# 8. What is involved in becoming a court monitor

**Court monitors perform a vital role in the whole process of supporting people who have been arrested and charged.**

**As a joint project with ACAB and GBC, we keep a record of everyone we know about who has been arrested at demonstrations, and use this information to provide individual support to those who are going through the legal process.**

**Interested in becoming a Court Monitor?**

**We're always looking for more volunteers to join our team of court monitors, it would be great to hear from you! Email courtsupport[at]protonmail.com**
**As a court monitor, your main task is to attend a court on the day we expect defendants to be appearing.**

**At court we:**
**Make contact with defendants we know about and talk to them to…**

- **Find out how their case is going**
- **Put them in contact with a good solicitor if necessary (who can often come out immediately)**
- **Give advice about the whole court process**
- **Meet their solicitors if possible**
- **Find out if we can help with witnesses to the event**
- **Generally be a listening and supportive ear, take people for a coffee/drink after court**
- **Get their email and phone numbers so we can continue to support them**
- **Tell them about ACAB and GBC and put them in touch with defendants groups or other defendants (we have leaflets and contact points, and a defendants email list)**
- **Sit in the public gallery of the court itself and listen to the hearing, making as many notes as possible. It's not always easy to hear as one is at the back of the court, sometimes in a screened off section, but every bit of information is useful.Find out when and where their next hearing is, and the why it is taking place. This can be gleaned from listening to the hearing and by asking the defendant/solicitor after the hearing.**
- **Talk to people in the waiting areas to find out if there are other people there from demonstrations to whom we can offer support. It is important not to push ourselves on people – not everyone wants to be in touch with us. Don't forget to preface saying hello to someone with words to the affect 'I'm from a support group…' , people waiting might be wary of officials etc.**
- **If we are talking to people who might be facing prison, then we can also put them in contact with our prison support group (London ABC) and give them information about what to expect.**
- **Finally, feed back all the information you have gathered so we can update out records. Every small piece of information is useful so don't worry if you haven't been able to find out everything you wanted to – it is probably more useful than you realise!**

**What if I don't have a legal background and am unsure of the process?**

**You don't need to know all the answers to questions asked by defendants. There is a backup team of people who will be at the end of a phone on the day, or later by phone and email. It is important to only tell a defendant something you are absolutely sure about and get advice about anything else.**

**We often hear from both defendants and their solicitors telling us how useful and supportive our court monitors have been to help people through what can be a difficult and overwhelming process.**