

Below are comments made in March and April 2016, by some previous customers.

A report and analysis of these comments can be seen on this link:

<http://www.mckenziefriends.directory/Dr.%20John%20Barry%20report%20-%20online%20format.pdf>

Comments from customers of SPMF Members.

1. My McKenzie friend provided me with excellent advice and direction, highlighting the key aspects which are important to the courts and how to focus on these. He also responded quickly when situations arose which a typical solicitor would have taken much longer to address. The cost of a solicitor would have been prohibitive, I would not have been able to bring my case to court, and most likely my daughter would have had to grow up with no contact with her father.

2. Without recourse to the McKenzie friend who supported me I would not have been able to get through the difficult process of litigation in the family courts. He always made clear his role in supporting me through the process and nurturing a positive attitude at times when emotions were playing havoc. As things are the cost of professional legal help and very quickly spiral out of control and beyond the means of the average person like me. In my experience the judge courted the view of Mr Barry on more than occasion which was a reflection of how he had helped me present by arguments.

3. Without help from the McKenzie Friends, facing court would have been extremely frightening on my own. They helped me to put together a proper court bundle which resulted in my winning the case and keeping my Grandchildren safe. I had previously used up savings for a solicitor who achieved nothing and was left disillusioned and heart broken when there was no money left. At the last minute I was informed about McKenzie Friends who immediately came to my aid. Their costs were **extremely** low in comparison to usual solicitor's fees. I believe it would be a grave injustice to prevent usual hard working citizens who do not have the capacity to pay for legal advice to be left adrift without aid. In fact I believe that McKenzie Friends deserve to be supported and should be more widely known to the public.

I for one will always be grateful for their support, expertise and wonderful service.

4. I have no clue how I could have managed without a McKenzie friends help and support through this extremely stressful event (divorce). Going through divorce and family matters are very stressful in the first place and not everyone can afford a lawyer's fees. Having experienced this myself, I strongly feel McKenzie friends should be allowed to continue offering their support to individuals like myself at a very reasonable price. I am sure the Lord Chief Justice will consider the above and make a fair decision.

5. After the first 2 Court Hearings with my McKenzie Friend, the Woolwich District Judge called James Jonklaas back in to compliment him on how smoothly he had made the process.

Part of how a McKenzie Friend helps is to allow the client to talk about personal issues affecting them, sometimes at length because no one is available or wants to listen. This can

help direct the client's course of action & s/he knows exactly why they have chosen the variance/order/etc. McKenzie Friends can sometimes bring their own personal experience into their advice as well as Court experience. All this comes at a lower cost than if talking to a junior solicitor, which some clients may not be able to afford or bring financial ruin & the stress that may cause.

6. My case led to a shared residence order put in place. Following the recommended route of solicitors/barristers would have left me penniless and broken. You want to deny this lifeline to others!! Shame.

7. I used a McKenzie friend to assist me in my court proceedings regarding my son. The service I received was very professional and reliable, I would gladly use them again in any of the court proceedings.

8. I spent 6 years in court to gain my rightful contact with my daughter who is now 8 years old. The first 2 years I used solicitors and barristers with limited success of contact but a huge bill. The last 4 years of court I used a McKenzie friend. Not only did we achieve a contact order until my child becomes 16 years old, but the cost involved was a fraction of the money I had spent in the first two years. I cannot thank my McKenzie friend enough for what he did for me. I will never forget him. I live in Northern Ireland but my case was dealt with in Croydon, London.

9. I believe that without McKenzie friends people like myself would be unable to access advice and guidance relating to legal/court matters, without being charged extortionate price and unaffordable costs.

10. I strongly believe that McKenzie friends offer a very valuable social service that benefits those that are most vulnerable in society.

11. I would not have access to any kind of legal process without the option of a professional McKenzie friend – the consultation paper completely misrepresents them and appears to be more about protecting a monopoly of lawyers rather than protecting “vulnerable litigants.”

12. With all the cuts to legal aid the ban you propose is not logical. I have used Ray Barry of McKenzie friends several times, at a much lower cost than a high-street solicitor and found himself valuable.

13. Ray Barry and his team have been invaluable to us through our toughest of times. Really wouldn't have got through it without help and guidance received from them.

