

**UNITED GRAND LODGE OF**  
**FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF ENGLAND**



**DISTRICT GRAND LODGE OF SOUTH AFRICA, NORTH**  
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**THE ALMONER'S GUIDE IN CRAFT LODGES**  
**AND ROYAL ARCH CHAPTERS**



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## **Introduction**

One of the Core values of Freemasonry is to look after the welfare of Freemasons and their family members.

This guide is intended to assist Almoners in fulfilling their role, namely carrying out the “pastoral” duties expected of them in support of Brethren and their immediate family.

## **What is Pastoral Care?**

It is defined as maintaining support and contact with Brethren and their immediate family.



### **A. Role of the Almoner**

Typically, your role will comprise of the duties below. This is not an exhaustive list and individual Lodges may ask you to take on other tasks.

- Maintaining the pastoral care of Brethren and their families by keeping in regular contact.
- Listening carefully to the needs of Brethren and their dependants whilst also managing their expectations.
- Highlighting the support available from the state, charities and other organisations.
- Recognising and fighting loneliness to resolve the problem before it gets out of control.
- Making all new members welcome in conjunction with the Proposer, Secunder and Lodge Mentor.
- Working closely with the Lodge Charity Steward and Lodge Mentor.
- Noting the non-attendance of Lodge members and following up as necessary.
- Keeping in touch with Brethren who have resigned or have been ‘lost’, whenever possible.
- Identifying the contact details of a friend or relative of a vulnerable person who can be contacted in emergencies.
- Encouraging other members of the Lodge to share the duties of the Almoner (e.g. assisting with visits to widowed partners).
- Keeping the Lodge updated on a Brother or dependant’s circumstances at frequent intervals.
- Initiating, investigating and renewing grants-in-aid to needy Brethren and Widows.
- Ensuring a smooth and detailed handover is made to your successor.

## **B. Essential qualities and skills**

To be a successful Almoner you will need a sympathetic and empathetic approach. A commitment to helping people and the time and energy to devote to the benefit of the Brethren and their dependants.

You will also need to be proactive, a good and attentive listener and a 'people person'. The role benefits greatly from continuity so it is suggested you commit to the role for around five years.



### **Building strong relationships**

Maintaining good relationships is core to your role as an Almoner.



### **Actively listening**

Listening is a vital skill for an Almoner and becoming an active listener is essential. To listen actively, you must make a conscious effort to both hear the words that another person says and, more importantly, to try to understand the complete message being communicated. In order to do this, you must pay careful attention to the other person.

If you're finding it particularly difficult to concentrate on what someone is saying, try repeating their words in your mind as they say them – this will reinforce their message and help you stay focused. Using body language and other signs to acknowledge you are listening also reminds you to pay attention and not let your mind wander. Also, remember to pay attention to the speaker's body language. Only about one-tenth of the message is conveyed in words.



## Gathering information

Encouraging an individual to open up and share information about their life can be a daunting task for both parties.

By using the '**LEAPS**' method outlined below, you can approach information gathering in a logical manner and help to put people at ease:

### **L – Listen:**

Show good attentive listening skills through nodding of the head, occasional gap fillers such as 'OK' or 'I see', steady eye contact and open body language (leaning forward and keeping arms uncrossed).

### **E – Empathise:**

Try to understand how the person feels by using phrases like "How did you feel about that?" or "What were you feeling when that happened?"

### **A – Ask Questions:**

Ask open questions rather than questions that invite a closed 'yes' or 'no' answer. Use leading statements such as "Please tell me more" and repeat the person's language i.e. "You say you feel concerned ...."

### **P – Paraphrase:**

Paraphrasing information back to the person shows you have listened and understood their situation.

### **S – Summarise:**

Summarise what has been said and agree the next steps to be taken by you and the person.

If you embed this method in your mind when carrying out pastoral visits, you won't go far wrong!

## Establishing a rapport

You can quickly begin to build a rapport with someone by identifying similarities between your experiences and theirs. When you first speak to them keep your eyes and ears open for clues about them and their interests.



## **Managing expectations**

A perceived failure to deliver 'what was promised' can be extremely detrimental to a relationship. In extreme cases it can lead to an individual breaking off all contact.

