



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.

- ❖ **Essential skills** - the information in this section will be familiar to you but it is well worth revisiting because it is so central to the work you do. Whether you are an experienced almoner or new to the role it might offer some new ideas or simply even give reassurance that what you are doing is right.

One of the key skills an almoner must have is the ability to listen and to listen well. Being able to 'actively listen' to somebody who may need support is a powerful tool and simply put means understanding, responding to and remembering what they have said. This skill doesn't come naturally to us all but thankfully it can be learnt!

An almoner who can listen well will look attentive, watching for any visual as well as verbal signs, and is giving the person time and space to express themselves. Feeling listened to can have an extremely positive effect and may make it easier for them to open up next time they see you. Some tips for successful listening include:

- **Body language.** Try to maintain open body language such as good posture, leaning forward and keeping arms unfolded.
- **Feelings and emotions.** Try to recognise feelings and emotions by showing that you are following them by nodding and making small reassuring noises such as 'yes' and 'uh huh'.
- **Patience.** Try not to lead or rush a conversation because a few seconds of comfortable, supportive silence can be very powerful and allows time for reflection.
- **Practise.** Try to find time and practise being a good listener by really listening to other members of the lodge, family and friends.

Why not take a look at the Almoner's Guide for more information on listening skills and the other skills needed to be a successful almoner – [Almoner's Guide](#)

- ❖ **Support** – if you would like further information and support on the skills and qualities needed to be a successful almoner then your MetGA/PGA is a good first point of contact. He may also be able to provide guidance if you think someone needs help and you are unsure about what to do next.

Missed one of our regular briefings? Then visit your section of the MCF website to find them - www.mcf.org.uk/almoner

- ❖ **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 that most people who are supported by the Masonic Charitable Foundation started out by having a conversation with their almoner? Talk to me - I can help you to find out about potential support.

- ❖ **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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