

## Britain First Rally and Counter-Protests Draw Heavy Police Presence in Manchester

August 3, 2025

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Hundreds of people gathered in Manchester city centre on Saturday for a march organised by the political group Britain First, drawing significant attention due to a simultaneous counter-demonstration led by Stand Up To Racism. The event, which began near Manchester Piccadilly railway station, saw a strong police presence aimed at maintaining public safety and order throughout the day.

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) confirmed that approximately 1,000 individuals were present at the height of the demonstrations, with around 600 supporting the Britain First rally and roughly 400 participating in the counter-protest. GMP reported two arrests during an early confrontation, but no major incidents were recorded during the remainder of the demonstrations.

A statement from GMP emphasised the force's commitment to facilitating lawful protests while minimising disruption for the wider public. Chief Superintendent Colette Rose noted that the police had prepared for a busy day in the city, deploying additional resources and working with organisers to ensure that the demonstrations remained peaceful.

Manchester City Council had earlier acknowledged that multiple protest events were scheduled throughout the day, prompting a coordinated response by local authorities and police. Images from the scene showed officers forming lines to separate opposing groups, with the goal of preventing direct confrontations.

As the demonstrations concluded, GMP reiterated the importance of safeguarding both the right to protest and public safety. "Thanks to the work of our officers on the ground, and the plans we put in place alongside our partners, hundreds of people from different groups were able to gather in a safe manner with no trouble of note," said Chief Superintendent Rose.

In a separate development, protests also took place in London on Saturday. Outside the Thistle City Barbican Hotel in Islington, demonstrators opposed to the use of the building to accommodate asylum seekers were met by counter-protesters. The Metropolitan Police imposed conditions to ensure both groups remained separated and maintained order in the area.

Both events highlight the continued tension surrounding public demonstrations in the UK, and the role of law enforcement in managing protest activity in major urban centres. Authorities in both Manchester and London reported minimal disruption, crediting advance planning and cooperation with protest organisers.