



RATHBONE HOTEL FITZROVIA

RATHBONE HOTEL BECOMES A KEY CENTRAL LONDON HOTEL TO RECEIVE COVID-19 INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATE



Iconic London property, Rathbone Hotel, achieves independent certification on Covid-19 hygiene and operational standards.

Summary

The Rathbone Hotel, Fitzrovia is situated between the glamour of London's West End and the offbeat counterculture of Fitzrovia and has been welcoming guests with warmth and hospitality since 1975. Fitzrovia has its own distinctive 'feel' and has long been a haven for revered literary figures including George Orwell, Virginia Woolf, Dylan Thomas, Quentin Crisp and George Bernard Shaw who all frequented Fitzrovia during the 1930s and 1940s.

The Rathbone Hotel is one of two hotels in London owned by Carnarvon Hotels Ltd which is a private family company that has been in the hospitality industry for over 50 years, and its bar is a homage to the Company's founder. With 72 rooms and suites, the Hotel is popular with businesspeople and leisure travellers, situated close to the business heart of the Capital and in an area boasting a wealth of pubs, clubs, theatres and restaurants. Long established as one of the most iconic boutique hotels in Fitzrovia, the Hotel is truly a 24-7-365 operation.

The Challenge

The global Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the hospitality industry and on traveller confidence. However, the industry is fighting back and reappraising how to deliver safe hospitality services in the Covid-19 era. Hotels, restaurants and other hospitality providers are now focusing on how best to rebuild the confidence that will be needed to return to pre-Covid 19 revenues. It is clear that travellers and those with obligations for the security,

At a glance

Challenge: Following the impact of Covid-19 on hotels worldwide, the hotel recognised the importance of seeking an independent assessment of the hotel's Covid-19 processes and procedures.

Approach: Global Secure Accreditation undertook an assessment at the hotel to validate independently that it maintains good hygiene and operational standards likely to prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like Covid-19. GSA experts review and present that evidence with any recommendations to the international awards organisation, SFJ Awards.

Results: The certification enables the Rathbone Hotel to:

- ❖ Secure more corporate and leisure business by demonstrating an enhanced duty of care to its guests and staff.
- ❖ Differentiation from competitor hotels
- ❖ Improve the RFP process surrounding health safety
- ❖ Provides independent assessment of the hotel's Covid-19 processes and procedures
- ❖ Marketing promotion to demonstrate to bookers of achievement

About Rathbone Hotel Fitzrovia



Iconic
Boutique
Hotel



Central
London
location



72 rooms &
suites



Corporate and
Leisure guests

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- **Daniel Harris, Director.**

safety and wellbeing of travellers are seeking greater clarity about health security standards and greater assurance that these standards are being met.

Daniel Harris is a Director at The Rathbone Hotel and takes responsibility for the well-being of all guests. Historically, during weekdays, corporate travel is particularly important to the Rathbone Hotel (10 RFP's per annum) – with up to 70 percent of guests staying for business. As travel abruptly halted in late February, the Rathbone took immediate action to look at ways they could demonstrate their commitment to providing a safe environment for their employees and guests.

During the early stages, Daniel recognised the importance of seeking an independent assessment of the hotel's Covid-19 processes and procedures. He comments “The hotel has always taken health and safety very seriously, and this is only amplified with the impact of Covid-19 and people's expectations.” Daniel Harris states “there are a lot of template models in circulation which provide guidance and a check list for hotels to ‘self-certify’ that they are Covid-19 safe, (but) they fall critically short in validating compliance as it remains a ‘mark your own homework’ model.”

The biggest challenge that the Rathbone Hotel faces is encouraging demand. With travel restrictions, a resurgence of cases throughout the UK and Europe and heightened concern for safety, people are reluctant to travel. Many companies have enacted business travel bans or discouraged travel which typically sustains hotels from Sunday through to Thursday. Consequently, the focus on building trust and confidence in health protection and security is the key area of focus. Daniel Harris mentions that

“the hotel management are extremely supportive of our efforts to ensure the highest levels of health safety and we are pretty sure that we are doing a good job, but the opportunity to have this assessed and certificated by a trusted third party was paramount to us.”

The Rathbone Hotel looked at a number of companies that provide third party assessments including Bureau Veritas and CSC and chose Global Secure Accreditation (GSA) because of their reputation and links with business travel management companies (TMC's).

The GSA Solution

There are many parallels between physical security and health security, and the disciplines are very similar. At a tactical level, the activities are different because the intruder in the case of Covid-19 is invisible but potentially lethal. Recognising the links between health, hygiene and security is key and the main link is safety.

Travelers used to ‘assume’ their safety, but the sheer number of worrying events happening around the world communicated nearly instantly and constantly through media apps, hyper connectivity, and social media has challenged that assumption.

GSA's COVID-19 Certificate of International Good Practice has been developed to ensure a hotel is taking all necessary steps to protect its guests and staff from the virus. By meeting the internationally researched good practice Standards and Guidance, a hotel can provide reassurance about health, hygiene, safety and security that are independently certified.

Through structured engagement with the hotel, GSA assesses evidence provided by the hotel which demonstrates that it maintains good hygiene and operational standards likely to prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like Covid-19. GSA experts review and present that evidence with any recommendations to the regulator, SFJ Awards (international awards organisation) for certification thus providing guests, staff, and corporate clients with independent assurance that a hotel is a safe place to stay.

The Rathbone Hotel prepared for the GSA assessment by conducting a thorough review of all its material, related to safety processes and procedures. “The GSA assessment was extremely professional, beyond thorough, the process was easy to follow, more in depth, practical, used common sense and the team were extremely helpful”, commented Daniel. “It was definitely not a box ticking exercise because you could tell they read every line in the information provided and the team made valuable comments and gave assistance as and when needed.”



Results

The Rathbone Hotel achieved the Covid-19 Certificate of International Good Practice in September 2020 and GSA provided the hotel with both certification and RFP supporting documentation on the hotel’s practices and processes. “This information will be used on all forms of marketing and promotion to demonstrate to bookers of our achievement” reported Daniel Harris.

“Having achieved the Covid-19 Certification sets us apart from our competitor hotels,” Daniel comments and goes on to say “the international SFJ Awards independent process and certificate was very important as it demonstrates that two parties are reviewing the data and collectively deciding whether or not we deserve the accreditation. With other companies, they assess and self-certify which is not in our interest.”

He added, “I am confident it will have a positive impact for travel management companies and corporate offices to differentiate our offering and am sure will really help in the RFP process with the answering of questions around the safety of guests, by providing evidence of an additional certification where our answers have been fully and independently assessed. They can see that safety of guests is extremely important here at the hotel.”