

Paint The Streets

Our longstanding flyposting & subvertising campaign. A great low-risk first NVDA action.

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What is Paint The Streets?



Paint the Streets is an ongoing creative campaign, breaking social norms to raise awareness about the climate & ecological emergency. Paint the Streets includes murals, stickering, flyposting, stencilling, chalking, banner drop actions, and subvertising bus stops and billboards.

Get involved with a UK-wide campaign or launch your own local campaign around local climate issues.

Connect with others taking part here:

- [UK Paint The Streets Telegram Group](#)
- [Facebook page](#)
- [Instagram page](#)

The Aims of Paint the Streets

- Tell the truth about climate and ecological breakdown, the injustice of our toxic systems, and failing government.
- Create an action pathway for new rebels.
- Move hearts and minds, inspire hope!
- Break the media echo chamber by reaching new audiences.

- Have fun!

Outreach and Mobilisation

- Paint the Streets actions give rebels a taste of non-violent direct action, helping to build confidence and encouraging affinity groups to form.
- Paint the Streets actions are often relatively quick to carry out, and simple to join in; they are great for rebels who would like to be involved but don't have lots of spare time.
- It reaches a wider audience to highlight important climate issues and campaigns (and then spreads them even further through sharing images on social media).
- Anyone in XR can take part! There are creative actions for everyone from flyposting and making stencils to mural painting, creating street sculptures to folding origami offerings.

For rebels to take part we ask that you are mindful of our core [Principles & Values](#) and [Demands](#) as well as strategy guidance.

What can I do?

- **Paint The Symbol everywhere!**
- **Make stencils** for posters and painting with [Spray-chalk](#) or emulsion paint.
- **Sticker up** anywhere you can think of.
- Print out **window posters** or make your own **window art**.
- **Flyposting**.
- **Brandalism** and **subvertising**: replacing bus stop posters with your own work or repurposing an existing advert to change the message; posterising billboards; replacing adverts on train carriages.
- **Give posters** to friends, shops, community centres etc to put up in their windows as effective outreach.
- **Train Talks** - stand on public transport and speak the truth to fellow passengers wearing badges and patches. For more information check out the [Train Talks Telegram group](#).
- **Banner drops** - there are frequent UK-wide banner drop actions, or create your own for a local climate issue.
- **Murals** - create beautiful art with a climate based message on a wall/building (if you have permission to do so).
- And much more!

To view these guidelines in one rolling Googledoc: [Paint The Streets Info Pack](#).

Planning a Paint the Streets Campaign

How do I join an existing Paint the Streets group?

The most likely points of contact to find out if you have a local / regional Paint The Streets group are either your local group coordinators, arts coordinator or actions coordinator.

You can also take action with your affinity group or by yourself, although some activities like fly-posting are easier with a small group of people.

Join the [Paint The Streets UK Telegram chat](#) to share images and ideas, ask for advice, and be part of a supportive community. Please share your photos!

Local/Regional Campaigns

- Check out the rest of the [Paint The Streets book](#) on the Rebel Toolkit for information on fly posting, subvertising, murals and more. This includes legal information.
- Set up a **local Paint The Streets** group on Signal, Telegram &/or Mattermost and invite people to join.
- **Create an action campaign together**, in line with XR strategy and messaging: see [Rebellion Broadcast](#) for up to date action information on U.K. Actions.
 - Campaigns involve different mediums or approaches including: posters, stickers, subvertising, brandalism, murals. You can find [guidance for each type of action here](#).
 - Think about drawing on the [XR design programme](#) for continuity of design and working with your messaging team.
 - You can find resources on the [XRUK Paint the Streets Design Drive](#), or the [Outreach Materials page](#).
 - If you want to make your own designs, check out [Aktivisda](#).
 - If you're completely new to Painting the Streets, contact other Local Groups near you to see if they have any old posters or materials you could use.