14. I needed to go to court to obtain a Residence Order for my daughter, as she wished to live with me permanently and visit her dad on occasions. Without the help of McKenzie Friends, I would not have been able to do this. I was not entitled to Legal Aid and had no funds available with which to pay hefty Solicitor bills. Had I not been able to obtain a Residence Order, I dread to think what would have happened to my daughter – she would have been devastated (at the time she was 9 years old). She was deeply affected by her drunken father,

suffering for years from anxiety and panic attacks and has only just finished Counselling. She will be 15 years old next week and luckily is now a happy, healthy teenager.

I recommended McKenzie Friends to my friend, whose son was in the same position as myself. With their help, he also was granted a Residence Order for his son, again he would not have been able to do this if he had needed to pay large Solicitor bills.

To take this service away from normal working people like myself would be a travesty and would cause anguish and heartache to not only parents, but also the children involved.

My personal view is that I would fully support McKenzie Friends 100% for the help they provide to people and would be extremely upset if this option were taken away.

I am happy to be contacted at any time to confirm this.

15. I have had an extremely good service from McKenzie friends especially in my financial difficulties and would recommend for every father.

16. It is untrue that such a ban would protect vulnerable litigants. On the contrary it will increase the likelihood of miscarriages of justice if one party is LIP without any help and the other has a solicitor. It will also increase court time. Legal aid has been withdrawn from family court hearings and professional McKenzie friends offer a valuable service to litigants who either cannot afford a solicitor or who find that they receive better help from their McKenzie friend than from a barrister brought in. This has been the case to my knowledge and such a ban would look like protectionism rather than a genuine desire to protect the public. If a McKenzie friend who is a member of the SPMF is chosen, any litigant is sure of dedicated and responsible help. The McKenzie friend with whom we have had dealings has, to my knowledge, been complimented by a district judge for his conduct during a difficult hearing and it is a fact that professional McKenzie friends can and do defuse emotionally charged atmospheres and give invaluable guidance. There is no good reason to ban professional McKenzie friends and every reason to allow them to continue helping the vulnerable people this proposed act purports to protect.

17. The potential removal of the option for someone to have a professional McKenzie friend to assist them in the legal process is wrong, it is putting justice at risk for people who fall outside the legal aid system or where no legal aid is available and their financial situation prevents them from having a solicitor. Surely it is everybody's right to represent themselves in court situation and at least be assisted by someone who is supportive and able to advise. Surely if people cannot afford a solicitor and barred from using a professional McKenzie friend then the court process will be adversely affected by untrained litigant in persons having to be guided through a legal process by the magistrates will judge.

18. I feel it is wrong to remove this valuable service, I gained far more with the assistance of my McKenzie friend than I did with full legal representation. I really hope common sense prevails and this ban is not brought in.

19. Please see attached page (below) – detailing the invaluable assistance provided by Ray Barry at a particularly bleak time in my life. Thanks to him I am still in contact with my daughter, four years on from his intervention. He provided an extremely inexpensive service and promoted non-confrontational methods of interacting with my ex-wife. – Many thanks Ray!

Ray Barry, my McKenzie Friend assisted and guided me in 2012 towards a solution to a most aggravated and emotionally draining situation arising from my ex-wife's announcement that she and her new husband were to take one of my children to live in Northern Ireland, thus reducing considerably my chances of contact with my daughter (then 14 years old).

Ray analysed the situation carefully and suggested a pragmatic way forward at this bleakest point of my life. A comprehensive 'Contact Arrangement' was drawn up and duly signed by my ex-wife and this has stood the test of time, being complied with to this day.

At the time, there was no possibility of me employing the services of a solicitor. I had undergone a costly divorce and had, it transpired, been poorly advised by the solicitor from a major Crawley firm, (whose name I will divulge if it is considered pertinent). A great deal of money had been wasted for little return. My funds were extremely depleted and I would not have been able to afford to consult a solicitor at that juncture even if I had desired to do so.

At this point, I discovered the existence of McKenzie Friends, in the form of Ray Barry. Ray explained in detail the legal force and limitations of any advice and guidance he would provide. He left me in no doubt that he was not a solicitor. I was extremely impressed throughout at the speed of response to communications exchanged with Ray. He would normally respond to queries on the same day or certainly within a short time frame. These exchanges were often conducted by email or telephone, with no need on my part to take annual leave from work to visit a solicitor's office.

