

# ONE DAY IN MANCHESTER

The policing of the antifascist counter-protest  
against a Britain First demonstration in  
Manchester, Saturday 18th April 2026



# **The policing of the antifascist counter-protest against a Britain First demonstration in Manchester, Saturday 18th April 2026**

**A report by the Network for Police Monitoring (Netpol)**



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## Foreword by Northern Police Monitoring Project

Northern Police Monitoring Project exists to build community resistance and solidarity against police violence. Our daily work brings us into contact with people who have been harmed by Greater Manchester Police (GMP), and some of those closest to us are families whose loved ones have died following police actions and contact. We know GMP for what they are: a deeply violent police force, who receive ever-increasing resources and funding, and operate with impunity.

We recognise the role that policing has in fascism and the role it plays in repressing resistance to it. NPMP sits within a network of local grassroots groups who have been working together to mobilise to counter Britain First and other far-right groups' presence over the past two years. Far-right presence and harm do not just take place as isolated marches in our city centre: supporters of Britain First and other groups violently attack community members on a regular basis, harassing residents at hotels where asylum seekers are housed and attacking mosques and individuals who are Black or Brown, or are perceived to be Muslims or immigrants. It is local community and antifascist networks who resist, respond and attempt to prevent that violence week in week out, not the police. This backdrop of racist hate and anti-racist resistance culminates in what we saw on 18th April 2026.

We were present as hundreds of anti-racist Mancunians turned up to protect their communities and refuse to let Britain First go unchallenged. In response to then-Mayor Andy Burnham's inaction, his statement rang hollow, but community stepped out to bring those words to life and prove that "there is no place in Greater Manchester for any form of racism and hate". But GMP were determined to protect Britain First and facilitate their march. It was against the anti-racist counterprotesters that GMP lived up to their violent reputation, using a mass of resources to attack people, including horses, kettling, punches, kicks, batons, ripping off masks, and relentless deployment of PAVA spray.

Following 18th April, we demanded answers from Manchester's political leadership. We sent an open letter<sup>1</sup>, signed by over 1,000 people, to Mayor Andy Burnham, Deputy Mayor Kate Green, and Councillor Bev Craig, and submitted FOIs to GMP about the use of force and costs of the policing operation. We received an unsurprisingly shallow response from Kate Green, that included claims such as the effect of PAVA only lasting ten minutes, and the FOIs delivered minimal results. But we ourselves had witnessed police officers deploy PAVA spray zealously at different points throughout the day, leaving people blinded with irritated skin for hours afterwards, and saw medics teams and counter-protestors diligently mobilise to support those targeted. We are entitled to transparency around operational planning and costs, especially as residents of Greater Manchester whose council tax is increased each year to make up for their funding deficits, and we are entitled to accountability around the extreme use of force as the people being harmed by it.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://npolicemonitor.co.uk/npmp/openletterburnhamgreencraig/>

The report you are about to read is an important piece of community record. In the absence of trust in police accountability systems and in the inaction of the city's political leadership, people needed somewhere to turn with their experiences. We are fortunate to exist within a movement which provides avenues for people to do this. When Netpol made the call out for evidence following 18th April, it was responded to by many people, and their contributions are what makes this dossier so important. We send our solidarity to each person who resisted Britain First, and to those who responded to the call for evidence, our neighbours, friends, family members, colleagues, students, and comrades who came out to stand against the far-right.

It is our intention to use this dossier – which holds such undeniable testimony – and its findings and recommendations in our reply to Kate Green. We will continue to pressure this city's political leadership for accountability and stand in solidarity with each of you.

We hope that everyone who reads it will recognise the strength of community, and the need to continue our work to resist the growth of the far-right and state violence. The 18th of April was a day of police violence, but it was also a day of camaraderie, grassroots resistance, community care, and Mancunian spirit. We showed then that when the words of our political leaders ring hollow, the people of Manchester will stand strong. We must continue to build our movement as we have been doing, from the ground up, with wide participation from each corner of our city. We must also remain committed to holding the political leadership to account and dismantling systems of harm. No one is coming to save us, there is only us.

Who protects the fascists? Police protect the fascists.

Who protects us? We protect us.



## Executive Summary

The evidence collected for this report exhibits a consistent pattern of policing characterised by disproportionate and unnecessary force against antifascist protesters on 18 April 2026.

### *Indiscriminate & disproportionate use of force*

Police repeatedly and often indiscriminately attacked individuals who were not posing any imminent threat. Testimonies document:

- PAVA (pepper) spray attacks
- Punches
- Kicks
- Strangulation & choking
- Baton strikes
- Hair pulling
- Sexualised violence
- Preventing people from, and attacking people whilst, accessing medical treatment.

### *Contained, then attacked whilst trapped*

In many instances those the police violently attacked were already contained (kettled) by the police and unable to disperse. Contributors

describe being trapped within police containment, exposed to violence and prevented from moving away without harm, or receiving timely medical care when injured.

### *A deliberate lack of police accountability*

Large numbers of officers did not display identification. There are concerns regarding body-worn video and evidence gathering practices. Senior officers are implicated in acts of extreme violence. Harassment directed towards antifascist protesters by far-right streamers and self-described “auditors” was tolerated. Counter-protesters repeatedly describe officers acting with apparent impunity, seemingly confident that their conduct would not be challenged or investigated. The responses from Kate Green indicate that this is correct.

### *An operational attack on the right to protest*

Police tactics meant protesters were unable to safely move or avoid harm, let alone exercise their right to protest. The violence experienced by antifascist counterdemonstrators was a direct result of operational decisions that enabled this level of violence.

## Introduction

Britain First is a far-right group and political party formed in 2011 by former members of the British National Party, led by Paul Golding. Britain First have capitalised on growing anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiment across Britain, holding a series of high-profile ‘remigration’ rallies.

Manchester has a long and well-documented history of anti-racism and anti-fascism. This report examines policing during a Britain First mobilisation in Manchester on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April and the experiences of antifascist counterdemonstrators.

Across this, and related mobilisations, consistent patterns have emerged of disproportionate force from and non-existent accountability for the police, alongside a significant gap between the lived experience of antifascist protesters, official accounts and media reporting. Where coverage exists, it has frequently framed protesters as “troublemakers”, equating fascist and antifascist demonstrations as equally dangerous to the wider public<sup>2</sup>. Many news reports have reproduced GMP’s statement verbatim<sup>3,4,5</sup>, centring police justification of violence without scrutinising whether this was necessary, proportionate or consistent across groups.

Despite evidence shared on social media and the direct testimonies of protesters, mainstream media engagement with these accounts has been limited. In practice, the absence of sustained reporting has been used by politicians to minimise allegations of police misconduct and to reframe structural concerns as individual complaints which can be resolved through formal police complaints processes.

MP Jeff Smith, for example, responded to a constituent who had raised their concerns about policing of the march with:

*“Regarding your comments concerning over-forceful police tactics in relation to the counter-protest, I have been unable to find reference to this in any of the reporting on the issue. If you are unhappy with the policing of the protest, I would advise putting in a complaint to GMP”<sup>6</sup>.*

Northern Police Monitoring Project (NPMP) delivered a letter, with over a thousand signatories, to Mayor Andy Burnham, Deputy Mayor Kate Green and Leader of Manchester City Council Bev Craig<sup>7</sup>. This documented the violence antifascist protesters were met with and called for condemnation of Britain First, an apology to the people of Manchester, and divestment from policing towards community-based support.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.itv.com/news/granada/2026-04-18/britain-first-march-far-right-group-gathers-in-manchester-amid-counter-protests>

<sup>3</sup> <https://aboutmanchester.co.uk/demo-brings-city-centre-to-the-halt/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.rochvalleyradio.com/news/manchester/city-centre-brought-to-standstill-as-major-police-operation-surrounds-britain-first-far-right-protest/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://manchesternews.com/three-arrested-as-manchester-city-centre-protests-largely-peaceful/>

<sup>6</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol

<sup>7</sup> <https://npolicemonitor.co.uk/npmp/openletterburnhamgreencraig/>

The letter has received a response from Deputy Mayor Kate Green. While she acknowledges that the use of PAVA is “distressing”, the response largely directs individuals who have been subject to police violence towards GMP’s existing complaints procedures, stating that any complaints submitted would be reviewed alongside body-worn camera video and other footage. However, it did not address concerns raised by signatories regarding the cumulative and systemic nature of the violence on 18 April, the barriers many face in pursuing complaints, or the risks associated with identifying oneself through police complaints mechanisms.

This report aims to document those experiences collectively and to provide an evidential record of policing on the day which does not rely on individuals navigating existing complaints processes in isolation.

This report also responds to the demand from Manchester’s political leadership for photographic, video and testimonial evidence before they will act: at a meeting on 15 May at the British Muslim Heritage Centre in Whalley Range, Kate Green responded to a question about the police’s actions on the day by asking for evidence of police violence, stating she would be willing to present it to Greater Manchester Police (GMP).

## Context

Britain First announced a ‘remigration’ rally in Manchester on Saturday 21 February, calling for mass deportations and framing their gathering explicitly around anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim politics. Antifascist and anti-racist counterdemonstrators mobilised in significant numbers in response.

