

8. Police Station Support Coordinator (PSSC)

PSSCs ensure arrested rebels are met on release by Police Station Supporters (PSSs), by creating a rota for supporters and offering them advice and information.

Liaison with PSSs takes place via WhatsApp or Signal groups, and occasionally by phone. Arrestees can be held in custody for 24 hours *after being checked in* at a police station, so we need to try to ensure supporters are available throughout this period (there is usually a time gap between arrestees arriving at a station and being checked in).

Police Station Supporters:

- Provide practical and emotional support to rebels on release, and
- Ensure that rebels' release data is collected (with their consent): this enables ongoing support to be offered following the action and helps BO to monitor whether any rebels are still held at each station.

Training

- Initial training, via zoom or video, as part of the BO overview
- PSSC video
- Practice and advice from the BOC and other volunteers, during shifts
- For liaison with PSSs, you'll find it helpful to read through [the guidelines provided for them](#), which includes links to videos.

All the links to the training videos and documentation can be found in the [Training](#) section of this Guide

Overview of PSSC Tasks

- PSSCs use two categories of WhatsApp/Signal groups:
 - Arrestee Support (AS) groups, all on WhatsApp, and Police Station (PS) groups, on WhatsApp or Signal.
 - Shift and general BO groups on Signal.
- There's a WhatsApp or Signal group corresponding to every police station in England and Wales that has a custody suite. Ideally, each group will already contain people willing to offer to provide PSS. In practice, new members, some without PSS training, tend to join the groups during a mass action. Currently all PS groups in London will be on WhatsApp.

- The **Police Station Map** (PS Map) shows the location of custody suites, marked by yellow smileies. Clicking on these reveals information about the station and the joining link to the associated PS group.
- When PSSs are needed, the PSSC calls out for volunteers to support at the necessary stations, in relevant PS groups and in the three AS groups, populated by PSSs able to support at several stations.
- The PSSC then creates a rota to ensure continuous coverage, and liaises with the supporters.
- The headers of some PS groups contain useful information about the particular station, such as position of exits, accessibility of waiting rooms, etc which may be helpful for PSSs. If you discover new information during your shift, please add it to the 'Station Information' tab in the PSS rota spreadsheet (see maintaining a rota, below).
- Monitor arrestees being taken to PSs for which you're responsible, using ArrestWatch.

Before your shift

- Ensure you have ready access to relevant documents, WhatsApp/Signal groups, including the shift Signal group, the PSS rota, and the shift zoom call, and have logged in to ArrestWatch. It's helpful to have kept an eye on the day's BO Signal group and the PSS rota, which will help familiarise you with what's happening.
- Ensure you've joined the three AS chats on WhatsApp, using these joining links:
 - <https://chat.whatsapp.com/HX07vNTURqLEyVgDo012NI>
 - <https://chat.whatsapp.com/KFZpuvZtVMY2wN0w5AHIOr>
 - <https://chat.whatsapp.com/FMi8rrD9C7ZBzIKm3OUtuZ>
- Check (from the PSS rota) which stations are active, and join all the corresponding WhatsApp/Signal groups - though you'll probably be responsible for a subset during your shift, you won't know its composition in advance. Joining all beforehand will enable you to check back through messages when you come on shift, and avoids you having to say you can't see previous messages (which appears unprofessional).

At the beginning of each shift

- The BOC will let you know which stations you'll be responsible for, or this may be negotiated between PSSCs.
- There may be an opportunity for a handover from the PSSC going off shift.
- The PSS rotas for all stations (link in the maintaining a rota section below) should be up to date, and the information in them should be clear: this should avoid the need for a handover in person
- Ensure (double check!) you've joined the relevant PS WhatsApp/Signal groups, using the links from the **PS map**. This should include the groups associated with any nearby stations, so you can call out in those.
- Identify gaps in the rota.
- Check when the last rebel taken to each station was arrested, from ArrestWatch. Cover needs to be arranged for 24 hours after the last rebel was likely to be checked in to the PS

- this can be some time after arrival at the PS, especially at a busy time, and you'll need to estimate.
- Send a message out in your allocated station WhatsApp groups, to inform supporters you are starting your shift, and check in that they're OK.

