



# About Green and Black Cross

**Please Note: we are only able to help people with issues related to protest and political action.**

**Green & Black Cross (GBC) is an independent grassroots project. We are set up in the spirit of mutual aid and solidarity to support autonomous social struggles within the UK.**

GBC was founded in November 2010 to provide legal support for protests against the government's wave of massive spending cuts. We take inspiration from the Anarchist Black Cross and from the diverse skills and infrastructure built up over the last decade by elements of the environmental movement, such as The Camp for Climate Action (Climate Camp).

We have supported thousands of people from many backgrounds in their rebellions and protests – from a 24/7 Legal Support Helpline to Legal Observers on the streets, and from Action Medics at large demos to a kitchen team smuggling flapjacks to students surrounded by police. Our emphasis on support is to allow the potential for further dissent – for people to rise up, and in doing so take control of the direction of their lives.

The structure and role of GBC has changed throughout its history. Today, GBC is formed of two autonomous collectives: the [Training Collective](#) and the [Resources Collective](#). The Training Collective creates and delivers legal trainings for protesters and protest support, whilst the Resources Collective creates, updates and maintains resources.

These collectives work alongside other independent and autonomous legal support groups: the [Independent Legal Observer Network \(ILON\)](#), the Phone Helpline, [Activist Court Aid Brigade \(ACAB\)](#) and [the Network for Police Monitoring \(Netpol\)](#).

GBC is mostly based in London, and there is a GBC group in Manchester.

**The GBC Training and Resources Collectives are entirely run by volunteers – we do this because we are also part of the struggle, not because it is our job.**

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## Common Philosophy

We believe in and support the kind of democratic change that comes from below. We see in history a narrative of progressive change when people come together in the face of dominant powers to confront problems and take their fate into their own hands. Through a diversity of tactics we see change occurring in this way from the fight for the five day working week, the movements for women's suffrage to the Poll Tax rebellion. For us, as the chant goes, this is what democracy looks like!

At the same time in these histories we find repression and abuse of social struggles by concentrated power – be that state, big business or 'revolutionary' Political Parties. For this reason we share a tradition and commitment to non-hierarchy and collective decision making.

Green and Black Cross has not been set up to direct a movement. Instead our role is one of support and developing the strength of movements through the practice of non hierarchy and mutual aid.

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## Who We Support



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**Green and Black Cross (GBC) was set up to support the wave of anti-cuts protests in 2010, as the police used violence and harassment to intimidate protesters. We also have roots in supporting the environmental and climate justice movements.**

**Please note we are able to support protestors and activists only**

We continue to support struggles for social, economic and environmental justice.

We are a [non-hierarchical group](#) and are particularly interested in working with groups which share these ideals; our aim is to skill-share and build capacity for autonomy.

In practice, we are also limited in who we can support by our own capacity. Where necessary, we will prioritise support for groups with similar ideals, groups that are also working to build their own autonomous support, and groups or actions which are most at risk of police repression.

If you would like support for an action you are planning, please read here about the [type of support we can offer](#), and then [get in touch](#).

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## Partner Groups

### [Activist Court Aid Brigade](#)

We work closely with the Activist Court Aid Brigade on many of our projects, including training and defendant and court support. Our [bustcard](#) is a joint project between ACAB and GBC.

### [Independent Legal Observers Network](#)

Green & Black Cross used to coordinate the work of Legal Observers ourselves, however we now work closely with The Independent Legal Observer Network (ILON) who do this work. They send call outs for legal observers that have been requested for actions and demonstrations.

### [Netpol](#)

The Network for Police Monitoring is a campaigning group which seeks to monitor public order, protest and street policing, and to challenge and resist policing which is excessive, discriminatory or threatens civil rights. We work with Netpol to share our on-the-ground experience of policing.

### [Bristol Defendant Solidarity](#)

Bristol Defendant Solidarity (BDS) is a legal support group who formed after the Stokes Croft riots in April 2011. We work with them to support people taking action in Bristol.

Previously, when these groups were active, we have also worked closely with the [Legal Defence & Monitoring Project](#), Newham Monitoring Project, and UK Action Medics.

## Other Comrades and Resources

We also rate the following groups doing excellent work supporting protest and resisting state oppression:



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[Squatters Legal Network](#) and [Advisory Service for Squatters](#)

Providing vital legal and practical information for squatters.