- **Send out a message, sign up form and/or contact details** to inform rebels about the campaign and inspire them to join. Leave enough time for information to be absorbed and build energy around a campaign. Add interested people into the Paint the Streets group you created earlier.
- **Get your materials printed!** For digital designs, you can print the materials yourself, either with your friendly local print shop or online at [Solopress](#) (next day delivery available) or -[DigitalPrinting](#) (especially for billboards and bus stop sizes). We recommend choosing bond type paper for a uncoated or natural look. For more specifics on printing specifications for a range of formats, [check out this Googledoc guide](#).
- **Prepare for the action** and be accountable for your action. Be aware of potential charges such as [criminal damage](#), making sure all involved in the action understand the [\(minimal, but still important to consider and be aware of!\) risks](#).
- **Share final images** with the [XR UK Paint the Streets Telegram group](#), adding info about which group is posting and a message, hashtags and any relevant links. This will inspire people and spread the message of your campaign; media & messaging teams can also pick up images here and share them on further. NB: Keep security in mind and don't include people in the images unless they have given consent.
- When you post photos of your action to social media, please remember to include the relevant hashtag for your campaign, along with **#paintthestreets**, as this helps us find them so that we can share.
- Consider sharing an action guide or prototype of the campaign to the UK group in the form of a linked document or video - so other groups can take it forward and it can be replicated (worldwide!). For example: [Children's Futures](#).
- Other circles can then share your brief further on other channels and networks where appropriate. **Spread the love!**

How do we coordinate campaigns with other local groups?

Simultaneous actions across the country can have a very powerful effect, so please connect up with your regional Action Planners group to get informed or share ideas to bring into synchronised campaigns.

UK Wide Campaigns

Planning to create or scale up a Paint The Streets action campaign UK-wide? If you're planning a new campaign, please be mindful of:

- Location
- Group capacity, and UK-wide capacity
- Messaging and aligning with UK strategy
- Working around key dates/themes- check the UK Actions calendar

Share your action brief or just sound out ideas with the Paint The Streets coordinating group.

Contact the group by posting in the [Telegram chat](#) and ask someone from the team to reply. Or get in touch with Action Circle to check in on calendar, capacity and funding, via [r-action@protonmail.com](mailto:action@protonmail.com)

Key thing to bear in mind:

- Messaging and targets e.g. the funders and profiteers of climate and ecological destruction; the government, corporations and the bank system.
- Leave approx a month at least to prepare for any big campaign. Rebels need time to get into a project idea, sound out groups and see if it works alongside other actions.
- Leave approx 2-4 weeks to print and distribute materials in your area. Or create a sharing link so that people can print the design off themselves. This is a more efficient way of sharing, but if you're able to do local distribution in your city or area then it can be a real booster for groups.
- Create an action event to rally rebels round a date and purpose. Give time for rebels to plan for this around other actions.
- Prepare for the action and be accountable for your action. Be aware of potential charges such as [criminal damage](#), making sure all involved in the action understand the [\(minimal, but still important to consider and be aware of!\) risks](#).
- Does the campaign fit into the current [XR Action Strategy](#) Reflect on the impact of the messaging as well as how it will be interpreted by society as a whole.

Is there funding available for materials?

XRUK funding for printing posters and buying materials is currently limited. Ask your Regional and Local Group coordinators if your group has any budget available.

- Raise the money required for materials within your community.
- Check out the list of local groups to make contact with those nearby to you and see if they have any materials you can share. Pooling resources is key where possible.

- Check out the [Finance and Fundraising](#) pages of the Rebel Toolkit for info on grants, and fundraising ideas.

Paint the Streets Messaging Focus

Rebel for Truth - Paint The Streets 2024



Spend 2024 spreading the love, creativity - and of course a little bit of mischief. Share the message Rebel for Truth far and wide.

- Print out a poster and put it in your window
- Scrawl a symbol with a sharpie
- Sticker up!
- Flypost your town
- Subvertise bus stops or billboards

Everyone. Everywhere.

Rebel for Truth is a main messaging theme of XR for 2024. You can find the [messaging guidance pack here](#).

Note: This is for all messaging, and is not Paint the Streets specific.