Ray's fees were extremely modest and there was no attempt to charge for every letter sent or phone conversation – as favoured by the professional solicitors. In sharp contrast to this, he would answer as many as perhaps ten lengthy and detailed letters for the same price as I would have paid for one at the solicitors. He represented exceptional value for money. I guess that as a result of lower overheads, the Friends are able to spend more time analysing detail and devising alternative ways of achieving goals. The whole experience took much stress out of the process and, as I mentioned, has stood the test of time, with my contact remaining intact with my daughter.

Ray also pointed out various points in my Court Order which had been badly or ambiguously worded- or indeed points which I had simply overlooked – and enabled me to successfully claim back amounts of money due to me. I would add that he managed to advise me how to approach my ex-wife in a very non-inflammatory manner – again in marked contrast to my solicitor.

In finishing this note, I will add that there are many people out there far poorer than I, who could not even consider employing solicitors. I would plead with you not to deprive such

people of what turned out to be a life line for me at such a depressing time. Such people will in reality probably end up representing themselves in Court fighting their case with next to no or at least very limited legal knowledge. I would suggest that surely the situation at present, where they are offered the assistance of a Professional McKenzie Friend, well versed in legal matters, is infinitely preferable to this bleak and retrogressive alternative.

20. Being a full-time working, busy single mum, I found Mr Barry's services very helpful, well explained and affordable in my recent divorce, Financial and as well as in children cases. He has attended court hearing with me and I felt well supported in these hectic court proceedings.

22. I am appalled to read that the service I have used and value is under threat. I was advised by a mediator to undertake this service when I was at my most vulnerable. I met with my McKenzie Friend for support and advice at a very crucial point in my life. I was not disappointed. Although my Mc Kenzie Friend is not legally trained his knowledge and expertise in supporting me through this case has been invaluable. Why then would someone want to ban a service such as this?

My Mc Kenzie Friend is well versed in matters of the court as he has had numerous years of experience on both sides of the court process. He always ensured that the standards of competence and conduct required by the court were adhered to. In addition, he ensured that I was made aware of these policies and practices.

23. To not have the benefit of James Jonklaas's vast experience would have meant disaster for my complex and extended case.

24. I am grateful to McKenzie friends for the impartial assistance and help received and wish to have the freedom to do so if needed again.

25. I am employed by Thames Valley police for the last 6 years, I have used the services of a McKenzie friend for assistance in preparing case file for court, and found their help and support invaluable.

26. My professional McKenzie friend was incredibly helpful in my divorce case. Without his help I could not have conducted the case as well which would have lengthened court proceedings and would not have been in my son's best interest.

29. After incurring a solicitor's bill of almost £5000 for my divorce I was unable to fund another solicitor. Mrs Karen Marshall (McKenzie friend) was completely invaluable in negotiating the minefield of the court process when it came to understanding the documents and court process I needed to adhere to. All forms/documents were professionally completed, I was kept up-to-date at all times. The support I received was far beyond that of a solicitor. I was never made to feel stupid or a lesser person if there was anything I didn't understand. Actually being honest it was nice to be able to deal with a human being (albeit very professional) instead of some stuffy solicitor who always seemed more concerned with lining his own pocket.

I always knew what to expect, knew what was going to be discussed, never came or went with great expectations. My McKenzie friend was always honest and upfront.

We always discussed the court process before we went. I could ask any questions and would always be pointed in the right direction of what I could and couldn't do in court, what I could or couldn't say how to say it.

If McKenzie friends are no more, how do people with little money, no confidence, vulnerable situations defend themselves.

Without the help of my McKenzie friend I am in no doubt that I would not have left and completed the court process the way I have.

Court is a daunting, sorry placed for "normal folks."

Anyone in a vulnerable situation would find the whole process overwhelming.

Without McKenzie friends how would "normal folks" negotiate everything. Surely the court processes would become more lengthy and drawn out. This would only cost courts more, clog the system up and cause more frustration for all involved.

