

ONE DAY IN BRIGHTON

The policing of the Carnival Against Fascism in
Brighton on Saturday 13th June 2026



The policing of the Carnival Against Fascism, Saturday 13th June 2026

A report by the Network for Police Monitoring (Netpol)



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Foreword by Brighton Legal Observer & Care Kollektive (BLOCK)

Brighton Legal Observer & Care Kollektive (BLOCK) were on the ground legal observing at the Carnival Against Fascism. We saw first-hand the police attacking, crushing and PAVA spraying Brighton residents. BLOCK exists for days like June the 13th, when the police attack protests in Brighton. We are grateful to Netpol for this rigorous report on the policing of the Carnival Against Fascism.

Police culture is rotten

This report documents wanton police violence – unsurprising to anyone familiar with demonstrations. More striking is the evidence of gendered violence, disproportionate violence against older and disabled people, and outright sadism from several officers. This is not a case of a few bad apples: throughout the day, we did not see one officer restrain a colleague meting out violence. The barrel is rotten, and this report is further evidence of how prejudiced and twisted policing is.

Unaccountable and endorsed by the council

Sussex police turn to violence whenever they are thwarted, knowing the toothless complaints process and the courts will never hold them to account. They have already lied about the day, denying that they used PAVA spray.

Bella Sankey, leader of Brighton Council, spoke fine words about fascists not being welcome, but also said she was working with the police. Despite many councillors being present on the day, we have heard nothing from the council about the police attacks on Brightonians documented in this report. Unless the council holds the police to account, they are complicit in their actions. We are tired of a model where the police make things worse and ordinary people bear the brunt of it.

We appreciate the Green Councillors' efforts to hold them to account, but doubt that a single officer will be disciplined, or that the commanders of this dangerous, botched operation will be held to account – despite the damning evidence in this report.

Brighton is antifascist

This report documents not only police violence but how we looked after each other when the police assaulted us: when the police PAVA sprayed us, we rinsed it from each other's eyes; when the police broke a wheelchair user's chair, we held them up; when the police picked on those more vulnerable than us, we put our bodies between them and were beaten for it.

Whilst the policing of the Carnival Against Fascism was abhorrent, we could not be more grateful to be part of the community that is Brighton. In the face of extreme police violence

and threat to life created by the crushes the police repeatedly caused, Brighton kept its head and stood its ground. In typical Brighton fashion, people of all races, ages, genders, abilities and walks of life refused to let Brighton become another victim of racism.

Who protects the fascists? Police protect the fascists.

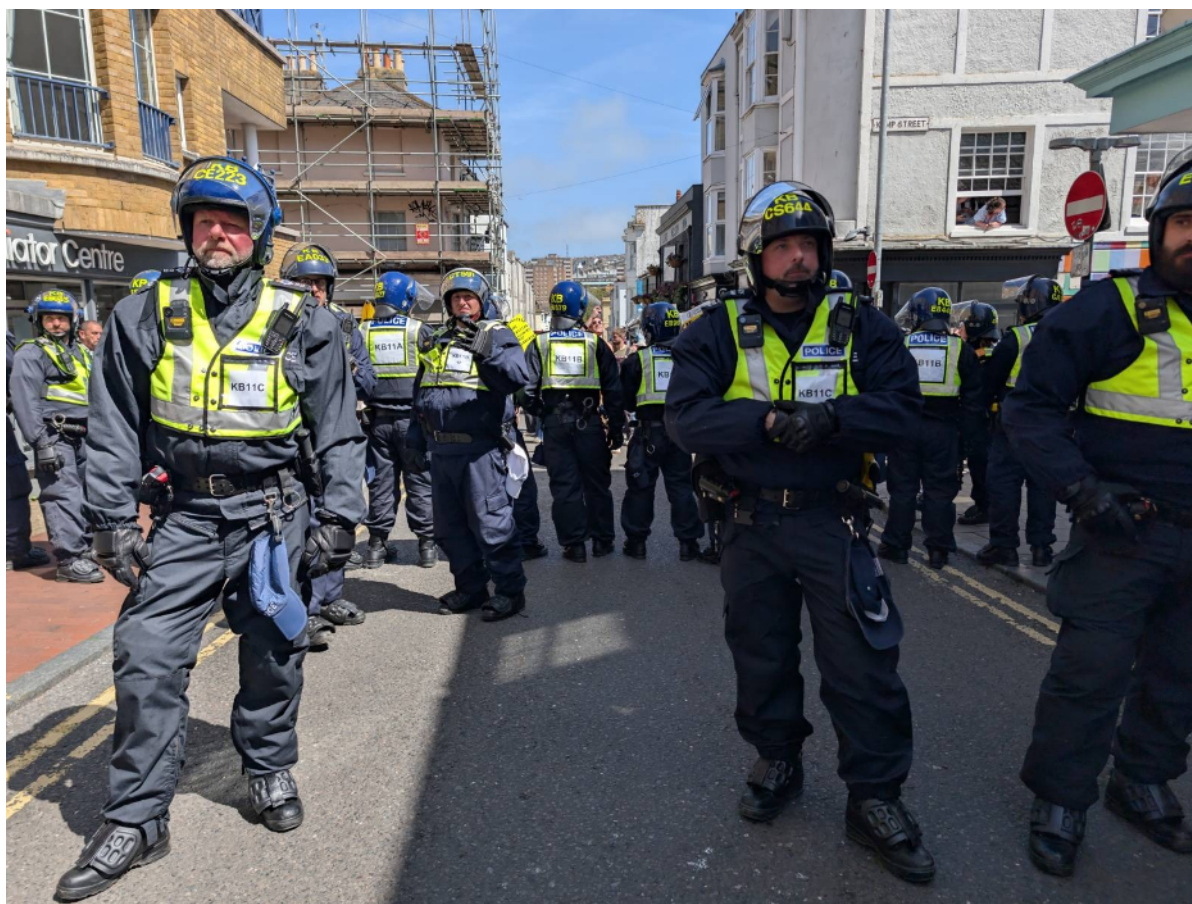
Who protects us? We protect us.

Brighton Legal Observer & Care Kollektive (BLOCK)

August 2026



Executive summary



On 13 June 2026, Sussex Police oversaw the policing of the Carnival Against Fascism, a demonstration of around 4,000 Brighton and Hove residents opposing a 300-strong far-right march organised by South East Patriots. Drawing on 97 witness testimonies, legal observer and medic accounts, and photographic and video evidence, this report identifies the following key findings:

- **Dangerous crowd crushing.**

Protesters were repeatedly pushed into densely packed crowds on Terminus Road and Trafalgar Street. Multiple testimonies – including from legal observers and street medics – describe warning officers in real time that people could not breathe, had fallen, or were being trampled. These warnings were consistently ignored; in one instance, the crush was severe enough that an officer himself lost consciousness. Brighton is lucky nobody was more seriously injured.

- **Kettling and route-clearing for the far right.**

From the outset, Sussex Police's operational priority was to clear a path through Brighton for the far-right march, repeatedly containing, pushing back and attempting to disperse the much larger antifascist counter-demonstration in order to do so.

- **Extensive and disproportionate force.**

Testimonies and photographic evidence describe baton strikes, PAVA spray deployed at close range and without warning (including after officers removed protesters' glasses or masks), choking, hair-pulling, kicking and punching – resulting in injuries including a broken foot, a fractured rib and a spigelian hernia.

- **Disproportionate impact on marginalised protesters.**

Force was repeatedly used against disabled, older and younger protesters and women, including accounts of sexual assault by officers and a blind protester's white cane being snapped and thrown to the ground.

- **An absence of accountability.**

Officers are reported to have used force against legal observers, to have appeared to frame an assault for the benefit of body-worn camera footage, and to have denied deploying PAVA spray despite video evidence to the contrary. Protesters who pursued complaints through the IOPC report being asked for identifying photographs.

Despite the scale of the operation, the far-right march advanced only a short distance before being escorted back to Brighton railway station. Netpol concludes that this violence was not incidental, but the direct consequence of a policing strategy built around facilitating a far-right demonstration through a city that had mobilised overwhelmingly against it. Without meaningful consequences, these patterns are likely to recur.

If policing does not change, next time the consequences of a policing operation with such twisted priorities and violent execution, may be far more serious.

Introduction

Netpol's *One Day In...* series has documented the policing of protests across England. Together, our three reports in the summer of 2026 highlight recurring patterns in public order policing that cannot be understood through individual incidents or complaints alone. Across multiple police forces and locations, and situated against different causes and political contexts, the evidence points towards increasingly similar operational tactics characterised by dangerous crowd containment, disproportionate force, arbitrary escalation and weak accountability.

This report examines the policing of the Carnival Against Fascism in Brighton on 13th June 2026. Drawing on eyewitness testimonies, photographs, video evidence, legal observer notes, medic and legal observer testimonies, interviews with protesters and online sources, it records the experiences of antifascist protesters.

While official statements and media reporting have focused primarily on arrests and the policing operation from the perspective of Sussex Police, they provide little insight into the experiences of those subject to police violence. By bringing together evidence from various witnesses and participants, this report seeks to provide a collective account of events.

We find that the violence documented in Brighton should not be understood as exceptional: instead, it is part of a broader pattern that is increasingly apparent across the policing of antifascist mobilisations documented by Netpol over recent months. This approach creates the conditions in which police violence can be justified as a necessary means of managing 'competing' protests, while forcing routes for far-right demonstrations through communities that have mobilised to oppose them.

This provides the basis on which police justify using force to separate the two groups and, as is clear throughout this report, to facilitate the movement of far-right demonstrations through communities opposing them.

Incident overview

On Saturday 13th June 2026, thousands of Brighton and Hove residents mobilised to oppose a far-right demonstration organised by anti-immigration group, South East Patriots. The group stated that the demonstration was intended to call for stronger border controls, enforcement of immigration laws, and the deportation of migrants.

In response, local residents, community organisations, faith groups and anti-fascist activists organised the Carnival Against Fascism, which drew an estimated 4,000 participants. By contrast, the far-right mobilisation attracted around 300 people, many of whom had travelled to Brighton from outside the city.

