



BEACON McKenzie Friends

Volunteer Role Description:

A McKenzie Friend is a member of the public, without legal training, who assists an appellant when they have no legal representative, at a time that is often bewildering and full of anxiety. A McKenzie Friend is a volunteer, independent of the court system and the Home Office. Our volunteers work as a team to **assist asylum seekers who have neither legal representative nor access to legal aid by:**

- **providing moral support**
- **attending court hearings with the clients**
- **helping clients to submit appeals and fresh claims**
- **liaising with other agencies as appropriate to ensure clients' different needs are addressed**

At no point are clients asked for any kind of financial contribution.

Questions prospective volunteers will be asked at interview

- What do you know about McKenzie Friends?
- What attracts you to becoming a McKenzie Friend?
- What do you see yourself doing as a McKenzie Friend?
- What specific skills or attributes would you bring to the role?

Necessary attributes

- Ability to work independently and as a team to quickly research, assimilate and process unfamiliar information
- Strong written language skills, especially to write reports
- Flexibility re time to meet with clients and volunteers, usually during office hours in Bradford, and to attend daytime court hearings in Thornbury
- Good listening skills
- Ability to understand and to communicate complex information to people with very limited English language skills
- Ability to balance sympathy and detachment and to work to professional standards of boundaries and ethics
- Ability to provide, without our having to chase them, two recent references