I have been a litigant in person both with and without a McKenzie friend. Litigants without any help/representation do not understand the court process or indeed how to conduct themselves. This can turn the courtroom into a circus. If someone is in need of help a McKenzie friend ticks all the boxes, obviously without the massive cost of a solicitor.

I know from experience that my McKenzie friend Mrs Karen Marshall, Absolute Legal Services was of paramount importance in me dealing with the situation I found myself in. I would have been lost and would have felt in a much more vulnerable state without her unwavering support.

Without legal aid and McKenzie friends the solicitors can name their prices too can't they!!

30. I value the help of my McKenzie friend and after spending money on solicitors without anything to show for it I feel I have made progress. I do not mind paying for this invaluable service.

31. Karen's help and fantastic service have been invaluable in helping me to see my daughter on a regular basis again. I could not afford to pay a solicitor as many people can't as they are so expensive.

32. I am happy to pay for a McKenzie friend to help me with any future family court proceedings I may have. I also want to emphasise how great their help has been in the past and without the help of a McKenzie friend the court may not have come to the right decision because I would not have been able to afford the use of a solicitor, and I was so very well advised by my McKenzie friend on which direction to take through my court proceedings case, and I would have really struggled to represent myself in court.

33. I think McKenzie friends should be allowed to stay as mine has been a great support within my case and as a single parent I wouldn't have been able to get any help and support as I am from Karen.

34. The service I have received from Karen Marshall (McKenzie friend) has been outstanding. The help, support and advice I have received is totally exceeded any money I have paid for service. I don't think anybody putting that much in should work for no financial gain.

35. I wouldn't of been able to afford or done it without them.

37. Robert Smith of Altruro has provided me with a high-class service and have recommended him to others.

38. I write to advise that without the assistance and help from Karen, I would not have been in a position to pay for solicitors in order to proceed with my divorce, due to the cost involved by them.

40. They are helpful. Far cheaper than traditional lawyers and many McKenzie friends are doing this out of their interest to help people.

41. Not everyone can afford a solicitor, with the increase of online divorce procedures which may result in unfair decisions, it's extremely important to have the support from a solicitor (McKenzie friends) so I feel confident in a time of stress that I'm getting the professional support to help my situation.

43. My McKenzie friend has been exceptionally helpful in his support and knowledge during my child arrangement and divorce case. I could not otherwise afford help and would be stuck in an unhappy marriage.

44. McKenzie friends must be allowed to appear in court and help families who cannot afford unreasonable fees imposed by lawyers.

45. As a single mother with limited income and minimal support from my estranged husband, I found the help of a McKenzie friend to be so helpful. I saved at least two thirds of the fee of what a practising solicitor would have charged me. At least I know I won't have to get another loan (which I cannot afford) to pay for my divorce proceedings.

48. I received professional and friendly service from my McKenzie friend who helped me tremendously in court. Their service is very valuable especially now that legal aid is restricted and I was not eligible for legal aid.

49. Without the support of my McKenzie friend I would not have gained joint care of my two children.

50. The service provided by McKenzie friends is invaluable. John has been very key in getting more time with my son. My barrister's comment was "this is one of the best

statements I have ever seen.” What they do they is needed and should be available to anyone who needs them.

51. I’m pretty shocked and disgusted that this would even be considered. More lights needs to be shone on the family court. McKenzie friends and should be encouraged whenever possible.

53. It is outrageous that solicitors are allowed to charge more per hour than the British Prime Minister receives. And then they refuse to act for you in court. McKenzie Friend was the only way I was able to complete my divorce procedure at a reasonable and realistic cost.

56. I started my divorce process in 2013. The solicitor I met was really nice and assuring. He promised a quick process. Unfortunately due to my ignorance in the family law area I had no choice but trust him. Two years and about £3000 later! realised how incompetent he was. My divorce reached the Decree Nisi stage. Nothing else was done.

I decided to change the law firm. In April 2015 my new lawyer was really nice and assuring. She promised a quick process. I had no choice but trust her. My ex-husband decided to take me to court. I couldn't afford a lawyer to represent me in the childcare matters and my friend mentioned a McKenzie Friend. I contacted Nicholas Walton-Jones.