The counter-protest was met with a heavy police presence, with GMP and mutual aid forces containing and kettling demonstrators in an attempt to prevent them from blocking Britain First’s planned march route (through the centre of Manchester, from Piccadilly Station to Castlefield Bowl).

For opposing fascists marching through our city, local people were subject to significant force by police. While it is not within the scope of this report to detail the events of 21 February, injuries resulting from police violence against counterdemonstrators included a person reported as having a fractured spine having been run over by a police vehicle, a protester requiring hospital treatment for an open head wound caused by a police baton strike, and protesters reporting limb and back injuries caused by baton strikes while contained.

Despite these tactics, the Britain First march was significantly disrupted, with turnout in Castlefield Bowl substantially lower than anticipated: only a couple of hundred gathered in the rain, far from the thousands in attendance claimed by its organisers. Paul Golding’s subsequent account of the day, released in a video on 23 February, described repeated re-routing, reduced turnout and disruption attributed to “trans communist socialist lunatics”.

It is in this context that the humiliated Britain First leader called for a return to Manchester for a further mobilisation on Saturday 18 April.

## Incident overview

On 18 April 2026, Britain First returned to Manchester for the second time this year for a national march. Antifascist collectives within Manchester, including the coalition group Resist Britain First, had planned a counterdemonstration.

The Britain First mobilisation formed part of a wider series of far-right demonstrations across Britain. Counterprotesters gathered in large numbers in central Manchester in response.

From late morning, GMP deployed a large-scale public order operation across the city centre. Police from nine forces were present, with Lancashire Constabulary, Merseyside Police, Cheshire Constabulary, Cumbria Police, South Yorkshire Police, Cleveland Police, West Yorkshire Police and Durham Constabulary offering GMP mutual aid.

Senior officers prioritised protecting the Britain First march route through central Manchester by separating fascist and antifascist groups. Throughout the day and across multiple locations, counterprotesters were kettled, moved through the city and repeatedly contained away from their march route. These containment zones were maintained for extended periods, meaning the movement of antifascist demonstrators was heavily restricted.

Britain First supporters were escorted along their planned route under sustained police protection, with notably lower levels of physical containment reported in comparison to people opposing them.

Both the far-right marchers and counterprotesters were channelled into opposing pens in St. Peter's Square from around 1.30pm, separated by several police lines.

Testimony from legal observers and participants describes repeated use of force against antifascist counterdemonstrators throughout the day, including consistent accounts of:

- Use of PAVA spray at close range during containment and dispersal
- Physical assaults including punches, strikes, blows, kicking and pushing delivered during crowd control interactions
- Hair pulling and forcible restraint techniques
- Choking and strangulation pressure reported during holds and dispersals
- Mounted police deployments, including horses to drive crowds back
- Kettling conditions as a vehicle for triggering and sustaining violence
- Denial or obstruction of medical access
- Targeted physical intervention against legal observers and journalists

- Gendered patterns of force
- Failure of police to display identification

These accounts describe force being applied in both moments of active confrontation and during static containment and attempted movement between protest locations, with no discernible escalation from protesters.

By the end of the operation, Greater Manchester Police reported a small number of arrests and characterised the overall policing operation as successful and focused on public order management. This, however, contrasts sharply with the volume and consistency describing sustained use of force against antifascist counterdemonstrators, as well as the nature of injuries and distress reported during and after the event.

A full timeline of the day's incidents can be found in **Appendix A** at the end of the report.

## Methodology

This report draws on a mixed evidential base, combining testimony submitted directly to Netpol, legal observer notes, information shared through community and antifascist networks, and formal information requests.

Netpol issued two public calls for evidence via Instagram: the first on 22 April focused on the lack of police identification during the operation<sup>8</sup>, and the second on 27 April sought accounts of police violence experienced on 18 April<sup>9</sup>. There was a further call-out for witness evidence on Bluesky on 28 April<sup>10</sup>. In total, 49 responses were received, consisting of written testimonies accompanied by photographic and video material.

The evidence directly quoted in this report has been provided via written or verbal accounts. We also hold extensive photo and video material, which has been used to corroborate and confirm testimony. However, this material is not being made public in order to preserve the integrity of any possible proceedings in relation to police conduct.

Similarly, all testimonies have been anonymised. Contributions were either provided on an off-the-record basis or anonymised at the point of submission due to concerns about legal vulnerability and identification. This anonymisation is not possible through formal police scrutiny routes or investigation processes.

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<sup>8</sup> [https://www.instagram.com/p/DXcKVPHjMsm/?img\\_index=9](https://www.instagram.com/p/DXcKVPHjMsm/?img_index=9)

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.instagram.com/p/DXpCofEjNob/?img\\_index=1](https://www.instagram.com/p/DXpCofEjNob/?img_index=1)

<sup>10</sup> <https://bsky.app/profile/netpol.org/post/3mkkott2oxc2z>

The report also draws on two Freedom of Information (FOI) requests submitted to GMP which have been shared with Netpol. These requests relate to the cost of the policing operation and the deployment of PAVA spray during the protest.

Where possible, testimonies were cross-referenced with accompanying visual material, legal observer notes and independent accounts in order to corroborate patterns of force and identify recurring forms of police conduct. This process enabled verification of multiple accounts of particularly severe uses of violence.

## What happened on 18 April?

### *Kettling*

Kettling is a crowd-control tactic regularly used by police at protests, whereby the police surround a crowd and trap them within an area for undefined periods. Protesters are then prevented from leaving unless police open an exit.

We received evidence about three main sites where police kettled antifascist protesters: Piccadilly Gardens at the beginning of the march; a smaller kettle on the intersection of Princess Street and Mosely Street; and a larger kettle within the pens at St. Peter's Square. While kettling is not in itself an overt use of violence, these kettles were used as the starting point for the police violence that followed. This violence was carried out on people who were kept contained, while attempts to block the Britain First march were blocked.

Netpol have also been sent a wealth of video evidence showing no motivation or justification for the persistent escalations of police violence enacted on those within these kettled areas.

### *Piccadilly Gardens*

This kettle was first formed shortly after counterprotesters gathered in Piccadilly Gardens at 11.30am. Testimony provided to Netpol, timed 11.30am, reads:

*"I stood near the front and ended up holding a banner. After a while, the Stand Up to Racism group seemed to rile the police with chanting. After this, the police deployed more officers and began to push us, and we stood holding our banners. I heard one officer say to the one next to him 'in five minues [sic] we'll batter these'. The police started pushing us more - at one point I heard an officer in a white cap shout 'strike' ... The officers who were*

*pushing us started throwing punches, shoving, swiping, grabbing and kicking at people. I myself think I was punched or kicked about 10-15 times.”<sup>11</sup>*

Verifying this account, another testimony tells us:

*“I was on the front up against the police line at Piccadilly Gardens at the start of the demo, & saw a good deal of police violence there ... I was hit and kicked by police officers.”<sup>12</sup>*

Reflecting the timeline collated through access to the notes of legal observers who were present on the day, another protester provided us with a testimony of the reinforcement of the kettle with police horses and officers equipped with batons and PAVA spray. This took place when the antifascist demonstration attempted to move towards Piccadilly Station, where the fascist mobilisation was congregating and planned to start:

*“Once the crowd began moving outwards slightly towards the Piccadilly station. The police began enforcing the kettle and brought in 2-4 police horses and more tactical enforcement behind the main line equipped with batons and PAVA spray, some [sic] the police did not have badge numbers attached ... Lots of shouting and demands to “move back!” and “don’t push!” From the police all whilst the police line was constantly pushing us and moving in wherever possible. The anti-fascist crowd began chanting “let us march” and then the police began attempting to move in further so the counter protesters stood their ground and didn’t allow any more movement from the police. As this continued the police began to get more aggressive towards anyone resisting throwing punches and shoving people with their shoulders.”<sup>13</sup>*

Videos provided to Netpol by those among the front few lines of the kettle evidence the claims made by the above testimonies, showing clear police escalation amid calls of “let us march” by antifascist protesters<sup>14</sup>.

## ***Princess Street***

A further confrontation by police against counterdemonstrators took place on Princess Street, which led to the formation of a police kettle. An eyewitness told us:

*“Later on in the day at St Peters was when the worst of the police violence took place that I was witness to. On the tram tracks I was again struck in the face and chest with open palm strikes and I believe one or two closed fist punches. When they began pushing the group back to try and form a kettle I was shoved and told to move back. I began arguing with them telling, them [sic] I couldn’t move back, when an Inspector put his hands on either side of the cops in front of him and booted me in the balls. I believe I was also punched as I doubled over from the pain. His shoulder number was 5000 and he was*

<sup>11</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>12</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>13</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>14</sup> Video evidence provided to Netpol.

*wearing a red hat. I was kneed several more times by cops, before an officer booted my knee, causing it to give out and me to fall to the ground in pain.”<sup>15</sup>*

This account demonstrates how kettles were used as an instrument of violence, both by subjecting those in the kettle to unreasonable force (despite the fact they could not leave), and then to deny or obstruct medical treatment to those in need.

