Planning an action?

The majority of the things you need to think about are in the Action Planning book, elsewhere on the Toolkit. However there are two things that are relevant to providing arrestee and legal support at an action.
- Legal Observer support
- Back Office support

- How to request a Legal Observer for a protest
- Back Office support for an action

How to request a Legal Observer for a protest

Legal observers have a vital role to play in supporting the right to protest. But what exactly do they do and how can you request one?

Legal observers are trained volunteers who support the legal rights of activists. They act as independant witnesses to police behaviour, monitor arrests and provide 'Know Your Rights' information to people on demonstrations.

Many people are worried about the risk of arrest and police intimidation at actions they are planning. Having legal support in place before an action can help people stay safer. There are useful tips around this in the Green and Black Cross guide to planning an action.

The Independent Legal Observers Network (ILON) may be able to provide legal observers to support your action on the day. To request a legal observer, email ILON and including the following details:

- The exact location of the protest
- The start time and expected end time
- The issue, and name of the organising group
- Any social media links for the protest
- A contact number for the day, in case it's needed

The more notice you can give the better, so please let them know basic details as soon as you start planning to call the demo/protest. A week's notice or more is ideal. You can contact ILON at legal-observer-network@protonmail.com.

PLEASE NOTE if you are in Scotland, you will need to contact the Scottish Community & Activist Legal Project for support.

Back Office support for an action

Back Office consists of a group of trained volunteers. The main functions of Back Office during an action are to:

- Compile and maintain a record of arrestees;
- Co-ordinate, and remain in contact with, supporters at police stations to which arrestees have been taken;
- Respond to phone calls, mainly from: people reporting arrests, arrestees (custody calls), friends and family members of arrestees, people reporting on incidents such as police misbehaviour, rebels with legal questions.

We also liaise with Arrest Welfare so that arrestees can be supported later in their journey, for example with Court Support and financial support.

Most regions are supported by the main Arrestee and Legal Support Back office; East of England has a regional Back Office that can support EofE groups taking local action.

If you are coordinating an action and would like Back Office support:

- Use this form to request Back Office cover for your action.
- Once you have completed it notify Back Office you have done so by emailing backoffice@riseup.net.

In addition:

- Please ask rebels willing to do Police Station Support (PSS) for their team to join one of the three WhatsApp groups listed below. A PSSC (PSS coordinator) will post in them when a police station is confirmed as 'live' and supporters can then join the relevant station group and post their offers of support there.

  A fuller guide to doing PSS is available on the Toolkit.
- WhatsApp group joining links:
  - https://chat.whatsapp.com/HX07vNTURqLEyVgDo012NI
  - https://chat.whatsapp.com/KFZpuvZtVMy2wN0w5AHIOr
  - https://chat.whatsapp.com/FMi8rrD9C7ZBzlKm3OUtuZ

For East of England regional Back Office only email xr-eoe-backoffice@protonmail.com.