

# Rising Up: Guide for Non-Violent Direct Action

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## Reflections following the experience of organising road blockades at Heathrow Airport, November 2016

Edited and added to from UK Feminista's NVDA guide, Libcom's ("Miscellaneous direct action guides") of Do or Die, and Seeds for Change's "Affinity Groups"

The Rising Up road blockade on the 19<sup>th</sup> November was a first attempt by Rising Up at a 'mass', public action. The intention was to draw as many people as possible into affinity groups taking 'arrestable', disruptive action. On the day there was minimal disruption to the operations of Heathrow airport. 15 individuals, for short, varying periods, managed to initiate road blockades with their affinity groups. Supported by an organised media team, these actions gained widespread attention in the UK media. Whilst disruption was minimal, the emotive, human images and footage captured had a powerful impact. The media did their best to sensationalise any disruption that was actually caused. These actions garnered media attention, and helped to absorb people into the Rising Up process.

The intention with this document is to explore how future actions can do more to affect the operations of infrastructure targeted, alongside gaining media attention; this in turn, aiding the wider escalation strategy of absorbing more people into taking disruptive non-violent action.

The logistics working group was responsible for preparing affinity groups into taking arrestable, disruptive action. A rough plan, with timings, equipment, and suggestions were given to each affinity group. Each affinity group, however, had the autonomy to decide which advice and tactics they took on.

### *Equipment for affinity groups*

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When thinking about equipment, the logistics working group could consider these questions:

- 1. How can we ensure affinity groups' actions are causing economic disruption to the operations of the targeted infrastructure?**
- 2. How can we design actions which provoke arrests?**
- 3. How can we ensure the equipment can be used safely, and those involved are removed by the authorities safely?**
- 4. How practical is the transportation and construction of the equipment?**
- 5. What is the cost involved?**

Equipment must ensure that blockading for a long period of time is likely to disrupt the operations, and negatively affect economically the infrastructure that is being targeted. What can diminish the level of disruption is if the police manage to drag protesters off the road immediately. With greater planning and thought, affinity groups can assemble equipment that can lead to blockades lasting hours.

Larger disruption has the added impact of gaining more traction in the media. Travel updates on the radio will reference the protest frequently throughout the day if there is major disruption to a road network. With greater disruption, there is more likely to be a flurry of social media tweets and Facebook shares (with pictures) from angry road users that the mainstream media are likely to pick up on.

The strategy is to create a scenario where the police must wait for trained cutting teams (and other services including firemen and paramedics - Heathrow airport has its own cutting team, 'Polarm', which can arrive at any given action at Heathrow within an hour; the other main cutting team is based in Kent) to remove the affinity group

before an arrest is made. The aim is to create a situation where the police are physically not able to remove you, or are deterred as a result of health and safety concerns.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> November, for protesters who did not manage to initiate road blockades, we found that the police did their best to avoid arrests. Individuals who clearly had intentions to stop traffic, who were grabbed or held back by the police, were not arrested.

If economic disruption is not the aim of the affinity group, heavy duty equipment may not be necessary. Sensational footage, with vivid police confrontation and arrests, were captured by the media even though there was little economic disruption. Some perspectives within non-violent direct action may dispute whether using equipment which antagonises the police is truly 'non-violent', or at least, it negates the real spirit, or strategic insight behind non-violence. The experience of the 19<sup>th</sup> November shows that there are strategic merits, as well as downsides (depending on your perspective), in taking action without equipment. Given that part of the intention was to ensure arrests were made, with an impact in the media, it's significant that all individuals who managed to initiate blockades without utilising equipment (e.g. arm tubes) were arrested, with their actions leading to powerful imagery in the media. Bearing these issues in mind, each affinity group can be left to decide what kind of equipment to use.

## Bicycle D-locks

These are a classic direct action tool. Get them from bike shops (we found really cheap ones from Tesco). The more you pay, the stronger they are – again – depends what the intentions of the affinity group are. They fit neatly around pieces of machinery, gates and your neck. When doing an action, individuals should pair up with a partner, in threes or fours. Each individual should have a d lock each. Once the pair or group have arrived at their target, they need to attach themselves to each other's d lock, which should be locked around each individual's neck. This is sometimes called an 'Octopus' Lock-on.

