



Welcome to your first regular **Almoner's Briefing** produced by the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF). Maintaining support and contact with Lodge Members and their families is at the heart of the role of Almoner so we hope this Briefing will assist you and keep you abreast of relevant information.

- ❖ **Data Protection Guidance** - following the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on 25 May 2018, here are some tips to help you comply:
  - **Let people know** what you intend to do with their data
  - **Only collect** the data you need to do what you are doing
  - **Make sure** you are the only one with access to the email account you use for your Almoner duties
  - **Only keep** data for as long as it is needed
  - **Ensure** the data you have is kept up to date
  - **Shred paper files** before throwing them away
  - **Seek** more detailed guidance or advice specific to your Lodge by contacting your Lodge's Data Controller (usually the Lodge Secretary)
  - **Find more tips** in our Data Protection Factsheet available on the MCF website – [www.mcf.org.uk/data-protection](http://www.mcf.org.uk/data-protection)
- ❖ **Support** - your Provincial Grand Almoner (PGA) is always on hand to assist you with your duties and should be contacted to request assistance for a Brother or their family.
- ❖ **Pastoral Care** – our Almoner Factsheets have been created for you to give specific information relating to 'life events' and should serve as a continuous reference point. Topics covered so far include bereavement, loneliness, respite care and more recently mental health and redundancy. To view our free Factsheets and supplementary videos visit our Almoner Resources page – [www.mcf.org.uk/almoner](http://www.mcf.org.uk/almoner)
- ❖ **Skills** – dip back into the Almoner's Guide for information on essential qualities and skills required for your important role. We think that listening is a vital skill and a conscious effort must be made to hear both the words that another person says and the complete message being communicated. Read more about listening skills in our free Almoner's Guide on the MCF website - [www.mcf.org.uk/almoners-guide](http://www.mcf.org.uk/almoners-guide)
- ❖ **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. We will provide you with something suitable to share within each **Almoner's Briefing**.

Did you know that the MCF offers access to a **Counselling Careline** for anyone struggling to cope? Read on for more information...

The **Counselling Careline** is a free and confidential support service for people who are experiencing:

- Anxiety, depression or stress
- Feelings of uncertainty, growing worry or panic
- Adjusting to retirement
- Workplace pressures
- Dealing with debt and financial stress
- Bereavement, divorce and loneliness
- Illness, addiction or family ill-health

The **Counselling Careline** is operated by trained counsellors who will listen to you, offer professional guidance and can arrange additional telephone or face-to-face sessions. Freemasons, their wives, partners or widows, as well as children between the ages of 17 - 25 who are in full-time education and, in certain cases, other adult dependents, can access the **Counselling Careline**. This is a free service and requires no form filling or application. Simply call the MCF on 0800 035 60 90 (calls are free).

We hope you have found our first **Almoner's Briefing** useful. To provide any feedback please email [masonicsupport@mcf.org.uk](mailto:masonicsupport@mcf.org.uk)

Be the first to receive the latest news about the wider work of the MCF (and get a free MCF lapel pin!) by signing up to receive our regular e-newsletter at [www.mcf.org.uk/sign-up](http://www.mcf.org.uk/sign-up). The e-newsletter contains further information, resources and stories about the MCF which may be of additional interest to you as Almoner.

***Disclaimer: this information does not constitute legal advice and, while care has been taken to ensure that the information is accurate, up to date and useful, the MCF will not accept any legal liability in relation to the content***