Supporting this account, another demonstrator told us:

*“On St Peter’s Square on Saturday I was one of many anti-fascist counter-protesters who were subjected to completely unreasonable force by GMP. The cops claim we were violent, but that isn’t true; they really just come up and shove people unprovoked, which is unnecessary. I was standing in a line with other comrades as we chanted and I held a Palestinian flag on a long wooden pole. The police physically forced us back from nearer the middle of the square to the corner near Spoons, and I called out to everyone alongside me to watch the curb behind us as we were moved back as I didn’t want anyone to trip. We were kettled there by Spoons [The Waterhouse, Princess Street] for quite a while, opposite a line of cops. One of our guys passed around some snacks. When an order was given, they once again charged forward and began attacking us. As I focused on preventing my Palestinian flag from injuring anyone in the crush, an officer seized the opportunity to snatch it from me and took great satisfaction in snapping it in half. Another had his hand directly and painfully on my left breast as he violently pushed me backwards into the crowd, and I heard him say, “You’re all a bunch of pricks.” There was nowhere to move in any direction, all I could do was try my best not to fall down so I wouldn’t be trampled. One officer said to another, “I’ve got someone else’s blood on me here,” and held up his hand to show a patch of blood. Whether this was from another protester, or if the cop who broke my flag had given himself a splinter in his zeal to demonstrate his contempt for an oppressed people, I can only speculate.”<sup>16</sup>*

Legal observer notes from this time confirm that the kettle was first formed around 12:46pm. At 1:06pm, the situation appeared stable but notes report Inspectors at the scene discussing moving in on the kettle “from front and back”. The crowd were then instructed that they were blocking the highway, despite having been forced to congregate in this area by descending police lines, before a police sergeant (identification number 15017) moves officers forward to further contain the kettle. Again, this demonstrates the arbitrary escalation of police force.

### ***St. Peter’s Square***

The majority of the testimonies received by Netpol regarding use of violence against protesters are focused on the police kettle that formed around the antifascist pen set up in St. Peter’s Square.

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<sup>15</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>16</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

The following three testimonies were provided by separate individuals, and all discuss severe levels of police violence in response to protesters touching the barriers at the front of the pen:

*"After the block arrived in St. Peter's Square and got into our dedicated section, several people were of course at the barrier. People were not pushing the barrier or attempting to lean over, merely at the barrier. One officer – Badge number 18524 – was very aggressive, pushing people off and hitting one person in particular. I only managed to capture the tail end of that altercation<sup>17</sup>, but you can see how aggressively they are handling this person still, pushing and punching very hard on their neck, shoulders and head. I can attest to the fact that this protester was calm and made no moves to interact with police officers or the barrier beyond standing by it with their hands resting on it, so there was no need for the police to interact with them at all."<sup>18</sup>*

*"I was at the Manchester against Britain First protest on 18th April 2026. I was right at the front, touching the barriers on St Peter's Square so literally looking the police in the eyes. The immediately resorted to using force. People were shaking the metal barriers, so police started hitting them, my friend even got punched in the face and she was not the only one. It seemed like they lost control completely, and essentially just started swinging when anyone touched the barriers. No one from the protest attempted to assault a police officer. In my opinion, the level of force they used was incredibly excessive – we were literally just shaking a fence."<sup>19</sup>*

*"I was at the protest on the 18th and got a bruised nose after an altercation with an officer at the barrier in St Peter's Square. I'd thought it would be my chest that bruised, as I remember being shoved particularly hard and had a bit of pain breathing the next day, but I remember receiving further blows from the same man when I refused to release the barrier."<sup>20</sup>*

These accounts are also supported by footage from those at the front of the pens, where the barriers and police lines are clearly visible.

Further testimony describes how the fence itself was used was used to attack protesters, reminiscent of 'blading' (an unauthorised police tactic of using riot shields to strike people):

*"I later followed the crowd down to St Peters Square where there was another kettle set up with fences and police with batons out ready to attack, I helped intervene when officers immediately started hitting with batons and throwing punches at one counter protester, all this whilst moving the fence further into and on top of the individual similar to how riot shields are used. During my time in St Peters Square I saw multiple counter protesters get physically assaulted or threatened with violence by police officers."<sup>21</sup>*

<sup>17</sup> Video evidence provided to Netpol.

<sup>18</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>19</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>20</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>21</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

Protesters describe feeling trapped, unable to leave while facing violence from officers even when they believe they are complying with demands:

*“Later, near the square at the end, riot police started giving orders to get back and took out their batons. Comrades were beaten and shoved, so we started to move back as a group. I turned around to move away with the group when a riot officer grabbed the back of my coat, stopping me from leaving, and then pushed me violently forwards and towards the ground, hitting my head and knee into the concrete.”<sup>22</sup>*

## Use of PAVA spray

PAVA spray is chemical irritant used to incapacitate, similarly to pepper spray<sup>23</sup>. A FOI submitted to GMP, which Netpol has access to, requested information on the total number of PAVA deployments made and whether authorisation was given (and, if so, at what point). The response claimed that there were only three PAVA deployments, which differs considerably from the testimonies provided to Netpol and the notes of legal observers. Additionally, GMP confirmed no authorisation for PAVA deployment was recorded. The accounts in this section describe uses of PAVA, with the majority focused on use early in the day at Piccadilly Gardens.

### Piccadilly Gardens

Legal observer notes provided to Netpol first reported the use of PAVA spray at Wellington Statue at about 12:15pm<sup>24</sup>. The following testimonies display indiscriminate and widespread use of PAVA against protesters posing no threat to police.

*“I was at the counter demo on April 18th in Manchester. Within 10 minutes of arriving we were immediately kettled and shortly after police started to ram us with horses making the kettle smaller. As you can see on the videos they then started to use PAVA spray completely unprovoked, even using them from the horses to gain more coverage. Again another example of how police abuse their powers.”<sup>25</sup>*

*“I was pepper sprayed by the police there's video of this incident and plenty of witnesses”<sup>26</sup>*

<sup>22</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>23</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/674f300734a339921747d02b/Home+Office+Standard+for+Police+Chemical+Irritants+-+PAVA+-+Publication+Number+23\\_14+-+v2+October+2024.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/674f300734a339921747d02b/Home+Office+Standard+for+Police+Chemical+Irritants+-+PAVA+-+Publication+Number+23_14+-+v2+October+2024.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Legal observer notes provided to Netpol.

<sup>25</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>26</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

*"I was one of several people in our group who was PAVA sprayed."<sup>27</sup>*

*"I personally was pepper sprayed in the face, and I saw several friends get pepper sprayed directly in the eyes at close range"<sup>28</sup>*



*Photograph of officer 8578 affected by PAVA spray, from anonymous testimony provided to Netpol*

One counterprotester shared several photos and told us:

*"You can also see that PAVA spray was deployed so widely that [officer] 8578 was caught up in it, those photos also show the officer next to him with no shoulder number"<sup>29</sup>*

<sup>27</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>28</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>29</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

The following testimonies describe the impacts of PAVA spray used on protesters, including pain and debilitation, and the dangers posed by obstructed vision:

*"We were PAVA sprayed by the police at least 4 times. Several police officers were spraying us at the same time. There was no warning from the police. Fortunately I had sunglasses on so it didn't go into my eyes but it was all over my face which was very painful."*<sup>30</sup>

*"Police pepper sprayed me directly in my eyes (I literally felt the liquid touch my eyeballs). The pepper spray left me temporarily unable to see, and caused considerable pain to my eyes and the surrounding area. The skin irritation to my cheeks and lips lasted for nearly an hour. Being left suddenly unable to see meant I was at risk of further injury from falling over and getting trampled in the crowd. Thankfully the quick wits of fellow protesters meant I was helped to safety and given water to rinse my eyes."*<sup>31</sup>

*"I saw a white guy, maybe aged 60 plus, sat on the pavement at the side of the crowd, pleading for help, with his eyes severely reddened and swollen, with lots of clear fluid/tears streaming down his face. He seemed traumatised, and in great distress and pain, and the people trying to offer him assistance said that he'd been 'pepper-sprayed' by the police."*

*I saw a mixed-race male, maybe in his late 40s, propped up on the pavement several yards away from the first guy I mentioned. He displayed very similar symptoms of physical injury and damage to his face and eyes, to the first man I've described. He also seemed to be in agony, and most distressed."*

*A few minutes later I saw a mid-30s black male very upset, shaking his head and blinking his eyes non-stop, in obvious pain and discomfort from damage to his eyes. He told me that he was terrified of rubbing or touching his eyes or face, as he'd been 'pepper-sprayed' by police officers."*<sup>32</sup>

*"I was stood in the second or third row of people in the antifascist bloc in Piccadilly gardens near the police line by the Wellington statue. Police were aggressive and shoving protesters at the front violently. Several police mounted on horses were also present and getting very close to the line. At shortly after 12 they sprayed myself and others directly in the face and eyes with large amounts of PAVA spray, blinding and incapacitating us. We had to move away and be attended to by medics after this."*<sup>33</sup>

