

Province of West Lancashire



A Guide for
Lodge and Royal Arch
Almoners 2015

This booklet has been designed to assist you in the important role you fill as almoner for your lodge or chapter.

The Provincial Grand Master's Cabinet has approved and agreed to support an initiative to further improve Care in the Province of West Lancashire.

So please take the time to read this booklet, and remember the Care structure of our Province is a team effort.

Whether it is a visit to combat loneliness or with a successful application we can make a substantial difference to the lives of those less fortunate than ourselves.

Provincial Grand Almoner

01.03.2015

During the last couple of years it has become increasingly apparent that the lodge Almoner's task has become too onerous and therefore there is a clear need to reduce his workload to enable him to carry out the basic function of Pastoral Care and remove the concern of dealing with grants.

From October 2015, all applications for grants and assistance will be handled and managed by specialist Care Officers.

Widows, brethren and families who need some assistance have a number of ways in which to get in touch with the Provincial Care team, it might be by Freemasonry Cares or more importantly you on one of your individual home visits.

Within each Masonic Hall you will find the details of the three members of the Provincial team who look after your area.

Contact the Admin Care Officer and inform him that you have a potential applicant. He will arrange to interview the client in their own home and you should introduce him.

Pastoral Care.

The worshipful master has appointed you almoner of the lodge, your duties are to know and visit all widows, dependants, resigned brethren and those brethren not able to attend your lodge or chapter and maintain contact with them.

Pastoral Care should include all four elements,

- Visit of all widows on a regular basis
- Hospital and sick visits
- Retention and retrieval of brethren who suddenly stop coming to lodge
- The lodge representative at funerals

The importance of the office of almoner is often underestimated by the brethren and the full extent and importance of the duties are not always appreciated or understood.

The office of almoner requires total commitment, an unerring diligence combined with a good measure of tact and diplomacy, but above all **total confidentiality**.

To assist you in identifying potential applicants a list of suitable phrases which should by the answers given indicate that you should inform the Admin Care Officer. He will speak with the client to ascertain if an application should be completed and you should then introduce him personally wherever possible.

Clearly, it is essential that the almoner is selected for his ability and a genuine desire to 'do the job'. He must be of a

compassionate nature able to gain and maintain confidentiality at all times. Able and willing to devote a good measure of his personal time visiting, talking and indeed, listening to people and not just taking the easy option of calling them by telephone.

Personal contact is vital, especially if the person concerned lives alone. The visit should also be used to observe and judge if other help or assistance is required, above all it demonstrates that we have not forgotten our obligation which will be greatly appreciated.

Those on the outside of Freemasonry e.g. a widow or the family of a sick or deceased brother will judge Freemasonry by the compassion shown by the almoner during their time of need.

While it is appreciated that although desirable, it may be impossible for the almoner to visit everybody personally, but it is still his responsibility to ensure that all in

need, especially those who are ill, receive a visit from someone in the lodge. This small act in itself is of great importance in demonstrating the principles of our Order and is always appreciated, especially by those who are incapacitated.

It is therefore essential that the almoner keeps and maintains a full and comprehensive record of:

- The names, addresses and telephone numbers of all lodge members including those who have resigned or have been excluded.
- The names and addresses and telephone numbers of all lodge widows and dependants including widows and dependants of resigned and excluded brethren. Also including widows and brethren who reside in residential or nursing homes.

He should ensure that all widows, particularly those who have moved away from within our Province are visited. He must inform the Provincial Grand Almoner who will find a lodge almoner in the immediate locality who will visit the widow concerned and advise you of any difficulties found.

The role of the almoner is in the large part performed outside the lodge itself and such expenses as are incurred together with telephone calls, postage etc., these should be properly accounted for and a detailed expense sheet submitted to the treasurer for consideration by the lodge committee. It must be remembered that although perhaps one almoner may well be financially capable and not worry about the cost incurred, he may well be followed by an equally diligent almoner

who is living on a state pension and cannot therefore afford the luxury of assisting the lodge by paying all the costs himself.

As in any well run lodge the treasurer should budget for the expenses incurred during the coming year. Freemasonry quite correctly presents itself as a caring organisation, it is quite wrong for the almoner to attempt to fund the cost of carrying out his own duties as the cost incurred are the responsibility of the whole lodge, not just one officer.

Terms of Office.

It is essential that the almoner is not replaced at too frequent intervals as it takes a considerable time for a new almoner to get to know the persons who are being visited. It is therefore desirable to have some continuity of service, and where possible an assistant almoner should be in place to learn and eventually take over the position.

It is important that the Provincial Care Officers covering your area should be immediately informed of any change of almoner.

