

# Fresh wave of youth climate action protests expected across Britain

Dozens of demonstrations due on Friday as report shows UK set to miss emissions targets

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Fri 12 Apr 2019 06.00 BST



Students strike against climate change. Photograph: Jack Taylor/Getty Images

A fresh wave of youth strikes for climate action will hit towns and cities across the UK on Friday, as a government report revealed that the nation is set to miss its emissions targets.

More than 60 demonstrations involving tens of thousands of young people are expected from Parliament Square in London to sites in Leeds, Manchester and Brighton. They follow the [global strike on 15 March](#), when more than 1 million young people across the world took action to demand rapid action to tackle the climate crisis.

The movement began when Swedish student Greta Thunberg started a [solo school strike](#) in August. The protests have been widely praised, although some have criticised the students for skipping school. On Friday, many UK students will already be on holiday.

“Young people in the UK are sending those in power a clear message: we won’t accept anything less than urgent climate action,” said Anna Taylor, 18, from London and co-founder of the [UK Student Climate Network](#). “Our futures, the health of our environment and the lives of those around the world already suffering the devastation of the climate crisis are not up for debate. We need [leaders] to act to protect people and planet.”

On Wednesday, Green party MP Caroline Lucas challenged Theresa May to join the leaders of all the other major parties who have already agreed to meet Thunberg when she visits the UK on 23 April. Thunberg has already [met UN secretary general António Guterres](#), the pope and [addressed the Davos summit](#).



'Our leaders are like children,' school strike founder tells climate summit

The prime minister declined to say she would meet Thunberg, saying: "I often hear young people tell of the importance of climate change." May added: "This government has a fine record on climate change."

However, a government report published on Thursday showed the UK is now set to **miss its 2025 and 2030 emissions targets** by an even larger margin than before. "Many policies which will affect the 2020s and beyond have not yet been developed to the point at which they can be included in these projections," it said.

"With our young people coming out on to the streets in record numbers calling for a structural change to tackle the climate crisis, the public will not forgive failure on this scale," said Rebecca Long-Bailey, Labour's shadow business secretary.

Concern about climate change is higher than ever amongst UK students – 91% – according to a rolling **opinion poll** for the National Union of Students, which began in 2014.

In Cambridge, several hundred school children plan to lie on the ground in a "die-in" protest to demand urgent action against climate change. They will wear blue to highlight the impacts of flooding and sea level rise on future generations and on the people of Mozambique and Zimbabwe who were hit **by Cyclone Idai in March**.

Rowan Williams, former head of the Anglican church and master of Magdalene College at the University of Cambridge, will join the protest. "It's a great sign of hope that so many of our young people are willing to stand up and be counted. This is their world, and our generation has come close to wrecking it," he said.

Ella Hone, at Chesterton Community College, said: "This Friday is my 12th birthday, so as a present I would like people to understand how important it is not only to me, but to everyone. **Climate change** is affecting all life on earth [and] we desperately need to stop it."

While the once-a-month strikes are expected to be large in the UK, Brazil, India and the Baltic nations on Friday, elsewhere weekly strikes have continued, particularly in Germany and Belgium. Luisa Neubauer, a youth striker from Hamburg, said 20,000 were expected to protest again on Friday.



Belgian climate activists take part in the 13th edition of the student strike action, organised by 'Youth For Climate'. Photograph: Hatim Kaghat/AFP/Getty Images

Neubauer has put the demands for climate action to Germany's economy environment ministers. "We still don't see that our government has understood what historical and global responsibility it carries," she said. "So we really don't have a choice but to keep going. For us young generations it's an existential question."

Around the world, strikes are expected in 500 towns and cities in 70 countries on Friday, according to the [Fridays for Future](#) website.



Climate crisis: today's children face lives with tiny carbon footprints

"These striking school children might not be able to vote yet, but they're certainly changing the face and pace of the debate – this is exactly what we've all been waiting for," said Helen Clarkson, CEO of [The Climate Group](#), which has agreements from 200 multinational companies and 220 state and regional governments to take significant climate action.

"For the last 20 to 30 years, the environmental movement has been waiting for the public to care about climate change," she said. "[The young people] taking to the streets to protest, are bringing exactly the energy and urgency that is needed to transform the conversation."

[Extinction Rebellion](#) activists have said they will "shut down London" on Monday by blocking roads in the capital, as part of global protests by that movement.