



▲ Anti-vaccine protesters temporarily close Westfield shopping centre in London - video

## Protest

# Anti-vaccine passport protesters storm Westfield mall in London

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Sat 29 May 2021 23.00 BST

Hundreds of anti-vaccine passport protesters invaded the [Westfield](#) shopping centre in Shepherd's Bush on Saturday evening at the culmination of a mass march that drew many thousands and snaked miles through central and west London.

There were tussles with police who tried to block access through one entrance to the shopping centre at about 6pm, before protesters quickly realised that another door just yards away was unguarded.

Hundreds made it into the shopping centre where they stayed for about half an hour chanting "no more lockdowns" and "take your freedom back" before they were cleared by police with batons drawn, although without scenes of violence.

Hundreds of [#NoVaccinePassports](#) protesters briefly occupied Westfield  
[pic.twitter.com/wbCf9uWJQE](https://pic.twitter.com/wbCf9uWJQE)

– Damien Gayle (@damiengayle) [May 29, 2021](#)

A video shared with the Guardian showed Piers Corbyn, the anti-lockdown protest figurehead, addressing the crowds inside the shopping centre through a megaphone. He said: “We’re here as free people, spending our time communicating, to prepare for the summer of discontent, where we’re going to organise in every community to prevent any more lockdowns. No more lockdowns!”

Etienne Finzetto, who works in Westfield, said the entire shopping centre was subsequently cordoned off and emptied by police. He said he and colleagues had initially thought that a celebrity was visiting.

“The staff were told to close down the shops while customers and the remainder of protesters were escorted out,” Finzetto told the Guardian in a WhatsApp message. “Westfield eventually messaged staff to say they were closing down, most shops (normally open until 9pm) [were] shut for the day.”

The Westfield invasion came after a mass march of about 12 miles through [London](#), starting in Parliament Square and reaching as far west as Acton. At its height there appeared to be hundreds of thousands of people taking part.

Organisers didn’t lie when they promised a different route to usual. [#NoVaccinePassports](#)  
[#londonprotest](#) now heading past Notting Hill Gate into west London.  
[pic.twitter.com/WZMgqNIjuQ](https://pic.twitter.com/WZMgqNIjuQ)

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The route of the march was not disclosed before it began. Activists at the front were directing the crowd via a series of coloured smoke signals. In posts to Telegram channels in the days leading up to the protest, organisers had promised to take the demonstration “to community areas that we haven’t hit before”, in a bid to counter what they see as a media blackout on their movement.

Saturday’s was the latest in a series of protests against the government’s coronavirus

measures in recent weeks that have drawn vast numbers of people. Protesters who spoke to the Guardian said they had joined the protest because they believed that the actions the government had taken to combat the coronavirus pandemic were causing more harm than good.

One protester, who would give his name only as Paul, from Bedfordshire, said he was taking part because he was scared about where the unprecedented crackdown on civil liberties under the pretext of fighting the pandemic would lead.

“I’m frightened about our liberties, our choice about whether we want to be vaccinated or not,” he said. “Lots of people legitimately don’t have any faith in it at all.”

The focus of dissent against the government’s coronavirus measures has evolved since the first anti-lockdown protests began last summer. Louise Creffield, the founder of Save Our Rights UK, one of the groups behind the protest, told the Guardian the focus of Saturday’s protest was medical freedom.

She said: “We’re very concerned about the track and trace being turned into vaccine passports and the increase in mandated testing.

“We’re campaigning for a medical freedom bill which would prevent any coercion and any discrimination for not partaking in a medical procedure, because where there’s that there can’t be fair and informed consent.

“Once we lose our medical freedom there is no saying if and when we will get it back and where this slippery slope could take us.”

The Metropolitan police said it had been policing three protests in London on Saturday. The force could only give arrest figures that included all of them.

A police spokesperson said: “As of 9.45pm on Saturday, 29 May, four arrests have been made during a number of protests in London. Four men were arrested on suspicion of offences including assault on police, violent disorder and criminal damage.”

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