We have already been through four hearings. I wish someone had mentioned him to me before I lost all my money on the lawyers who didn't progress my divorce at all. I am representing myself but with Nik's help I actually understand the process now. I feel I have a professional advisor who doesn't lead me and has always been very clear on what I should or shouldn't expect. He is not biased or doesn't tell me what to do but his explanations give a great understanding on my situation. Nik doesn't make promises- he clarifies the process, prepares and supports.

When we go to hearings, Nik makes me feel really comfortable and confident. I also feel I have a friend who distracts me and makes me less stressed. Nik's fees are very low. He is flexible with the payments dates, which makes it possible to have professional and affordable help without worrying about charges. My childcare matters are being sorted thank to my McKenzie friend! A year and £2000 later my finances are still where they were over two and half year ago. I already contacted my current solicitor to tell them I wish for them to stop dealing with my finances matters. I have been waiting for the detailed breakdown and the final invoice for over a month. I am taking my finance matters to Nik. I know I will be finally divorced this year!

If you ban McKenzie friends from charging for their services, you will lose excellent professionals. They invested a lot of time and money in their qualifications. They could charge far more for their excellence and yet those minimal fees are all they get. Comparing to the lawyers' fees, they already seem to be doing almost a charity work. Comparing to the lawyers' quality of service... There is no comparison as they actually help.

If we start losing McKenzie friends (which is what is probable to happen with their charges being banned), a lot of people will be disadvantaged because they won't be able to afford solicitors. I know I could have been one of them...

57. The practical and emotional support I have received from my McKenzie friend has been invaluable to my case regarding access to my children. The legal process regarding family court is a minefield and to have to negotiate this minefield during such an emotional time would have been almost impossible. There is no doubt that I would have not been able to commence or continue with proceedings without the professional help of a McKenzie friend. Their emotional support has also been invaluable and given me the strength to continue with my case and fight to get justice and the best for my children. There is no way I would have been able to continue without a McKenzie friend and I am so pleased that I have their support.

I approached a solicitor in the hope that they could help me but even on my average wage there was no way I could afford their services. At this time I was in despair until I discovered the services of a McKenzie friend and they have given me the hope that I need.

If a McKenzie Friend was not available **I could not** afford a barrister or solicitor.

58. Myself and friends have used McKenzie friend's in the past as we were unable to afford Solicitor fees, and they have been instrumental in helping receive justice in court when without them cases have been lost and justice not served. This is an invaluable service that should continue as it has in the past. In my own case Helen Maltby, my McKenzie friend has been there to hold my hand through a very trying time, without her help I would not have known where to start, not understood court procedures and understand how whole procedure works.

Countless hours were spent preparing my case, something that I could have not done by myself. She made sure that how I approached everything was within the law and that I understood what I could and couldn't do...I would never have gotten through the process without my McKenzie friend.

59. My McKenzie friend played such a big part in my case, both inside and outside the court, without their help it would have been impossible for me to be able to fund going to court to get access for my son. I hope not to do so, but if I end up going back to court it is without question I would be relying on my McKenzie friend to provide the help I need and is without a doubt a service that I couldn't go without.

60. Without the support of McKenzie Friends there would have been a number of occasions I would have had to represent myself in the family court and would have not understood the legal terms and implications of actions that have occurred in my daughter's case that has been escalated to her now having to be made part of the proceedings with a child's Guardian and her own solicitor.

61. Working with a McKenzie friend enabled me to continue with my case without the financial stress I would have had if I had continued to use a solicitor. In my particular case I had to t

take swift action to protect my son and hadn't heard of a McKenzie friend at this point. The fee through a solicitor for taking this action and one court appearance was £1000. Money I had to put on my credit card, and as yet have not been able to pay off. Because of the financial pressures I was considering representing myself but felt totally unskilled, but felt I had no other option. It was my Mum who found out about McKenzie friends on the internet. I went onto contact Helen Maltby, in Sheffield, who provided an excellent professional service that was affordable. I was able to meet the cost much more comfortably within my monthly budget and was offered the opportunity to spread the cost over a longer period if needed. Although my case was closed over 6 months ago I have since contacted my McKenzie on two occasions regarding organising contact between my son and his dad. Advice that has been invaluable, but a service I would not have sorted if I had had to use a solicitor and pay their fees. On a personal note working with a McKenzie friend was much less intimidating than working with a solicitor. She was able to come to my house, talk on the phone and also met me a short distance away from the court so we could walk to the court together, which supported me immensely.

I can't talk highly enough of my experience of working with a McKenzie friend, and have recommended the service to many people. I felt happy to pay for the professional service I received, as the fee was a manageable amount that I could meet. I was very grateful to be able to make the choice of using a McKenzie friend.

62. The help and advice I received from McKenzie Friend was very professional and valuable and I cannot fault the service provided.

63. I recently used a McKenzie Friend following my divorce, this was an unbelievably stressful and expensive time for me and the help and support I was given by my McKenzie Friend was second to none. I strongly believe they should be available to help people in a variety of situations, and I do not know what I would have done had I not had their help. The legal system is both confusing, and I must say in my case, not helpful at all. If I had known about McKenzie Friends at the start of my ordeal then I wonder if I would have gone to court at all, therefore another good reason to have their expertise and help. I can not recommend them strongly enough.

64. McKenzie Friend helped in my case as she explained to me things which I was unable to understand, after my legal aid stopped and I couldn't afford to pay a solicitor as the fees were too high for me, McKenzie Friend helped me in writing my statement and support me at court which I would have found it difficult without McKenzie Friend, I think it's a useful idea and I did appreciate that there is another way to help me at court and which is affordable to me.

65. Without my McKenzie friend I would not have been able to afford a solicitor. They helped me gain more time with my daughter which at present is nice but eventually I want to gain more contact and so I will be in need if my McKenzie again. Without legal aid available it costs lots to go through family courts.

66. During a difficult separation (including divorce, obtaining an occupation and non molestation order and Children Act proceedings), Helen Maltby helped me with many court appearances and the preparation of court documents and correspondence in 2014 and 2015. She was courteous, well informed and professional at all times.

I could not afford the rates charged by a standard solicitor or barrister and it was a huge relief to me to know that help was out there at a reduced fee, but still with a knowledgeable and capable person. Staff at Sheffield Domestic Abuse Outreach Service recommended Helen initially and from the outset I could tell that she was experienced and well placed to help me at a very challenging time in my life. I am sure that her work and that of her colleagues is of the utmost importance in assisting the poorest members of society with legal matters. Without such help the court process would seem more baffling and the whole experience would probably be almost unbearably stressful for many people.

67. I have found McKenzie Friends professional, friendly and most of all affordable. They provided me with a prompt and outstanding service in both of my cases – children & financial. They are approachable, understanding and reliable individuals who offer the solution for those who need it and not always can afford it.

68. Without the help of a McKenzie friend, I would have had to face an acrimonious divorce alone and as I could not afford a solicitor's fee, my McKenzie friend was valuable and helpful beyond what can be measured in monetary terms. I had no problem paying for their help. It was a valuable service.

69. My divorce case had stalled in the legal system and I had paid lawyers a substantial amount in fees. I contacted a McKenzie Friend who supported me and offered clear and constructive advice throughout my dealings with him.

I can only say that the Lord Chief Justice is incorrect in his opinion. My experience is quite the opposite, in that my McKenzie Friend actually facilitated the proper administration of justice, whilst providing effective protection to me as a litigant who really felt that I had little to no effective protection, or means of redress, by 'regulated legal teams.'

The competency of my McKenzie Friend was second to none and he assisted me in obtaining an outcome I could not have expected from my previous 'legal teams'. The option for an individual to choose McKenzie Friends should not be removed.

71. I personally received much of help from McKenzie friends and I do really appreciate the hard works I received.

72. Our family had spent a considerable amount of money on solicitors who had got us nowhere. The McKenzie friends from court without a lawyer were absolutely brilliant and it is without doubt that without them our son would have lost any contact with his daughter and us with our grand daughter. To consider banning them would do a considerable injustice to all

involved in such cases.

74. Going through divorce is an extremely traumatic, worrying and stressful experience. One of the most concerning aspects about the whole process is about being able to afford all of the associated costs, especially for someone like me who earns less than the national average, has to pay child maintenance to my children's mother all while having to move back home with my own Mum because I can't financially afford a place of my own.

The one constant I have throughout this awful time of my life; the one reassuring person whom I can rely on completely is my McKenzie Friend, Ashlie Prescott. Even though I've still had to initially borrow the money from my Mum to pay for Ashlie's expert and value-for-money services, Ashlie has provided me with affordable, expert advice which I couldn't have obtained via a practising solicitor due to their extortionate costs.

I had contacted various Family Divorce Solicitors in the Hull area prior to meeting Ashlie. I couldn't quite believe just how much their costs were, and when speaking to a couple of them over the phone it immediately appeared to me that they were more concerned with the money side of things and less concerned about my emotional and financial welfare. With Ashlie this has been the complete opposite.

The fact that she is providing me with the same level of advice and professionalism I would expect from the legal services, but for a fraction of the cost is of extreme comfort to me. As a human being I'm much happier dealing with someone who is more concerned about me than their own financial gain - this is how everybody should operate in my view.

There is too much emphasis on profit in today's world. Making large sums of money out of people while they're going through what is deemed to be the second most depressing time of anyone's life behind a bereavement, is quite frankly absurd. It is my view that rather than consider banning good-hearted people like Ashlie and the wider network of McKenzie Friends from assisting ordinary people like me, you should in fact be reviewing the entire legal system from the perspective of reducing the amount of profit legal companies are permitted to make from situations like divorce.

Therefore, it will come as no surprise to you when I say that I wholeheartedly oppose your proposal and urge you to reconsider.

75. If I had not been able to use the services of Ashlie Prescott my life and my son's life would have such a different outcome. My ex-husband was extremely controlling over myself and my ten year old son due to him having severe mental health problems. I had to use Ashlie's services to fight to amend the contact that my ex-husband had. Since going to court and using Ashlie's services, my son had flourished at school, has stopped complaining of stress related symptoms and is able to manage his controlling father much better now as he does not see him as often.

Without being able to access this service I would not have been able to pay solicitors costs. I feel a withdrawal of this service would be dangerous and would affect the mental health of a lot of people, especially children. As human's we should have the choice to choose what service we want to pay for. If there are Mckenzie friends who are unethical and not giving good advice then focus on these people rather than banishing the qualified caring people like Ashlie.

80. This concern was invaluable to me at a time that I needed professional help and didn't know where to turn. They gave me a professional, competent and caring service.

81. Without Ashley Prescott service I would be unable to access affordable legal advice. As an adult I welcome having a choice of either try and muddle through on my own or use this service.

82. I do not qualify for legal aid. Without the support of my professional McKenzie friend, whom I pay for, I would not have been able to afford "full" solicitors fees and therefore could not have been confident in securing my daughters and my own financial security during my divorce.

83. I found the service I received from Ashley to be a great help to me at a time when I needed professional advice and could not afford to pay a solicitor's fees.

84. The service has been invaluable to me as I would have struggled greatly to be able to afford the cost of instructing a solicitor. I have been very happy with the way the work has been undertaken.

85. The professional help and advice I received from Ashley Prescott as a McKenzie friend was invaluable and without the option to use a professional as a McKenzie friend, I would have had no means to proceed with my divorce.

86. Karen has helped me immeasurably with support in terms of both my divorce, and the finance and family matters associated, help I could not have afforded otherwise, and a service that is second to none in terms of its value.

87. The help and support I have received has been so beneficial to myself and my family. If it wasn't for this service I could not and would not have moved forward with as little stress as I have done.

88. I have found it more personal and not so harrowing dealing with a McKenzie friend rather than an impersonal service from a solicitor. Also I received the same service but at an affordable cost.

90. I have received invaluable help and advice from Karen Marshall. Help and advice which I may not have been able to afford from a clock-ticking, cost rising solicitor. I would certainly use Karen or another member of the society of professional McKenzie friends again.

91. I have found the help given to me invaluable and my McKenzie friend has supported me whenever I have contacted her. It should be a choice for me to make who I wish to get advice from.

92. Without such dedicated professionals I don't know how I could have afforded this. I have been in this position before and went down the solicitors route and found this very expensive and with very little effort to given to me to justify the fee they charged at the time.

93. Karen's help was invaluable. I was a victim of domestic abuse and had employed a solicitor but could not keep up with the fees they were requiring to protect both me and my son. I am currently going through the financial settlement and divorce. Without doubt I wouldn't be able to do this without Karen's help and guidance.