



BATH FAMILY LAW  
LLP

# What is a McKenzie Friend?



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A McKenzie Friend is someone who supports and guides a Litigant in Person (someone navigating the legal system without formal representation) through their case. They can provide moral support, help with paperwork, take notes during a hearing, breakdown any confusing legal jargon and provide crucial information on the court's powers, processes and procedures.

Although a McKenzie Friend can not speak for a Litigant in Person during a court hearing (unless provided special permission), their presence and guidance can empower individuals to present their case, tell their story and assert their rights effectively.

## Why use a McKenzie Friend?

McKenzie Friends are significantly less expensive than formal representation. They also operate on the understanding that you know your story best, and might just need a little support and guidance to align that story with the appropriate legal formalities and procedures. While it's normal to want a lawyer to handle a business transaction or contract amendment, many people prefer to remain more involved and in control when it comes to decisions about family, financial stability or safety.



## Is a McKenzie Friend a new role?

No. McKenzie Friends have been around since 1970, when a judge recognised the importance of a Litigant in Person having access to support during court proceedings. Following legal aid cuts and the rise in fees for formal representation, McKenzie Friends have become increasingly popular as a more accessible and affordable alternative to the traditional solicitor route.

## What is a Professional McKenzie Friend?

As the role of a McKenzie Friend has evolved it has split into two distinct categories. A Professional McKenzie Friend (like Bath Family Law) and a Non-professional McKenzie Friend (such as a friend or neighbour).

- **Professional McKenzie Friend** – Will have some legal training, qualifications and experience as well as full professional indemnity insurance and clear pricing, policies and procedures that align with recognised codes of conduct and regulating bodies
- **Non-professional McKenzie Friend** – Usually someone already known to the Litigant in Person who (often) gives their time voluntarily. This person may or may not have experience within family law and may be more suited to providing moral support as opposed to guidance in respect of the legal process.



## How can Bath Family Law help you?

Legal professionals at Bath Family Law can act as a Professional McKenzie Friend to ensure you are supported throughout your separation journey. We are registered with three different regulating bodies, fully abide with their codes of conduct and policies and hold comprehensive professional liability insurance.

Bath Family Law have been supporting families to navigate the complexities of the legal system for many years. Because of our credibility and experience we have occasionally been granted rights of audience when supporting vulnerable individuals in a court hearing (allowing us to speak for that Litigant in Person). We've also been requested by the judge to facilitate negotiations at court between two parties attending a dispute resolution hearing about child contact or the division of matrimonial assets.



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our family law experts

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