From the outset, Sussex Police adopted an operational strategy intent on pushing a far-right demonstration through Brighton. Throughout the afternoon, police repeatedly sought to clear routes ahead of the march by containing, pushing back and attempting to disperse antifascist protesters. As the far-right procession encountered successive blockades, police made repeated attempts to move antifascist demonstrators from roads and junctions in order to reopen a route for the march.

The far-right demonstration made only limited progress over approximately five hours, advancing a few hundred yards before eventually being escorted back towards Brighton railway station after police attempts to continue the march into the city centre. As officers sought to clear routes for the far-right march, antifascist protesters were subjected to repeated uses of force.

Netpol has received a substantial body of testimony and photographic and video evidence documenting these incidents. Many accounts describe police using disproportionate force while attempting to push antifascist demonstrators from roads and compress crowds into side streets or confined spaces.

Testimonies consistently report crowd crushing, kettling, baton strikes, the deployment of PAVA spray, punching, kicking, choking and neck restraints, hair-pulling and other force techniques, resulting in numerous lasting injuries. Witnesses also raised concerns about the disproportionate impact of policing on marginalised and minoritised protesters, and policing decisions that prioritised the facilitation of the far-right march despite foreseeable risks posed to the much larger counterdemonstration.

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 testimony submitted directly to Netpol, extensive photographic and video evidence, legal observer and protest medic accounts, interviews and conversations with legal observers and medics, and analysis of publicly available material.

Following the Carnival Against Fascism, on 18th June, Netpol and Brighton Legal Observer Care Kollektive (BLOCK) issued a public call for evidence seeking testimonies and visual material documenting policing of antifascists during the demonstration. The call specifically asked for accounts related to police use of force, the deployment of PAVA spray, and photographs of police officers present during the operation. It was circulated through social media and activist networks.

In response, we received approximately 97 written testimonies and around 150 photographs and videos relating to the policing of the demonstration. The report also draws on testimonies and interviews with legal observers and street medics, as well as the notes of legal observers present on the day. It incorporates analysis of publicly available sources, including social media posts on Instagram and X (formerly Twitter), news reporting and press statements issued by Sussex Police.

The evidence directly quoted throughout this report has been provided through written or verbal testimonies. While Netpol has analysed a substantial body of photographic and video evidence, much of this material is not being published in order to preserve the integrity of any current or future legal proceedings relating to police conduct.

All testimonies have been anonymised. Contributions were provided either on an off-the-record basis or anonymised at the point of submission because of concerns about criminalisation and identification. These concerns were reflected in both testimonies themselves and the experiences of participants when attempting to pursue formal complaint routes.

Where possible, testimonies have been cross-referenced with photographic and video evidence, legal observer notes, medic accounts and other independent sources to corroborate individual events and verify patterns of force.

Evidence

Kettling and crushing



Kettling on Terminus Road

Netpol has received numerous testimonies referring to a kettle which took place shortly after the march had begun, between 12pm – 1pm. Antifascists were kettled on Terminus Road and the surrounding side streets by a double police line and horses, where many report being subject to pushing and violence despite the pleas of protesters.

Netpol has seen video evidence supporting the below testimonies:

“The police charged extremely aggressively at the remaining counter protestors, trying to kettle us into the side road (Terminus Street). The officers were pushing and shoving all of us, including elderly people. The woman next to me was pushed backwards over a bicycle and almost fell over. Our group was shouting “peaceful protest” to try and defuse the aggression – but the police response was anything but peaceful.”¹

1 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

"The police attempted to push hundreds of us into terminus street (which is a small street and practically a dead end with only two small alleys coming off of it). In doing so they pushed over multiple people who then had more people pushed on top of them. We told the police to stop so we could help them up but they did not. I shouted we were in the side street as they wanted but they kept pushing anyway" ²

"I saw a scuffle with police on the Left-hand side of the line close to where the bins were. I couldn't really see what was going on but saw police pushing and arms being thrown at protesters. Then a call went through the crowd for a first aider so as a trained first aider I followed a steward who took me round behind the bins where someone who had been punched in the face by police needed support. Their nose was bleeding significantly, me and another first aider administered first aid." ³

Crushing on Trafalgar Street

While protesters were not technically kettled, they were confined into a space, unable to escape and then subject to violence, resulting in a similar effect to that seen in Manchester in April, whereby antifascist protesters were kettled and then attacked by police⁴. Some of the most concerning reports of violence took place while antifascist demonstrators were trapped here, and will be discussed later in the report; below are the quotes demonstrating the impact of the crush itself.

Extensive video evidence is publicly available on YouTube (9:15 – 9:50 in cited video)⁵.

A number of testimonies describe confusing and unclear direction from police, which led to the crush worsening:

"The police became increasingly aggressive physically and verbally so some people wanted to leave but there was a line of police behind us; it was confusing as one side of the police was asking us to move back but the line behind us was telling us we couldn't go passed them, it made no sense and there was literally no where for us to go." ⁶

"Protesters at the front were ordered to turn around and leave despite hundreds of people behind them making this physically impossible, resulting in dangerous crowd crushing." ⁷

Meanwhile, others drew attention to the police themselves pushing and shoving the crowd:

2 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
 3 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
 4 <https://netpol.org/2026/07/07/one-day-in-manchester/>
 5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sq7Jl8GqyhY>
 6 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
 7 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

*"Suddenly there was a surge from the police so the people ahead of me were forcefully pushed back and I was stuck between them and the soundstage with nowhere to go becoming crushed and I started to hyperventilate."*⁸

*"Police pushed people into space that did not exist, causing individuals to fall and be trampled."*⁹

*"Myself and my partner were crushed and I myself was dragged, pushed and kicked during a push by the police on Trafalgar Street."*¹⁰

*"I helped someone who had passed out in the crush. We had to carry them out. I was completely shocked by the violence and anger the police approached us with. There were two policemen in particular on the front of the line at Trafalgar Street who were screaming and throwing protesters on the ground. You could tell that they had come ready to fight and create violence and were trying to get us to fight with them."*¹¹

*"The police pushed the crowd back a bit, and I and at least two others fell over backwards onto the ground"*¹²

*"I was also very concerned by the way police pushed into a large and densely packed crowd. The road was already full of residents and demonstrators, leaving people with little or no space to move back or safely disperse. Despite this, police continued to push forward with shields and use pepper spray, creating what I believe was a serious risk of people being crushed."*¹³

*"Police advanced together in unison and forced the crowd downhill, despite the obvious and well-known risk that pushing a densely packed crowd down a hill will cause people to fall and be trampled. Such tactics are inherently dangerous and create a foreseeable risk of serious injury or death."*¹⁴

Another protester describes how their *"chest and neck were being compressed between the officers and the activists behind"*, resulting in bruising on their chest, which they have shared photographic evidence of with Netpol¹⁵.

Again, many testimonies describe the police ignoring protesters' warnings that people were getting crushed, falling and being injured:

"I saw some officers putting their hands in some counter-protestors faces and pushing them in the face to try and push them back. It's also worth noting that we were repeatedly letting the officers know that there was a risk of causing a crush,

8 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

9 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

10 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

11 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

12 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

13 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

14 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

15 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

especially on the side of the counter-protest where the steps were, but they kept on pushing as hard as they could to try and break through.”¹⁶

“Protesters repeatedly warned officers that people had fallen and were being crushed, but the pushing continued, increasing the danger to those on the ground.”¹⁷

“I also shouted to an officer that people were getting crushed, alas they did not care.”¹⁸

Someone noted the “*obvious and foreseeable risk of crushing or trampling if force were applied in a forward push*” due to the “*density of the crowd and the confined nature of the street*”, as well as the lack of escalation surrounding police attempts to contain protesters: “*the crowd was densely packed and effectively contained ... the crowd was not advancing into police lines ... I did not observe missiles being thrown at officers in this location*”¹⁹.

We have been sent two corroborating testimonies which clearly demonstrate the experiences of antifascist protesters who were simultaneously prevented from leaving while being crushed and subject to an onslaught of violence by police:

“Within this movement I was being crushed and felt unable to breathe. I said this to my partner [redacted], I then said this to the officer in front of me that was pushing against me, I also made him aware of my frozen shoulder which was becoming increasingly painful with the pressure of the crush. The officer leant hard against my shoulder and had a knee hard into my back. I was telling him that he was hurting me and was desperately holding close to [redacted]. The officer told me to ‘move back then’ I said I was unable to due to the crowd (of hundreds of people), he told me to ‘tell them to move back then’, he continued to push against me hurting my shoulder. We were pepper sprayed, fortunately we managed to keep our heads down to protect our eyes. The officer told me ‘move back or we’ll drag him [redacted] back (through the line of police) away from me, at this point [redacted] had more than one officer with hands on him, I was punched in my mouth by an officer, splitting the inside of my lip, [redacted] was being punched over his head in his back and hit with a baton.

At this point I was screaming in fear of [redacted] being hurt. I held onto him with all of my might as he remained with his back against the officers. [Redacted] had been trying to move us to safety since I told him that I couldn’t breath. As we got closer to the corner of Over street, police grabbed and continued hitting [redacted] about his head and back.”²⁰

16 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

17 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

18 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

19 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

20 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

"[Redacted] was punched in the face by a policeman and they threatened to take me away if she didn't move. I then saw a policeman hit me around the head with a baton of some sorts. [Redacted] told the police she had a bad shoulder and the policeman then deliberately grabbed her shoulder. They repeatedly told [redacted] they were going to drag me back into the police if she didn't move. [Redacted] was unable to breathe so I pulled her towards me and multiple police were grabbing and hitting me.