If locking onto machinery or something fixed, there should be a person who carries the U shaped section, and loops it around both a suitable fixed piece of machine and their neck. Then another "buddy", carrying lock barrel and key, secures the lock, and hides, or runs off with the key. If locking on to a machine, someone must let the driver know that operating it will break someone's neck. If locking on, you may be there for some time, so choose your point carefully. The police may remove any blankets or seats you have, and isolate you from other protesters, sometimes forming a screen around you.



You may want to keep a spare key about your person but they may search you for it. If a buddy stays (with key) within earshot, then you can be released in an emergency.

Heathrow Airport have contractors with their own hydraulic bolt croppers, which cut the strongest lock in seconds. The lock gives a frightening jolt when cut, so don't lock on if you have a neck injury.

D locks, which are used to lock up bicycles, are easy to get hold of and fairly cheap from certain retailers (such as Tescos and some hardware shops). Cost: £5 – £15.

## Arm tubes

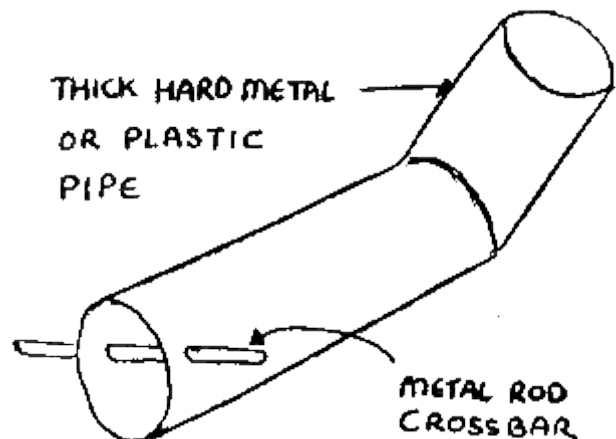
Tubes made from plastic or metal piping, the diameter of a clothed arm, are a versatile tool. They need to be ideally the length of two arms, ideally with a strong metal pin screwed on/welded in the middle. We've found shorter ones (an arm's length) still require cutting teams, lengthening the blockade considerably. You need to link

your arms together inside the tubes, either with handcuffs, or loops of strong cord, chain, and karabiners, attached to the metal pin.

You can spend lots of time bulking out the arm tubes to make them stronger, **this can prolong your occupation for hours**. Consider using metal wire and mesh, carpet, bolts and nails, concrete, rubber tyres, bitumen, and expanding foam to hold all the materials in place, and lots and lots of gaffer tape! Using a variety of materials can really fuck up their tools. Make sure the layers are not easy to rip off.

For comfort, pad the top of the tube, and keep your arm lower than your heart to maintain blood flow. Also make sure you don't cut off blood flow by spraying too much expanding foam in an arm tube.

The number of people in arm tubes determines how large an object you can encircle. If you lie down in a circle as a group of say ten people (i.e. 9 tubes) with your feet in the centre of a circle, quite a large area can be covered. Arm tubes have been used to blockade gateways, roads and even airport runways. To remove you, they must cut the tube using hacksaws or angle grinders. Once one tube is cut then the whole circle is broken.



## Scrap cars

You can buy these very cheaply, and register them with a false name and address. Be aware that driving an 'unroadworthy', uninsured, untaxed car will get you arrested if you're stopped. You can use scrap cars to quickly blockade a gate, road, motorway, or just about anything. Lock-ons can be built into the car to make them an even more potent tool, or you can just lock onto the chassis. To start the blockade, you could quickly immobilise the car by slashing tyres, removing wheels, or turning it over.

You should be able to buy cheap vehicles from auto trader or gumtree. Set up visits with sellers. Make sure you go for a test drive. Find out whether the vehicle has had its MOT, whether it is taxed. Put aside funds for insuring a driver for the vehicle. The vehicle only as to make a few journeys (the removal team may well have to cut through the car, destroying the vehicle in the process, in order to remove you); strike a balance between low cost and roadworthiness.

