



MCF Almoner's Briefing - January 2021

Welcome to your regular Almoner's Briefing produced by the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) and shared by your Metropolitan/Provincial Grand Almoner. Your role within Freemasonry may feel different since lodges were prevented from meeting in 2020 but it remains critical to the welfare of those within your Masonic community.

A new year has brought with it a new national lockdown in response to the current coronavirus pandemic. A great number of you will have already adopted innovative ways of working during these unprecedented times. Using Zoom or WhatsApp will have enabled you to keep on interacting and keeping in touch with those around you. As lockdown returns, your role will be vital to ensuring those that need support get support.

Try to innovate with the ways in which you are interacting with those who may need your assistance. If you are new to the role why not consider doing one task differently in order to make a real difference to people within your community. For example, could you commit to making that telephone call to Mrs Smith more frequently? Could you initiate a regular 'Zoom call' with Mr Jones to check how he is managing with the demands of home schooling whilst working from home? You will know that you are perfectly placed to offer some stability and reassurance to people at a time when they may not have any.

Signposting to specialist organisations is a key part of your role. You are not expected to be an expert in the wide range of issues you will frequently encounter so here are a sample of the organisations you may wish to refer to:

- **MIND** - provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health issue. Call 020 8519 2122 or visit their website - www.mind.org.uk
- **NHS Volunteer Responders** delivered through the **Royal Voluntary Service** - provides somebody to talk to or a hand with collecting shopping or prescriptions. Call 0808 196 3646 or visit www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk
- **Age UK** - did you know MCF has funded Age UK's 'call in time' service, a free telephone friendship service for people 60 and over? [Sign up today her](#)
- **Turn2Us** - helps people access the money available to them through welfare benefits and grants. Visit www.turn2us.org.uk

In addition, your Metropolitan/Provincial Grand Almoner (MetGA/PGA) may be able to advise you of any local organisations or initiatives in place. General information on topics ranging from bereavement

to addiction can be found on your section of the MCF website –

www.mcf.org.uk/resources/almoner-resources

Why not share the following information with your lodge members? You could include it in an email it or use it as part of your update at a lodge video meeting:

Did you know the Masonic Charitable Foundation – the Freemasons' charity - offers a wide range of support for Freemasons and their families with financial, health, family or care-related needs? If somebody has found themselves with an unexpected loss of income – whether they're self-employed, an employee, or are simply struggling to collect their pension – MCF may be able to provide support to cover daily living costs, helping to make ends meet.

If somebody is struggling to pay their rent, mortgage or utility bills and are facing eviction or arrears, we may be able to provide emergency one-off grants to help keep a roof over their head.

Please direct potential applicants to the MCF's Enquiries Team on 0800 035 60 90 (calls are free), or by email to help@mcf.org.uk for advice on starting an application and to learn more about the eligibility criteria (teams are all working from home and so current response to telephone, post and email enquiries may be a little longer than usual).

Don't forget that in these strange times it is all the more important that you take care of your own wellbeing. If you find you are struggling you must not be afraid to seek help from members of your lodge, a friend or family member. Don't delay and let somebody know how you are feeling.

Getting help for somebody is simple and can be done by contacting the MCF's Enquiries Team on freephone 0800 035 60 90 or emailing help@mcf.org.uk. Alternatively, you can contact your MetGA/PGA for guidance on how best to support members and their families.

If you found this useful, why not sign-up to our mailing list. You will be one of the first people to receive the latest news about the work of the MCF (and you will get a free MCF lapel pin!). Sign-up at www.mcf.org.uk/sign-up

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