*We got to the corner of over street to get out of the way and a policeman grabbed me from behind and repeatedly hit me around the body. We got out to the safety of over street."*²¹

A number of testimonies also refer to a specific area of the crush, outside restaurant Alushi on Trafalgar Street:

*"... the police began by forcing their way down the side of Alushi, into the garden. They instructed everyone to get back, however, due to the presence of the picnic tables and the wall, it was impossible for us to move back. Despite knowing this, the police began to push us back. I ended up being forced into a picnic table, which caused me a back injury. There were several people who were pushed and shoved by the police into tables and into the wall. In addition, they got rather rough with the tables, forcing them into people, as well as picking up chairs belonging to the restaurant and throwing them to one side."*²²

*"In a side area near a restaurant the cops were pushing us back into a wall and demanding we move back even though we literally couldn't. They pretty badly injured someone's arm and threw a table at one point to try to get to us."*²³

*"At around 14.40 i noticed the police pushing and throwing around young counter protesters outside ... Alushis, on Trafalgar arches i noticed one of the staff inside the restaurant looking quite scared ... they continued to push harder pulling the restaurant furniture out of the way as we all tried to keep it in place with no intention of moving"*²⁴.

Highlighting the danger posed to everyone involved, one testimony describes their experience of being in the crush:

"Initially I think they had some riot gear on but didn't have shields and their visors on their helmets were mostly up, and they began by using lots of force to try and push us back. For the protesters towards the front, this was very dangerous and it was hard to breath. At one point I had a lot of pressure being exerted on my chest for an extended period and I worried that I couldn't breath properly. It was so hot and crushed that a police officer in front of me lost consciousness at one point and was held up just by the pressure of those around him. Myself and other

21 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

22 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

23 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

24 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

protesters close to me attempted to wake him and to get the attention of the other officers. He came to after about 1 minute.”²⁵

Supporting, a public post on X noted “*Officers are fainting. They are losing their cool. I have been assaulted twice, and once very seriously.*”²⁶

Baton strikes

Numerous testimonies referring to the use of batons by police include both written reports and photographic evidence of bruising. Testimonies note that this took place “*despite [counterprotesters] posing no threat to public safety*”²⁷.

The use of batons has been reported as taking place largely on Trafalgar Street:

“I couldn’t hear exactly what one of the officers said but when they started to put on the riot gear he announced something along the lines of “we will beat you with batons if you don’t move”. Some people suddenly got distressed, this brought tensions higher as a small number of protesters left, out of fear for their safety, others pleading for answers as to why this was allowed and others helplessly stuck in the crowd unable to move. After some more pushing by the police, one officer jammed his baton deep into my lower right back (See image: Back), which at first I thought was a bruise but it was hard enough to break the skin as I realised it began to scab over”²⁸.

This testimony was supported by photographic evidence of the protesters’ injuries, seen right. Another testimony, which was also accompanied by photographic evidence, reads:

“At about 3pm I witnessed heavy handedness from the police towards the protesters.... Truncheons were raised and I witnessed people being thrown to the floor next to me. Next thing I feel immense pain in my left leg to the side of my knee. I had been whacked with a truncheon for no reason other than standing in front of the police. A week later it is still tender to the touch with bruising.”²⁹

Photographic evidence of bruising and abrasions on protester’s back – provided anonymously to Netpol



25 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

26 <https://x.com/PhilipProudfoot/status/2065804839024566323>

27 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

28 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

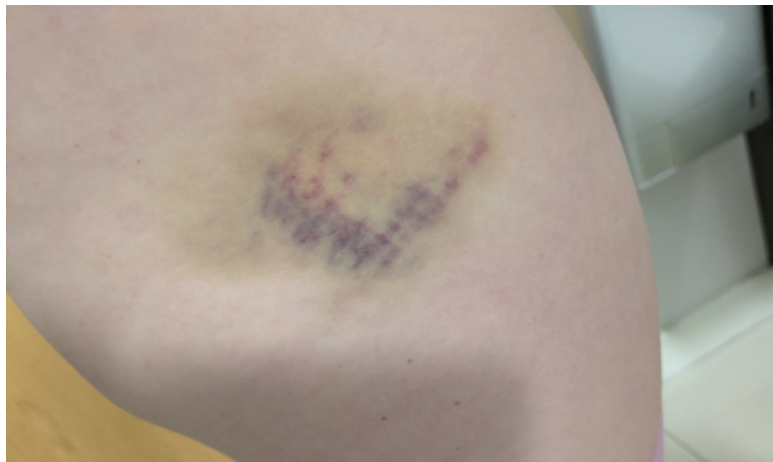
Evidence of bruising is shown below:



Photographic evidence showing swelling and bruising to protester's knee – provided anonymously to Netpol

"I was hit on my leg by a member of the police force, causing significant bruising as per attached photos"³⁰.

Photos provided to Netpol included this:



Photographic evidence of bruising to protester's upper leg – provided anonymously to Netpol

29 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

30 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

Another testimony describes multiple protesters hit on the legs with batons:

"I was hit by a policeman with a baton to the thigh, when we were peacefully standing our ground. He told me to get back, there was nowhere to get back to as we were stuck from them charging us. He said 'I'll fucking hit you and I'll pepper spray you' i stayed where I was and he hit me and a man next to me on the leg. I definitely got off lightly, many around me were trampled, pushed, sprayed, squashed" ³¹.

This testimony was accompanied by a photograph of the bruising obtained by the protester, and the below photograph of the offending officer:



Photographic evidence showing police officer – provided anonymously to Netpol

Multiple testimonies describe police using baton “to ‘stab’ at protestors below the waist”³²:

*"I saw officers remove and extend their batons and begin using them indiscriminate against the crowd (I myself was hit and have attached photo of bruise) who only responded with non violence and holding the line. I felt a closed baton be forced hard and dug into my back and spine, causing pain as motivation to try and make me move."*³³

Another testimony describes the “indiscriminate” police use of batons, shoving and hitting against protesters³⁴.

Use of batons on protesters with their arms in the air and backs turned is clearly evident in a publicly available YouTube video (14:07 – 14:26 in the cited video)³⁵.

31 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

32 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

33 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

34 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

35 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sq7Jl8GqyhY>

PAVA

PAVA spray is a chemical irritant, similar to pepper spray, used to incapacitate. The accounts in this section describe uses of PAVA on antifascist protesters, with the majority focused on use at Trafalgar Street. Netpol received 57 reports of the use of PAVA, including several from legal observers³⁶ and medics³⁷. These are supported by extensive video evidence shared with Netpol.

At 3.03pm, legal observer notes read *“Spray victims are now coming back through the crowd in distress – street medics are on site quickly – Pava spray is irritating my throat and eyes at this point – I can taste and feel the effects of it”*³⁸.

A first aider on the scene also shared their notes with us:

“I was called to Trafalgar Place to assist several individuals following an unprovoked police charge in Trafalgar Street which I also directly witnessed. Upon my arrival, four individuals were seated on the ground in varying states of distress. Observed injuries and symptoms: All four individuals reported being directly pepper sprayed in the eyes.

*One of them stated that police had removed their glasses to enable more direct spraying. All four were initially unable to open their eyes, which appeared extremely red. Two individuals were hyperventilating and in severe pain. The other two were also in significant discomfort but were eventually able to partially open their eyes and regain limited vision. While I was present, three additional individuals approached with symptoms consistent with pepper spray exposure: Burning sensations on the skin and in eyes Red patches on exposed areas.”*³⁹

Another medic we spoke to was also PAVA sprayed themselves. They realised afterwards they had burn marks amounting to chemical burns as a result. This medic also told us they treated around 15 to 20 people who had been hit by PAVA. They told us that this took place while the police were pushing people on the front lines, and there was a real sense of panic that people were unable to move and could be crushed once PAVA was deployed⁴⁰.

One testimony, supported by video evidence available on Instagram⁴¹, told us:

*“Within, what felt like a very short space of time, while facing away from the officers towards the crowd, I felt police officers try to kick behind my back calf to break my balance and cause me to trip. I Suddenly felt the right side of my face start to burn before I realised that pepper spray had been used. The attached video highlights the moment pepper spray was being deployed.”*⁴²

36 Legal observer testimony and legal observer notes shared with Netpol

37 Medic testimony and medic notes shared with Netpol.

38 Legal observer notes shared with Netpol

39 Medic notes shared with Netpol

40 Interview with medic provided to Netpol

41 <https://www.instagram.com/reels/DZkVMLSNgXL/>

42 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

Another testimony read:

*"I saw three people who had been pepper sprayed in the face. Two can't have been more than teenagers. It seemed to me, the police were about to lose control. Like most people there, I just couldn't understand why the police were attempting to force the march. It was needlessly dangerous."*⁴³

Removal of eye- and face-wear to deploy PAVA

A significant number of testimonies reference police deliberately removing the face and eyewear of protesters in order to spray them directly in the face and eyes:

*"Me and many of the people around me were pepper sprayed at close range, i saw police remove the glasses of one woman to spray her in the eyes."*⁴⁴

*"I felt some liquid hit my forehead ... It started stinging a lot and I realised that I'd been hit by pepper spray which had stuck to my face and was burning me ... Annoyingly this went into one of my eyes causing me immense pain although the burning on my forehead was much more intense. I kept the one eye shut and went back to the front and more manhandling and abuse from the police. At one point a policeman leant over and pulled my mask down exposing my face which I believe has had the most long lasting effect on me."*⁴⁵

*"We saw people who had been pepper sprayed close to us, so put masks on to protect our mouths and noses. My partner ended up right in front of the police line as they tried to push us down the road, a police officer took his mask off him and said they were identifying him."*⁴⁶

*"A Police officer grabbed my face and pulled down my balaclava without asking me to remove it before hand, while shouting "I told you to fucking move." Unfortunately my legs aren't on my face so unsure how that would've helped me move."*⁴⁷

*"Whilst in the midst of the crowd, I noticed a police officer grab an individual's glasses. At the time, I was surprised and could not understand why this had happened. Shortly afterwards, there were reports that pepper spray had been used. I attempted to assist some of those affected."*⁴⁸

The following testimony was corroborated by photographic and video evidence identifying the officer who had deployed PAVA spray as wearing a badge number KA-EA976:

*"I was kneed and pepper sprayed by police. My sunglasses were lifted off my face and I was sprayed from a few inches from my eyes."*⁴⁹

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- 43 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
 - 44 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
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 - 47 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
 - 48 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
 - 49 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

Indiscriminate spraying

Testimonies describe PAVA being sprayed “*indiscriminately on Anti-Fascist protesters*”⁵⁰, with police spraying crowds of people as opposed to any individuals posing any sort of threat⁵¹:

*“I repeatedly saw them spraying from directly behind the ‘frontline’ of Police over their colleagues shoulders, thus blocking their view of the protesters they were aiming at.”*⁵²

*“On Trafalgar Street, I saw police pepper-spraying crowds of people. I then saw several people coming out of the crowd in visible distress, with others pouring bottles of water over their faces to try to relieve the pain caused by the spray.”*⁵³

*“There was no aggression to trigger the use of pepper spray, however I witnessed the police spray it at the crowd, directly hitting two men in the face at close range. There was no warning given that I could see. The pepper spray travelled across the crowd, burning my eyes.”*⁵⁴

*“There were then some police officers standing behind the line of police officers trying to push us back who started indiscriminately pepper spraying people in the crowd. This was not targeted at any particular people from what I could see, they just sprayed in random directions. I assume that this was done to spray as many people as possible in order to try and get through the crowd.”*⁵⁵

Indicating the extent of PAVA deployment, we also received an image of a police officer who appears to be treated by a police medic for having received PAVA spray to the face:



Photographic evidence showing police officer having eyes washed out after being hit with PAVA – provided anonymously to Netpol

- 50 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
- 51 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
- 52 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
- 53 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
- 54 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
- 55 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

At close range and without warning

Lots of the evidence describing the use of PAVA note that this was not only deployed indiscriminately, but also at close range and without any warning or clear escalation which would trigger a police response:

“the first warning i heard about pepper spray was from the counter protesters side after i got sprayed, as far as i recall the cops didn't give any warning”⁵⁶.

Notes from a legal observer reported that police had *“Pava spray[ed] a young male who was sitting outside a cafe, posing no threat to anyone. The police were seen to force him backwards against a wall and spraying Pava spray directly into his eyes”⁵⁷.*

This is supported by a medic’s testimony, who told us that people were being sprayed directly in the eyes from around 30cm away⁵⁸. Another protester testimony describes the close-range application:

“I did not hear any warning before they started spraying ... We were all squashed together so they were right up close. Like we had our hands on the riot shields and they were spraying at point blank range. We turned around to try and avoid the spray and they were reaching round to try and get at our faces. A policeman reached round to try and get at my head but I ducked out the way. I tried to get away and they grabbed at my clothes and tore my shorts. My partner saw them reach and throw someone on the ground who had been pepper sprayed.”⁵⁹

A number of testimonies also reference the police claiming that PAVA spray had been deployed by a protester who had stolen the spray from an officer, despite extensive footage of police deploying PAVA themselves⁶⁰:

“I then politely asked a couple of police officers within the kettle why they felt it had been necessary to use pepper spray, as it appeared to me that the larger group of Brighton anti-fascist protesters was located further down Trafalgar Street, beyond our position. Their response was that the spray had not been deployed by the police. I was told that it had “come loose” and that a protester had been using it.”⁶¹

“I was pepper sprayed at close range by police on Trafalgar street just a little down the road from the Prince Albert. The spray contacted my mouth and eyes. I was blinded so my friend helped lead me away from police where another anti-fascist protestor helped by pouring water over my face to wash out the pepper spray, my friend then lead me home.

56 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

57 Legal observer notes shared with Netpol

58 Interview with medic provided to Netpol

59 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

60 <https://www.instagram.com/reels/DZnSCFwsaN2/>

61 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

Shortly before this happened to me I also witnessed a man who had been sprayed. He was standing in the crowd with his eyes shut asking if anyone had any water to help him. I heard rumours that the police were saying after the fact that this pepper spraying had been done by nationalist protestors, however this could not have been the case as police had created a gap between the two groups when pepper spraying took place.”⁶²

“The officer in charge of the tunnel/ Trafalgar St said, while they were still using pepper sprays, that SEVERAL pepper sprays had been stolen off equipment belts and the counter protestors were spraying them”⁶³

Disproportionate force

The following section focuses on various accounts of police violence. Many contributors described experiencing multiple forms of force during individual encounters with the police, and thus these categories should not be understood as discrete or mutually exclusive. 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.

One testimony, detailing the violence themselves and their partner were subject to, described the incident as “shocking and frightening”, and told us that “officers were hostile, violent, brutal and menacing”⁶⁴.

Legal observer notes provided to Netpol reported kicking, pushing, pulling, hitting, punching, shoving, grabbing, batons drawn, arms twisted behind peoples’ backs to push them, PAVA sprayed and people screaming⁶⁵. Another legal observer’s notes, recording incidents which took place on Trafalgar Street, read “*cops are being extremely violent – punching - kneeling - pushing & pulling people over*”. A medic testimony, meanwhile, stated:

“Throughout the event, I treated multiple individuals with injuries consistent with the use of force by police. In several cases, the level of distress and injury observed was significant and required immediate first aid intervention”⁶⁶.

Kicking

Netpol received extensive evidence of police kicking protestors. Many of these testimonies were also accompanied by photographic evidence of bruising and related injuries.

“My partner who was next to me for most of the time was kicked so hard that it took weeks for the bruising to go.”⁶⁷

62 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

63 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

64 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

65 Legal observer notes shared with Netpol

66 Medic notes shared with Netpol

67 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

*"Officer 1465 repeatedly kicked my ankles, and would pause when I shouted to the crowd for him to stop kicking my ankles. He would continue again shortly after. I reported this to an LO."*⁶⁸

*"On terminus road we prevented the police from advancing the fascist up the hill, I was in the first part and saw my friend being dragged down and kicked, she's in her 50s and had lots of bruises. I pushed against them and was crushed several times."*⁶⁹

*"The police then started pushing us and yelling to move. I kept repeating that I could not move and I could not breathe but they just kept yelling to move. One officer began kicking the person in front of me (who was also repeatedly saying they could not move) and I was kicked through their legs – it was incredibly hard."*⁷⁰

*"I was repeatedly kicked on the legs and on the back (as I turned around to protect myself), and police officers were also trying to trip us with their legs and feet. A particular policeman (with thick beard and rugged face) repeatedly grabbed my hand and tried to push back my thumbs with the intention of breaking them, and pulled out my sun glasses, presumably so he could more clearly record me and identify me ... While all this was happening, adrenaline prevented me from feeling any pain. But towards the end of the day, it was clear that the police charge I experienced had taken its toll. My right hand leg was in great pain and I struggled to walk and sleep for 3-4 days. Even worse, my lower back has been severely hurt, and I still fill lots of pain in that area almost one week later. All pointless and senseless violence, as the marchers still didn't march..."*⁷¹

Discussing being moved on from Terminus Road, one contributor told us:

*"Then they again attempted to force us off the road. At this point the officer in front of me started kneeing and kicking me hard in the upper leg, though I believe he was aiming for my groin as I was turned slightly to present my left side to him. I asked him why he was attacking me, and he said I needed to get back. I said no, and he again used his legs to try to hit me in the groin. He yelled get back again, and I replied no again. He hit me once more again and began using his forearm held up and in front of him to apply force to my upper chest and neck. When I in return grabbed his arm to relieve the pressure he began shouting at me to let him go. Immediately upon moving back I noticed significant soreness in my left thigh and began to limp ... Whilst I have taken over a week to begin to recover and have been unable to have a normal routine in the meantime because of the attack on my person by a police officer"*⁷².

Another testimony reports protesters put in headlocks by police while being kicked, and protesters kicked by police while on the floor:

68 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

69 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

70 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

71 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

72 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

"This is when a second officer comes over and I hear him tell the first officer to kick me, I look down at their feet and then back up at them but after a short pause the first officer puts me in a headlock whilst the second is kicking me in the shins... At this point other protesters became concerned for my safety and pulled me out of the crowd ... When I came out of the crowd I was quite shaken up, I saw a young man who had just been pepper sprayed by police and a friend reported to me that he and another police officer were taken to the ground and whilst he was down there other officers began to kick him." ⁷³

The attached photographs of this protesters' injuries are shown below:



Photographic evidence showing protester's abrasions on legs and bruising to chin – provided anonymously to Netpol

Noting an incident on Trafalgar Street, a medic told us:

"While providing treatment to those affected by pepper spray, a man approached with a significant injury to his right shin. Observed injury: Deep cut with substantial bleeding. The individual reported being forcefully kicked by a police officer. The impact had broken the skin and caused notable swelling ... The individual was advised to seek medical attention from a doctor the following day due to the extent of swelling and trauma" ⁷⁴.

We have also received several reports of police *"deliberately [driving] their knees into protesters"*. One testimony notes that there was no reason to do this other than to *"cause pain"*⁷⁵. Another testimony reads:

"I think at the same time the cop I was pushing against kneed me very very hard in the thigh. I have the one on a photo. He was padded up and much much larger than me, I'm a petite but strong 5'3 and 52. Clearly grey. At this time we also have a pic of a cop behind the one who kneed me trying to open my bag..for some reason"⁷⁶.

This testimony also included photographic evidence of the bruising obtained:

⁷³ Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

⁷⁴ Medic notes shared with Netpol

⁷⁵ Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

⁷⁶ Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol



Photographic evidence showing bruising to protester's arms and legs – provided anonymously to Netpol

A medic also told us that the police were kicking people in the shins repeatedly in steel toecap boots⁷⁷.

Choking and strangulation

A theme clear throughout the evidence provided to Netpol was the police use of choking, strangulation, headlocks and grabbing of protesters by the throats and necks. As is demonstrated by the below testimonies, these tactics were almost always reported as being used alongside other forms of police violence:

*"I saw people being shoved to the floor and the police not allowing others to pick them up. I personally was repeatedly shoved by a police officer, who had his grip on my throat/neck."*⁷⁸

*"As the counter protest attempted to hold our line, an officer held his fist against my throat with significant force, restricting my breathing and causing pain"*⁷⁹.