If the aim is to blockade integral road infrastructure with fast moving traffic, make sure there are support vehicles, or 'buffer cars' (at least two) behind that help slow down traffic safely, before the 'lock-on car' makes a sideways turn blocking two lanes of traffic.

In 2015, activists from Plane Stupid managed to block the tunnel leading into Heathrow terminals for 3.5 hours, using a T shaped arm tube built into the front of a van.



## Occupying Runways

In recent years, both Heathrow and London City's runways have been occupied for roughly 6 hours at a time, causing millions of pounds of economic damage, and gaining international media attention.

On both occasions, it seems that both the protesters and equipment arrived in two vehicles, dropping off everything before scooting off. In Heathrow's case, bolt croppers were used to cut a hole in the perimeter fence

before Heras fencing with blocks (for stability), D-locks, a pre-prepared scaffolding tripod (a lighter, bamboo tripod could also work) and arm tubes were carried through.

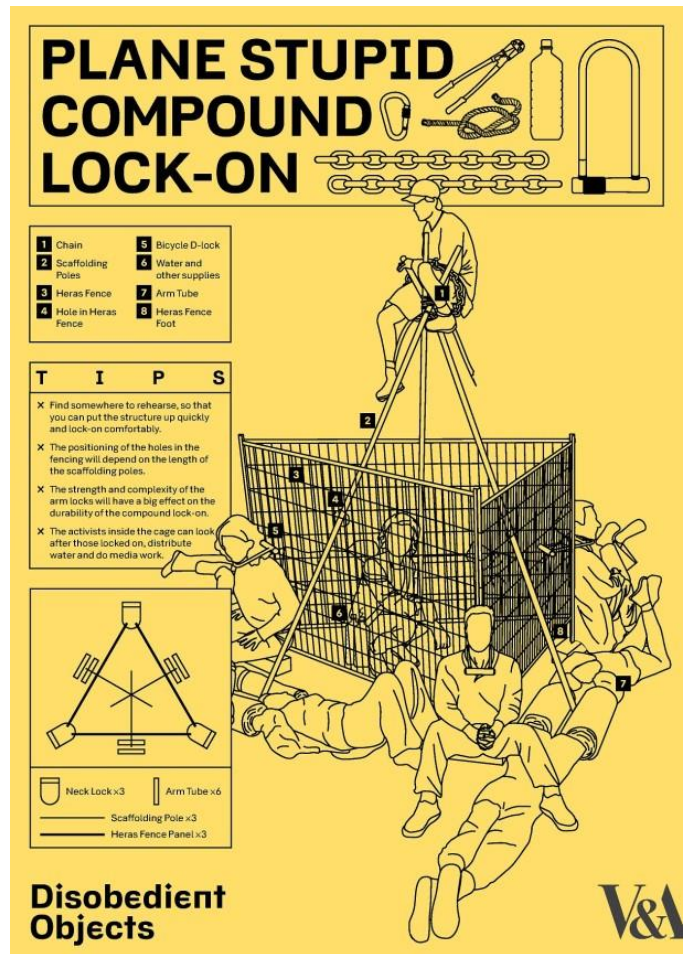
In the case of the occupation at London City Airport, it seems that as there was no perimeter fence to cut through, the individuals used rubber dinghies, either swimming or paddling over a short distance of water to reach the runway.

Each plan will be different according to the elements at play. Other possible strategies of breaking entry could be to use ladders and carpet for jumping over high fences with barbed wire.

The Heras fencing served two functions: It allowed the individuals inside (who were not locked on) to remain protected from the authorities, allowing them to focus on photography and live streaming, spraying expanding foam within the arm tubes (which prevents individuals locked-on being removed with specialist equipment from within the arm tube - expanding foam can also be highly flammable, another delaying factor for the removal team), as well as serving the wellbeing of those locked on with food, water and general comfort. Secondly, the fencing provided an extra complication for the removal team, with 3 individuals being locked to each corner with a d lock. Further, the tripod was interwoven with the fencing, ensuring that the removal team had to proceed delicately and slowly in order not to compromise the safety of everyone.

The tripod, similarly, serves this last function mentioned. A cherry picker, an added piece of heavy duty equipment, was needed to safely remove the individual on top.

The position of those locking on with arm tubes, at the foot of each tripod leg, creates an added complication for the removal team. Positioning everyone locked-on in close proximity to each other also has a delaying effect. The longevity of your occupation comes down to the amount of time the removal team give for deliberating and carefully executing your removal.



## Organising Affinity groups

For the road blockades on the 19<sup>th</sup> November, the organisers set themselves the ambitious target of preparing 100 'pledges': individuals committed to taking arrestable action. A team of roughly 10 organised workshops, and attended events to get face to face, written commitment by individuals to take action. Alongside, there was a strategic process to absorb people on social media. Individuals could also make a 'pledge' on the compassionate revolution website. This led to roughly 100 'pledges', of varying commitment, with those achieved through face to face contact usually being more solid.

Whilst roughly 10 in total were working on pulling affinity groups together, the number was not enough. The workload was not apportioned evenly. More could have been done to be realistic about each organiser's level of capacity.

The Outreach working group, whose tasks often crossed over with the logistics working group, were responsible for 'looking after' those who had pledged. 10 organisers were allocated 10 'pledges' to 'look after'. This involved checking in with them through email and phone calls. It was made clear to each 'pledge' that they had to join and

organise within an affinity group in order to take part on the action; they were informed of various occasions they could meet fellow participants and join a group. Direct action trainings alongside affinity group forming sessions were held around the South of England.

Some sessions were well attended, some not so. The varying successes in mobilising people to form affinity groups was a steep learning curve for both organisers and those hoping to get involved. Steps were taken to overcome this cultural impasse; the revelation that we need to plan and organise in order to be effective, is an important one.

In the days preceding the action, the organisers were aware of roughly 40 individuals who had expressed continued interest to take arrestable action, and had attended group forming sessions and trainings. On the day, roughly 30 of those 40 had managed to form affinity groups and had made it to Heathrow to take action. In the end, there were 15 arrests; 3 affinity groups had managed to initiate blockades.

Some of the key reasons why some groups were successful in initiating blockades were:

- Confidence of individuals
- Group affinity/trust
- Group preparation/organisation
- Heavy police presence thwarting attempts
- Previous experience within the group

Affinity groups that have more time to prepare and practise beforehand are more likely to have the confidence and skills necessary to execute a successful action. **Organising and creating spaces for affinity group formation is critical in ensuring successful mass actions.**

## Booking venues

Once the strategy working group has called an action at a specific target, the first job is to contact groups or venues that might be interested in hosting workshops to learn about the Rising Up strategy / direct action / form affinity groups. Possible venues could be:

- People's home addresses
- Squatted social centres
- Anarchist social centres
- Quaker meeting spaces
- Community Centres (particularly ones affected by Heathrow expansion)
- Pub rooms
- University rooms

Possible groups interested in receiving workshops could be:

- Friends of the Earth local groups
- Greenpeace local groups
- Green Party local groups
- Green NGOs
- University groups
- Radical left groups
- Community/campaign groups

The workshops probably should not be promoted as 'affinity group forming for action on X date', but rather, using more general terms, such as 'direct action training' or 'info and mobilisation Rising Up Workshop'. In the small print of the event description in emails or on Facebook, affinity group forming was occasionally mentioned. This perhaps was a risk, inviting greater police surveillance. The police did not intervene in any of these workshops that we know of. Undercover informers may have been present.

## Promoting Workshops

Once a venue and date has been set, the event needs to be promoted as widely as possible, with the help of the outreach and media working groups:

- Make sure the workshop is included in the Rising Up and Compassionate Revolution 'big list' email send out.
- Create a Facebook event with the Rising Up account. Share amongst your friends. Get everyone in the Rising Up network to share widely.
- Make individual phone calls and emails to individuals you have met or have been put in touch with by the Outreach Working Group.

