

Initial Submission of McKenzie Friends Plus (SCIO)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our initial response. This organisation is one of Scotland's youngest charities having received charitable status this year.

The organisation has only recently learned of the invitation to respond under the auspices of this review and elected to express its interest in providing responses and participating in the process in respect of civil law only. It is hoped the organisation will be permitted to provide substantive responses in the future as the review takes its course.

The aim of McKenzie Friends Plus is to provide holistic assistance to those with unmet legal needs and to accompany them as they navigate the civil justice system providing practical as well as moral and well-being support with partner groups.

We believe the interests of the individual is best served by securing the services of a qualified legal professional. In situations where this may prove impossible provide support to identify alternative routes to possible resolution will be provided.

McKenzie Friends Plus does not provide lay representation, nor does it seek to do so. Support and assistance to those experiencing unmet legal need passing through the civil justice system will not be charged.

One fundamental concern of McKenzie Friends Plus is whether the present system designed for individuals to access civil legal aid provides sufficient safeguards for the consumer that the Scottish Legal Aid Board will be put in a position to consider and assess the merits of their cause in making a decision whether or not to grant legal aid. End.