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## Increased Police Presence in Islington Ahead of Hotel Protest and Counter-Protest

August 1, 2025

– Categories: *Breaking News*



The Metropolitan Police has confirmed that increased policing will be in place in the Clerkenwell area of Islington on Saturday, where a protest against the use of a hotel to accommodate asylum seekers and a counter-protest are both scheduled to take place.

The planned demonstration opposing the use of the Thistle Barbican Hotel was organised by residents under the campaign name “Thistle Barbican needs to go, locals say no.” Another group, Stand Up To Racism, has arranged a counter-protest, drawing support from other organisations and increasing the expected turnout from both camps.

Chief Superintendent Clair Haynes, leading the operation, said: “We have been in discussions with the organisers of both protests in recent days. Our officers will police without fear or favour, ensuring those exercising their right to protest can do so safely but intervening at the first sign of actions that cross the line into criminality.” Conditions under the Public Order Act have been imposed to prevent serious disorder, including designated protest zones and defined start and end times for both gatherings.

The Met has emphasised that its approach will be replicated at other hotels across London currently used to house asylum seekers, aiming to uphold public safety while preserving lawful protest rights.