*"One officer was using his elbow against my throat to push back. My feet were off the ground, and I was being pushed against other people behind me. The officers used their legs to swipe our feet from under us, deliberately causing people to fall. When I told them that people couldn't breathe, and some people had fallen on the floor, they continued to push, leading to people getting trampled until other members of the crowd were able to create enough space to help them get up."*⁸⁰

"When they attempted to push us back at Terminus Road (before the Trafalgar Street attacks), one cop pushed his hand directly into my throat and when I moved, he moved his hand to still be on my throat. At the same time he was pushing his knee guard directly into the side of my knee and if I moved my leg to

77 Medic interview provided to Netpol

78 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

79 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

80 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

*avoid this he would move his leg to continue. This slightly injured my knee for a day or so.*⁸¹

*"I had a policeman's arm across my throat at one point when they were trying to push through us, and the same officer then tried to kick my legs out from under me. I became distressed and felt faint and fellow residents helped move me back"*⁸².

*"Police officers deliberately used their forearms against protesters' throats, causing choking and restricting breathing"*⁸³.

*"I was placed in a headlock, from behind with an officer's arm around my neck, for approximately 10 seconds."*⁸⁴

*"Police grabbed, pushed and elbowed me, i saw an officer repeatedly put a man next to me in a headlock"*⁸⁵.

*"Like the people around me i was just standing my ground and not pushing back against the police or doing anything to antagonise them further. at some point i got turned around so my back was to the police and this led the police to try and drag me out of the crowd, first by my arms then by my neck, it took other protesters helping me to get them to let go as I was struggling to breathe. whilst stood here I was struck repeatedly on the back and had a truncheon forced into my kidneys to try to get me to move. this has left bruising on my back which I have attached a picture of."*⁸⁶

The picture (right) was provided, illustrating the bruising to this protester's back.

We have also seen a video of someone being grabbed and pulled by their keffiyeh, which was tied around their neck⁸⁷.



Photographic evidence showing bruising to protester's back – provided anonymously to Netpol

-
- 81 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
 - 82 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
 - 83 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
 - 84 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
 - 85 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
 - 86 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol
 - 87 Anonymous video evidence shared with Netpol

Another video provided to Netpol clearly displays an officer forcibly holding someone's neck⁸⁸. In a separate video shared with Netpol, a protester can be heard shouting an officer "do not go for the neck"⁸⁹.

Hair pulling

Another theme which was evident across the research was police pulling counterprotesters' hair:

*"A man had his dreadlocks pulled and some more protestors get punched in the head to try to get them to move"*⁹⁰.

*"A girl close to me was punched in the head by a male police officer and a trans woman was grabbed by her hair with force and dragged to the ground."*⁹¹

*"A friend of mine had their mask and glasses removed by police, and a chunk of their hair ripped out"*⁹².

We have received substantial testimony detailing one of the most shocking incidents, from the individual who was subject to police violence, fellow protesters, legal observers and the medic who treated him. The individual was attending the Carnival Against Fascism with his mum.

*"I had my hair pulled, I was punched and kicked repeatedly, I had my hand cut (it will now scar) and I was treated like a violent criminal with threats that the police would "nick me". My whole body is covered in cuts, bruises and scrapes and I still feel pain in my neck, back and scalp from where I was thrown around and grabbed repeatedly. I have footage of these incidents and i will send them attached to this message. In the videos you can see me in the [identifying detail removed] having my hair pulled."*⁹³

He then goes on to explain how he felt he was targeted by police throughout the day, even while no longer part of the protest:

*"Throughout the rest of the day after this incident I continued to be targeted. A Sergeant came up (he was across the street in a police van and got out just to say this) to me later in the day and said he knew I was violent and that if I were to touch one of his boys I would be arrested. I was with my mother at this point and was no longer at the protest."*⁹⁴

Corroborating, we also received the following testimony:

88 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Cy-Vsu8JnU> – 4.27.30 in this video

89 Anonymous video evidence shared with Netpol

90 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

91 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

92 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

93 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

94 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

"We saw a young man on terminus St have hair pulled out and I removed a cops forearm from his neck. There is a video of this"⁹⁵.

The below was written in legal observer notes:

"[Redacted] came to report that her son was hit on the arm by police, had it his head hit and hair pulled and pushed hard on the next[marks visible on finger, neck and head] Her son said he was pulled up by his hair and then pushed on the neck possibly by CG372 police. and EA483 and EB721 pulled whistle out of his hand injuring his finger ... A street medic attended on the spot"⁹⁶.

Meanwhile, a medic told us:

"I was called to assist a young man who had sustained multiple injuries, which he reported were caused by police (and are consistent with video evidence which surfaced after the event). Observed injuries: Hair had been forcibly pulled out. Skin torn from his ring finger on his right hand after a whistle was forcefully ripped off. Skin abrasion to the right shoulder and upper chest area, presenting as significant redness. A Legal Observer (LO) was also present at the scene and was recording details as I provided treatment"⁹⁷

This can be clearly seen in an Instagram video⁹⁸, as well as in the cited YouTube video⁹⁹ (at 0:00 – 0:13, 5:51 – 6:30 and 7:47 – 8:06). This individual also shared photographic evidence of their injuries:



Photographic evidence showing bruising and abrasions to protester's collar bone and cut finger – provided anonymously to Netpol

95 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

96 Legal observer notes shared with Netpol

97 Medic notes shared with Netpol

98 <https://www.instagram.com/reels/DZiW5UzNOtX/>

99 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sq7Jl8GqyhY>

Other uses of force

Others discuss being subject to various forms of disproportionate force, including elbowing, headbutting, striking, blading (whereby the edge of shields are used as a weapon), and having limbs twisted:

*"While standing in the crowd a police officer firmly thrust his head, wearing a riot helmet into the centre of my forehead (nuttled me)."*¹⁰⁰

*"One officer took a running start before shouldering into the crowd."*¹⁰¹

*"My partner saw a police officer elbow a person next to him several times, and I spoke to a woman in the crowd who said a police officer had punched her."*¹⁰²

*"I had a firm grip on the door frame of this shop with my left hand. I held this for a few minutes. Then a police officer saw this, and grabbed my left arm with both hands, I think one on my wrist and one on my elbow. He twisted my arm very hard using huge leverage, to the point where I thought he would break it."*¹⁰³

*"They literally attacked us with their plastic shields. It's one thing to walk forward holding a plastic shield but quite another to use it as weapon and they punched their way through, teeth bared"*¹⁰⁴.

An older couple spoke of being *"shoved with riot shields"* alongside being hit with batons, sprayed with PAVA, and being kned in the back. Both reported being *"bruised, shaken and very upset"*, a legal observer told us¹⁰⁵.

Two legal observers¹⁰⁶ also described a woman *"snatched by the police through the riot police line forcibly"*¹⁰⁷, *causing her to fall backwards and hit her head on the pavement* on the corner of Trafalgar Street and Over Street. Legal observer notes say this woman was subsequently arrested.

Injuries

Several people reported lasting injuries which required hospital treatment, including a 64-year-old retired NHS worker whose foot was broken by an officer stamping on it:

"Police and horses continued to push aggressively – people were knocked over, squashed against the wall, squashed against police vans and generally pummelled. During one particularly aggressive push from the police I was almost pushed over myself and my left foot was heavily stamped on by a police officer"

100 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

101 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

102 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

103 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

104 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

105 Legal observer testimony shared with Netpol

106 Legal observer notes shared with Netpol

107 Legal observer testimony shared with Netpol

... My foot was swollen and bruised almost immediately but it wasn't until Monday (when I realised it was no better, in fact more painful) that I attended A&E on the advice of a Dr who examined me. The x-ray confirmed my foot (5th metatarsal) was broken and I would need to wear a boot for 6-8 weeks.”¹⁰⁸

Another testimony explains how one antifascist protester received a fractured rib:

“One officer placed an elbow into my stomach area, and pushed very hard. This was painful, and made breathing difficult ... I'm not sure exactly what happened next, but I strongly suspect the same officer pushed me again with his elbow, but this time against the floating ribs on my left side (see final paragraph below for the consequences). I didn't feel much pain at the time, but my chest was also being squeezed, and I was having to work hard forcing air into my lungs so I could breathe. I was worried because I felt I was close to the point of not being able to breathe at all ... Later that evening, I noticed quite a bit of pain around the lower ribs on my left side. At first I thought it was just a bit of bruising. However, over the next few days, the pain got worse. On Tuesday 16th June 2026, I went to A&E. They examined me, and told me it was probably a fractured rib. I think it is rib 9, one of the floating ribs, on my left side.”¹⁰⁹

Others described the lasting psychological impacts:

“I was left feeling dissociated and anxious for days following the incident, and I know many other attendees have suffered similar lasting psychological distress since Saturday 13th”¹¹⁰.

“On Saturday I was shoved, choked, gripped tightly and elbowed on the front line. My arms are sore from their fingerprints and legs are sore from where they pressed into me (photos attached). When I started crying and having a panic attack, I told them I couldn't breathe and they kept shoving me ... They didn't even ask us first to move, resorting straight to brute force. It was extremely triggering and brought back PTSD from being sexually assaulted and non consensually touched/unable to move.”¹¹¹

This person also shared photographic evidence of their bruising alongside video footage showing the officers who had attacked them¹¹².

Violence against minoritised and marginalised groups

Testimonies consistently indicate that police violence did not affect all protesters equally. Older people, disabled protesters, women and younger protesters describe being subject to force in circumstances that heightened their risk of harm.

