



Welcome to your regular Almoner's Briefing produced by the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF). It aims to assist you with maintaining support and contact with all present and past lodge members, widows, partners and their families; a task which is at the heart of the almoner's role.

- ❖ **Living with a disability** – there are currently 13.9 million disabled people in the UK according to the Family Resources Survey 2016/17. The survey found that 45% of pension age adults are disabled so it is highly likely there are disabled members of your lodge and across the masonic community who may require your support. You have a vital role to play through keeping in regular contact and visiting, and by bringing individuals into the masonic support network.

One possible sign that somebody may be in need of assistance could be their non-attendance at lodge meetings or social events. It could be caused by a sudden mobility or transport issue meaning they are unable to get to the lodge. These issues should be addressed as early as possible before they escalate into [feelings of loneliness or social isolation](#).

- ❖ **How you can help** – when you become aware of somebody's non-attendance at lodge (either directly or from another member of the lodge such as the secretary or mentor) why not follow up with them afterwards to check whether all is well by giving them a quick phone call. If you don't know the brother personally this would be the ideal opportunity to introduce yourself and let him know that he has been missed. At the same time you could potentially learn a lot about his circumstances and any support he may need. The minutes of your lodge meeting will also aid with monitoring regular attendance.

Face to face visits can be particularly beneficial and offer a much better opportunity to identify any real need. If a brother's non-attendance is a result of a disability you should sensitively explore what support may be needed. Perhaps you could assist him by offering to organise some temporary transport to and from the lodge or the supermarket?

There are a range of resources available to almoners through MCF. These can be viewed, downloaded or ordered by visiting www.mcf.org.org/almoner

- ❖ **Support** – if you think you have identified a potential issue and are unsure about what to do next your MetGA/PGA is a good first point of contact for guidance. He may also be able to advise on whether your province has its own charity or funds which can be used to help individuals.
- ❖ **Information to share** – you are encouraged to read the following information out at your next lodge meeting as part of your almoner's report or circulate to members of your lodge. Read on for more information...

'Did you know the MCF may be able to meet the cost of home adaptations and mobility equipment including scooters, stairlifts, power chairs and hoists? Grants for specialist or bespoke equipment for young people with severe and life-limiting disabilities may also be possible. During 2018/19, the MCF awarded 1,350 mobility aid grants to freemasons and their families to the value of over £1m.'

- ❖ **Getting help** - if you believe somebody requires assistance, contact your MetGA/PGA or the MCF's Enquiries Team on 0800 035 60 90 (calls are free), or email help@mcf.org.uk

Any feedback you may have on this Briefing can be sent to: rprice@mcf.org.uk

If you found this useful, why not sign-up to receive the MCF's e-newsletter. You will be one of the first people to receive the latest news about the work of the MCF which may be of additional interest to you as almoner (and you will get a free MCF lapel pin!). Sign-up at www.mcf.org.uk/sign-up

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