

Legal Support Briefing- How to set up a legal support group

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Here are some ideas for organising legal support for an action.

[What are the aims of legal support?](#)

To make sure everyone going on the action is prepared for arrest; to let people in custody know they have support; to get everyone released as soon as possible.

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1. Ideally, everyone going on the action should have attended a legal workshop/received a legal briefing which should include information on arrest procedure, what happens at the police station, likely offences, likely outcomes, bail and first court hearing. Contact us for details if you want a workshop or briefings for your group.
2. Before the action make sure you have: -police station /court phone numbers -friendly solicitor on call to attend police station if needed -people who don't plan to get arrested to help give support -vehicles and drivers to collect people from police station on release -legal briefings and bust cards to hand out
3. Hand out bust cards on the day of the action: These should have the legal support phone number and the number of the solicitor who is on call for the action together with some brief legal details. See attached example of a bust card. Get people to write the phone numbers of the solicitor and the support team on their arms/legs.
4. Once the arrests start to happen: Get as much information as you can from the police/legal observers including: -name and address and where they are being held -what they have been arrested for, have they been charged, what with, if not are they going to be charged, how long will they be held, are they going to court Also ask them to pass on messages to those being held. Offer to help verify addresses or to contact solicitors. If there are a lot of people arrested it may be helpful to draw up a big chart with columns, that can be filled in as information is received about each person-name and address, where arrested, when arrested, what for, which police station held at, time charged, what charged with, bailed or held over, which court, time released.

5. Building Support for those in the cells: If people are held for more than a few hours, or if the police are particularly nasty then think about ways of building support for those in the cells; -organise a vigil outside the police station. -get people to hand in messages, food, books, clothes cigarettes etc to those in the cells. -get supporters to phone the police. -get the press to call the police. -get a friendly lawyer to visit, even if those arrested don't want legal advice this may be the only type of visitor allowed in to see them, they can pass messages, bring food, cigarettes, check person is OK etc.

6. When people are released: -make sure you keep in touch with the police so that you know when this is going to happen. -arrange lifts home for the people released from the cells. -arrange people to welcome the people released with hugs, food etc.

7. If people are held and taken to court: -get people to go and support. -arrange lifts home for people released after court hearing. -ask a friendly lawyer to phone and talk to them, even if want to represent themselves they may want to talk through the procedure with someone.

For more information contact us

Bust Card

Legal Information

On Arrest

- Stay calm.
- Tell someone so you can be located later at the police station.
- You have the right to know why you are being arrested, so ask!
- Note the number(s) of your arresting officer(s), if possible.

At the Police Station

- You have the right to consult a solicitor of your choice, free of charge.
- You have the right to have someone informed of your arrest.
- You have the right to remain silent, there is NO requirement to talk to the police. We strongly advise you to answer 'NO COMMENT' to all police questions, don't write or sign any statement written by the police or sign any police notebook, until you have taken legal advice.
- The only information you have to give the police after arrest (but not before!) is a verifiable name and address. You don't have to give a date of birth, but it may delay your release, if you don't.
- You may be searched on arrival.
- If you want to see a doctor or need medication tell the police.
- They can take fingerprints, saliva/hair samples and your photograph, without your consent, only after you have been charged. They can use 'reasonable force' to take fingerprints and a saliva/hair sample, but they can never use force to take your photograph.
- You may be asked personal questions, you don't have to answer.
- Please authorise the police and your solicitor to reveal information about your detention and welfare to legal support.

- When you are released tell legal support.

If you witness an arrest

- Write down the name, where they were arrested and any other relevant information and let legal support know. If you are injured or witness an injury

If you are injured by the police/security

- Let legal support know so they can arrange for an independent doctor to examine and photograph the injuries.

If you are arrested call: Solicitors on

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