## **Keeping in touch**

Whilst it may be possible to re-establish contact with those that have been 'lost', it is more realistic and cost-effective to minimise any future losses by establishing systems for keeping in touch.

## **Updating the Lodge**

It is important that you are proactive and provide regular reports to your Lodge. You may be asked to provide an update on the health or circumstances of a member, widowed partner or other dependant, and the action you have taken to assist them. Care must be taken not to divulge sensitive information – you must always ascertain what information the person is happy for you to share about them during Lodge meetings.

## **Record keeping [The dreaded paperwork]**

**Keeping good records of Brethren, widowed partners and dependants is essential.**



Here are some examples of information such records should include:

- Details of all Brethren, including those who have resigned or have been excluded, giving their name, address, telephone number, email address (if available) and any other relevant information.
- Names and addresses of all Lodge widowed partners and other dependants, including those who are living in residential accommodation, with any other important relevant information.
- The dates and details of all visits to widowed partners, sick Brethren and non-attendees.
- Country Members and Honorary Members

***See Examples contained in the Annexures of this manual.***



## Using Information Technology (IT)

You will find your role much easier if you are confident in using a computer. Communication via email is increasingly common and it is likely that your Predecessor will pass on records held in electronic format. Increasingly, video calls (Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp) are becoming popular and add an extra dimension to the contact.



## Handing over

**When you step down as Almoner, it is very important that you hand over the following to your successor:**

- The names, addresses and contact details of any person you are currently helping.
- All support materials you have collected such as this guide and Almoner's record cards.

When stepping down, you should ensure that everyone involved knows that you have handed over your duties. This is especially important for any widowed partners or dependants you are supporting. Almoner beneficiaries can miss out, Lodge members and widowed partners in need can be overlooked.

## C. Visiting lodge members and their families

**You must be constantly watching out for cases of need or difficulty amongst Brethren and their dependants.**

While regular phone contact is great, taking the time to visit someone shows you really care and can provide a valuable insight into their circumstances which might not otherwise have been revealed.



Face-to-face visits to the following individuals can be particularly beneficial:

- Sick Brethren
- Members who have recently experienced a significant life event (e.g. redundancy or bereavement).
- Widowed partners and single Brethren.
- Members missing meetings, socials or Festive Boards.

## **Having conversations**

**You can learn a lot about a person's circumstances and what support they may need through having an in-depth conversation.**



The following suggestions will help you start the right conversations:

- How have you been feeling?
- Have your friends or family visited you recently?
- What are your neighbours like? How often do you see or hear from them?
- How do you keep in touch with friends, relatives or loved ones?
- Do you have a spouse or partner? How are they keeping?
- When was the last time you left the house and where did you go?
- Do you belong to any clubs or groups?
- Do you have a pet? How is it?
- Do you have any special interests or hobbies such as reading, baking or gardening?
- How is your health?
- Has anything been troubling you recently?

## **To understand their circumstances in more detail, ask the following:**

- Are you managing with everyday chores such as laundry, ironing and cleaning?
- Are you managing with climbing the stairs?
- Are you on medication? If so, have you been taking it regularly or have there been any changes with your prescription?
- Are you receiving care at home from a registered provider? Is it continuing to meet your needs?
- Have you been eating well or suffering from loss of appetite?
- Do you prepare meals for yourselves or do you rely on help (e.g. meals on wheels)?
- Are you in employment? What's your job like and what are your hopes for the future?
- Do you have any children or grandchildren? How are they?
- Are you having issues paying household bills?
- (For those living in sheltered accommodation). How is your accommodation and do you feel safe and looked after?



## **Things to look out for**

As well as listening to the person, you should be observing their home and surroundings for signs that help or support may be needed.

## **Noticing possible signs of financial difficulty**

- Property in poor state of repair.
- Evidence of damp or infestations inside the property.
- Garden overgrown.
- Little or no heat in the property.
- Poor or limited use of electrical lighting.
- Telephone or internet disconnected.
- Car off the road or in a state of disrepair.
- Empty fridge or kitchen cupboards.
- Worn carpets, wallpaper or curtains.
- Neglected or sick pets.
- Unkempt appearance.