Creating and maintaining a PSS rota

- PSS rotas are created using an online spreadsheet (currently Google) - you'll find the link in the header information in the active Back Office Signal group.
- There'll probably already be a rota covering the PSs for which you're responsible. If not, create a new one: instructions are on the first spreadsheet tab.
- Message in the relevant AS and PS groups, requesting volunteers to cover any gaps in the rota. Standard message templates (see the next section 'Communication') can be used, though personalised messages are preferred, being less robotic.
- Call-outs in the three AS groups should include an invitation to join the relevant PS group, with a link.
- As people volunteer for shifts, add their names to the rota, with the times they've offered and any notes.
- Please try to keep the spreadsheet up to date during your shift
- Aim to have at least two supporters on each shift, particularly after dark and if female. Some stations have more than one exit, not all visible from the same location, so more supporters may be needed to cover all exits, including fire exits if possible: PS group headers or the rota spreadsheet may contain useful information, or you may be able to get information from the PSSs already on shift.
- Supporters are unable to see the PSS rota. Post summarised rota details (ie names and times) in the WhatsApp/Signal group from time to time, to enable supporters to check their shifts.
- Sometimes all arrestees at a station have been released before some supporters are due to come on shift. Remind supporters to check in the group before leaving home, to ensure they're still required.
- If you're struggling to find PSSs, inform the BOC. They may have access to XR communication platforms, and may be able to get a message out asking for additional support.

Communication with PSSs

- There is a [guide to messaging in the PS WhatsApp/Signal groups](#), including optional standard message templates.
- Sometimes supporters haven't done PSS before - check. If they haven't, send them the link to the [PSS guidelines](#) - which incorporate links to videos
- Remember that supporters who've just joined the group are unable to see earlier messages, so you may need to repeat information.
- Make sure all supporters are safe - if it appears that they may not be safe, advise them to leave.

- Check in on supporters from time to time, to make sure they've arrived for their shifts and have everything they need, and thank individual supporters going off shift.
- Ensure that PSSs remember to ask every released rebel to complete the on-line release form: <https://arrestwatch.info/pss> , ideally as soon as released but otherwise as soon as possible. **Rebels should complete the form in person** to comply with GDPR. If they prefer not to complete the form straight away, PSSs should give them the link to the form.
- **PSSs should also note the name of each released rebel, and let the PSSC know**, by Direct Message. Not all arrestees complete the release form promptly, so knowing their names will enable us to monitor the number of rebels left in each PS. **Please let the BOC know the names of released rebels asap**, via DM in Signal or via zoom, depending on their preference.
- Information useful for PSSs includes:
 - On-line release form: arrestwatch.info/pss
 - A&LS Back Office number: 07749 335574
 - PSS video:
 - Short (20 mins): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_2ldBymn_hA
 - Long (54 mins): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0t8TnjLJ-08>
 - These videos are slightly out-of-date; updates are summarized in this document
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_Sazu3J7HjZ40F2f_mirKQDV0jf13CxREYWI0nfsvB0
 - PSS guide: <https://rebeltoolkit.extinctionrebellion.uk/link/1412>
 - PS map: <https://tinyurl.com/pssmap>
 - PSS Expenses form: <https://form.jotform.com/220687954564368> (to be circulated when the PSSC thinks it appropriate - see below).

During your shift

- The BOC will be monitoring activity. When a new police station becomes active, they will allocate it to one of the PSSCs
- It can be difficult to know exactly how many rebels are inside a particular PS. The PSS rota you inherit may state a number, but this will be **approximate**. For the purpose of arranging PSS, however, you don't need to know the exact number. You should try to arrange PSS to be available from approximately 4h after the first arrest until 24h after the last rebel was likely to have been checked in. Arrestees are only rarely released in less than 4h after arrest, although during mass actions, the turn-around can be quite fast. Your BOC should let you know if the Police are adopting an expedited processing procedure.
- It can be difficult to be sure when a station is empty, because the information we receive about arrests is often duplicated, and we aren't notified about all arrests. If necessary, ask the PSSs on shift to check with the Police whether the station still contains any XR rebels - but be aware that the Police may not always tell the truth. If in doubt, consult your BOC.
- If you're sure that a station has become inactive, confirm with the BOC and then post a message in the WhatsApp/Signal group. Send direct messages to supporters who've signed up for shifts and are not now needed.