Finally this booklet is a guide to your duties as a lodge or chapter almoner, it has been produced to assist you to carry out the duties of your office. I trust that the contents will enable you to give

to your duties the attention which their importance demands.

Enlist the help of all Lodge members

- You cannot do it all yourself
- If you have a lot of widows spread them out
- Enlist the help of the younger members
- Adopt a widow (one to one)
- Build links with younger members and the widows and older members
- It is the responsibility of every member to be your assistant

You will know how to assimilate the information and direct it to the Admin Care Office when necessary.

Provincial Grand Almoner

See appendix for phrases and pointers which will help you identify potential cases of people in need.

1.

Are you getting all your entitlements from the State?

I get my pension and attendance allowance – do you get any pension credit? If yes they are a candidate for making a charity application.

2.

Do you get housing benefit from the council towards your rates? If yes it is an indication they are a candidate for a charity application.

3.

Is the house cold in winter with little or no heating? again this is another indication that they might be a candidate for a charity application.

4.

What are the decorations like? If poor, it is another pointer.

5.

House in a poor state of repair

Car off the road

Worn carpets or curtains

Garden overgrown

Telephone disconnected

All these are signs of financial distress

6.

Financially how does the husband's death affect the children's education and welfare?

7.

Does her husband's pension cease with his death?

8.

Does the widow know about the death benefits?

9.

Health problems:

If someone mentions that they have a health problem, ask directly if they are on a waiting list for a consultation or operation

Mobility problems:

The first question is always whether they have had an Occupational Therapist assessment from Social Services/Local Authority. Often this identifies problems but cannot provide funding in full or they only provide a makeshift solution, when MSF may consider something more suitable or permanent.

Care:

Are they caring for a family member, or is a family member caring for them? Do they have carers provided by Social Services?

Counselling:

Is there any mention or evidence of anxiety, stress or depression? Are they aware of the MSF Counselling Care Line? Obviously this is sensitive area, so worth noting that it should be approached with discretion and tact.

General indications:

Include looking out for unkempt appearance and/or poor personal hygiene, as this can often be an indicator of distress, poverty and/or mental health issues.

Security risks

Safety risks

Fire Hazards

10.

LONELINESS is one of the biggest problems in older people

These are all signs you should look for on **home** visits

RMBI Care Homes

7 Eccleshome	Manchester
16 The Tithebarn	Crosby
13 Queen Elizabeth Court	Llandudno
1 Prince of Wales Court	Porthcawl
2 Barford Court	Hove
3 Cadogan Court	Exeter
4 Connaught Court	York
6 Devonshire Court	Oadby
5 Cornwallis Court Bury	St Edmonds
8 James Terry Court	Croydon
9 Lord Harris Court	Wokingham
10 Prince Edward Court	Braintree
11 Prince George	Chislehurst
12 Prince Michael of Kent	Watford
14 Scarborough Court	Cramlington
15 Shannon Court	Hindhead
17 Zetland Court	Bournemouth

To apply please contact the relevant Home directly or visit the website at rmbi.org.uk or telephone 020 7596 2400 to discuss your care needs.

The Locations



All homes have a Dementia wing

Admin Care Officers post code areas

Barrow in Furness

LA 11-18

Lancaster

LA 1-7

Preston

PR 1-5

Chorley/Leyland

PR 6,7, 25,26 BB3

North Fylde/Blackpool

FY 2, 5-7

South Fylde/Blackpool

FY 1, 3, 4, 8

Southport/Ormskirk

PR 8, 9 L 39, 40

Wigan/Leigh

WN 1-8

Warrington/St. Helens & Prescot

WA 1-12 CH 2

Bootle/Liverpool North

L3-5, 9-11, 20-22, 30 CH 44, 45

Liverpool South/Widnes

L1, 6-8,12-19, 24-28, 35, 36 CH41-43

Eccles

M28-31, 33, 38, 41, 44-46 BL 1-6

Admin & PR Care Officers

Barrow in Furness/Lancaster

Preston

Chorley/Leyland

Wigan/Leigh

North & South Fylde/Blackpool

Southport/Ormskirk/Bootle

Eccles/Warrington/St. Helens & Prescot

Liverpool South/Widnes

Pastoral Care Officers

Barrow in Furness

Lancaster

Preston

Chorley/Leyland

Blackpool and Cleveleys

South Fylde and Fleetwood

Fylde Coast (Provinces other than West Lancs)

Southport/Ormskirk

Wigan/Leigh

Warrington/St. Helens & Prescot/Widnes

Bootle/Gladstone/Garston

Liverpool South/Woolton

Eccles/South Eastern

Provincial Care Team

Pastoral Care Officer

Tel:

M:

Admin Care Officer

Tel:

M:

Admin & PR Care Officer

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Tel:

M:

