



## **A study of fee-charging McKenzie Friends in family law cases**

### **What is the study about?**

Many people who consider going to court about a family issue use a lawyer but some people pay a fee for a McKenzie Friend to help them with their family law case instead. The purpose of this study is to find out more about what fee-charging McKenzie Friends do and what difference their support makes to the people who use them. The research will help us to make suggestions about the use of McKenzie Friends. The results of the research will be published in a report, which will be available online.

### **Who is in charge of the study?**

The research team is led by [Dr Leanne Smith](#) from Cardiff University. She has many years of experience of research on separating families' experiences of the legal system. The researchers are [Dr Emma Hitchings](#) from Bristol University and Mark Sefton. They also have a great deal of experience of research in this area.

The study is funded by the Bar Council, which is an organisation representing barristers. However, the research team is independent and we will be able to publish our findings whether or not the Bar Council supports them.

### **How you can help us**

We have already spoken to lots of McKenzie Friends and we are observing some case hearings involving McKenzie Friends. But we also need to talk to as many people as possible who have used a McKenzie Friend so that we can understand what it is like to use a McKenzie Friends.

You can take part in the study if:

- You have been involved in a legal dispute about the arrangements for taking care of your child (such as who your child should live with or have contact with), or about how to sort out your finances after a divorce, AND
- you paid a fee for a McKenzie Friend to help you with the legal dispute

We would like to carry out a short telephone interview with you, to ask you questions about your experience of using a McKenzie Friend.

### **What will taking part in the research involve?**

The telephone interview will take around 20 minutes. With your permission, we would like to audio record the interview so that the interviewer is free to listen carefully to what you are saying.

You can refuse to answer any questions which make you uncomfortable and you can change your mind about taking part in the study at any point - just tell the researcher that you no longer wish to take part.

If you take part in an interview we are able to offer a £10 gift voucher to thank you for your time.

### **Confidentiality**

The things you say to the researcher may be used in the research report but your identity will be kept strictly confidential. The researcher will not record any names or addresses and if you agree to an audio recording of your interview we will make sure that no names or identifying details are transcribed. Nobody from outside the research team will be able to identify you from any comments you make. Neither you, nor any case you are involved in, will be identified in the research report.

### **Any questions?**

If you would like more information about the research, or if you have any questions, please email [McKenziefriends@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:McKenziefriends@cardiff.ac.uk) or contact:

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