



We Care Notices

We Care is the ethos of the Provincial Almoners Team and it was therefore felt appropriate that this heading should be used for communications emanating from the office. It symbolises how we all feel about supporting our Brethren, their families and the wider community. The notes are issued to give guidance or information relating to the work that we undertake.

1. **Lodge Almoner reporting**
2. **Applications to RMBI homes**
3. **Coronavirus actions by Almoners**
4. **Covid Responses and Actions**
5. **Assisting the NHS**
6. **Re-opening of medical support by the MCF**
7. **Support from the MCT and for the NHS**
8. **The Masonic Charitable Trust**
9. **Preparing for the vaccine**

JULY 2019

We Care

PROVINCIAL GRAND
ALMONERS OFFICE



PROVINCE OF HAMPSHIRE
& ISLE OF WIGHT

Lodge Almoner reporting

- Reports should be circulated prior to meetings, through the Lodge Secretary
- The Almoner should give any updates to his report during his allocated agenda item
- The report should focus on the brethren (attending and non-attending) and their families
- Reports should not discuss types of illness or distress, but reflect on the ongoing nature of the dialogue between the LA and the recipient.
- Records of contacts made with members and their families should be documented with dates and actions.
- Reports should also include planned activities of the local Amity Club or other welfare related events, such as the holiday schemes.

Rationale

Specific attention to those members who are not attending could disclose underlying issues, such as financial difficulties, which could be addressed through the support mechanisms available within the Province and National charities. This would be a natural way to work with the Membership Officer and Mentor to help with member retention.

In respecting the confidentiality of the relationship between the LA and the members and their families, it is important that personal information, even when agreed with the member, should not be disclosed further. On many occasions, there will also be visitors in the Lodge to whom the member will not be known. Such disclosure must be avoided.



Application procedure for access to an RMBI home

Note—All Masons and their immediate families can apply to an RMBI Care home. Details of the location of the homes along with what care categories they accommodate can be found on their website www.rmbi.org.uk or contact them on 0207 596 2400

1. Contact the care home to arrange a visit or ask for further information. An application pack will be supplied for completion to enable the admission to progress. Admission will always depend upon the availability of places and the care needs assessment.
2. If financial support is required contact must be made with the local Social Services to arrange a welfare and financial support assessment. This will determine if the person will meet the local social services eligibility criteria for funding.
3. To support the Masons and their families who are unable to self-fund the full RMBI care fee, the MCF provides a charitable subsidy to RMBI. This subsidy provides Masons and their immediate family members with the additional funds needed to secure a place at an RMBI home by supplementing any local authority support to which they are entitled.
4. Home fee subsidies are not paid by the individual resident, therefore **'no application needs to be made to the MCF'**. This subsidy is paid directly to the RMBI by the MCF
5. If Social Services do agree to fund admission to a care home, that home will require confirmation of the funding.
6. The personal contribution will depend upon the personal and financial situation of the applicant and will involve an investigation of their state and/or private pensions, as well as assets and property.
7. Where a spouse or partner continues to occupy a family home, that property will not be included in the financial assessment.. However this could change if the spouse /partner dies or moves into care.
8. If Social Services do not agree to finance residential care, contact should be made with the staff at RMBI to see if a special case can be made to the trustees of the RMBI
9. Subject to the satisfactory completion of the forms, the assessment and the availability of accommodation, it may be possible for admission within days but realistically it may typically take longer.

Full and further information in *Freemasons Guide to RMBI Care Co.*

SEPTEMBER 2020

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Covid 19 Welfare Responses and Actions

As we move cautiously into the new Masonic season, I thought it worthwhile to update with you some of the key points from our Covid-19 experiences to date and outline some of the major lessons we have learned to help formulate our plans for support in the coming months.

In all our thinking, our base assumption is that there will be a second wave of the pandemic and that the Government support for 'Furloughed' employees will end, as scheduled, at the end of October.

Our major areas of support, from the Masonic Charitable Foundation and the Provincial Masonic Charitable Trust are Medical, Financial and Family. The following are the key aspects of each:

Medical Support

Under current MCF policy, Medical support is limited to urgent Cardiac, Cancer and Ophthalmic cases. This policy will be reviewed in November.

Some application for mobility aids are being permitted through local arrangements, where an Occupational Therapist assessment is not required.

Actions Required.

Follow the guidance previously issued and contact the MCF on **0800 035 60 90**.

This process has worked well to date and is to be maintained.

Financial Support

Both the MCF and MCT have responded to short and longer term financial support brought about by loss of income through furlough etc. The demand for this is expected to rise from October.

Actions Required.

Follow the guidance previously issued and contact the MCF on **0800 035 60 90**.

In addition, contact your Area Almoner who can instigate an enquiry to the Provincial Charity.

This new added step will speed up any possible, timely support whilst the MCF review any longer term financial need.

Family Support

On-going Pastoral Support for our Brethren and their families, contacts with our Amity Club members and maintaining contact with our members is a major priority for us all.

Actions Required.

Keep up the excellent work that is already being done and remember that the MCF and the MCT are here to support you. Keep in contact with your Area Almoner.

JANUARY 2021

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Preparation and support for the vaccination programme

As we enter the most critical of this Pandemic, we have the chance to look forward to the positive effects

that hopefully will be forthcoming with the lock down and the roll out of the vaccine.

As many of our members are within the very vulnerable categories, particularly relating to age, the vaccine provides that bright light at the end of what has been a very dark tunnel.

