

Legal and other info

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The Die-in is an act of civil disobedience, so by taking part you will be risking arrest. It should be possible to take part in the wedding procession to the main entrance at Northwood, and then to vigil outside, without being arrested. However, whilst the police will usually give ample warning before arresting people – giving you time to comply with their demands etc... - this cannot be guaranteed. Those not wishing to be arrested are welcome to join us on 27th, but should be aware of this reality.

1. Possible offences

The offence for which you are most likely to be arrested if you take part in the die-in itself is **obstruction of the highway**.

You commit this offence if, without lawful authority or excuse, you wilfully obstruct the free passage of the highway. The 'highway' includes the road, the pavement, grass verges and private property used as a public thoroughfare. 'Obstruction' includes anything that prevents passing and repassing along the highway. It is not necessary for the whole of the highway to be blocked for the offence to be committed. The offence is obstructing the highway, not other highway users, so it is not necessary to prove that anyone was actually obstructed. The obstruction has to be 'wilful', so you will often be asked to move and if you do not then this will be used as evidence of your 'wilful' obstruction in court.

This offence can only be tried in the magistrates court, the maximum penalty is a fine of £1000. There is no power to send a person convicted of this offence to prison. Fines for first timers are generally about £200.

It is also possible that you could be arrested for some other offence, for example, **failure to comply with conditions imposed by the police on a public on a public procession and / or assembly** (Sections 12 – 14 of the Public Order Act, max. fine £1,000).

Instead of arresting you, **the police are entitled to ask for your name and address** - and for you to sign a statement – if they think that you are committing an offence. This means that the police can report you to the CPS who may decide to charge you later. **You do not have to give them this information but if you refuse you may be arrested anyway.**

2. Legal support on the day

Bustcards containing basic legal info - and advice on what (not) to do if you've been arrested - will be distributed on the day. There will also be legal observers at the demonstration and a post-action support number for anyone arrested.

3. If you're arrested

If you're arrested it is quite likely that you'll be charged and convicted. You will then have a criminal record. If you think this could cause you problems (eg. at work) check this out *before* you risk arrest. For more information see the Activists' Legal Project briefing 'The Impact of Arrest and Criminal Convictions' (<http://tinyurl.com/djjkl3>).

If you are thinking about risking arrest on 27 May and you've never been arrested before then we recommend that you attend the legal briefing on 26 May (7.30pm, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, WC1R 4RL. Nearest tube: Holborn).

For more info on the arrest process and other possible offences see the briefings on the Activists' Legal Project web-site: www.activistslegalproject.org.uk.

4. Accommodation

Crash-pad accommodation will be available on request on the Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. Please contact us ASAP to book a space and find out where it is: 0845 458 2564 or voices@voicesuk.org. Please bring a camping mat and a sleeping bag.

5. What to wear

Please wear wedding clothes (or as close as you can get!). Given the nature of the Die-in, please wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty – or possibly torn by police handling.

6. Contact your local media

If you're taking part in the Die-in then it would be good to contact your local media to let them know what you're doing and why. Whilst there will be national media work done around the action, local media offers opportunities to get the action's message out to tens of thousands of people in ways that we just can't do nationally. So go for it!

If you don't have experience of doing media work then George Monbiot's short "Activists' Guide to Exploiting the Media" contains (almost) everything you need to know: <http://tinyurl.com/zg8a7>.

A sample press release is enclosed with this info pack, and is also available on request from 0845 458 2564 or voices@voicesuk.org