From our experience, a good objective for each workshop is to form an affinity group amongst the participants. This is not always possible. There may not be enough time to build affinity amongst the participants, the participants may not feel comfortable with each other, or it may be more appropriate to focus on other areas (such as the general escalation strategy or direct action training), depending on the needs of the group.

## Rising Up Info/Mobilisation workshops and Direct Action Workshops

Organise with the trainings working group to make sure experienced trainers are available to run a workshop. In preparation for the 19<sup>th</sup> November action, workshops were held on "Info and mobilisation for Rising Up" and "Direct Action Training". On different occasions, these workshops were both facilitated as separate workshops as well as delivered together. From experience, the ideal practice would be to facilitate exercises which encourage the participants to consider their affinity groups towards the end of the workshop.

## *Affinity Group Formation*

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### What is an affinity group?

An affinity group is a small group of 5 to 20 people who work together autonomously on direct actions or other projects. You can form an affinity group with your friends, people from your community, workplace, or organisation.

Affinity groups challenge top-down decision-making and organising, and empower those involved to take creative direct action. Affinity groups allow people to "be" the action they want to see by giving freedom and decision-making power to the affinity group. Affinity groups by nature are decentralised and non-hierarchical, two important principles of anarchist organising and action. The affinity group model was first used by anarchists in Spain in the late 19th and early 20th century, and was re-introduced to radical direct action by anti-nuclear activists during the 1970s, who used decentralised non-violent direct action to blockade roads, occupy spaces and disrupt "business as usual" for the nuclear and war makers of the US.

### How to start an affinity group

It is important people join an affinity group that is best suited to their interests. Workshop participants should consider who would be willing to use similar tactics - if you want to do relatively high risk lockdowns, someone who does not want to be in that situation may not want to be in the affinity group. That person could do media or medic work, but it may not be best if they are completely uncomfortable around certain tactics of direct action.

If you are looking to join an affinity group at a mass action, first find out what affinity groups are open to new members and which ones are closed. For many people, affinity groups are based on trusting relationships based around years of friendship and work, thus they might not want people they don't know in their affinity group. Once you find which affinity groups are open, look for ones that have an issue interest or action tactic that you are drawn to. Remember that affinity groups are usually a fluid/loose, not fixed, group of people that may change over time.

## What can an affinity group do?

Anything! They can be used for mass or smaller scale actions. Affinity groups can be used to drop a banner, blockade a road, provide back-up for other affinity groups, do street theatre, block traffic by riding bikes, organise a tree sit, change the message on a massive billboard, play music in a radical marching band or sing in a revolutionary choir, etc. There can even be affinity groups who take on certain tasks in an action. For instance, there could be a roving affinity group made up of street medics, or an affinity group who brings food and water to people on the streets.

## Building affinity and working together

Getting to know each other is vital if you want to build trust. Use facilitation techniques, such as talking in pairs or in groups, to get to know about each other's' experiences, worries, hopes, limitations and motivations. Make sure that the direct action training includes drills and role play that prepares the affinity group both technically and emotionally for their action. This will help the participants get to know each other better and will make it possible to give each other the right kind of support in stressful situations.

Each affinity group needs an agreement for how the group operates, how decisions are made, what it does and how it will react in certain situations. Depending on how long you are likely to work together for, this could require a long time to work out. It's important to get it right though – everyone needs to be willing and able to keep to this agreement. Talking about things in advance makes it possible for the group members to trust each other's' reactions, even in the heat of a stressful moment. It's important to communicate agreements to new group members and ensure they agree and respect them. It can be helpful to split your affinity group into pairs of buddies who look out for each other on an action.

One method often used by groups is consensus decision making. This is a way of collectively making decisions and is used to enable everyone to participate in the process. The aim is to reach a decision that everyone supports. This does not mean everyone will be 100% satisfied with the decision, but that everyone is willing to agree to it. This process shouldn't be used for every decision you make when planning an action. Times not to use it include: when the matter at hand is trivial, when there is insufficient information to make a decision and when there isn't time. Solutions could be to have either to elect a temporary leadership, or to develop a streamlined process for making consensus decisions.

To ensure meetings of the affinity group run smoothly and effectively appoint a facilitator. The role of the facilitator is to ensure that the group achieves its objectives in the meeting. They do not make decisions for the group, but suggest ways to help the group move forward and collectively reach decisions. A facilitator can also help ensure everyone is able to participate in the meeting and that it is not dominated by a few individuals. You can appoint one person to facilitate all the meetings, or rotate who takes on this role at each meeting.

For guidance on how to do consensus decision making and facilitating meetings visit [www.ukfeminista.org.uk](http://www.ukfeminista.org.uk), Seeds for Change, [www.seedsforchange.org.uk](http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk) or Rhizome <http://www.rhizome.coop>.

Long term questions: Is this an open or closed affinity group (i.e. can new people join the group)? How do we make decisions? What do we each expect from the group?

If the workshop participants are considering working together, invite them to spend some time together both formally and informally e.g. going for bike rides, eating together, or going to the pub with each other all help.

Make sure all the contact information of the participants has been collected by one person in the group; make it clear that they are responsible for contacting the rest of the group.

It is the responsibility of the logistics working group to write up an action briefing to be given to each affinity group. This briefing should include the suggested target and key advice that each affinity group should consider:

- Annotated maps with suggested locations for blockades, banner drops, where non arrestable activity will be etc.
- The suggested time for affinity groups to do their action alongside other groups and media presence
- Likely police/security tactics/presence or CCTV cameras
- Suggestions for transport – getting there and back
- Presence of other supportive teams (e.g. wellbeing, legal observers)
- Suggestions for accommodation the night before
- Legal advice summary (e.g. no comment interview, likely charges)
- The nonviolence action consensus
- The media narrative and theme of the day
- Any other key information specific to the designated location
- Strategic reasoning behind logistical choices

### Experience from road blockades at Heathrow

In hindsight, the briefing given to affinity groups for the November 19<sup>th</sup> road blockades, needed to be more specific and detailed, with key points given to each affinity group of where they should block. The most successful blockade was told exactly where to go and how to do it. A balance must be struck here with making use of each group's autonomy and decision making, as opposed to each group following rigid orders. Whilst suggestions and advice can be given, each affinity group must feel empowered to plan and make their own decisions.

Part of the Rising Up strategy is to publicise actions well in advance in order to gain more traction with the media, to cause economic insecurity in the future, and to maximise participation. This approach means that police presence is likely to be high. They will be aware of how groups in recent history (Plane Stupid and Black Lives Matter) have achieved blockades. With this in mind, affinity groups must be extra prepared, smart, and creative in order to effectively blockade.

### Legal advice

Green and Black Cross wrote up a legal briefing in advance for all of the activists involved on the 19<sup>th</sup> November, focusing on the legal issues of road blockading. Check if Green and Black Cross want to make any amendments to this document. Make sure this briefing gets out to every participant in the action.

Phone: **07946 541 511**

Email: **gbclegal@riseup.net**

### Preparing the 'stragglers'

For various reasons, there will be individuals who have been recruited by the outreach working group who want to take part in the action, but have not had time to make it to one of these organised workshops. It's possible, although not ideal, to arrange informal meet ups with groups the day before or morning of actions. Do your best to prepare the groups as much as possible when you meet. Reiterate that everyone involved in the action must be in an affinity group. It's best to keep the details of these meetups secret to avoid police intervention, as they may be on high alert in the run up to the publicised action.



## *Planning and preparing the logistics*

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### **Aims and activity**

What would you like the action to achieve? It may be education and agitation, economic damage, physical disruption, solidarity with others in struggle, or elements of all of these and more. It is best to clarify which is your priority. This helps identify the activity needed to achieve your aims.

### **Target**

You may have a target in mind already. It may be following the action coordinator's suggestions. Think through whether it is possible to achieve the aims wanted with the activity you've decided upon.

When you have an idea of the aims, activity and target you have an outline plan. That is – you know what you want to achieve, and will do so by taking a certain type of action on a specific target.

When you have this you can move onto the first reconnaissance ('reccie') for the action.

### **Primary reconnaissance ('reccie')**

Even if the action is to be done at night it may be best to make this first reccie a daylight one.

Use it for gathering 'hard information'. Get maps, photographs and plans of the target and the surrounding area. Look for likely drop off points for people, entrance and exit points from the target as well as escape routes (if applicable).

### **Primary plan**

After the first reccie sit down with your fellow planners in a secure location and work out a basic plan. This should include a route to the target.

It should be decided when the action will take place, what time of day or night, roughly how long each part will take (e.g. getting to the drop off point, drop off point to target, doing the action, re-grouping, getting back to the pick up point and getting away) and how many people will be needed.

The plan should also involve communications. This includes who might need to communicate with who and how on the action. This might be between drivers and the people they have dropped off, lookouts and people on the action.

### **Secondary reconnaissance ('reccie')**

If the action is going to be at night make this second reccie at night as well so as to familiarise yourself with the area in the dark. It may be possible to do both reccies on the same day, and then have time for planning the action afterwards. Not everyone in the group needs to do this (especially as this may attract unwanted attention) but it's a good idea for a few people to know the lie of the land.

On this second reccies look at the target in more depth. Actually time the different stages of the action. Think about what tools you will need to do the job and what you will do with them afterwards.

## Detailed action plan

This plan should fill out the basic plan with all the rest of the information needed to carry out the action. It should go from the point people meet to go on the action to the point people disperse at the end. It needs to include precise timings, which routes will be taken, what will be happening at each stage of the action, who will be communicating with who, what tools and other equipment will be needed, what will happen to the vehicle, and what roles need to be filled, e.g. driver, navigator, spotters etc.

People should decide how to organise themselves on the action. You could pair off in buddies or split into smaller groups. Doing this makes it easier to look after one another, move quickly and know if anyone is missing.

## Some final legal preparations

Upon being arrested, individuals will be asked for their names, date of birth and addresses (bail address) at the police station. Make sure everyone risking arrest prepares for this (**See full briefing from Green and Black Cross**).

In short, failure to comply can provoke the police to hold you in remand until the next opportunity is available to see a judge (usually the following Monday).

If you give a bail address which is not normally your place of residence, note that bail conditions (e.g. answering bail at your nearest police station X many times a week before your plea hearing) will reflect the bail address you have given (it can be time consuming and expensive meeting bail conditions from afar).

Make sure those risking arrest inform those living at their bail address that the police may come knocking, searching the property for evidence. Police have been known to break entry into your property if they can't get in. Make sure it is clear which room belongs to the arrestee, so that the rooms of others are not searched. Be sure to remove any compromising evidence (e.g. illegal drugs or evidence of planning the action) from the bail address given. Laptops amongst other electronic devices which can hold data can be confiscated.

## Back up plans

The back up plan/s should be done in the same way as the main action plan. Back ups could be alternative actions to do at the target selected, or new targets entirely. Consideration should be given to the conditions in which the initial plan will be abandoned and how the decision to revert to a back up plan will be made and communicated to others.

How do we react if... (e.g. the police intervene, someone gets violent)? How do we act towards people we encounter during actions (bystanders, the police, company directors)? How opportunistic are we (e.g. What do we do if the plan was to hold up banners outside some office, but then there is the chance to actually get inside the building? How would that affect the group?) What happens if someone really feels the need to leave?

## Take action and support each other

Taking action together is one of the best ways of getting to know each other. Remember to keep checking that everyone is OK, and make sure you are keeping to the agreements you made. Consider organising yourselves into pairs or 'buddies' for better support, and practise making quick consensus decisions. This ensures that no-one ever finds themselves alone in a situation during the action. The aim is that buddies then look out for each other during the action.