[Activist Trauma Support](#)

A website containing some fantastic resources for people struggling with psychological trauma as a result of activism, and for those who support them.

[Counselling for Social Change](#)

Providing emotional support to activists.

[Activists' Legal Project](#) and [Scottish Activists Legal Project \(SCALP\)](#)

ALP have been a large source of inspiration and information for our resources. These two websites have not been recently updated, so please be cautious before using information found there. Updated versions of many resources can be found in our [guides](#).

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## Frequently Asked Questions

*For FAQs related to protesting, your rights and the law, please see our [guides](#).*

### **Where does the name Green and Black Cross come from?**

'Green' reflects the fact that much of the experience, skills and infrastructure in our movement has come from the ecological direct action movement. The rest of the name is a nod to the [Anarchist Black Cross](#), a movement of mutual-aid projects providing practical assistance to anarchists facing repression.

### **When and how did you start?**

At the time of the student protests in the winter of 2010, a number of people who had been involved with the [Camp for Climate Action](#) saw a need for similar support for student and other anti-cuts activists. GBC draws on a lot of the resources and skills from the Camp for Climate Action Legal Team, as well as those of other past and current groups such as the [Legal Defense and Monitoring Group](#), [UK Action Medics](#) and the [Activists Legal Project](#).

### **How do we know you aren't cops?**

You don't. We have ways of building up trust between members of the group, and try very hard to ensure the security of the data we hold, but we can never guarantee this completely: like all groups involved in protest we are potentially vulnerable to police infiltration. Please don't tell us details of your actions if they are super secret, and please don't share stories or evidence that could potentially incriminate you!

### **Are you solicitors?**

No. We have a separate role to solicitors which is to enable practical support for protest and legal issues connected to protest. We do this because we are a part of the movement, not because it is our job! Our advice is based on our significant collective experience of protest and interactions with the law, but is not official legal advice.

### **Why contact you rather than just a solicitor?**

Collectively, with all of us together working in solidarity, we are stronger and more effective. If you go it alone then not only do you



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miss out on our assistance, experience and support, but you potentially also deny your own support to others in the same boat. We often have a lot of valuable witness information for defendants from both Legal Observers and members of the public.

## Are you connected to or funded by a law firm?

We have no connection to any law firm or solicitors. We are entirely independent. The [solicitors we recommend](#) are ones many activists have used and found to be good and experienced in protest related cases, and we update our recommendations in response to feedback from activists.

## Are there other groups doing similar work?

Our Training & Resources collectives work closely alongside other independent and autonomous legal support groups: the [Independent Legal Observer Network \(ILON\)](#), the Phone Helpline, [Activist Court Aid Brigade \(ACAB\)](#) and [the Network for Police Monitoring \(Netpol\)](#). You can read more on our [Partner Groups page](#). We don't intend to replicate or duplicate infrastructure or support projects already active in any given area, but hopefully advance collaboration within the movement, with GBC acting as one possible portal.

## Are you paid to do this?

Everyone involved in GBC is acting in a voluntary capacity because they believe in the importance of this kind of support on protests. As we grew as an organisation, we found it increasingly difficult to cope with all our admin work so for several years we had 1-3 part time paid staff members to support this, but we currently have no paid staff. We try where possible to cover childcare & travel expenses of volunteers.

## Where do you get money?

We accept [donations](#) from individuals to help cover printing, phone bills etc. We also apply for grant funding for larger costs.

## Can we donate money towards costs?

Yes, that would be amazing! [See here for how to donate](#).

## Where are you based?

There is no permanent Green and Black Cross 'office'. Our biggest groups are in London and Manchester, but we have a number of [other groups across the UK](#), and are always interested to hear from people interested in training or setting up new groups in places we don't yet cover.

## What do you do with the data of people who contact you?

We are aware that some of the data we hold are very sensitive, particularly around arrests. We minimise what we collect and store, minimise the number of people who have access to this, and have a high standard for the security of platforms on which we hold data. We will always check for permission if to share information with others, e.g. your solicitor. We also comply with GDPR legislation – see our [privacy notice](#).

## Do you have anything to do with chocolate?

No not, *that* chocolate! We're big fans of biscuits at our meetings though [come along!](#)

**Please do contact us and get involved!**