

# Creating Accessible Actions

Quote from a disabled rebel: “Making actions accessible is the simple act of asking, What do you need?”

Extinction Rebellion is committed to equality and to enabling people who have been marginalised by systemic oppression to act now and give their message in solidarity. See [XR's Principles of Inclusivity](#).

This page contains a checklist to help action planners consider possible barriers to marginalised groups. These guidelines are designed to be practical and manageable, whilst ensuring diversity, inclusivity and accessibility are embedded in action planning and design.

Diversity and inclusivity is important all the time. This page focusses on actions, but remember that diversity, accessibility and inclusivity is just as important for the planning meetings as it is for the action itself.

Actions need to be designed to be as inclusive as possible. While total inclusivity is impossible, actions should aim to be inclusive for the widest range of people possible.

Where an action may exclude people, for example climbing Big Ben to drop a banner, there are additional considerations such as necessity and proportionality. However, try not to make assumptions about individuals' limitations. Think of paralympian James Brown on top of a jet at City Airport.

The larger the action is, the greater the issue of diversity and inclusivity will be. With smaller actions, resources may be limited but the same issues must be considered and those affected should be consulted. If action planners receive requests from representatives of marginalised groups, they should be treated as a priority.

## Inclusive Actions

**Actions that aim to be inclusive for all marginalised groups**

# Disability

There is a significant probability that disabled people have experienced discrimination and oppressive behaviour by the police and others. The process of being arrested can be particularly harrowing for those with disabilities who may have to rely on the police for greater support and care whilst in custody. Many, with good reason, will feel excluded if the action is designed to have a high risk of arrest.

## Mobility/Accessibility

- Is the action accessible for those with limitations in mobility?
- Are meeting venues prior to the action accessible?
- Consider the location of the action, how do rebels get there if they use mobility aids, vehicles, wheelchairs and pushchairs for example. Can we offer support to transport people?
- What is the geography/accessibility of the action site?
- Can those with mobility issues move freely around the site?
- Can we provide ramps and people to support movement?
- Can you provide buddies who can dedicate themselves to supporting those with mobility issues?
- Are toilets for those with mobility aids available?
- Are toilets with hoists available?
- Zoom meetings of 75 minutes or more should have a scheduled break and a group agreement reached on the length of the break (15 minutes is the recommended length).

## Hearing impaired

- If there are speeches/meetings/training, have you provided a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter? (Additional sign language (not BSL) interpreters may be needed)
- Are there any rebels skilled in BSL that can assist with communication during meetings and at the action? Consider for all online meetings and training sessions.
- Interpreters and lip readers need a break every 20 minutes
- Zoom has a **Live Transcript** functionality that you can switch on and it subtitles the meeting
- Have seats been reserved at the front to enable lip-reading and better acoustics?
- Are captions included on films?
- Create audio files for (non-spicy) mass action briefings

Contact **xr.bsl@protonmail** to request interpreters

# Vision Impaired

- Are there any issues for vision impaired rebels travelling to meetings or the action site?
- Have you assessed the action site for hazards for the vision impaired, can we make them safe?
- Are venues accessible for guide dogs?
- Can you provide rebels in support of the partially sighted?
- Have quality contrasting colours been used in written material for those with colour blindness?

# Neurodiversity

There is a wide range of considerations for neurodivergent people. **Offer help and be directed rather than asking about needs.**

- Noise can affect people negatively, waving hands instead of clapping for example may help. Has this been considered?
- Strobe lights can trigger epileptic episodes, will warnings be issued?
- Have colour schemes for signage and literature been considered for dyslexic rebels (avoid italics, underlining and use a sans serif font)?
- Can you allocate a buddy that is available to support neurodivergent people?
- Do you have any Mental Health professionals amongst your protest group that are willing to be available if needed?
- Are there quiet places for neurodivergent people to access if they get overwhelmed?

# Ethnicity

There is a significant probability that people of colour have experienced discrimination and oppressive behaviour by the police and others. Many, with good reason, have no confidence in the justice system. If the action is designed to have a high risk of arrest then this will tend to exclude people of colour, LGBTQ+ and disabled rebels.

- If a mass arrest action or physically close action is deemed necessary and proportionate, will there be alternative supportive actions that allow people of increased risk of Covid 19 or people that are unwilling to be arrested, to share in the protest?
- **Good protest (police) liaison** can pacify police response and prevent escalation which could be uncomfortable for marginalised groups. However, police liaison rebels should not be overtly 'chummy' with police no matter how reasonable they are. This could be very uncomfortable for groups that have experienced police oppression to witness. In addition, police liaison should remind the police of their duty to behave without discrimination and

facilitate protest.

- Is the action being protest (police) liaised?
- Will protest liaison be briefed regarding their behaviour at the action?
- Take care with banners and action messaging. Any reference to police, even in jest, is indicative of a privileged relationship with an institutionally racist organisation.
- Have action designers/artists been made aware of the issues with police and messaging?

## LGBTQ+

There are parallel issues with ethnicity and disability in that there is a significant probability that LGBTQ+ people have experienced discrimination and oppressive behaviour by the police and others. Actions with a high risk of arrest may exclude LGBTQ+ people. [Participating in Direct Action: A Guide for Transgender People.](#)

- It goes without saying that XR does not tolerate any discrimination or LGBTQ+ abuse but if it is not said and reinforced, then it is not positively challenged within our culture. Has this been spelt out within the action messaging?
- Are gender neutral toilets provided?
- Are there safe spaces for sleep outs?

## Families

Families can be marginalised with children and be members of other marginalised groups. The exclusionary issues listed in this process can have a heightened effect on young rebels.

- Has the action considered the mobility of families with children and buggies? (Please see mobility above, consider meetings as well as the action itself)?
- Children can go missing temporarily. Has the action a site for lost children?
- What is the action policy for communicating details of lost children to the masses? (broadcast on Public Announcement, use Protest Liaison)?
- Do you have DBS checked adults to supervise children? (this is advisable not a legal obligation)?
- Do you have activities to educate children of all ages?
- Climate anxiety is a serious issue for young people, is wellbeing prepared to work with children?
- Has the content of speeches been considered for the suitability of children?
- Has the action site been assessed for traffic and hazards to child safety?

## Faiths

Protection of the planet is important to all faiths and it is important to ensure that all feel welcome.

- Have you considered the day of the action clashing with days of worship/religious holidays?
- Has the action design included a multi-faith space for prayer?
- Will the action include vegan food (acceptable to most faiths)?
- A single muslim woman or orthodox jewish woman alone amongst men may feel excluded on religious grounds. Are female buddies available to chaperone?
- Are your meeting venues alcohol-free?

# Exclusionary Actions

## **Actions that may exclude marginalised groups**

It is accepted that the nature and requirements of some actions will exclude some rebels from taking part. It is important that this is recognised at the design stage and assessed to ensure that the exclusionary aspect is necessary, has been minimised and is deemed proportionate to the purpose of the action.

- **Are exclusionary elements necessary? (Are there other more inclusive ways to achieve the aim of the protest?)**
  - Who may find the action exclusionary?
  - Has the element that is exclusionary been examined to ensure that adjustments cannot be made to address this and make it more inclusive?
  - Are exclusionary elements proportionate?
  - How is it proportionate to the aim of the action to have people excluded from it by design?
  - Is the exclusionary action supported by other inclusive actions that allow everyone to share, feel valued and contribute towards the aim of the action?
  - Have you discussed this with those rebels that may be excluded?
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