## **Noticing possible signs of ill-health, including anxiety and depression.**

- Weight-loss or irregular eating patterns.
- Medicines laying around.
- Use of or lack of mobility aids.
- Memory loss – especially problems remembering recent events such as messages, routes or names.
- Becoming confused or experiencing difficulty finding the right words.
- Tearfulness, headaches and sudden changes in emotions or mood.
- Hoarding of particular items and belongings.
- Considerable or large amounts of unopened post.
- Increased or decreased levels of energy.
- Rapid or rambling speech.

## Other issues

- **Security risks** – doors and windows not fitted with locks or closed properly.
- **Safety risks** – trip hazards and items not within easy reach.
- **Fire hazards** – too many plugs in one socket, items too close to a fire or heater.



## Loneliness

Loneliness and social isolation affect a significant number of people. You can play a vital role in relieving loneliness through regular contact and visits, and by helping to bring individuals into the Masonic support network.

Loneliness can be hidden, but it is important to be alert for the signs. You can help by talking to people about their situation and understanding the support they may need – the following questions are a good place to start:

- Have you had any other visitors in the last few days?
- When was the last time you visited friends and family? When was the last time they visited you?
- When was the last time you left the house? Where did you go?
- Do you belong to any clubs or groups?



## Quick tips for successful conversations

### Face-to-face

- Arrive on time.
- Introduce yourself and take some official ID, if you have not met before.
- Switch off or mute your mobile phone or device.
- Shake hands and say how nice it is to see them.
- Wait to be invited in but if they don't, then ask.
- Ask before you sit down.
- Ask open questions and be observant of your surroundings.
- Listen attentively.
- Leave them with a smile and a promise of making contact to visit again.

## On the Phone

- Make sure you are speaking to the right person.
- Introduce yourself and give the name and number of your Lodge.
- Explain why you are calling.
- Speak clearly and confidently.
- Listen attentively.
- Think about the right questions in advance.
- Promise to call them again by suggesting a suitable date and time.
- If agreeing a meeting, repeat the date, time and place back to them.
- If the person is deaf, use WhatsApp or SMS to communicate

## **D. How to help**

**Your role is not just to identify an issue, but also to do what you can to support a person and see them through their situation.**



- ❖ **To do this effectively you will need to have a basic knowledge of the many sources of support and assistance available from other organisations and charities, as well as state benefits.**
- ❖ You should make yourself acquainted with the activities of, and the assistance available from the various charities.
- ❖ It is your duty to investigate fully, on behalf of your Lodge, the circumstances of any needy brother, or of a needy masonic widow (whose deceased husband was a member of your Lodge) to determine:
  - Whether an application for assistance is justified, and
  - To which charity the application should be directed.
- ❖ A financial grant, when granted, is never for more than a year. You will therefore be requested to investigate any renewal of a grant, even when the recipient is no longer residing in your area.
- ❖ These include:
  - Our own District Grand Charity, the Masonic Services Committee and the combined charities of all the Constitutions, viz. The Transvaal Inter-Constitutional Masonic Chartiy (T.I.M.C.); and
  - Applications to Freemasonry Cares – the Samaritan Fund of United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE).

## Speak to the District Grand Almoner

- ❖ The District Grand Almoner is a good point of contact for guidance and support when you are unsure what to do next. He may also be able to signpost you to local organisations and agencies who can assist.
- ❖ Cases of serious illness (or death) of a brother, or a brother's spouse, or a deceased brother's widow should also be reported to the District Grand Almoner.

**The Lodge Secretary must also notify the District Grand Almoner and the District Grand Secretary of the death of a Brother, District or Grand Lodge Officer.**



When a Brother passes away, it is the lodge Almoner's responsibility to report this to the District Grand Almoner.

The District Grand Almoner will then confirm the details and report it to the District Grand Secretary.

The District Grand Secretary will draft a notice to the Brethren and Companions in the District and will distribute it.

Details required to report a death to the DistGAlmoner / DistGSec.