Resources

- [Rebel for Truth Flyers](#)
- [Rebel for Truth Stickers](#)
- [Rebel for Truth Posters](#)
- [Rebel for Truth stencils](#)- see the [Stencils page](#) for instructions.
- [Rebel for Truth Social Media Assets](#) (you will need to add your own text)

The Paint the Streets [google drive](#) also has an archive of campaigns and designs; from bus stop and billboards, to posters and flyers (this is being updated).

Note: The logo is copyrighted and not to be used for commercial purposes.

If you want to create your own posters etc, check out [Aktavisda](#) or [download the XR fonts](#) to use on your preferred editing software.

Slogans

The main slogans for the Rebel for Truth campaign are:

REBEL FOR TRUTH

CITIZENS ASSEMBLE

Paint the Streets Slogans

A wide range of slogans have been used by XR over the years. Here are some of the most successful slogans that resonated with people who saw them.

Core XR slogans

REBEL FOR LIFE

TELL THE TRUTH

THIS IS AN EMERGENCY

ACT NOW

REBEL FOR TRUTH

CITIZENS ASSEMBLE

NO FOOD NO FUTURE

THIS IS NOT A DRILL

NO MUSIC ON A DEAD PLANET

NO FUTURE ON A DEAD PLANET

----- ON A DEAD PLANET

FRUGALITY, HUMILITY, EMPATHY

REFLECT, REBEL, RELINQUISH

FLY TODAY, NO TOMORROW

YOU CAN'T EAT MONEY

NOW OR NEVER

TIME IS UP

DEEDS NOT WORDS (nicked from Suffragettes)

WE ACT IN PEACE

THIS IS CHANGE

CHANGE IS NOW

EVERYTHING WILL CHANGE, EVERYTHING CAN CHANGE

STOP THE HARM

LOVE IN ACTION

PEACE

Slogans from specific campaigns

PEOPLE OVER PROFIT

OUR AMAZON

GOVERNMENT INACTION KILLS

REWILD

WE ARE NATURE DEFENDING ITSELF

IMAGINE THE IMPOSSIBLE

BIG OIL IS THE POISON, ACTION IS THE ANTIDOTE

INVEST IN LIFE NOT DEATH

MUTUAL AID

ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE

NHS NOT HS2

STOP HS2

PPE not GDP

Older Slogans

November 2023

REBEL FOR TRUTH

CITIZENS ASSEMBLE

April 2023

UNITE TO SURVIVE

CHOOSE YOUR FUTURE

DECIDE TOGETHER

REPARATIONS NOW

Elements of Paint the Streets

Paint The Symbol

Let's get the Extinction Symbol EVERYWHERE!

Why? The more visible XR is, the better our cause will land with the public. There are many who would like to silence us: we need to be unmissable.

How? Sharpies, stencils and paint; posters, stickers... and boundless imagination. Here are some ideas:

Every Day Symboling

Get yourself a stash of markers, and take them out with you. Something like the [Uni Paint PX-20](#) is good. At a minimum, get black and white.

Opportunity is everywhere, especially if you look out for circles!

BEFORE



AFTER



Get hold of stickers! Lamp posts, crossings, adverts – look for spots where there are clean sightlines.

WHERE ARE MORE PEOPLE GOING TO SEE THE SYMBOL? Entrances, exits, main thoroughfares. On the ceiling of the bus. A cash machine.

How about **stencilling the symbol**? You're in luck. There's a [template and guide to making a symbol stencil](#)



Affinity Symboling

Get yourself a Symbol Affinity Group, a can of spray paint and a ladder!



Height is good. Try and avoid everyone else's graff. You'll be painted over, and not stand out as well.

Plan Ahead. Stake out your 'hood. Where are the great sightlines? Where several roads meet, or where you'll have the most impact. Upset the visual narrative!

The Legal Bit

Painting The Symbol is a bit naughty, do be careful.

Obviously if you are going to actually try and turn the London Eye into The World's Largest Symbol you may end up in significantly more trouble. Check out legal guidance [here](#).



Flyposting



Planning Your Flyposting Action

Check out this [general guidance for how to organise all sorts of Paint the Streets actions](#), then come back here for specific advice for flyposting.