Work to keep the atmosphere positive throughout the action: Stay focussed on the aim of the action and the agreements you made as a group about how you intended to behave and respond, even in the face of rising tension or uncertainty. Try to stay calm and relaxed: Pay attention to your own body language and keep your voice calm and clear when communicating with members of your group or liaising with external individuals. This in turn will help other members of your group to stay focussed and remain calm throughout the action.

Consider the use of cushions, blankets and nappies to ensure everyone has as comfortable experience as possible. Consider the use of thermos flasks, thermal underwear and all that jazz. Lying on the tarmac for extended periods can get cold and boring so think of ways to keep up your morale: e.g songs, games, chants

Consider bringing first aid kits. If you have any medical issues (such as epilepsy or diabetes) make sure other members of the group are aware, take any emergency medication you might need with you, and ensure other members of the group know what to do should a medical issue arise during the action.

Take food and water with you. It's important you don't become dehydrated or experience low blood sugar levels when carrying out an action as this can impair your judgement. Bear in mind when carrying out non-violent direct action you can't always be sure how long you'll be at the action site.

## **Communication**

Consider buying a secure 'network' of phones – cheap phones for £5 or so. Top up £10 on each. Only use phones within the secure network to contact each other. As soon as you use one of your personal phones to contact a secure phone you've set up, the network is traceable to someone's identity. Input numbers into each phone: Wellbeing, Legal, affinity group #1, affinity group #2 (if applicable) etc.

## **Media**

Trusted individuals in the media working group are responsible for sending out press releases, ringing news outlets, using social media and organising interviews with pre-assigned spokespersons.

If there is a journalist your affinity group and the media working group trust, you can provide them with details in advance so they can be embedded in your action and report directly from it. In this scenario, make sure there are assigned, prepared media spokespersons within your affinity group to deal with live questions from trusted journalists. Make sure clear ground rules are set with journalists reporting directly from your action (e.g. who journalists are permitted to film/speak to).

Consider how your independent media, through live streaming or photography, can be incorporated into the action design. Blogs or articles for both mainstream and fringe outlets can be prepared before an action takes place.

## ***Post-action***

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### **Arrestee Support (see full legal briefing from Green and Black Cross)**

Each individual risking arrest in any way should write a legal phone number on their arm (e.g. a number provided by Green and Black Cross (GBC). Upon arrest, with GBC and Bindmans Solicitors (other trusted and experienced firms dealing with activists include Hodge, Jones and Allen), the first task for someone doing arrestee support is to find out which police station those arrested have been taken to. This may be the same police station, or they may all be at different locations.

If the arrestees have given you contact information to inform loved ones or friends, get in touch with them, letting them know the situation, and which police station they can be met at.

Once the locations of the arrestees have been identified, organise who can pick up the arrestees and raise their spirits (e.g. food, clothes etc). The police are legally allowed to hold people in custody for up to 24 hours; sometimes individuals are released in the middle of the night – prepare for this eventuality, perhaps with people waiting at police stations on a rota.

### **Legal meeting, debrief and social**

After the action, organise with the defendants, those that have been arrested and charged, when the best time would be for a legal meeting with solicitors (Bindmans or Hodge Jones and Allen).

Whilst the group of defendants will have specific questions to answer (e.g. plea, defences to run) a debrief which includes all those who supported the action should be arranged to air out and discuss people's thoughts and feelings on how it went. Before your action, set a time and date for this debrief. Check in on how everyone feels, and whether they are getting what they need from the group. Think about what has worked and why, and apply these lessons to the future. Address problems and power relations within the group. Take time to celebrate your successes and to enjoy each other's company as people as well as activists.

Don't let your security slacken because the action is in the past. The cops have longer memories than we do and if your action is considered serious by the state an investigation into it can continue for months - or even years.

Analyse the tactical and strategic impact of your actions. Are there better targets or ways of operating? Read our history and learn from current and past struggles, movements and groups.

Organise a social for everyone involved! Getting to know each other is vital if you want to build trust for future actions.