Eliciting information about arrestees via PSSs

- We are often notified about an arrest but not the PS to which the arrestee was taken, or the station information may be incorrect
- PSSs can be helpful in investigating the number of arrestees being held in a station. Invite them to ring the custody bell, use the external phone, or go into the station, and ask the custody sergeant if they have XR rebels in the station and how many. Police often say they can't give information unless the supporter identifies the possible arrestee, e.g. name and DOB. **They should not under any circumstance give such information to the police.**
- Any information given by the Police may be unreliable.
- PSSs are sometimes able to talk to rebels or their lawyers as they leave the station, and can then get useful information about the number of remaining XR arrestees.
- Sometimes the Police will spontaneously tell PSSs that the station is now empty. This has sometimes been reliable, but we have been misled - so should not accept any information at face value
- If the station is thought to be empty, the PSSs should inform you and you should ask them to stay in place until you check with the BOC the likelihood of this information being true.
- Remember that arrestees may be held for court (see [below](#)). Accurate information can be difficult to obtain. If we find out where a rebel's hearing will be held (e.g. via PSSs), **let the BOC know**, and we can try to arrange court support. Alternatively, if a hearing is being held at the PS (probably less likely now than during the Covid pandemic), we should try to maintain PSS cover outside the station.

Appropriate Adults

- The Police must ensure that a vulnerable person or a minor (under 18) is supported in custody by an Appropriate Adult. We encourage people who intend to get arrested, and who need an Appropriate Adult, to organise this for themselves in advance, but sometimes this doesn't happen. In such a situation, the Police may ask the PSS to help with this role, and in turn the PSS may consult the PSSC. The PSS could fulfill this role if invited to do so, but should not feel under pressure to do so.
- If you need advice about a request for an Appropriate Adult, consult your BOC.

When an arrestee can be held for more than 24h

In certain circumstances, an arrestee can legitimately be held by the Police for more than 24h. Sometimes the BOC may have had, or be able to get, information via the solicitor network, and should tell any PSSCs looking after the stations involved. Circumstances in which arrestees can be held longer than 24h include:

- Non-cooperation - If an arrestee declines to share their name and/or address they will be held in custody to appear in court on the next available court date (if arrested on a Friday this could be Saturday morning or Monday). If you hear this has happened, please try to find out the court and the court date and time (possibly from the PSSs) and inform the BOC
- Remanded to appear in Court - sometimes charged rebels are remanded in custody to appear in court. Based on past experience this is more likely in the case of foreign

nationals, if police bail conditions are refused, if the arrestee has broken court bail conditions, or if they have a previous criminal record.

If you think there's a possibility that a rebel may be going to be held for court (eg if it appears from the arrest report that they may have broken bail conditions), let the BOC know and they may be able to investigate.

PSS Expenses

- We have a limited pot of money to refund things like costs of snacks for arrestees (not for PSSs); costs of arrestees' travel (only if they don't have the money and have to ask the PSS to help out); cost of a taxi for a vulnerable arrestee if felt needed (should be discussed by PSSC with BOC); and cost of PSS travel if travelling beyond local area to a Police station we have found difficult to cover (should be discussed by PSSC with BOC in advance).
- For full guidance on what's covered, please consult your BOC.
- PSSs should be encouraged to keep receipts where possible and to make a claim within 24h so that we can keep a track of claims and give fair warning if the money is all spent and no longer refunds are possible.
- Only provide the link to the claim form in situations in which you think a claim's justified: <https://form.jotform.com/220687954564368>

At the end of each shift

- Ensure that the PSS rotas for 'your' stations are up-to-date, accurate and clear
 - You may be asked by the BOC to hand them over orally to the incoming PSSC, via zoom.
 - If you've encountered any difficulties during your shift, or can suggest improvements to any procedures or processes, please let the BOC know.
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