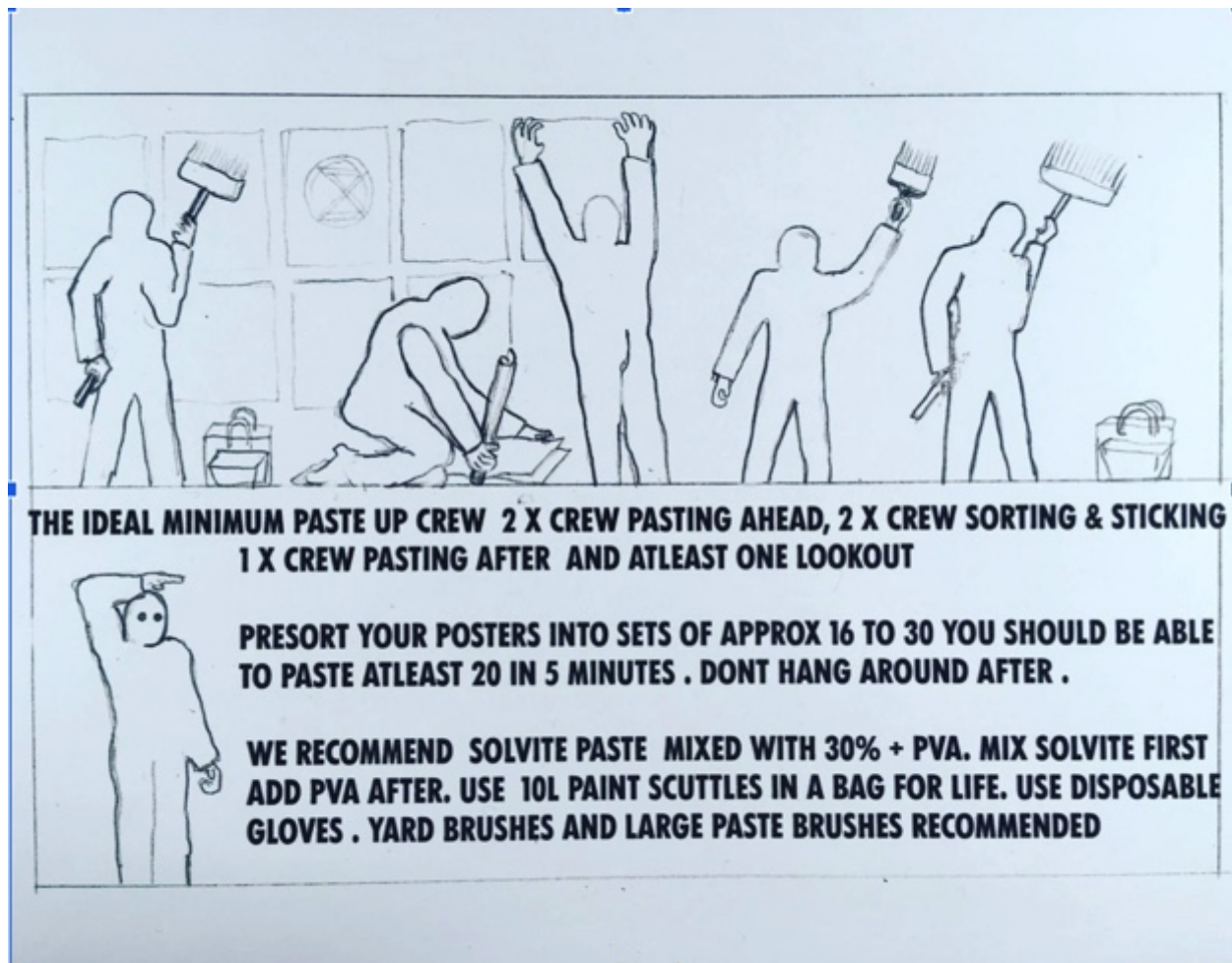
Organise a Flyposting Team

Get together in an affinity group of 2-5 people. Roles needed are:

- Coordinators and Police liaison
- Flyposters: 1 to roll on the paste, 1 to put up the posters, 1 to roll on more paste on top
- Social Media Rebel to take photos of the work, and post them online (don't forget to use the hashtag #paintthestreets and tag our Facebook or Instagram pages!) as well as sharing them in the PTS Telegram chat.