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

¹⁰⁹ Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

¹¹⁰ Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

¹¹¹ Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

¹¹² Anonymous photographic and video testimony shared with Netpol

Disabled protesters

Several testimonies described being amid a crush at Terminus Street alongside a wheelchair user, with attempts from antifascist protesters to make the police aware of their presence and to stop pushing ignored:

*"I was standing behind a disabled man in a wheelchair. We shouted to the police that there was a disabled man who couldn't move but they took no notice and carried on beating anyone in their path."*¹¹³

*"A crowd of us numbering no more than 50-70 were lining the railings looking down to what was now an empty street as the anti boats were in Trafalgar street. Again a sudden decision was made for police to push us back from the railings, with physical force. I was stood behind someone in a wheelchair and the police were forcing the people onto the person, even while some of us screamed at them that there was a wheelchair user there who couldn't move and hadn't been given warning to. I am not sure if they were okay – their friend was with them and supported them to leave the area once the police had calmed down with their violent pushing"*¹¹⁴

Legal observer notes corroborate these accounts:

*"1247 I have noted there is a wheelchair user who are pushing people onto without any care or attention - people (including me) are shouting to the TSG trying to prevent the person in the wheelchair from being hurt / tipped over"*¹¹⁵.

TSG refers to Territorial Support Group, a Metropolitan Police unit focused on public order policing.

A testimony describing a crush at Trafalgar Street later in the day – around 4pm – depicts a similar incident:

"The call was ordered to "fucking use force" to create the line. The police then wanted to push us further back. The use of pushing hard against the whole crowd was the applied to the whole crowd, even those who had been compliant in moving backwards when asked as the line of police was being created. Little warning was given for this [police pushing] which resulted in a walker / wheelchair user who was sat down becoming unstable and crushed by the crowd. A few of the crowd shouted wheelchair. The police didn't listen. I stepped in to support the person as their wheel had come loose and collapsed on the floor because of the pressure it was being put under by the crowd created by police. It was almost impossible to fix because there was no space, the density of the crowd had been created by the police. I said to the police the wheel had gone down and appealed for them to move back, despite having lots of space to move back and no far right protestors behind them. The only response I got was "well fucking fix it". If it wasn't multiple members of the crowd supporting the

113 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

114 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

115 Legal observer notes shared with Netpol

wheelchair, the person in it would have certainly fallen backwards off the chair.”¹¹⁶

Other testimonies detailing police attacks on disabled protesters are included below:

“I heard first-hand accounts of police brutality which I found shocking – a friend of mine was thrown to the floor, losing both of their hearing aids and received kicks and a punch to the ribs, a blind man was hit on the head with a baton, another friend was pepper sprayed in the mouth and hit on the head and I washed pepper spray from multiple people’s faces – at least 5.”¹¹⁷

“My friend was trying to reason with the police about their decision to push down Trafalgar, and his hearing aids were knocked out and smashed.”¹¹⁸

“I was on the front line, I watched a cop grab the white stick off a blind, brave young guy, stood next to me, snap it in half, throw it to the ground and say ‘get that out of my face’ ... I watched them push at least 2 people down to the ground, out of sight and give them a good kicking, I got pepper sprayed in the eyes”¹¹⁹.

Gendered violence

Many reported the “*violent tactics*”¹²⁰ used against women, with some noting that they felt police were specifically targeting feminine-presenting antifascist protesters:

“I saw people be shoved, shoulder barged, kicked, kneed, punched, strangled, elbowed, stomped on and dragged across the floor by officers. Several older women (50s onwards) were hit and shoved to the ground. Officers seemed incredibly reluctant to hit men/masculine presenting people in comparison to how freely they were assaulting female/feminine presenting people.”¹²¹

“I was shoved in two separate occasions by male police officers. Both times I was just standing in the crowd, surrounded by men but I felt like the force was put on me. The first time jolted me fully forward.”¹²²

“When I looked back to the police line I saw a young woman punched in the head at least twice by a police officer, this officer was behind his colleague at the front and did this over the shoulder of those pushing.”¹²³

Others describe sexualised violence used against women:

“My friend, who was to my left, was groped by an officer. He reached out directly aimed at her breasts and sexually assaulted her. Naturally angered by this, my

116 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

117 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

118 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

119 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

120 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

121 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

122 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

123 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

*response was to shove him away and force my body between the two of them to prevent him from being able to sexually assault her again. I'm trans masculine and pass in most situations, the officers were referring to me as male and were trying to "reason" with me whilst being openly misogynistic towards anyone they perceived as female by acting as if they were stupid, not bothering to talk to them and dismissing anything they said. His comrade next to me reached for my throat with his hand, and upon seeing people filming instead put his elbow in my throat with a fair amount of force, whilst the officer who had assaulted my friend repeatedly kicked and kneed me in the leg as hard as he was physically able. He used so much force that each strike on me pushed him backwards and he had to step forward to hit me again. He hit me a minimum of ten times whilst his comrade kept an elbow in my throat to prevent me from moving away. Both fortunately and unfortunately there are photos and videos of this incident where you can see the distress on my friend's face. I have photos of my injuries and both officers, but I do not have either of their shoulder numbers.*¹²⁴

They shared the below annotated photograph showing the offending officers, alongside photographic evidence of their bruising:



Annotated photograph provided anonymously to Netpol – detailing protester's experience with police

They also shared the following account with us:

"After having asked around I have been told of around 20 women and fem presenting people who were groped or sexually assaulted by officers. Some reported officers attempting to rip their shirts off. One of my friends was punched

124 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

in the face by an officer who started swinging wildly as he retreated, seemingly aiming for anyone female/feminine presenting. He gave them a bloody nose and a concussion and they had to go home, they were doing nothing more than standing in the way.”¹²⁵

Another protester also reported having their clothes ripped off by an officer:

“I was at the stand off next to the station and had a police officer nearly rip my shirt off. two people had to intervene and ask if i was OK because he nearly exposed my chest (im a woman)”¹²⁶.

Older and younger protesters

Netpol received numerous testimonies from both younger and older antifascist protesters describing how their age contributed to their vulnerability to police violence. We also received accounts from witnesses who described police using force against people they deemed vulnerable because of their age:

“Saw first-hand how the police violently shoved at elderly protestors who had committed no crimes and been given no notice that they couldn’t stand where they were”¹²⁷.

“At this point, I moved away from the direct front line, in order to assist in helping those who had been sprayed. This included pouring water over the faces of older men and women who were obviously in severe pain. From the side, and with a higher viewpoint of the front, I could see multiple police officers using pepper spray in close proximity to those on the front line, as well as many acts of physical violence. Many officers were punching, kicking, and pushing the counter-protesters and using batons, and in one instance I saw someone get dragged to the ground and kicked by an officers and then beaten with a baton whilst they were on the floor. This level of violence was used upon all people in the crowd, including older people, and stayed at a sustained level for a considerable time”¹²⁸.

Meanwhile, younger protesters describe being subject to violence and targeted:

“I felt as though I was repeatedly targeted by the police due to my age, even though I was peaceful and had my hands by my side the whole time police were pushing me.” ¹²⁹

“I am under 18 and so are my friends who were pepper sprayed and attacked.”¹³⁰

125 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

126 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

127 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

128 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

129 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

130 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

Lack of accountability

The testimonies collected by Netpol indicate that the violence documented in this report did not appear in isolation, but within an operational environment in which accountability mechanisms are weakened, disregarded, or under attack. These accounts raise profound concerns about transparency and oversight throughout this policing operation. As one protester asked, “*When the police attack you, who do you turn to?*”¹³¹

One testimony demonstrating police attitudes reads:

*“I can remember an officer hitting someone stood just behind me, who said “you just hit me in the face, that’s assault” to which the officer replied “too right it is”. ”*¹³²

We have also received an account of an officer manipulating body-worn camera evidence:

*“After the two officers on the row behind went to help with another part of the police line, and the officer directly ahead of me began to look more worried. He looked up, giving me direct eye contact, then punched me directly in the lower right of my abdomen, shouting “don’t you dare fucking elbow me again”. My arms were still behind the people either side of me, so I believe this to be for the benefit of his body camera”*¹³³

This person describes their lasting injuries:

*“Though the officer was not to know, he had punched me directly where I’d had an adrenalectomy in 2022, so the muscle is weaker. On the Monday, the pain and nausea from sitting or standing was unbearable, and I had to take frequent breaks from work to lie down. Tuesday was only slightly better. On Wednesday, I went to see my GP, who told me to go to A&E immediately. Sitting for so long in the waiting room was so bad that I had to be given IV antiemetics”*¹³⁴

They were diagnosed with bruising and a spigelian hernia, which can be caused by trauma to the abdomen.

Reports of attacks on legal observers feature prominently in the evidence provided to Netpol. This is particularly concerning given the recognised role of legal observers in documenting public order policing and facilitating accountability. Section 17(1) of the Public Order Act 2023 provides that police powers to impose conditions on public assemblies and processions cannot be used to prevent a person from observing or reporting on a protest¹³⁵. Violence directed towards legal observers therefore represents an attack on an important accountability

¹³¹ Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

¹³² Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

¹³³ Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

¹³⁴ Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

¹³⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/15/section/17>

mechanism that protesters have developed in response to longstanding concerns about the adequacy of formal oversight and complaints processes.

The below accounts are all from legal observers:

*"I was pushed and pinned to the doorway and other people's bodies without an option to move back despite getting the attention of some police and telling them people had no where to move"*¹³⁶

*"[Legal observer] was pushed with knee in back with gloved hand round his neck all while saying he had no where to move and that he is a legal observer."*¹³⁷

*"I was punched in the back – elbowed – had a gloved hand squeezing my neck and forcing my head down TSG liberally doling out the violence to all and sundry (Legal Observer wearing Hi Vis & Cap with Legal Observer on) S 17 Public Order Act 2023"*¹³⁸.

Attempts to seek accountability through formal channels have themselves raised concerns. Protesters who submitted complaints to the IOPC reported being asked to provide identifying photographs, highlighting how systems supposedly intended to scrutinise police conduct are instead used to criminalise those already exposed to harm¹³⁹.

Arbitrary escalation

Across the testimonies received by Netpol, a consistent theme was the absence of any clear escalation or warning before officers used force against protesters. Many accounts describe police violence as sudden, disproportionate and unexplained, whereby antifascist protesters were not given an opportunity to comply before force was used against them.

