

**ACTION TOOL KIT - one example
that worked in Portsmouth**



@sistersuncut

**SAFETY IS A
RIGHT
NOT A
PRIVILEGE**

GOLDEN RULES

Before you consider any action, about any issue, you should make sure you:

- Where ever possible take lead and direction from those affected. For our work in Portsmouth that meant survivors of domestic violence and sector workers at risk of losing their jobs.
- Be principled. Just because you want to be successful doesn't mean you should collaborate with groups or individuals whose politics are harmful and dangerous.
- Having ideas is great but don't always assume you know best. Listen to the demands of those affected
- Use local knowledge and resources, build on existing campaigns and actions
- Don't wait! Stopping potential cuts is easier than reversing passed ones: act fast.
- Be intersectional! E.g. Migrant women have no recourse to public funds making escaping DV especially hard. Are there local migrant solidarity groups you can connect with to build mutual support?

TIMELINE OF ACTION

Sisters Uncut found out about the cuts in Portsmouth through email. We then did lots of research to find out the impact the cuts would have. Be thorough! Always assume there's more to learn!

Finding Out	<p>If this comes from a disclosure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respond quickly and sensitively • check if discloser needs anonymity
Research the plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visit local authority website, look for consultation documents, budget proposals and DV strategies • find out exactly what is proposed, when and how? • who is responsible for the decision? • how many services, jobs and women will it affect? <p>Solid statistics are very effective in getting public attention and for making clear key messaging.</p>
Research key stats and local context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who are the local experts? What do they have to say? • what are the local DV statistics? E.g. how many women have been killed in the area? How often is DV reported? • have there been any high profile cases in the area? • what is the likely impact of the proposed cuts on local women and other services?
Network & Solidarity Building	<p>Immediately start to get in touch with local people, groups and networks, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service users and sector workers on the ground • local people • existing housing and anti-cuts groups • places of worship and community groups • other activist groups (anti-cuts, feminist, LGBTQ, anti-racist groups etc.) • trade unions • student groups

<p>Media: we used local and national press to raise awareness of our cause and put pressure on Portsmouth council.</p>	<p>PRESS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write a press release with info about the plans, impact, key stats and your demands • contact local, regional and national news desks (contact info can be found online) • call them: speaking to someone directly makes you more memorable and starts to develop a relationship • don't give them any specific details about your action plans "something will be happening here/at this time" is enough 	<p>SOCIAL MEDIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use social media to get out your key messages but don't rely on it to mobilise people: the best mobilisation happens by speaking to people face to face • create an event page for your action • post short, key statistics regularly • post your event and messages to local groups and pages • set up a campaign 'likes' page • Images are shared more often than events: make infographics
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ACTIONS

Direct action (disruption, occupation etc.), civil disobedience and public protests all help build our movement, put pressure on decision-makers and attract media attention to the cause. Tight organisation is important to mobilising as many people to participate in your action as possible.

Things to think about when planning:

- make sure your action is intersectional – have you actively contacted/welcomed different groups in the community i.e. migrant groups, disabled people, LGBTQ+ etc
- choose a powerful location; somewhere public and symbolic/iconic or somewhere where you can cause a lot of disruption to the everyday workings of the political and economic system
- think about accessibility and transport options for people attending
- Make sure you share your event page widely, keep details to a minimum until close to the event, but share location if it's public
- Tell the media you are planning an action (but generally don't tell them sensitive details about what you're planning)
- Get everyone in your networks to share the event
- Propaganda – make sure you have placards/banners etc and they have your key stats and messages on them. Make them clear, simple and as big as possible
- Plan noise – whistles, drums, saucepans even!
- Send out key messages to people attending

On the day:

- Don't speak to police! If they are acting like your pals they are lying to you to extract information about what is planned for the protest
- Social media the hell out of it, tweet and post non-incriminating photographs
- Be friendly, supportive and welcoming to anyone you meet on the demo – not everyone is confident on a demonstration but it is also a movement building opportunity!
- If planning anything spikey/illegal, make sure you've chatted to a solicitor who specialises in supporting protesters so they know to expect a call if something happens and make sure anyone involved in the naughty bits knows a number to call for a solicitor if arrested

Supporting the action:

These tasks should be done alongside direct action, protest and movement building and should not replace them

- create an online petition and share widely (this helps raise awareness and if the petition is successful it is a show of force)
- write letters to local councillors (this means they can't claim ignorance)
- try to influence the democratic process – respond to consultations, submit deputations to meetings, file objections etc. (all of this along the way helps spread the message but remember building a physical movement on the streets is how we get change!)

FINAL NOTE

These are some simple guidelines, aimed at those who want to take action against their local councils to save domestic violence services but who have not necessarily taken such action before. Expect to make mistakes: experience is the best teacher when it comes to organising against dynamic forces like the state and austerity.

TOGETHER WE CAN FIGHT AND TOGETHER WE CAN WIN!