- Some groups like to have look-out people, particularly in areas where security guards may be on duty.

Note: Avoid taking (or posting online) photos of anyone actually doing the flyposting as it could be used as evidence in the future. Always obtain permission before taking a photo of someone.



What Materials do I Need?

- Buckets or large tubs (to carry the paste)
- Bags (to carry everything without it being too obvious)
- Posters- find [lots of poster options here](#) and guidance on how to get your poster printed in this [Google doc](#).
- Poster paste - wallpaper paste is most durable but not environmentally friendly. To make flour paste check out this [YouTube video](#).
- Brushes
- Rollers / & pins



Key Tactics:

- Pick a few best locations to paint.
- Pick some backup locations if you have to change plans.
- Travel as light as possible.
- Pick a meeting point and time, and communicate these via Signal or other encrypted chats the night before.
- Use emergent strategy to move: avoid planning a travel route which could be snitched on (information leaked) or messed up by delays - instead, make the route up as you go along. Change location every 20-30min depending on how discreet your action is.
- Always have a plan B.

What's a Suitable Target?

Remember, you don't **have** to flypost; you can give posters away and put them up on school/university noticeboards, in windows of cafes and on flyer tables. People often like being given things and to have a chance to share their thoughts on the climate and ecological emergency- use any available opportunity for outreach.

General Good Targets:

- Billboards or temporary walls.
- Public transport - trains, back of buses, bus stops and stations.
- Busy central areas in cities: town squares, statues, pedestrian areas
- Universities, colleges, schools.
- Places with high pollution levels.

- Locations with iconic backdrops for dramatic/symbolic effect, e.g. Eiffel Tower or Government buildings in background.
- HQ's of companies agreed as targets by XR strategy.
- Companies linked to fossil fuel industry and fracking e.g. HSBC, Barclays.
- On the floor in a place where lots of people get an aerial viewpoint e.g. a square surrounded by skyscrapers.
- Places people queue or areas of high footfall.
- Replacing ferry flags.

Fly-posting Etiquette

DO target: derelict buildings, areas with existing fly-posting, electrical boxes, lamp posts, and ugly structures, temporary hoardings. Pick areas with high footfall.

DON'T target private property, institutions like schools, hospitals and police stations! Avoid pasting over someone else's poster unless it's out of date.

If you still need more guidance, check out this amazing website: [everything you need to know to blanket the world in posters](#).

Stencils & Murals

Stencilling



Paris68redux have created a [comprehensive guide on stencil and print making](#).

https://www.youtube.com/embed/nUFIrM_KUVk?si=UhyFUM4IK11LBWIO

Environmentally Friendly Sprays and Paints

- We recommend emulsion paint for doing stencils on paper
- We also recommend chalk spray such as Montana but it's less ecologically sound. Prices vary but check out [Graffcity](#) and [MontanaCans](#).
- There are a variety of other environmentally friendly graffiti options available to Rebels including [Water based spray paint](#) and [Reverse graffiti](#).



Reverse graffiti, or 'clean graffiti', involves removing dirt or dust from a dirty surface to create an image or text. XR Bristol have created a ['How to' video](#).

Is it Okay to Chalk Spray, Paint or Flypost Local Businesses?

Rebels are asked to be mindful about where they paint the streets.

Please do not damage private property or small and independent businesses as this can be seen as vandalism and might impact relationships within the community. Try and use materials which cause minimal damage to the environment.

Some actions potentially seen as "vandalism" may have a high risk of arrest if private sector buildings are targeted. It is unclear what police reaction will be to some of these actions, so read the legal advice and take precautions.



What About Spraying over Existing Artwork?

As a golden rule don't not tag over other posters and spray tags as this could cause conflict. Organised fly-posters and graffiti groups can be territorial and could get violent.

Murals



Large scale murals are a big undertaking, but there are some beautiful examples that have been created over the years. If you're thinking of creating a mural you can find lots of tips and guidance

in the [XR Guide to Murals](#).

Subvertising



What is Subvertising?

