# Royal protection officers deployed at Notting Hill Carnival amid safety and staffing crisis



Hundreds of elite officers from the Metropolitan Police's Royal and Specialist Protection (RaSP) command, typically assigned to protect royals and senior politicians, are set to be deployed at this year's Notting Hill Carnival amid rising concerns about violence and crowd safety. These officers will join the approximately 7,000 Met Police personnel expected to manage the three-day event, which traditionally draws crowds exceeding two million people.

RaSP officers, many of whom usually operate in plain clothes, have had to adapt by wearing older ill-fitting uniforms or being issued new ones specifically for the carnival, with some receiving additional training to use body-worn cameras—a device not mandatory in some of their normal roles. This redeployment has been met with discontent within the units. An internal source described it as serving as "glorified stewards" and indicated that it was an order from higher-ups with little room for refusal. The same source highlighted general antipathy toward the event, stating, "Notting Hill is the least popular job of the year... The shifts are very long, the conditions are really stressful, and it is a pretty thankless role." The large, dense crowds significantly complicate officers’ ability to move through the festival.

Safety concerns among police at the carnival are stark. Nearly 90% of officers responding to a recent survey reported feeling unsafe while working the event, and nearly 29% reported having been assaulted. Descriptions from officers range from characterising the event as "hell" and a "war zone" to more candid expressions like feeling "like lambs to slaughter." The event has been marred by serious violence including assaults on police, drug use, excessive alcohol consumption, destruction of property, stabbings, and murders. In the latest carnival, there were two murders, eight stabbings—including one with a critical injury—349 arrests, and 61 assaults on officers, which involved physical attacks such as kicks, punches, and objects being thrown.

While the focus has often been on criminal activity, top-ranking officers within the Met have voiced strong concerns about the potential for a crowd crush scenario given the overwhelming number of attendees compacted into a relatively small area. Assistant Commissioner Matt Twist explicitly warned of the risk of a "mass casualty event" caused by crowd density, underscoring the inadequate stewarding at the carnival. This concern echoes previous warnings from Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley who described the event as "poorly run" and devoid of expert event management, fearing a potential "mass fatality event." Such statements highlight urgent calls within police ranks for improved organisation and crowd management strategies.

The policing situation is further complicated by increased demands on the force. Susan Hall, vice chairman of the London Assembly police and crime committee, pointed out that policing recent pro-Palestine protests had added pressure to Met resources. These protests, including disruptions to the London Pride parade and direct actions against corporate participants, occurred only days after the Palestine Action group was banned and designated a terrorist organisation. This additional strain raises questions about the allocation of officers during the carnival period.

Despite the distressing reports from officers, Notting Hill Carnival Ltd, the event organisers, have disputed the Met Police Federation's survey findings that portray the carnival as unsafe for officers. They contend the survey represents a minority viewpoint and accused it of having an "anti-carnival agenda." Yet with the sheer scale of the festival—marked by thousands of violent or sexual offences reported in recent years—and the demonstrated risks to both public and police safety, the challenge remains significant. The Met Police’s reliance on redeploying elite protection officers to perform public order and stewarding functions reflects the gravity of the operational demands and perhaps signals a need for wider reconsideration of how such a unique and immense event is policed in the future.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14878927/royal-protection-cops-Notting-Hill-Carnival-safety-concerns.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://policeprofessional.com/news/officers-describe-utter-lawlessness-while-policing-notting-hill-carnival/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14878927/royal-protection-cops-Notting-Hill-Carnival-safety-concerns.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5yvk5dk38xo), [[4]](https://policeprofessional.com/news/officers-describe-utter-lawlessness-while-policing-notting-hill-carnival/), [[5]](https://www.gbnews.com/news/notting-hill-carnival-police-safety-war-zone-met-officers-survey-london)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14878927/royal-protection-cops-Notting-Hill-Carnival-safety-concerns.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://news.met.police.uk/news/notting-hill-carnival-update-on-incidents-and-arrests-487332), [[5]](https://www.gbnews.com/news/notting-hill-carnival-police-safety-war-zone-met-officers-survey-london)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14878927/royal-protection-cops-Notting-Hill-Carnival-safety-concerns.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2891zgqdwo), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c77xjv11lm8o)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14878927/royal-protection-cops-Notting-Hill-Carnival-safety-concerns.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14878927/royal-protection-cops-Notting-Hill-Carnival-safety-concerns.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5yvk5dk38xo), [[4]](https://policeprofessional.com/news/officers-describe-utter-lawlessness-while-policing-notting-hill-carnival/), [[5]](https://www.gbnews.com/news/notting-hill-carnival-police-safety-war-zone-met-officers-survey-london)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14878927/royal-protection-cops-Notting-Hill-Carnival-safety-concerns.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5yvk5dk38xo> - A survey by the Metropolitan Police Federation revealed that 89% of officers felt unsafe working at the Notting Hill Carnival, with 29% reporting assaults during the event. Officers described the environment as 'hell' and a 'warzone', highlighting concerns over safety and the challenges of policing the event. The organisers, Notting Hill Carnival Ltd, contested the survey's findings, suggesting it represented a minority view and had an 'anti-carnival agenda'.
3. <https://news.met.police.uk/news/notting-hill-carnival-update-on-incidents-and-arrests-487332> - The Metropolitan Police provided an update on the Notting Hill Carnival, reporting 61 assaults on officers over two days, with incidents including kicks, punches, and objects thrown. Additionally, there were eight stabbings, resulting in one critical injury, and 349 arrests, covering offences such as possession of offensive weapons, assaults on emergency workers, and sexual offences.
4. <https://policeprofessional.com/news/officers-describe-utter-lawlessness-while-policing-notting-hill-carnival/> - Officers policing the Notting Hill Carnival described the event as 'utter lawlessness' and a 'war zone'. The Metropolitan Police Federation's survey highlighted concerns over officer safety, with 29% reporting assaults and 89% feeling unsafe. The federation called for a review of the event's safety measures, citing the challenges of policing such a large-scale event.
5. <https://www.gbnews.com/news/notting-hill-carnival-police-safety-war-zone-met-officers-survey-london> - A Metropolitan Police survey revealed that 90% of officers felt unsafe at the Notting Hill Carnival, with 25% reporting assaults. Descriptions of the event included 'hell' and a 'war zone', with officers expressing concerns over safety and the challenges of policing the event. The organisers contested the survey's findings, suggesting it had an 'anti-carnival agenda'.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2891zgqdwo> - Assistant Commissioner Matt Twist of the Metropolitan Police highlighted the risk of a 'mass casualty' crowd crush at the Notting Hill Carnival, citing insufficient stewarding by organisers. He reported 889 crimes and 353 arrests during the event, emphasising the challenges of policing such a large-scale event and the need for improved crowd management.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c77xjv11lm8o> - Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley expressed concerns over the Notting Hill Carnival's organisation, describing it as 'poorly run' and highlighting risks of crowd-related incidents. He noted that the event was not managed by experts in event management and feared a 'mass fatality event' due to crowd density, calling for improved safety measures.