

# 19112 Extinction Rebellion stages youth protest at Heathrow airport

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Youth activists have taken the Extinction Rebellion protests to Heathrow on the fifth day of action, demonstrating beside the main roundabout on the road to the airport.

The activists, all born after 1990, had a banner asking: *Are we the last generation?* as dozens of police prevented them from blocking the road. The protesters said they were risking arrest to highlight the dangers of climate change. *To everyone reading about this, I'm here because I love you and fear for your future and my future. It's that life and that fear that give me courage*, said Oscar Idoe, 17, from Bristol.

Activists have also been occupying four landmark sites in central London since Monday in efforts to highlight the escalating climate crisis and demand urgent government action.

On Thursday night the Metropolitan police said they had arrested more than 500 people so far and had cancelled holidays for some police officers over Easter.

The government urged police to use the *full force of the law* against the protesters. They condemned protesters who were *significantly disrupting the lives of others*.

Scotland Yard described the difficulties they have faced keeping control of the protests, while avoiding infringing on the activists' rights to demonstrate.

Police said the demonstrators' tactic of lying down meant four officers were needed to make an arrest and said there was no legal justification for more draconian measures, such as mass-arresting groups, because the demonstrations were peaceful.

*Those arrested are then taken into custody which again means our officers are off the streets temporarily while that process takes place*, the statement said.

Police added: *We have been asked why we are not using tactics such as containment, physically and forcibly stopping the protesters from moving around. The simple answer is we have no legal basis to do so. These are peaceful protesters; while disruptive, their actions are not violent towards police, themselves or other members of the public.*

*It is better for us to keep our resources and prison capacity moving and flexible than leave protesters sitting in cells for up to 12 hours before going to court for what, although highly disruptive, are lower level offences.*

Scotland Yard had warned the protesters they would face a *robust response* if they targeted Heathrow on Friday. The force said it had *strong plans in place*, to address the issue.