Subvertising is the practice of lighting up the streets with spoofs or parodies of corporate and political advertisements. By using witty and cutting satire of companies subverters are able to expose racial and climate injustice. We use subvertising to turn the iconography of advertisers on it's head. If images can create a brand, they can also destroy one.

Join the [Paint the Streets Telegram chat](#) and/or ask your actions group to connect you into subvertising spaces.

Check out XR Lambeth's [ad-hacking video](#).

Working with Partner Groups

Crews like Zap Games, [Special Patrol Facebook Group](#), and [Brandalism](#) are currently active alongside Extinction Rebellion.

Note: Brandalism and Special Patrol Group are separate organisations to XR and any reproduction of their work must be credited.

How to Get Into a Bus Stop?

There are [videos](#), [guides](#) and [websites](#) with plenty of info but the main piece of kit people use is a T30 key, high visibility jackets and non-descript worker clothes; it's best to hide in plain sight and look like they belong when they are putting up the posters.

What artwork should I use?

To keep costs down, groups have been known to remove adverts and hand paint chosen messages on to the back of the adverts. It's also common practice to edit posters, focusing specifically on companies complicit in the climate crisis.

- [Billboard sized graphics can be found here.](#)
- [Bus stop sized graphics can be found here.](#)
- [London Underground ad-space sized graphics can be found here](#) (along with a guide on how to subvertise on the tube).
- For Design Assets you can use to create your own artwork [check out the Paint the Streets Google Drive.](#)

Where to Print Bus Stop Ads

To print bus stops sized sheets use [DigitalPrinting](#) and select [6 sheet](#) measuring 1,200mm x 1,800mm.

What are the Legal Implications?

There is generally a view that this kind of action is a lower level in arrestability.

From the Brandalism [Subvertising manual](#)- "some legal advice from Green and Black Cross: The basic rule of thumb is 'No Comment'. In the worst case scenario, a charge is likely to be that 'criminal damage', which holds minor penalties."

Other legal advice that has been provided warns that if caught with a removed advert there could be a charge of theft. However, at present we are unaware of anyone facing prosecution for subvertising.

Resources

- Brandalism's [Subvertising Guide](#) for all things bus stop related.

- Inspiration on [how to take over billboards](#).
- More instructions on [subvertising bus stops & billboards](#) and a series of case studies.



(Credit: Brandalism)

Banner Drops



You can find lots of details about [organising Banner Drops here](#).

Will chalking or flyposting get me arrested?

You are unlikely to get stopped in the UK.

The police are usually uninterested in chalking and flyposting, unless you force them to take action by doing it under their noses.

NOTE: Avoid taking or posting photos of anyone doing the work if they are potentially identifiable as it can be used as evidence against them.

What if I'm stopped?

If you are stopped it's more likely to be a member of the public, private security, or a police community support officer (who don't have any more power than the others).

The best response is normally to simply walk away. If this is not possible and you are 'detained' you aren't obliged to say anything to anyone. This technically includes the police, though not confirming your details can increase the possibility of arrest.

If arrested it's normally advisable to confirm who you are. If you don't you are likely to be held overnight and taken to court the next day.

The most likely charge is Criminal Damage, but there is now a higher threshold to successfully prosecute. A recent ruling confirmed that it is not in the public interest to prosecute if the damage caused was part of a legitimate protest and was 'minor and temporary' in nature.

The specific example given by the court was chalk-based paint on a pavement. The threshold would be lower if the damage was on private property and if you cause damage that would have significant 'clean-up costs' a prosecution would be likely.

The penalty for criminal damage largely depends on the cost of the damage caused. If convicted you would normally be expected to pay some or all of any clean-up costs incurred, the prosecution's legal fees, a victim surcharge and a sentence ranging from a conditional discharge to low-level fine for damage of less than £5k.

In some circumstances, the police may decide to resolve the matter through a fixed penalty notice.

For more information check out the [Green and Black Cross website](#).

Scotland has different rulings, more info can be found [here](#).

For legal support, contact XRUK Legal Support

- Email: xr-legal@riseup.net
- Mattermost: [XRUK Legal Support Reception](#)