



**HM Courts
& Tribunals
Service**



This notice provides information in respect of your hearing and facilities which are available to you for assistance and guidance. It has three sections. Section 1 is for attending a hearing remotely (by telephone or video). Section 2 is for attending court in person. Section 3 is for all cases.

1. TELEPHONE AND VIDEO HEARINGS

What can I expect from the court before the hearing?

You should be notified of the format of the hearing and sent details about how to join the hearing in good time before the date of the hearing. This may not be possible where a hearing is urgent, in which case the court will give you as much advance notice as it can.

The court will always keep your contact details private when sending out information about a remote hearing.

How will my safety be protected in the hearing?

If you have concerns about your safety in any Family Court hearing you should immediately contact the court. The [dedicated] [telephone number / email address] for requesting safety measures is [].

If you have contacted the court to tell them about your safety concerns, the court should:

1. Consult with you, or your legal representative if you have one, about how you would prefer to take part in the hearing (e.g. by phone or video). The format of the hearing will be decided by the judge but your preference will be taken into account.
2. Never leave you alone on a telephone or video call with the other party, or with the other party and their lawyer.
3. Provide information about how to protect your privacy and safety in a video hearing.
4. Warn everyone in the hearing that recording of remote hearings is strictly forbidden.

Can I have someone in the hearing to support me?

You may request the court to have a supporter with you in the hearing, and this will normally be allowed. It is best to choose someone who is not directly involved in the case, such as an IDVA, a support worker or a friend.

They must sit quietly and not speak to the court or disrupt the hearing. If they are in the same room as you they can speak to you softly but not so as to distract the other people in the hearing.

If you do not have legal representation you may arrange for someone of your choice to assist you with the hearing, e.g. by taking notes and providing you with quiet advice. This

person will be known as a 'McKenzie Friend'. See the information on 'McKenzie Friends' in the section on 'Can I bring someone to court with me' below.

If you want to have a supporter or McKenzie Friend in the hearing, you should [insert local procedure]. Please tell the court whether this person will be at the same location as you or will be joining the hearing from a different place.

If you tell the court you will have a McKenzie Friend with you, the court will email a declaration which your McKenzie Friend should read before the hearing. At the start of the hearing they will be asked to confirm that they have read it and agree to follow it.

Even if you do not have a supporter present during the hearing, you may want to arrange for someone to be on hand for you to talk to once the hearing has ended.

2. ATTENDING COURT

What facilities are available at court to protect my safety?

If you are attending court and require special facilities for your own safety you should immediately contact the court. The [dedicated] [telephone number / email address] for requesting safety measures is [].

The facilities available at [] Court which may be requested are:

1. A separate, secure entrance
2. A separate waiting room / area
3. Screens in court so you cannot see or be seen by the other party
4. Video link facilities so you can attend the hearing from another room / venue

If you ask for a screen or a video link, this will have to be approved by a judge. The judge may wish to speak to you and the other party at court before making a decision.

Contact Name.....

Contact - Telephone number/email address.....

Can I bring someone to court with me?

You can bring anyone to court to wait with you, but there may be restrictions on who can come with you into the courtroom.

If you do not have legal representation you may bring someone of your choice to court to assist you with the hearing, e.g. by taking notes and providing you with quiet advice. This person will be known as a 'McKenzie Friend'. A McKenzie Friend can speak to you in court but they will not be able to speak to the court on your behalf unless you specifically request this and the court agrees to it. The legal rules concerning McKenzie Friends can be found here: <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/JCO/Documents/Guidance/mckenzie-friends-practice-guidance-july-2010.pdf>

If you want to have a McKenzie Friend in court, you should [insert local procedure].

If you have an IDVA or domestic abuse support worker or advocate, you may request that they come into court with you. They can support you but will not be allowed to speak to the court. [You should notify the usher when you arrive at court that you wish to bring an IDVA or

domestic abuse support worker into court and they will put your request to the judge or magistrates – or specify other procedure.]

If you would like to bring a friend or family member with you for support, you may request that they come into court with you. They can support you but will not be allowed to speak to the court. [You should notify the usher when you arrive at court that you wish to bring a supporter into court with you and they will put your request to the judge or magistrates – or specify other procedure]. The judge or magistrates may ask for the other party's views on whether your supporter should be admitted into court, but the decision will be made by the court.

What services are available at court for litigants in person?

The services available at [] Court to assist litigants in person are:

1. Support Through Court – they may help you to complete forms or accompany you into court. [Include information on opening hours.] Phone [] for further advice as to the service they can offer and to arrange an appointment.
2. [Name of service] – they provide assistance and support for victims of domestic abuse at court. [Include information on days / hours available.] Phone [] for further advice as to the service they can offer and to arrange an appointment.
3. [Name of any student helpdesk service] – they are available to assist litigants in person with [brief scope of support provided]. [Include information on days / hours available] [Include any contact details].
4. [Name and details of any other service/s]

3. SERVICES TO HELP PEOPLE GOING TO THE FAMILY COURT

What other services are available to help people going to the family court?

[Provide contact details of the following]:

Local services

- Local CAB
- Local domestic abuse charities
- Local services for children affected by domestic abuse
- Local services for domestic abuse perpetrators
- Other relevant local services

National services

- Support Through Court – for support at remote hearings
National Helpline 0300 810 006 Website <https://www.supportthroughcourt.org/>
- The Legal Aid Agency – check eligibility for legal aid
- Law Society and Resolution – find a local solicitor (including solicitors who specialise in particular aspects of family law)
- The Bar Council – direct access and pro bono schemes

- Rights of Women <https://rightsofwomen.org.uk/>
- Women's Aid <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support/what-is-domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-services/>
- Refuge <https://www.refuge.org.uk/>
- Respect <http://respect.uk.net/>
- Mankind <https://www.mankind.org.uk/>
- Domestic Abuse Recovering Together (DART) programme for children <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/services-children-families/dart/>
- NSPCC service centres <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/our-services/nspcc-service-centres/>

Assistance for applicants for a Family Law Act injunction in preparing their statement is available from

- FLOWS (Finding Legal Options for Women Survivors): <https://www.rcjadvise.org.uk/family/flows-finding-legal-options-for-women-survivors/>, and
- Advicenow: <https://www.advicenow.org.uk/statement-injunction>.