A medic's testimony reads *"on 18.4.26 in City centre I witnessed & treated aftermath of GMP pepper-spray attack on several protestors, incl. some w/. significant disabilities."*<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>31</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>32</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>33</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>34</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

Some of the most disturbing uses, however, involve police deliberately removing the face and eyewear of protesters in order to spray them directly in faces and eyes:

*"I experienced that I was on the front line against police early in the day at Piccadilly Square Gardens. I would estimate around 12 o'clock. A female police officer in a white hat who's [sic] number I am seeking, reached through the counter protesters around me and purposefully reached and grabbed my hat to take it off, and ripped my mask off, with such force that my ear piercing was ripped out of my ear along with cartilage, causing tearing and bleeding.*

*I believe there was absolutely no reason for this officer to rip my mask off in this situation. This was immediately prior to the use of PAVA spray beginning. No audible warning was given for the use of the PAVA spray. Counter-protestors began calling around that it was being used. I do not believe it was a coincidence that this officer removed my hat (protecting my eyes) and my mask before PAVA spray was used. I was then pepper sprayed and had to be administered water in my eyes. I would like to note that I was in no way acting with violence. I was linked arms with protestors next to me, using no force. I was standing on a line of protestors against the police resisting kettling."<sup>35</sup> [Another account corroborates this testimony.<sup>36</sup>]*

*"I was present when police first deployed PAVA spray in Piccadilly Gardens. After I was pushed back by police ... an officer in a white cap (which I believe makes him a sergeant, though I may be wrong) reached for my sunglasses and mask, and ripped them off to PAVA me in the face. I was not given any warning, nor was I served with a 60AA to remove my face coverings, I was assaulted and then sprayed directly in the eyes and face. My sunglasses were thrown so aggressively I was unable to retrieve them after. I watched police continue to try and push back protesters, even when 20 people were on the floor behind the group blinded by PAVA. The police attempted to push protestors onto those people, despite those on horseback having a clear view of those on the floor."<sup>37</sup>*

*"During the aggression one of the police behind the line began approaching the left side of the line (where I was stationed) with a hand over their PAVA spray. Someone in the front line saw this and announced that they had PAVA spray and then as I turned to one side the officer had parted the heads of 2 officers to the left of me sprayed once then removed the glasses of an individual and proceeded to spray PAVA into their eyes and mouth and onto the people either side before retreating back behind the line and talking amongst other officers bragging and making hand gestures re-enacting the actions they had taken."<sup>38</sup>*

*"At one point, an officer grabbed my arm, I thought to get me out the crowd to arrest me. I heard him shout 'shoving, shoving' whilst pointing at my arm that I was just holding onto the banner with, as if to say I had been shoving him. He then smacked my cap up and was sprayed with pepper spray on the right side of my face and in my eye. I was stumbling*

<sup>35</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>36</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>37</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>38</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

*around still whilst being pushed, and then when I finally stood upright I was sprayed with a full discharge of PAVA right into my left eye at very close distance. At no point did any officer deploying PAVA warn they were going to discharge, and I saw multiple people have their caps pushed or face coverings dislodged to be sprayed, and more people being sprayed at very close range. I stumbled to the back where the scene resembled a war zone of people who had been injured by the police. Around twenty people were sat about me having been sprayed and more were injured later on when I left. I had no clue what to expect in terms of the effects of the PAVA spray, how long it would last but the medics on the ground really helped me and saw I was OK. I had to take my contact lenses out and due to my extreme short-sightedness had to leave the demo. I was only there for half an hour.”<sup>39</sup>*

*“I got PAVA sprayed in the eyes and have bruising to intercostal muscles between ribs (assessed by GP today). There are witnesses if necessary. I was resisting pressure to move from where we were standing. My (adult) daughter said they tried to spray behind her glasses – she wasn’t with me at time.”<sup>40</sup>*

*“In Piccadilly in the first round of pepper spray, near the front - cop PAVAd my hand (I think while aiming for someone else’s face) and it was pretty irritated/painful for maybe 4 hours”.<sup>41</sup>*

*“I witnessed police spraying PAVA directly into people’s eyes at point blank range ... I saw a police officer pull the glasses and mask off the face of one protestor.”<sup>42</sup>*

*“[Referring to] Several officers: Later police attempted to grab my mask off me. I saw other people around me had their mask and glasses pulled off in order to be sprayed.”<sup>43</sup>*

The following are accounts referring to specific officers’ conduct in deploying PAVA:

*“At Wellington statue near the start of the demo, a cop (potentially badge 2299) broke my glasses and shoved me in the face, I subsequently received a large amount of PAVA spray from about 1m distance and left the demo”<sup>44</sup>*

The account of Officer 2299 is supported by video evidence provided to Netpol, another testimony stating that this officer was particularly aggressive, and the notes of legal observers.

Another testimony reads:

*“Officer 05824 snatched my mask without warning. This is video evidence, posted by sky news. The video also shows the officer with the white cap pepper spraying my friend in the face for no reason while she is facing the other way.”<sup>45</sup>*

<sup>39</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>40</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>41</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>42</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>43</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>44</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>45</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

Video evidence of this account can be found at 1.07 in a video, posted by *Sky News*<sup>46</sup>:

*"Officer 8708 (I think, I have lost the message where I documented this) forcibly removed my mask, hat and sunglasses to pepper spray me. He did not serve me a 60aa [instruction], he literally ripped my mask off me and threw my sunglasses to the side (I was not able to recover them) to make sure he could directly spray me in the eyes."*<sup>47</sup>

Again, the above account of Officer 8708 is confirmed by notes from a local antifascist group, which read "8708 – removed sunglasses to pepper spray"<sup>48</sup>. This officer is also identified by several testimonies as particularly violent, punching protesters and using PAVA spray indiscriminately<sup>49</sup>.

### *St. Peter's Square*

Accounts of PAVA deployment in St. Peter's Square are fewer in number but follow very similar themes of lack of provocation from protesters, no audible warnings, the removal of face and eye wear to spray people directly in the face, and the identification of particularly violent officers.

These are again supported by video evidence made available to Netpol<sup>50</sup>:

*"At St Peter's Square I saw a young man who I now believe was pepper sprayed as he looked distressed and his face was covered in liquid walking quickly away from the edge of the protest. I was kettled at St Peter's Square. I observed the use of the tram at St Peter's Square as a barrier keeping counter protesters kettled."*<sup>51</sup>

*"... Around the same time a cop pulled the mask and glasses of the person next to me off, then reached around to PAVA them, again when we weren't pushing against them at all. I think this may have been because that person had had a little back and forth with the cop ('stop pushing' 'we aren't pushing you' etc)."*<sup>52</sup>

*"5875: Singled me out for no reason, saying 'that one that one' then grabbed my hair and pulled it, while someone was spraying pepper spray on me. It got the back of my neck and ears but not in my eyes luckily. She was told by her colleague to stop."*<sup>53</sup>

We have received footage of this last incident, within which the officer in question (05875) can be seen smiling and laughing with other officers immediately following the deployment of PAVA<sup>54</sup>. Notes

<sup>46</sup> <https://news.sky.com/video/hundreds-gather-in-manchester-at-britain-first-march-and-counter-demo-13533609>

<sup>47</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>48</sup> Notes of local antifascist group provided to Netpol.

<sup>49</sup> Anonymous testimonies provided to Netpol.

<sup>50</sup> Video evidence provided to Netpol.

<sup>51</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>52</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>53</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>54</sup> Video evidence provided to Netpol.

provided to Netpol by a local antifascist group read “5875 – [police officer] singled out protesters to threaten them, pulled hair, used PAVA directed at individuals”<sup>55</sup>.

It is worth noting that Deputy Mayor Kate Green’s response to NPMP’s Open Letter refers to the use of PAVA as “limited”, and “not deployed in relation to the static protestors, but where protestors ignored or resisted police instructions and attempted to breach cordons or move outside of the space they had been told they were permitted to occupy”. She also claims to have seen drone footage supporting this<sup>56</sup>.

## **Physical police violence**

The following testimonies describe various forms of police violence: the categories should not be understood as discrete or mutually exclusive. Many contributors described experiencing multiple forms of force during a single encounter with police. As a result, it was often difficult to categorise testimonies according to a single type of violence. For the purposes of this report, testimonies have been organised under the category that best reflects the primary focus of the account, while recognising that considerable overlap exists between categories.

## **Punching and striking**

One particularly well-documented incident involves a person reporting being punched in the face, unprovoked, near St. Peter’s Square tram stop at around 12.30pm:

*“The first [incident] was just after marching to St Peter’s Square, when the police were attempting to form the kettle. I was stood by one of the tramlines when a police officer approached me and told me to move back, I was hesitant and the Police Officer (no. 2956) punched me in the face.”<sup>57</sup>*

This is supported by the testimonies of those who observed this incident:

*“I witnessed officer 2956 punch a protester in the side of the head. The punch was thrown with tremendous force and from angle that could be interpreted as ‘from behind’. Unfortunately I did not record any footage, but I did take a photograph of the officer after I confronted him about the use of excessive force. The officer claimed ‘self defence’ but I did not witness the victim act in a violent manner towards the officer.”<sup>58</sup>*

*“12.25pm male officer 2956 punched a lad front on in the face / unprovoked – that was in front of the St Peter’s tram stop.”<sup>59</sup>*

<sup>55</sup> Notes of local antifascist group provided to Netpol.

