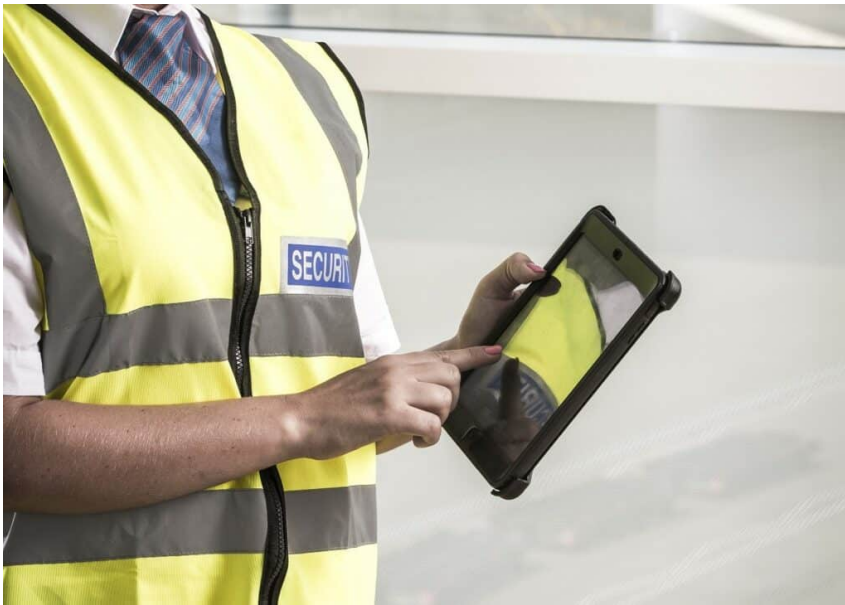


Mitie Security works with the National Portrait Gallery to provide a safer and more secure space for visitors in Central London

2 years ago



Safe Havens are a part of the collective effort to address the issue of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) from the Safer Business Network, in partnership with the Police, Councils, the Security Industry Authority (SIA), City Security Council (CSC), City Property Association (CPA) and the wider business community.

Each Safe Haven is required to display the Safe Haven logo, use CCTV and have the ability to offer access to water, a telephone and charging point. Whilst the scheme has been designed specifically around the safety of women and girls, Safe Havens can support anyone who may feel vulnerable. The Mitie Security team, working at the National Portrait Gallery, have received specialist Welfare And Vulnerability Engagement (WAVE) training to recognise vulnerable people in and outside the venue who may be in need of support.

At the National Portrait Gallery, as with other venues which it has helped to become Safe Havens, Mitie has played a key role alongside representatives from the Safer Business Network in training employees in a 'Train the Trainer' initiative, enabling those who complete the training with Mitie to then pass on these skills to their own teams. Learners are taught about what a Safe Haven is, how to spot signs of vulnerability and how to assist 'users' of Safe Havens. Mitie also coordinates feedback and examples of best practice from each Safe Haven to help continuously improve the initiative.

To support this work, Mitie and the National Portrait Gallery have also introduced 'Ask for Angela' to protect individuals if they feel at risk of danger, unsafe or vulnerable in the Gallery's building. By approaching a member of staff and 'asking for Angela', individuals can subtly signal their request for support. In line with the City Security Council's ongoing commitment to improve safety across London, the National Portrait Gallery has also signed up to the Women's Night Safety Charter.

Jason Towse, Managing Director, Business Services, Mitie, said: "Preventing violence against women and girls, or in fact any vulnerable person, is a responsibility we all share. I am proud that through our work with the National Portrait Gallery we are providing the expertise and skills that will allow this cultural landmark to provide a temporary safe space for those who need support.

"80% of women have been harassed in public and there are 1.5 million cases of stalking on average each year, so it is vital that we have accessible safe havens that promote and prioritise safety,. Other businesses, large and small, can follow the lead of the National Portrait Gallery in becoming a Safe Haven. By opening our doors and equipping colleagues with the right training and skills, we can all help prevent serious crimes or even save a life."

Curt Gibson, Head of Estates and Operations, National Portrait Gallery, said: "Like our Collection, our building is for everyone, so opening in the evenings is key to being an accessible attraction for new and existing audiences alike. By becoming part of the Safe Haven initiative and being part of the Women's Night Safety Charter, we are committed to endeavouring to make visitor to the National Portrait Gallery feel safe and supported, no matter the time of day that they choose to visit us."