westminster.gov.uk/citysave
Contact the council

Contact the council to get the information you need on everything from licensing and training, health and safety, commercial waste, business rates and more.

You can also go online to find the information you need quickly and at a time that suits you.

Call our Business Unit which is dedicated contact centre for businesses, on 020 7641 2070.

businesswestminster.com
@CityofWestminster

Useful websites

Business rates
westminster.gov.uk/businessrates
Pay your business rates online, notify us of a change of address and apply for exemptions and relief.

Commercial waste and recycling
cleanstreets.westminster.gov.uk
Sign up to our commercial waste services, order more bags and find out how to dispose of bulky items.

City promotions, events and filming
westminster.gov.uk/events-and-filming
Apply to film or hold an event.

Food safety
westminster.gov.uk/food-safety-businesses
Register your food business with the council, report a concern about food safety and sign up for food safety training.

Health and safety
westminster.gov.uk/health-and-safety
Report health and safety concerns, sign up for training courses and find the latest advice.

Licensing
westminster.gov.uk/licensing
Apply for a licence, request pre-application advice and pay your annual fee.

Noise
westminster.gov.uk/noise
Report noise concerns and find the permitted hours at which work can be carried out.

Parking
westminster.gov.uk/parking
Apply for a trade parking permit, parking bay suspensions and skip licences.

Pest control
westminster.gov.uk/pest-control
Request advice and treatment to get rid of pests, rodents and other potential health hazards.
Report It

westminster.gov.uk/report-it

Go online to report problems with the streets around your business directly from your mobile phone or tablet. Just fill in a few details using our Report It tool, upload a photo of what you have seen and send it to us.

Planning

westminster.gov.uk/planning

Apply for planning permission, comment on planning applications and apply for a temporary structure, road closure or crane licence.

Street cleansing

westminster.gov.uk/street-cleansing

Find your street’s cleaning schedule and report street cleansing issues.

Street trading

westminster.gov.uk/street-trading

Become a licensed market trader, pay market pitch fees and apply for a tables and chairs licence.

Trading standards

westminster.gov.uk/trading-standards

Get advice and guidance on consumer protection legislation affecting your business and protect your business from scams.
Prices from £75p for waste and recycling collection and disposal* 

*based on one bag of recycling

CALL: 020 7641 6180
westminster.gov.uk/commercialwaste