The following accounts describe the use of violence at Terminus Road and the surrounding side streets:

*"There was no need to use any force, we were within our rights be standing where we were, nothing had become suddenly more dangerous by standing there before the police started pushing us and yet with some force the officers pushed us back"*¹⁴⁰.

*"The police line in front of us started getting agitated. They did not make any clear and loud announcement, they just started pushing and signalling for us to move backwards towards Terminus St. The aim was clearly to allow the marchers to walk by, which we could not tolerate. A few seconds later, the whole police line violently charged against us. As we resisted, the violence increased."*¹⁴¹

136 Legal observer testimony shared with Netpol

137 Legal observer notes shared with Netpol

138 Legal observer notes shared with Netpol

139 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

140 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

141 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

"The whole situation was totally disproportionate. None of the counter protestors were being violent or aggressive. Some of the police officers had a look of genuine hatred and anger on their faces."¹⁴²

Supporting, a legal observer testimony reads:

"No warning given – no explanation, very violent policing for a completely peaceful crowd of counter protestors – pushing and shoving people indiscriminately (the crowd was not militant – it was a mixture of old & young & everything in between- disabled person in a wheelchair) - The police showed no mercy whatsoever – they went into attack mode & people were being pushed hard / pushed & knocked over – people being literally thrown about by the police – extreme violence on a peaceful crowd ... Horses in full public order also pushing into the crowd of counterprotestors ... indiscriminately people are being assaulted, punched, pushed, thrown over each other – the crowd is peacefully resisting & trying to hold a line but facing serious brutality from TSG against defenceless members of the public."¹⁴³

Netpol has seen video evidence supporting this version of events.

Another legal observer shares the below account, demonstrative of the level of violence or disorder immediately before police escalation:

"Around this time a man came down terminus street with a baby in a pram trying to get to railway station and would not be deterred because he couldn't see the public order police getting ready to push round the corner. This gives an idea that he felt safe to move through the protestors in and level with terminus street [he was pursued by the crowd to turn round as they could see the growing police presence]"¹⁴⁴.

The below testimonies refer to the policing of antifascist protesters at Trafalgar Street:

"Suddenly and completely without warning, but obviously on some command of their own, the line of police barrelled into us in a diagonal movement to force us the road alongside the prince Albert. no aggression, had not been asked to move, and were not agitating the police in any way. My friend was knocked to the ground and literally trampled on by heavy men. The police were physically grabbing and throwing us, trying to throw us on the ground it felt like, or at least across the street. I was lifted and grabbed and hit many time. I saw boots standing on my friend's body and they suffered a shoulder injury. I was desperately trying to help them get up but I myself was being grabbed and hit and forcibly barged and thrown around. I believe I was hit with batons, as my bruises have sharp line across them and I am in pain all over still, five days later. I was screaming at them to stop and let my friend get up but they continued to trample on them. I believe this was completely unnecessary as I was simply

142 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

143 Legal observer testimony shared with Netpol

144 Legal observer notes shared with Netpol

standing on a street. No fascists in sight. The police were removing us like rubble to make way for them without any care or regard for our safety.”¹⁴⁵

“The police drew their batters and started shouting their intentions to use them. I was telling them that it was completely unnecessary, that we were peaceful but they obviously weren’t in the mood to listen to us. At this point I turned around so that I was pushing backwards rather than forwards. I was thinking I’d rather get hit in the back of my head than in my face. I’m not sure how I got hit but it felt like a punch in my side and then my back”¹⁴⁶.

“I was one of approximately 10 people who peacefully stood in the road when officers advanced towards us. Within minutes, the situation had escalated and become dangerous. There were no attempts to have a conversation with us before they began to use force”¹⁴⁷

“I saw police officers pepper-spray people who were not pushing or posing any threat, I saw them shoulder barge people whose backs were turned away from the police and were not posing any threat, and use batons to strike the legs of people in the crowd.”¹⁴⁸

“Police deliberately shoulder-barged people from behind, including individuals who were not facing the police and clearly posed no threat. This is clearly unwarranted and violent”¹⁴⁹.

“At least 2 times, when my back was turned to police, a hand was placed on my shoulder and another hand pushed the back of my head downwards hard and fast.”¹⁵⁰

“I didn’t witness a single protestor fight back against the police, merely try to brace themselves against the push. the level of violence I saw from the police was completely unnecessary and disproportionate for a peaceful protest. not once did i see the police try to explain or justify their actions, they just kept shouting at us to move”¹⁵¹.

The below are testimonies from legal observers:

“Witness reported seeing police Pava spraying protesters in Trafalgar street who were not behaving aggressively. Witness reported this as being an act of provocation by the Police seemingly with the intent to inflame rather than calm down the atmosphere”¹⁵².

145 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

146 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

147 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

148 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

149 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

150 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

151 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

152 Legal observer testimony shared with Netpol

“Police pushing pulling kicking hitting punching and spraying crowd saying ‘move back’ despite legal observers and others shouting that 1) there is no room to move back into the crowd and 2) there are about 20 people sitting down near the DJ booth in the middle of Trafalgar Street. Force used very aggressive with intent to hurt. Crowd were not offering any threat to the police or trying to push the police. I did not see anything thrown at police.”¹⁵³

Netpol has seen substantial video evidence supporting these claims, whereby there is clear police escalation and violence in response to protesters acting peacefully¹⁵⁴.

Facilitation of the far-right

The violence documented throughout this report cannot be separated from the central purpose of the policing operation: forcing the route of a far-right demonstration through Brighton. Rather than preventing conflict, this prioritised the protection of far-right, racist and fascist demonstrators by using force against those who opposed it, drawing attention to the ways in which public order strategies can reproduce and intensify harm while claiming to protect communities.

Many of the testimonies Netpol received articulated this clearly:

“The first and most important thing to understand is that the police were adamant the [South East Patriots] march would go ahead ... It was an extremely dangerous situation, once again provoked by police commanders utterly possessed with moving the march through an impassable object”¹⁵⁵

“An officer who I assume was a senior in some way went down the line with a very smug look on his face declaring that there was nothing we could do and the far right were going to march up terminus road anyway. He seemed pleased about this and later ordered officers to push us back, which of course they failed to do. This is when the police began to brutalise people.”¹⁵⁶

“When I managed to get away from [the police], I retreated to the side of the streets as I was really shaken up, breathless, and in pain. The anti boats crew were then led down Trafalgar street where police continued to use violence to make a way for them over the next hour or so. Their decision that it was the right mood and time to try and lead them into such a busy area of the city after hours of resistance is absolutely ludicrous. Of course we continued to stand our ground.”¹⁵⁷

153 Legal observer notes shared with Netpol

154 Anonymous video evidence shared with Netpol

155 Johnson, J., 2026. “The Battle of Trafalgar Street”, <https://bhafz.wordpress.com/2026/06/14/the-battle-of-traffic-street/>

156 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

157 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

"they seemed determined to facilitate the racists marching and used excessive force on the ordinary, decent and peaceful of Brighton to allow that to happen"¹⁵⁸.

"I'm also left feeling that the police did little to protect me, they seemed to be on the side of the agitators which is why they showed such violence towards us."¹⁵⁹

"The use of such high levels of unnecessary violence on Saturday was truly shocking and abhorrent to see. There are big questions that need to be answered. Why was an anti immigrant march such a priority over the health and safety of the city's residents? Why did the police so quickly resort to inflicting violence without warning?"

Many contributors describe being subject to crushing as a direct result of the police attempting to facilitate the far-right march via the routes occupied by antifascist protesters:

"I would like the force to acknowledge that something went wrong here. That the tactics they used against the crowd were excessive and violent, and the decision-making was unsafe. There were thousands of counter-protesters in a very tight space, and the officers decided to attempt to move the much larger crowd of counter-protesters backwards. I would like to understand the reasoning behind this decision-making. It was very clear that the police were not there to maintain public safety but instead, to facilitate the racist march at any cost."¹⁶⁰

This is evident in publicly available Instagram¹⁶¹ and YouTube¹⁶² videos – in the latter, at around 5:20, the police can be seen escorting a single-file line of far-right protesters. We have also been sent anonymous video evidence which demonstrates police pushing, shoving and using excessive force to make routes through densely packed crowds of antifascists.

The stark difference between this treatment and the severe violence that antifascist protesters were met with is difficult to ignore.

Many also discuss the police appearing to overlook violence and antagonisation from far-right protesters directed at antifascist counterprotesters, echoing the findings of Netpol's 'One Day In Edgware' report, whereby pro-Palestine protesters were subject to racist, misogynist and violent attacks while police turned a blind eye¹⁶³:

"I also wanted to note that this level of violence was only directed towards the carnival against fascism crowd. At no point did I see the police turn to the fascists or enact any violence upon them, instead they seemed determined to break our side through violence in order to let the fascists march"¹⁶⁴.

158 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

159 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

160 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

161 <https://www.instagram.com/p/DZi4Zi9qc7w/>

162 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sq7Jl8GqyhY>

163 <https://netpol.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/One-Day-In-Edgware-web-version-FINAL.pdf>

164 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

"The police also turned a blind eye to anti-immigration protesters who reached over the police line to remove a mask from my face. I saw them also punching past the police and throwing cans/bottles at people's heads with no repercussions"¹⁶⁵.

"From what I observed, far-right protesters were throwing drinks at Brighton residents while police appeared to take little or no action. By contrast, the force and aggression I witnessed from police seemed to be directed at Brighton residents who were peacefully demonstrating against racism."¹⁶⁶

These claims are corroborated by an Instagram video showing far-right protesters throwing things at antifascist demonstrators¹⁶⁷. Netpol has also been sent video evidence appearing to show far-right protesters antagonising antifascists, getting in their faces and being physically threatening in the presence of police.

Operational failures

Despite the significant resources deployed and the extensive use of force against antifascist counterdemonstrators, the policing operation failed to achieve its objective of clearing a route for a far-right march, which ultimately progressed only a short distance over the course of the day before having to turn back to the railway station.