<sup>56</sup> <https://netpol.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Deputy-Mayor-to-NPMP-Open-Letter.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>58</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>59</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

A photograph of the officer was also provided by someone who had witnessed the event<sup>60</sup>.

Noting a separate incident, another testimony reads:

*"I wanted to report that I witnessed a police officer remove their cap and full force headbutt the person stood next to me, as well as punching several people in the face at the anti-britain first protest in Manchester on the 18th of April. The officer's number 18681."*<sup>61</sup>



*Officer 2956, accused in anonymous testimony provided to Netpol of punching a protester in the face*

Again, we have received corroborating footage of this officer (18681) punching counterdemonstrators kettled at the front of the antifascist pen in St. Peter's Square. He was also reported as particularly violent by the notes of a local antifascist group, which read "18618 and 19449 – violent [police officers]"<sup>62</sup>.

Another testimony describes open palm strikes to the face and chest:

<sup>60</sup> Photograph provided to Netpol.

<sup>61</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>62</sup> Notes of local antifascist group provided to Netpol.

*“Very early on, when we tried to leave to head to store street [sic] I was hit in the face and chest multiple times with open palm strikes. They then made plans to arrest me with an inspector pointing at me and going ‘that one in the hoodie, grab him’.”<sup>63</sup>*

We have also received a number of testimonies of punches and strikes taking place in Piccadilly Gardens:

*“At Piccadilly Gardens I was briefly at the front of the crowd and was repeatedly struck in the face (as well as being PAVA sprayed) by either 6880, 8578 or 8708, possibly all of them. After this, I retreated to further back in the crowd and was stood on the second line, but officers continued to reach past the people at the front of the crowd to target me for repeated punches. The final picture attached shows my bruising after the demonstration from this, there is also some light abrasion visible to my eyelid which I believe is a result of my glasses hitting my eye when punched”<sup>64</sup>.*

Again, this is supported by photographic evidence<sup>65</sup>, video evidence<sup>66</sup>, and the notes of a local antifascist group: “8708 & 8758 [this may refer to Officer 8578] – [police officers] were especially violent. Punched protestors and used PAVA liberally (12:39)”<sup>67</sup>.

In a video provided to Netpol, Officer 8578 can be seen punching a protester in the face, who has their head down, hands holding a banner and is standing still, posing no discernible threat, in the face at the front of the kettle in Piccadilly Gardens<sup>68</sup>. Officer 8578 is also described as “*extremely violent ... dragged a protester across the floor by their hair*”<sup>69</sup>.

Other officers identified include Officer 6680, who repeatedly punched a protester in the face at 12:17pm, and 1635, who is also reported to have punched a protester in the face at 3:00pm<sup>70</sup>.

A further video shared with Netpol clearly shows an officer punching two people in the throat. Both appear unthreatening, are standing a fair distance away and pose no physical risk to the offending officer; one is stood with their hands in their pockets and is knocked backwards when they are struck<sup>71</sup>.

Another testimony describes combined use of punching, pushing and hair pulling:

*“I witnessed someone being punched in the face by the police, and the police pushing peoples [sic] heads forward with extreme force and pulling their hair.”<sup>72</sup>*

<sup>63</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>64</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>65</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>66</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>67</sup> Notes of local antifascist group provided to Netpol.

<sup>68</sup> Video evidence provided to Netpol.

<sup>69</sup> Notes of local antifascist group provided to Netpol.

<sup>70</sup> Notes of local antifascist group provided to Netpol.

<sup>71</sup> Video evidence provided to Netpol.

<sup>72</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

## ***Strangling and choking***

We have received a number of accounts which describe officers strangling and choking counterprotesters:

*"Just emailing because I got punched in the ribs by an officer so hard I was winded, and then he grabbed me around the throat and forced me backwards by my neck while I was struggling to breathe. Two of my friends also got punched in the head by cops, one got pushed to the floor repeatedly and another got a baton to the knee so that they could barely walk."*<sup>73</sup>

*"... On the tram tracks at Piccadilly gardens, I was choked by a cop who used his other hand to 'sternum rub' on my chest around my heart. I was also struck in the face and chest at this point."*<sup>74</sup>

*"12.35pm male officer 16625 put a lad in a stranglehold from behind unprovoked – that was in front of art gallery on Moseley St."*<sup>75</sup>

*"A police officer grabbed the keffiyeh round my neck and pulled it in a way that seemed deliberately intended to tighten it around my throat – I saw this happen to several other people also."*<sup>76</sup>

*"I also saw police grabbing hoods and scarves to choke protesters."*<sup>77</sup>

We have also seen legal observer notes that report an officer grabbing someone by the throat on one of the roads running between Bishopsgate and Bale Street at around 1:32pm<sup>78</sup>.

A legal observer, based on a first-hand account, also noted an officer pushing someone into a ticket scanner and winding them so badly that they were unable to breath, before kneeling them in the crotch<sup>79</sup>. The officer's identification number is recorded as 18246, and the incident took place at St. Peter's Square tram stop at around 12:35pm.

## ***Kicking protesters***

Many reports mention being kicked by police with great force while protesters' backs are turned to police lines – again, posing seemingly little threat that would necessitate force.

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<sup>73</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>74</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>75</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>76</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>77</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>78</sup> Legal observer notes provided to Netpol.

<sup>79</sup> Legal observer testimony provided to Netpol.

*"later at St Peters – near the front again. I was facing away from police. cop kicked the back of my leg repeatedly when we weren't pushing them at all"*<sup>80</sup>.

*"I was also kicked with force in the back of my legs 3 times by a police officer (I had my back to the police line)."*<sup>81</sup>

*"On the protest today, 18th April, I was repeatedly kicked and pushed by GMP."*<sup>82</sup>

[Following being kettled in Piccadilly Gardens at the beginning of the protest] *"I also noticed I had two huge gashes from being kicked by the police on my leg and shin respectively – I have still marks here a month on."*<sup>83</sup>

## Use of batons

The use of batons by police has been recorded throughout the day, although some of the most disturbing scenes take place during a police pursuit of counterprotesters on Peter Street<sup>84</sup>.

*"I am getting in touch to provide a video"*<sup>85</sup> *of police using unnecessary force to move counter protestors down a road with no reason to. They were pushing/shoving counter away from seemingly nothing, and hitting people with batons when people paused to pick up their fallen comrades."*<sup>86</sup>

*"Please find attached a video"*<sup>87</sup> *of my daughter [redacted] holding a banner at anti-fascist march. She is 23yrs old, student + weighs less than 8 stone. She was thrown to the ground by police, three times ... You can hear her cries, "Help me". I am absolutely appalled and deeply fearful for the safety of peaceful protesters. It just takes one shove, one person to crack their skull with potentially devastating consequences"*<sup>88</sup>.

*"During another altercation that happened later on Peter Street, I was again on the front line and was excessively shoved to the floor several times without warning. They screamed at me to get up and, yet continued to throw me around and raised their batons at me despite my pleas to let me go. I sustained a few bruises on my elbows and knees."*<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>81</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>82</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>83</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>84</sup> See: 10:00 – 12:18 of <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zFP8OspmvI>.

<sup>85</sup> Video evidence provided to Netpol.

<sup>86</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>87</sup> Video evidence provided to Netpol.

<sup>88</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>89</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

*“Later on I was in the group that escaped the kettle, where a path was being blocked off from us, before I was pushed over by a police officer and repeatedly shouted at on the floor (there is a video circulating on social media of this)”<sup>90</sup>.*

There is footage of this incident available online, upholding these testimonies. This demonstrates officers pushing and using batons against retreating protesters, many of whom have fallen over, are unable to get up in the commotion, and are trampled on by officers<sup>91</sup>. This event was recorded and is publicly available on YouTube (10:00 - 12:18 in video)<sup>92</sup>.

An earlier clip in this same video (4:09 – 4:28)<sup>93</sup> shows officers poised with their batons, before police on horses move through them, right up to the line of protesters. You can see them moving the horses forward to intimidate protesters, while one officer on horseback reaches down to the push back the heads of protesters and possibly deploy PAVA.

Another testimony describes the use of batons following an instruction to move back, without any time being given for the counterprotester to do so. The location is unknown:

*“The video... shows me and my partner being beaten with a baton by officer 02253. We were instructed to move back and were not given the chance to do so before my partners left knee was severely hit, this is when I moved in front to defend them and my right knee was also severely hit. This happened at around 2:30-3pm on the 18th. I’ve also attached a photo of the swelling on my knee<sup>94</sup>, it may yet come out in a bruise but it has been extremely painful to walk on.”<sup>95</sup>*

Several testimonies also cite a Police Liaison Officer (PLO), identified as 12394, acting aggressively and drawing a baton on protesters:

*“At St Peter’s Square, I was stood far enough back to not face direct police violence myself, but I did observe 12394 wearing the Police Liaison Officer outfit and engaging very directly with protesters, the pictures from 13:30:01 show that he had his baton drawn.”<sup>96</sup>*

This witness account is supported by two photographs and one video provided to Netpol, via two separate testimonies<sup>97</sup>, as well as notes from a local antifascist group (“12394 (?) - PO wielded a baton to threaten protestors”<sup>98</sup>).