I am aware that many members have already received the first dose of the vaccine, but many are still awaiting the call to attend.

With many vaccination centres in place, there are some slight deviations in the way in which they are operating but one way in which we can assist is by ensuring that when attending, you have your NHS

number with you, in case they have difficulty in locating your details on the national database.

The Deputy Provincial Grand Master in Charge has already identified the assistance that can be given by volunteering to assist in stewarding at the Vaccinations centres.

A request has now been made for volunteers to act as delivery drivers for the oximeter measuring devices to various locations. If you are prepared to collect and deliver these then please once again get in touch with volunteer helpline.

It is obvious that assistance will be required for some considerable time

Anything that we can do to lighten the heavy load placed upon the NHS staff will be greatly appreciated.

Follow the example set by our Deputy PGM in Charge in giving your time to assist.

Please go to www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk to register.

Remember the sooner we beat this virus, the sooner we can 'Meet on the Square'

DECEMBER 2020

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MCF Re-opening for Non-Urgent medical cases

The MCF have made us aware that they are now re-opening their service to non-urgent medical applications. It is anticipated that there will be a high demand, and therefore the following guidelines have been put into operation and outline the basic principles in order to get new medical cases registered with the MCF.

1. Urgent cases, for Cancer, heart and Ophthalmic processes have, and will continue to have priority over other cases.
2. The MCF is already working through all of the applications already recorded with them.
3. Before any contact is made with the MCF to register a new medical request, at least ONE of the following criteria MUST be met:
 - a) The applicant must have a treatment plan and a date for surgery, or
 - b) The applicant must have been referred to a consultant,

If NEITHER criteria a) or b) is met, the applicant must approach their GP to get a referral to a consultant prior to contacting the MCF. Once a referral has been obtained, the MCF can be contacted.

It should be noted that it will be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that they have identified the details of the proposed consultant.

4. With item 3 complete, an applicant can contact the MCF by telephone or email
Telephone : 0800 035 60 90 or Email : help@mcf.org.uk
5. The MCF will make contact with the applicant. Having ascertained eligibility, a brief financial evaluation will be undertaken by the MCF, prior to issuing any documentation. This will include household income(s) and capital assets. The applicant will be advised of the outcome and the potential funding position.
6. With demand expected to be high, and backlogs being addressed, as well as availability within the NHS and private hospitals still under stress through Covid-19, it will be into the New Year before new cases can be progressed.

FEBRUARY 2021

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Support from the MCT and for the NHS

The Provincial Masonic Charitable Trust (MCT) provides a rapid response to those H&IOW Freemasons and their families in financial distress. **In 2019, £41,700** was awarded to meet such demands. **In 2020, the total was £64,500.** Of this amount **£32,500** was granted to brethren and families directly affected by the impacts of Covid19.

The MCT awards are funded from returns on investments, overseen by a board of Trustees. In recent months, some Lodges and Chapters have also made donations, for which the Trustees are very grateful. Although a registered Charity, donations to the MCT cannot be Gift Aided. However, in response to some queries, should a Lodge or Chapter wish to donate to the Charity, it can be completed by either a cheque or bank transfer as follows;

By cheque, sent to the Provincial Treasurer, made payable to **Prov Hants and IoW Masonic Char Trust** or by BACS to **Lloyds Bank**, Sort code **30-90-34**, Account No. **28757768**, Account name **Prov Hants & IoW Masonic Char Trust**

So far in 2021, £9000 worth of grants have been approved and credited to those in need. The MCT remains committed to support a rapid response to the needs of brethren. If you require help, please contact your Area Almoner.



In the past few weeks the Deputy Provincial Grand Master in Charge has highlighted two additional ways in which Brethren could assist during the pandemic, if they are willing and able to do so.

Firstly, by acting as volunteers to help 'stewarding' at vaccination centres and

Secondly, by delivering oximeters to those in need.

Both of these activities will help alleviate the pressure on our NHS staff and will be greatly appreciated.

In both circumstances, if you can help, then please register at : www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk

January 2021

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The Masonic Charitable Trust (MCT)

The MCT is a charity which is unique to our Province, being funded by income from investments and donations from the Lodges within the Province. It is overseen by Trustees who are senior members of the craft within the Province and therefore it can be deemed to be very much our local charity.

Because of the nature of the charity it is able to quickly respond to the needs of the Lodges and members within the Province. This has been very ably demonstrated during the last year when the Pandemic has caused much suffering amongst members and the need for fairly urgent help. To demonstrate this, the following is a breakdown of the assistance given last year.

Benevolent support This is the financial support given to applicants whose assistance is not Covid 19 related, and is for short term relief of a situation.

Covid 19 support Financial support to those whose incomes were lost or severely reduced due to the impact of the virus.

Centre support Grants given to Masonic Centres to install equipment or improve access for the benefit of members.

Year	Benevolent	Covid 19	Centres	Total
2019	£41,700	-	£30,500	£72,200
2020	£32,000	£32,500	-	£64,500

As interest rates are currently very low the amount forthcoming from investments is falling and because Lodges have not been meeting, donations have also been lower.

In order to ensure that the excellent support for members and their families can be sustained, it would be very much appreciated if Lodges or individual members could look to make donations to the MCT this year.

Simply send your cheque, made out to **Prov Hants&IOW Masonic Char Trust**, to the Provincial Treasurer at the Provincial Office or by bank transfer to;

Lloyds bank - Sort code **30-90-34** Account **Prov Hants&IOW Masonic Char Trust** -Ac No **28757768**

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