2. Why You Might End up Doing Police Station Support

You might have planned in advance to be doing station support for arrestees from a particular action or it may have come as a surprise.

Setting up a Station Support Group in Advance

If you're planning an action it's a good idea to plan station support in advance, especially if you think arrests are likely (and remember that police behaviour is often unpredictable so it's best to be prepared just in case!)

- **Gather together** a group of people who are willing to do station support. This may be people who will be at the protest or other people sympathetic to the cause. If someone has access to a car this is even better, as arrestees could be taken to a police station that's far away where they need to get back to.
- Make sure everyone has **read this guide** and understands their role.
- Sort out a **rota** with shifts and buddies. How formal or informal this will be depends on the size and nature of the protest and supporters. Most importantly, ensure there are at least two people available at all times, and a few people who can cover shifts overnight and into the early hours of the morning.
- If you can, try to build up a few **station support kits** containing the items set out below. Aim to have one kit per police station.
- Set up a form of **communication** for the station support crew. A good way of doing this is through a group chat on a secure messaging app such as Signal. If applicable, the people doing Back Office may wish to join this chat to make communication easier. Some groups have a designated person coordinating station support; others coordinate station support through the Back Office; and others coordinate themselves through a group chat or via other means. Find out what works best for your group.
- Have someone on the ground who's in communication with the Legal Back Office / Protest Legal Support Line and with station support crews throughout the action and after, **reporting** any arrests to the people who are planning to head out to support.
- A few days after the action and the station support, you may find it appropriate to have a **debrief** or to call each other to check how you're all doing. Support is valuable and appreciated, but can also be draining and invisiblised work.

If You Witness an Arrest and Want to Support

- Try to **find out** where the arrestee is being taken by asking **Legal Observers**, or, if there are none around, the **arresting police officers**. If they don't know or don't tell you, call the **Legal Back Office / Protest Legal Support Line** (07946 541 511) to say that you want to be kept updated.
- You don't need to go to the police station as soon as you see an arrest – it usually takes a while for arrestees to be taken to the station and booked in. Use this time to gather some **other people** to support with you, especially if there's not a station support group set up already, and as many things from the below list as you can.
- Share this guide with your fellow supporters.

If You Receive a Custody Call and Want to Support

You may receive a custody call from a friend or family member who's been arrested. In the call, make sure to find out what **station** they're at, and advise them to use a trusted protest solicitor.

- **Inform** the Legal Back Office / Protest Legal Support Line of the **name/alias** of the arrestee, what **station** they're at, and any **other information** you have about their arrest. Let them know that you're heading to the police station.
- See if you can get some **other people** to do support with you, and take this **guide**, some **food**, and as many of the other **items listed below** as you can along with you.