<sup>90</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>91</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zFP8OspmvI>

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zFP8OspmvI>

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zFP8OspmvI>

<sup>94</sup> Photo evidence provided to Netpol.

<sup>95</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>96</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>97</sup> Anonymous testimonies provided to Netpol.

<sup>98</sup> Notes of local antifascist group provided to Netpol.

## Gendered violence

Many of the testimonies across this report describe forms of police violence that participants experience as gendered. In this section, we include accounts where gendered or sexualised violence was explicitly described. Across the wider dataset, and where demographic information has been disclosed, a substantial proportion of testimonies have been provided by women and gender-diverse protesters.

*"I was pushed back by police, particularly in my uterus and breasts"<sup>99</sup>.*

*"Police violence, especially towards women needs to stop. This is the second time that my daughter has been assaulted by the police. At the previous anti-fascist march, a large policeman, shoved my daughter to the ground. When I said, "Hey, you just hurt my daughter". He replied, "Get over it"."<sup>100</sup>.*

Notes from a local antifascist group read *"01910 – [police officer] punched protestors and used sexual violence/groped them (13:30?)"*<sup>101</sup>.

## Denying protesters medical access

Alongside accounts of force, multiple testimonies raise concerns about the treatment of injured protesters. These accounts describe barriers to accessing medical care, including restrictions on independent medics, conditions placed on receiving treatment, interruptions to ongoing care, and instances where police advice was perceived to place injured individuals at further risk.

Legal observer notes describe someone collapsing in the kettle on Princess Street, with police continuing to push them while they are on the floor as a protest medic tried to treat the injured individual<sup>102</sup>. This is corroborated by an account from a local antifascist group, who note:

*"1214 – PO stamped on a protestor's [sic] knee so that it buckled, continued to swarm protestor while he struggled to stand up (13:01)."<sup>103</sup>*

A testimony from the protester themselves describes what happened following the assault:

*"As I was on the ground medics tried to attend to me, and the police chose this exact time to push in and try form a kettle. Even when multiple people were pleading with the cops to stop, pointing at me on the ground, they refused to stop. This was terrifying, as I could see people in front of me staring at me panicked as they were pushed closer to me – clearly*

<sup>99</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>100</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>101</sup> Notes of local antifascist group provided to Netpol.

<sup>102</sup> Legal observer notes provided to Netpol.

<sup>103</sup> Notes of local antifascist group provided to Netpol.

*worried they were about to trample me. Eventually I was lifted up and essentially carried out of the way by medics, but no support was offered by the cops despite the fact I was unable to walk at the time”*<sup>104</sup>

Other testimonies mention police refusing a protest medic, who is providing verification of their medical training, access to a kettled protester suffering from angina. Instead, they allow a police medic through who refuses to treat the protester:

*“Later, when the group were gathered at St Peter’s, I witnessed police refusing access to a medic during an emergency. A member of the protest was suffering from angina and collapsed. A medic, who was held in a kettle behind the police line repeated she was a medic, showing her equipment and begging to be let through the line to treat the patient. The police refused without giving a reason. The police then forced us to allow a ‘police medic’ into our group, who was followed by 3 other officers to crowd the person. The patient refused treatment from the officer repeatedly, which was ignored by GMP and eventually triggered a heart attack. Even during this, GMP were reluctant to allow demo medics to treat the patient and blocked an ambulance from gaining access to the group.”*<sup>105</sup>

*“Later I witnessed officers refusing to allow medics access to a person having a medical emergency, despite her stating her qualifications and showing her equipment”*<sup>106</sup>.

In her letter to NPMP, the Deputy Mayor states that, in relation to PAVA deployment, “a public order medic was present on each unit”, but that the “volume of people and intensity of activity presented some access challenges for them”<sup>107</sup>. It is not acknowledged that the ‘intensity of activity’ was overwhelmingly the result of police violence, nor that these police medics chose not to treat injured protesters.

Protesters were forced to treat themselves and their fellow protesters experiencing medical emergencies. GTN, or glyceryl trinitrate, is a medication used to relieve or prevent angina:

*“I witnessed requests for GTN spray by fellow protesters due to the police refusing people to leave”*<sup>108</sup>.

Many of the testimonies describing uses of PAVA spray attest to the rapid and compassionate responses of protest medics, whose actions were instrumental in providing immediate treatment and support to those exposed.

However, we have received accounts of what appears to be police intentionally aggravating the injury experienced by protesters who have been sprayed with PAVA:

<sup>104</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>105</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>106</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>107</sup> <https://netpol.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Deputy-Mayor-to-NPMP-Open-Letter.pdf>

<sup>108</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

*“At the front of the block up from Piccadilly Gardens towards the station, the police were consistently pushing back the line and finding ways to jostle the crowd to accuse use of pushing. Pepper spray was brought out in one of these occasions and sprayed liberally among the crowd with no warning. Most people managed to avert their eyes, but it got in one of the protesters' eyes and a police officer I could not see but could hear started trying to get that protester to look into the air and open their eyes rather than wash them out, saying they were just trying to help them – obviously trying to make it worse.”<sup>109</sup>*

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<sup>109</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

## Lack of accountability

Throughout the testimonies collected for this report, concerns about police violence are accompanied by accountability failures. Contributors repeatedly describe officers acting with apparent impunity, seemingly confident that their conduct will not be meaningfully challenged or investigated.

These concerns extend beyond individual incidents of force. The evidence collected highlights longstanding failures in police accountability systems, which place the burden of proving misconduct on those subjected to violence and offer few realistic avenues for redress, while exposing those documenting abuses to potential criminalisation. Rather than facilitating accountability, these systems frequently operate as barriers to it.

### *Failure to display police identification*

Failure of police to display the requisite identification is a longstanding accountability issue in protest policing<sup>110</sup>. Identifying information is a compulsory part of police uniform, allowing members of the public to identify officers and thus pursue complaints or legal action.

Netpol has documented concerns about unidentifiable officers within GMP for over a decade. As far back as 2014, we highlighted repeated instances of GMP officers failing to display identification<sup>111</sup>, despite force guidance whereby non-compliance constitutes a disciplinary offence.

Yet there is essentially no evidence suggesting that this is meaningfully enforced. In 2026, Netpol submitted FOI requests to police forces across England and Wales asking about misconduct or disciplinary cases relating to officers failing to display identification. Among the forces that responded, the overwhelming majority recorded either no cases or no disciplinary action. GMP stated that it held no 'easily retrievable' records of misconduct cases relating to officers failing to wear correct identification<sup>112</sup>.

Netpol received a substantial volume of photographic evidence (see Appendix B for examples), testimony and legal observer notes documenting officers who appeared not to be displaying identification. The below accounts demonstrate the scale of the issue, and the concerns this raises for accountability.

Some note that officers appeared defensive or belittling towards those questioning their lack of identification:

<sup>110</sup> <https://netpol.org/2026/05/28/accountability-for-protesters-but-not-for-police/>

<sup>111</sup> <https://netpol.org/2014/08/01/gmp-identification-numbers/>

<sup>112</sup> [https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/failure\\_to\\_display\\_identificatio\\_14/response/3401082/attach/html/2/FOI%20RESPONSE%2001FOI26016656Z.pdf.html](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/failure_to_display_identificatio_14/response/3401082/attach/html/2/FOI%20RESPONSE%2001FOI26016656Z.pdf.html)

*"On Saturday 18th April I took a picture of this lovely gentleman not wearing an identification number. When I asked what his number was he said "I'm sure you'll find it out when you make a complaint" - I intend to do just that" <sup>113</sup>.*

This testimony was accompanied by photographic evidence of the officer, which allowed him to be identified as the same officer who told a legal observer who was taking a photograph of his missing epaulettes that he did not have to wear them, and that they should go back to 'legal observer training'<sup>114</sup>.

The issue of missing identification raises particular concerns in the context of allegations of police violence and misconduct. One testimony reads:

*"The majority of officers I witnessed did not have a visible id number and were smiling and laughing while brandishing batons, spraying pepper spray and threatening to trample protesters while on horse back"<sup>115</sup>.*

Notes from a local antifascist group identify one officer appearing to disguise his badge number while using force on protesters:

*"19849 – PO used baton on protestors while they were stood still and hid his badge numbers."<sup>116</sup>*

In her response to NPMP, Kate Green notes that the officers failing to display identification were from neighbouring forces providing mutual aid:

*"In relation to the officers that did not have their badge numbers on their lapels, I am aware that mutual aid was sent from other neighbouring police forces, and I have been informed that these officers may not have had badge numbers on their uniform as they were deployed in full public order uniform."<sup>117</sup>*

This claim is at odds with the significant collection of written evidence in this report. It is proven entirely false by the array photographs of GMP officers not wearing ID possessed by Netpol<sup>118</sup>. These include publicly available evidence spanning back over a decade, demonstrating that GMP's conduct around displaying identification, if anything, stands out among other police forces for being particularly poor<sup>119</sup>.

