What is an ‘Appropriate Adult’?

How can they help me?

A guide for people who have been arrested and are at the Police station.

What is an Appropriate Adult?

An Appropriate Adult is someone who can give support and advice to people if they have been arrested.

Who can they help?

- Children.

- People with support needs. This includes people who have learning disabilities.
How can they help me?

An Appropriate Adult can help you to understand what is happening at the police station. They will tell you what your rights are.

Appropriate Adults are independent. That means they do not work for the police.

An Appropriate Adult can:

- Give you support, advice and help.
- Help you to understand what the police are saying.
- Make sure that the police treat you fairly.
- Help you to explain things to the police and to other people at the station.

An AA cannot give you legal advice.

They can make sure that you have a solicitor.

Legal advice at the police station is free and will not cost you anything.
Who can be an Appropriate Adult?

An AA can be a parent, another family member, a social or care worker or a volunteer.

Appropriate adults must be over 18.

How can an Appropriate Adult help me when I am being interviewed?

An AA should be with you when the police interview you. The ways they should help you include:

- Help you to understand the ‘caution’ that is given to you by the police at the start of the interview.

- Help you to communicate better with the police and to understand their questions.
• Ask if you can have a break.

A break is for if you need to rest. It can also be used to ask for legal advice.

• You can also ask to talk to the AA in private.

• Be with you when you are asked to agree with any information or to sign any documents.

The AA can help you understand what things mean.
Other times when an Appropriate Adult should help you.

- If you are searched by the police (when it involves taking off any clothes).

- When your ‘identification’ is being checked.

This is when the police check who you are, like take your fingerprints or take a DNA sample.

Extra times when an Appropriate Adult can help if they are available.

- When a senior police officer is deciding if you are allowed to be kept at the police station for an extra time.

- When you are told by the police that you are being charged with committing a crime.

This document was developed with help from members of the ‘Working for Justice’ group, supported by KeyRing Living Support Networks and the Prison Reform Trust.

It was written and designed by the National Appropriate Adult Network and KeyRing Living Support Networks, with images designed by the advocacy organisation ‘CHANGE.’