"Harm was done to people because of the police, harm that would have been avoided if the interest of the police was the safety of everyone and not to be personal security for the far-right."¹⁶⁸

"The scariest and worrying part of the day isn't that the danger came from the far right. It's that it came from a police force that should be protecting the rights of everyone."¹⁶⁹

"I hold the police wholly responsible for the breach of the peace that day, and call them fascists for their sympathy and cooperation with the fascist hacks who came to our city to try and scare us."¹⁷⁰

"The police were clearly on the side of the fascists and had come down to Brighton from all over the country to assist the fascists. They were the equivalent of football hooligans, but given a legal right to beat people up. From the outset, it was quite clear that 200 fascists were never going to penetrate a crowd of 5,000 counter-demonstrators but the police had come down to Brighton for a fight and were determined to get one."¹⁷¹

165 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

166 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

167 <https://www.instagram.com/reels/DZkFigRogMR/>

168 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

169 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

170 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

171 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

Many focus on the danger posed by police decision-making:

*"It was clear there was no proper plan from the police and it felt unsafe and out of control. It felt moments away from disaster."*¹⁷²

*"Police decision making was seriously flawed that day leading to unnecessary violence and injuries and a dangerous crush situation."*¹⁷³

*"The decision to push the flag wavers down Trafalgar Street was crazy, incendiary and almost caused a full scale riot, it's only that the people of Brighton are so cool that things didn't really kick off"*¹⁷⁴.

*"I also witnessed the officers arguing among themselves about the handling of the situation, clearly disagreeing about tactics and decision-making, thereby exacerbating an already unsafe situation."*¹⁷⁵

Several testimonies highlight the futility of the violence:

*"The police made no headway against maybe a thousand counter-demonstrators, despite attacking those on the front line with pepper spray."*¹⁷⁶

*"It was an extraordinary display of violence from the police, and in the end it was all for nought. Having assaulted and injured countless locals, the racists having managed a grand total of around 500 steps all day, and finding the way down Trafalgar Street utterly impenetrable, the reality of the situation belatedly dawned on the police. Jubilant cheers went up as police removed their helmets and retreated."*¹⁷⁷

*"Their actions created unnecessary danger and caused avoidable injuries. They must be held accountable for the failures in planning, command and the use of force that occurred that day."*¹⁷⁸

*"I have attended many protests before, but I have never witnessed scenes like this in person. What I saw was frightening, unnecessary and avoidable."*¹⁷⁹

*"Despite everything the police did to facilitate the fascists' march, they only got about 50 metres up Terminus Road, before getting stuck by another (much larger) crowd of counter protestors. Ultimately, this led to the police leading the marchers downhill again and onto Trafalgar Street. I'm sure you've had plenty of submissions about that particularly reckless decision!"*¹⁸⁰

172 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

173 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

174 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

175 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

176 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

177 Johnson, J., 2026. "The Battle of Trafalgar Street, <https://bhafz.wordpress.com/2026/06/14/the-battle-of-trafalgar-street/>

178 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

179 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

180 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

A legal observer's notes, recorded while at Trafalgar Street, read *"1503 Despite the TSG really going for it – they are not really getting anywhere though (at most they have only managed to push the crowd a few metres ...maybe 4 or 5)"*¹⁸¹.

Some highlight the police's failure to protect racialised groups, despite advancing a racist march of whom refugees and people of colour are well-known targets:

*"They had attempted to move them down Trafalgar street deeper toward the more densely populated area of Brighton the North Laines. This is an area where we have many independent shops owned by migrants and businesses with migrant employees."*¹⁸²

*"nothing that happened that day can be justified by trying to be "neutral" or respect the marchers' "right to protest and march". First, it's not morally and ethically equivalent to protest in favour of racism and fascism, on the one hand, and protesting in favour of protecting vulnerable asylums-seekers and promoting a socially fair society, on the other."*¹⁸³

Netpol understands that there was a hotel in Hove housing refugees and asylum seekers that was targeted by far-right demonstrators after they were finally escorted back to Brighton train station:

*"Police did not inform hotel manager that they were a target. Also soon after the FR left the area around the hotel the police removed their presence, even though FR leaders were in a hotel just down the road and they were at least 15 stealth camper vans that stayed in the area"*¹⁸⁴.

181 Legal observer notes shared with Netpol

182 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

183 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

184 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

Conclusion

The policing of antifascist counterdemonstrators on 13th June 2026 has been described as “scary”¹⁸⁵, “shameful”, “disgusting”¹⁸⁶ and a “reckless, dangerous and racist policing operation”¹⁸⁷. The evidence collected by Netpol explains why. The violence experienced by antifascist protesters was not incidental to the policing operation: it stemmed directly from the decision to facilitate the movement of a far-right demonstration through Brighton.

Across the testimonies, the same patterns emerge. Protesters describe prolonged kettling and dangerous crowd crushing as officers sought to force people away from roads and junctions to create space for the far-right march. They describe PAVA spray being deployed indiscriminately, at close range and without warning, often accompanied by baton strikes, punches, kicks, choking, hair-pulling and other forms of physical violence. Many of these acts of police violence sit clearly outside of policing guidelines on use of force.

The wealth of evidence describing crowd crushing across multiple locations demonstrates that the danger of multiple fatalities was very real. Despite the deaths of George Floyd, Edward Garner and Henry Nowak after police ignored their pleas they could not breathe, warnings that people could not breathe were ignored. Police neglect of welfare even extended to their own colleagues, whereby calls of an officer passed out were overlooked. In the face of this completely unnecessary life-threatening situation, it was only due to the good sense and solidarity of Brighton residents that something more sinister was avoided. This report should be read as a warning: the policing tactics we have documented created conditions in which death or serious injury was a foreseeable risk.

Witnesses consistently report that force was used without any clear escalation, meaningful communication or opportunity for protesters to comply with police instructions. Far from responding to imminent threats, officers initiated violent and dangerous conditions while attempting to clear routes for the far-right procession.

The evidence also shows that this violence was not experienced equally. Numerous testimonies describe force being used against older people, disabled protesters, women and younger protesters. Witnesses repeatedly questioned whether officers took any account of the particular vulnerabilities of those against whom force was used. Sussex Police’s duty to minimise foreseeable harm during a public order operation involving thousands of people appears to have been abandoned in pursuit of other aims.

Alongside the violence itself, testimonies reveal an absence of meaningful accountability. Protesters describe officers acting with an apparent sense of impunity, including the use of

185 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

186 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

187 Anonymous testimony shared with Netpol

force against legal observers and actions undermining the collection of evidence. Even attempts to seek accountability through formal complaints processes raised further concerns, with complainants reporting requests for identifying material that increased fears of surveillance and criminalisation rather than providing confidence in the independence of scrutiny processes.

Many of the incidents documented throughout this report will be capable of verification through police body-worn video and other operational footage. Sussex Police should ensure that all relevant evidence is preserved beyond routine retention periods to enable meaningful scrutiny of the policing operation.

Even on its own operational terms, the excessive use of force failed. Despite hours of policing, huge public resources and repeated violent attacks that will leave some antifascist protesters with lasting injuries, the far-right demonstration progressed only a short distance before police abandoned attempts to continue the march and escorted participants back towards Brighton railway station.

Yet again, as has been the case for every report in our ‘One Day In...’ series, the picture that emerges is one of systemic violence produced through operational decisions about how protest is managed, whereby policing strategies rely on containment and force to manage political dissent.

The testimonies in this report, therefore, demand much more than investigation of individual incidents. They raise fundamental questions about the role of public order policing and the adequacy of accountability mechanisms and, crucially, the violence produced when police powers are used to impose political order through force. They also demonstrate the importance of community-led accountability. The evidence contained in this report exists because protesters, legal observers, street medics and photographers documented what happened on 13th June. As formal accountability mechanisms continue to fall short, independent legal observing and police monitoring are essential safeguards against police violence.

Without meaningful consequences for increasingly powerful police forces, there is every reason to expect that the patterns documented in Brighton will be repeated. If these continue unchecked, the risk of a future death resulting from protest policing should be taken seriously. When that happens, it should not be treated as an unforeseeable tragedy, but as the predictable consequence of policing strategies whose dangers have been repeatedly documented and ignored.

Appendix 1 – *Timeline*

10:30am – Antifascist protesters begin to gather at Queens Road Quadrant.

12:00pm – Far-right march begins. Far-right protesters are filtered out of the station by police and then penned in by police and antifascists at Surrey Street and Queens Road junction.

12:00 – 1:00pm – Antifascists are kettled on Terminus Road by a double police line and horses. Antifascists are forced down surrounding side streets to create room for fascists to march down Terminus Road.

1:15pm – Once antifascist protesters are blocked among side streets, police march far-right demonstrators down Terminus Road, aggressively pushing antifascists out the way.

1:30 – 2:00pm – Antifascists pre-emptively congregate at Seven Dials, blocking far-right demonstrators at West Hill Tavern.

2:30pm – Police attempt to direct the far-right march back down Trafalgar Street and into the city centre. They are met by antifascists again at Over Street.

2:50pm – PAVA is deployed on Trafalgar Street. Police attempt to push antifascists to the side to facilitate the far-right march, resulting in a crush.

3:00 – 4:00pm – Fascists are held in the tunnel, blocked from moving by antifascists.

4:00pm – Police give up and lead far-right marchers back to Brighton train station.

Appendix 2 – *Summary of themes emerging from testimonies*

PAVA deployment	57
Punching/striking	29
Unnecessary or disproportionate violence, lack of escalation, or attacks on defenceless protesters	28
Violence against minoritised and marginalised groups (including women, disabled people, older people, younger people and racialised protesters)	27
Kettling/crushing	26
Baton use	24
Kicking	23
Stomping, trampling, being beaten while on the ground, or being pushed to the ground	23
Strangulation, choking, headlocks or difficulty breathing due to police violence	23
Lasting injuries reported	23
Use of horses/mounted police charges	12
Hair pulling	11
Forceful removal of face masks or coverings	10
Kneeing	10
Shoulder barging	6
Harassment/intimidation	3