This highlights two problems for police accountability: an attempt by the Deputy Mayor for Crime and Policing to evade her responsibility for GMP's conduct; and an apparent lack of

<sup>113</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>114</sup> Legal observer notes provided to Netpol.

<sup>115</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>116</sup> Notes of local antifascist group provided to Netpol.

<sup>117</sup> <https://netpol.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Deputy-Mayor-to-NPMP-Open-Letter.pdf>

<sup>118</sup> Photographs sent in for this report and [https://www.instagram.com/p/DXcKVPHjMsm/?img\\_index=2](https://www.instagram.com/p/DXcKVPHjMsm/?img_index=2)

<sup>119</sup> <https://netpol.org/2014/08/01/gmp-identification-numbers/>

oversight regarding officers from forces outside of Manchester, who appear unanswerable to public allegations of violence and misconduct. Several of the officers identified in this report as particularly violent were deployed in Manchester from other police forces.

### **Selective recording and missing footage**

Two testimonies and notes from a local antifascist group reference one officer (identification number 9095) discussing turning his bodycam off while acting aggressively and threateningly towards protesters:

*“9095 Gallagher: Heard him discussing his bodycam being off and deciding to leave it off. He kept consistently pushing and leaning on me in the kettle despite not pushing or having anywhere to go. Even when other police were not pushing. He kept talking/joking about going into my backpack, and using his hand to indicate unzipping it. He also stole someone else’s glasses”<sup>120</sup>.*

*“9095 – PO heard discussing that his bodycam was off and that he was going to keep it off, constantly pushing protestors while they were still. Joked about opening a protestors backpack and taking her things. Stole someone’s sunglasses.”<sup>121</sup>*

We have also received video evidence of this incident<sup>122</sup>.

Similarly, one witness describes police camera operators – often referred to as Evidence Gathering Teams (EGTs), identifiable by their orange caps – diverting cameras while violence took place:

*“I witnessed officer forcibly removing protestors glasses, facemasks and hats to aim pepper spray directly into their eyes and mouths. I witnessed police camera operators turn attention elsewhere while these attacks happened.”<sup>123</sup>*

### **Senior officers**

Several contributors described a perception that officers acted with confidence that their conduct would not be challenged. Accounts alleging direct involvement by senior-ranking officers reinforce these concerns. Where those responsible for overseeing operations and officers are themselves participating in violence, any chance of immediate accountability or corrective intervention is absent.

Within public order policing, white caps are worn by Sergeants, while red caps are worn by Commanders or Inspectors. Testimonies referencing serious acts of violence carried out by senior officers include:

<sup>120</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>121</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>122</sup> Video evidence provided to Netpol.

<sup>123</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

- Inspector 5000, who is reported to have “*put his hands on either side of the cops in front of him and booted [a protester] in the balls*”, before reportedly punching them<sup>124</sup>. This Inspector is also alleged to have screamed in the face of a legal observer attempting to record this incident to “*let his officers work*”, before the legal observer steps back and he does it again<sup>125</sup>.
- A Sergeant who ripped off a protester’s sunglasses and mask to PAVA them in the face with no prior warning or instruction to remove their face coverings, before throwing their glasses away<sup>126</sup>.
- Sergeant 2956, who is referenced in this report by three separate testimonies as having punched someone with “tremendous” force in the side of the head, unprovoked<sup>127</sup>.

We have also received testimony of senior officers encouraging violence among others:

*“Towards the start of the commotion, as the lines started to push, I heard one of the police officers in the white caps (not sure of rank etc) give the order to those holding the line to ‘get some hits in’”*<sup>128</sup>.

### ***Tolerance of harassment by far-right streamers or “auditors”***

While the police seemed determined to keep far-right marchers and antifascists apart, Netpol received numerous testimonies describing a policing operation that tolerated the presence of far-right video streamers, or so-called “auditors”, among crowds of counterdemonstrators.

These accounts are notable not simply because of the alleged conduct, but because contributors describe such individuals moving freely through protest spaces while antifascist protesters were subject to containment and restricted movement. Several testimonies also question the extent to which these ‘auditors’ are neutral observers, describing behaviour they experienced as harassment and intimidation from far-right actors.

A recurring theme within the testimonies is the apparent tolerance of this behaviour by police, including accounts of friendly interactions with individuals who were simultaneously directing abuse towards counterprotesters.

*“We arrived at Piccadilly Gardens at 11.30, already a great many far-right streamers had been allowed to mingle amongst and harass the anti-fascist crowd by the police.”*<sup>129</sup>

*“Instead what I saw around the demo was many streamers who were always just in the immediate vicinity in loose dispersed formations. They were not only intimidating and filming anyone who might look like an antifascist protester but were also very visibly and*

<sup>124</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>125</sup> Legal observer notes provided to Netpol.

<sup>126</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>127</sup> Anonymous testimonies provided to Netpol.

<sup>128</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>129</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

*regularly hanging out with police officers and laughing with them in a friendly atmosphere. This was the more visible side of what the police were doing on the day, for people who weren't in the demo."*<sup>130</sup>

*"Finally, me and some comrades were running to head over to some other comrades who needed support. A far right group approached us, and kicked my leg to try to make me fall over. I looked back, and a group of police had witnessed it, but did nothing, not even warning the man not to kick people."*<sup>131</sup>

*"I was verbally abused by a so called "auditor" about my appearance and I observed him verbally abuse another female protester about her appearance. I am 55 and she was also an older woman. He abused her for her hair and me for my clothes. I reported it to an officer and he declined to take any action to stop it or intervene."*<sup>132</sup>

These accounts should be understood in the context of a policing operation in which antifascist protesters were repeatedly kettled, while far-right streamers and Britain First supporters moved with considerably greater freedom. The primary concern raised by many testimonies is the perception that the auditors' harassment and intimidation was tolerated within a heavily policed environment.

*"I witnessed at St Peters Square the police kettle us while Britain First were free to march and leave uninterrupted."*<sup>133</sup>

*"I observed that while the counter protest was kettled the Britain First Rally was allowed to move around"*<sup>134</sup>.

## ***Lack of transparency regarding cost***

An FOI submitted to GMP seeking information about the cost of the 18 April policing operation was refused. The issue pertains to questions regarding both public expenditure and accountability: the evidence presented throughout this report describes a policing operation in which substantial resources were deployed to suppress antifascist protesters, while facilitating the movement of the Britain First mobilisation through Manchester.

Members of the public are therefore being denied information about how much public money was spent on an operation that many experienced as violent and repressive. If public funds are being used to facilitate large-scale police violence against those opposing racism and fascism, there is a clear public interest in ensuring that expenditure is subject to scrutiny.

<sup>130</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>131</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>132</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>133</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

<sup>134</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

## Arrests

Despite the staggering police presence, there were only three arrests made on the day on the antifascist side: one counterprotester arrested on suspicion of breaching Section 60aa of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, which authorises police to demand the removal of face coverings; a second counterprotester arrested on suspicion of assaulting a police officer; and a person arrested on suspicion of breaching the peace.

None of these have yet resulted in charges, and Netpol has been informed that the arrestee suspected of breaching the peace was immediately released without charge after being taken to the police station, whereby the police found she was not involved in the protest at all.

One testimony provides us with an account of this arrest:

*"Soon after the 18th of April demo had ended (about after 4pm) I (and a small group) witnessed part of an incident in the Manchester Town Hall entrance, where one young person (girl/woman) was being interrogated by two police officers (numbers 04892 and 19351) and it was unclear if this was going to lead to an arrest, but looked likely. The young person was visibly in distress and on their own.*

The incident was visible from outside the entrance but we couldn't hear what was being said exactly, unless we stepped inside. We weren't sure if the young person had just been at the demo although it seemed likely/possible. At some point, one of the officers stepped outside and spoke on the phone to what sounded like medical or other services and said that the person was not under arrest. Later, though, she stepped back inside and the interrogation continued.

A Legal Observer (and protest medics) came very quickly soon after we noticed the incident. The LO stayed there to observe the incident whilst the rest of the group eventually left so as not to further intimidate the person being interrogated, as we were also visible from inside the entrance. From what I was later told the person was eventually released.

*I filmed part of this (the two officers talking to the person) and the officers' numbers are visible. I stopped filming when one of them asked me if I was okay in an aggressive tone so I stepped outside."*<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

## Conclusion

The accounts collected for this report, supported by photographic and video evidence as well as the notes of legal observers and local activist groups, exhibit a consistent pattern of policing characterised by disproportionate and unnecessary force against antifascist protesters on 18 April 2026.

Across multiple locations in Manchester and throughout the day, protesters describe repeated and often indiscriminate use of kettling as a coercive containment tactic, PAVA spray and physical strikes deployed against individuals who were not posing any imminent threat or, in many cases, were already contained and unable to disperse. These testimonies indicate that force was not exceptional or isolated but embedded within operational management of the protest.

The evidence points to a policing strategy within which containment and escalation functioned together. Rather than facilitating safe assembly or de-escalation, the tactics deployed produced conditions in which protesters were physically restricted, exposed to harm and frequently unable to access medical assistance or move to safety. The effect was active production of risk within contained spaces over the management of protest.

A recurring theme is the scale and intensity of violence experienced in relation to the stated policing objective of managing competing protest groups. As one protester summarised,

*“Overall, this was a very violent day, with unthinkable dense police presence, when we kept hearing of people needing to be removed from the demo as they needed medical assistance”<sup>136</sup>.*

This is consistent with wider accounts in which injured protesters describe difficulty accessing care or being forced to rely on improvised medical support

The evidence also raises serious concerns regarding accountability and oversight. Testimonies describe an acute lack of officer identification and visible accountability mechanisms, contributing to conditions in which misconduct could not be effectively challenged. The prominence of officers lacking identification suggests either a deliberate tactic or a cultural problem. Accounts of senior officers participating in or directing use of force further limit opportunities for scrutiny, reinforcing the structural absence of accountability.

The picture is one of systemic and disproportionate violence within a policing environment in which accountability mechanisms were either absent or redundant.

One testimony described the cumulative effects of the day more starkly:

*“When I got in I reflected that I’d gone into town and been attacked by a gang of people and pepper sprayed twice in the face just for standing for half an hour whilst holding a banner to oppose proud fascists marching through our city – and this was facilitated and*

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<sup>136</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

*paid for by the council. I thought about the fact that I'd been beaten up and attacked whilst not actually seeing a single 'fascist'" <sup>137</sup>.*

The evidence makes clear that the violence experienced was not incidental, nor the result of individual overreach, but structurally produced through operational decisions about how protest is contained and managed.

This kind of deliberately violent and unaccountable policing is reminiscent of the policing of the G20 protests in London in 2009, and the consequent murder of Ian Tomlinson. If left unchecked, the risk that we see another brutal killing as a result of policing is a very real one.

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<sup>137</sup> Anonymous testimony provided to Netpol.

## Recommendations

Systemic failures in both accountability and operational policing are clear. Recommendations are therefore directed at the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and the members of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

### Independent public scrutiny and investigation

An independent statutory inquiry should be established into the policing of the 18 April protest in Manchester. We recognise that official oversight mechanisms operate largely within the same institutional framework that enables police violence, limiting their ability to provide meaningful accountability.

Any inquiry into the events of 18 April must therefore be structurally independent of GMP and policing governance bodies, including leadership and meaningful participation from affected communities and protest rights organisations, and be empowered to scrutinise both individual conduct and the policing model and assumptions that produced the harms this report has documented. The inquiry must not be contingent on individual complaints or internal police processes.

Specifically, it should examine:

- Use of force
- Operational planning and command decision-making
- Conduct of senior officers on the ground
- Treatment of injured protesters and access to medical care
- Failures relating to officer identification
- Retention and use of body-worn video and other evidential material

### Immediate preservation of evidence

The Deputy Mayor must demand that Greater Manchester Police Chief, Constable Stephen Watson, preserve all relevant police material relating to 18 April 2026, including body-worn video footage, Evidence Gathering Team footage, radio communications and command logs, custody records, and any other operational records.

That Kate Green claims to have seen drone footage supporting the “limited” use of PAVA only on those attempting to breach cordons<sup>138</sup> only reinforces the need for full review of bodycam footage and police-gathered evidence on the day.

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<sup>138</sup> <https://netpol.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Deputy-Mayor-to-NPMP-Open-Letter.pdf>

Routine deletion policies (including standard three-month retention periods) should be suspended to prevent irreversible loss of evidence ahead of an independent investigation.

## **Transparency of operational decision-making**

Greater Manchester Police and the Greater Manchester Mayor should publish full information relating to policing on 18 April 2026, including:

- The operational plan for the day
- Authorisation frameworks for use of force tactics, including specific guidance on the deployment of PAVA
- Post-incident reviews or debriefs
- Total cost of the policing operation, including staffing, overtime and resource deployment
- Details of mutual aid arrangements.

## **Measures taken to change GMP's culture of impunity**

Despite GMP's policy that "all officers and staff in uniform are required to wear epaulettes clearly showing their collar number on both shoulders at all times," Netpol has gathered extensive evidence indicating that significant numbers fail to do so.

All public order officers must receive clear guidance on the importance of wearing identification, and when and where they must wear and display this appropriately.

GMP must clarify if there is intentional guidance allowing officers to not wear identification in public order situations. If so, this must be reversed. If not, where there is evidence of officers not wearing identification, they should be disciplined.

GMP's policy clearly states that "supervisors are responsible for making sure that all staff comply with the uniform dress code". Senior officers who fail to take action when those under their command are not wearing the correct uniform must also, therefore, face appropriate disciplinary action. Given the scale of the operation on 18<sup>th</sup> April, this should include overseeing Silver Commanders.

## Appendix A – Timeline of policing on 18<sup>th</sup> April

**10:54am:** Two opposing pens are set up by police in St. Peter's Square, which is the planned site for the march's finish

**11:30am:** Resist Britain First (RBF) and Stand Up to Racism (SUTR) gatherings are set to begin in Piccadilly Gardens

**11:45am:** Police kettle is in place in Piccadilly Gardens, preventing antifascists from marching

**11:52am:** Police horses move further in towards protesters kettled by Wellington Statue, Piccadilly Gardens

**12:00pm:** Approximately the time that police violence begins to escalate: PAVA is deployed with no audible warning, with police forcibly removing protesters face and eyewear to spray them. Netpol has received reports of police punching, choking, pushing and targeting women-appearing protesters beginning at this time.

**12:00pm:** Meanwhile, at Store Street outside Piccadilly Station, Britain First marches begin to congregate in line with the call-out.

**12:25pm:** Back at Piccadilly, the police are aggressively pushing back the videos of those in kettles, forming a double police line with police horses behind them.

**12:35pm:** Scuffles between police and counterdemonstrators break out on the roads between Piccadilly Gardens and St. Peter's Square, including on Princess Street and Mosely Street, as counterdemonstrators attempt to move into St Peter's Square. It is in these scuffles that we see some of the heaviest examples of police violence on the day.

**12:39pm:** Police move into St. Peter's Square in huge numbers.

**12:49pm:** A smaller group is kettled on Princess Street. A protester has collapsed within the kettle, but the police continue to move in. The crowd are instructed they are blocking the highway, before a double police line is formed under instruction from a Sergeant (identification number 15017).

**1:23pm:** Police begin lining up on the tram tracks next to the pens in St. Peter's Square.

**1:27pm:** Police move from Mosely Street to form at kettle around the counterdemonstrators marching into St. Peter's Square.

**1:29pm:** Britain First marchers are streamed into the oppose pen on the south side of St. Peter's Square.

**1:30pm:** Counterprotesters are moved into the pen on the north side. We have received a significant number of reports of police violence at the front of these pens.

**1:30pm:** In the smaller kettle on Princess Street, an Inspector (identification number 5000) is seen grabbing, pushing and kicking a counterprotester in the crotch. Medics are prevented from treating the injured protester and police shout at legal observers to 'let [their] officers work'.

**1:32pm:** In a breakaway scuffle on one of the roads running between Bishopsgate and Bale Street, an officer grabs someone by the throat.

**2:00pm:** A shift change sees approximately 51 more officers move into St. Peter's Square from Princess Street.

**2:30pm to 3:00pm:** Police are using batons on counterdemonstrators in the kettle in St. Peter's Square.

**2:34pm:** A counterdemonstrator has two seizures. They refuse an ambulance and are told by an officer (identification number 11713) they have to remove their mask and confirm this on film.

**2:39pm:** A double line kettle pushes protesters forwards from the back of the pen.

**2:43pm:** PAVA spray is deployed at St. Peter's Square. Video and photographic evidence shows heavy police violence against antifascist protesters.

**2:45pm:** Scuffles between police and auditors break out behind the counterdemonstrator pen, and police move in to form a third kettle line facing outwards, ahead of a group of counterdemonstrators entering St. Peter's Square via Princess Street.

**3:01pm:** A counterprotester suffers angina; a police medic refuses to treat them, while someone trying to intervene receives a Section 60aa. Police refuse to let a medic (displaying proof of their qualification) through the kettle lines to treat them. Medics are eventually allowed in, and the person is stretchered out.

**3:15pm:** Police attempt an arrest on Mosely Road/Princess Street.

**3:37pm:** Britain First demonstrators are cleared out by police to let trams come through.

**3:43pm:** Police form kettle lines further apart and begin to let counterdemonstrators leave through the sides under Manchester Central Library arches (where CCTV is present).

**4:00pm:** With many of the demonstrators having dispersed, a young person is interrogated by officers (identification numbers 04892 and 19351). They are taken to the station and immediately released as it was determined they weren't part of the protest.

## Appendix B – examples of GMP officers without ID