Full name	
Lodge	
Date of death	
Immediate Family Members	
Funeral arrangement details (if known)	

## The Transvaal Inter-Constitutional Masonic Charity (T.I.M.C).

Our District is currently able to assist our Members where there is a demonstrable need through the Transvaal Inter-Constitutional Masonic Charity. This fund supports two types of applications for those in need:

- ❖ Applications for the welfare of indigent Masons and their widows, in the form of a monthly Endowment or grant. A financial needs test is applicable for those applying.
- ❖ Applications for educational bursaries for children or grandchildren of Masons. Again, a financial needs test is applicable for those applying and the applicant must meet the educational standards laid down by The Transvaal Inter-Constitutional Masonic Charity T.I.M.C.

## **Applications for a Welfare Grant**

- ❖ The Lodge concerned or, in cases of urgency, its Master must FIRST be satisfied that a case should be investigated.
- ❖ The Lodge Investigating Officer (The Lodge Almoner) will arrange for the form to be completed and signed. Accompanying the forms, will be a signed copy of ID and three consecutive bank statements and other formalities. Thereafter, the recommendation for assistance must be approved in Open Lodge and then submitted to The Board of Benevolence.
- ❖ Eligibility for a TIMC Grant is as follows:
  - The Council shall take Craft membership into particular consideration, the normal requirement being that the Freemason concerned shall have been a member of his Craft Lodge for at least the proceeding Ten (10) years.
  - Where the application is on behalf of a widow or dependent, the Freemason concerned must have been a member of his Craft Lodge at the date of death for at least ten (10) years during his lifetime.
  - The qualifying period may be reduced by the Council in exceptional circumstances, such as temporary or permanent disability through accident or illness. In addition, membership of other Masonic bodies in the District of South Africa, North, may be taken into consideration.
  - Please check with the District Grand Secretary (+27 11 643 3311 or +27 11 643 3312 for the latest regulations as these do change from time to time.
  - These regulations apply to all Masons who are members of Constitutions who are members of the T.I.M.C

## **Children's education, including Bursaries for Tertiary Education**

- ❖ The term children now includes stepchildren, adopted children, and grandchildren, in addition to the natural children of Freemasons or deceased brethren. (Please note, the Freemason must be the legal guardian of the child) and the Freemason must be or have been a subscribing member of a Lodge for at least 5 years in the District of SA North for the English Constitution, or of Lodges in Districts/Provinces of Sister Constitutions in the northern part of South Africa.
- ❖ Bursaries are available for tertiary education (University, Teacher's Training College, Technikon or other tertiary institutions) of children with proven educational potential and where there is a provable financial need. Application forms may be obtained from the District Grand Almoner or the District Grand Secretary.
- ❖ Grants for the primary and secondary education of children are also available. Application forms may be obtained from the District Grand Secretary (011) 643-3311. Applicants must clearly show there is a financial need.
- ❖ Eligibility for an Educational Grant is as follows:



- No Child shall be eligible for the benefits of the Charity:
  - Unless his Father has been a subscribing member of a Masonic Body for a least:
    - Five (5) years in the case of assistance for primary and secondary education
    - Seven (7) years in the case of assistance for Tertiary education or such lesser period in each case as the Council may at its discretion accept.
    - Please refer to Regulations E2 plus E3.1 to E7 which are obtainable from the District Grand Secretary
    - Please check with the District Grand Secretary (+27 11 643 3311 or +27 11 643 3312 for the latest regulations as these do change from time to time.
    - These regulations apply to all Masons who are members of Constitutions who are members of the T.I.M.C

### **Application to the (U.G.L.E.) – Masonic Charitable Foundation (M.C.F)**

- ❖ The Masonic Charitable Foundation was formed in 2016 and brings together the legacy charities of the Masonic Samaritan Fund, Freemasons' Grand Charity, Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys and RMBI. Freemasonry Cares was created as an easy way to access the services of the four separate charities so when they formally became one in 2016, Freemasonry Cares name was retired.). However, ALL applications for UGLE Grants should be made through and with the consultation of the Board of Benevolence. **Direct contact with the Masonic Charitable Foundation in London is not acceptable or permitted.**
- ❖ It must be clearly understood that this Fund is not for local Samaritan relief.
- ❖ **All applications to the UGLE Masonic Charitable Foundation MUST be done through the President of the District Board of Benevolence – NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- ❖ Any application for assistance from the MCF must originate at lodge level starting with the Lodge Almoner and then to the Worshipful Master and must be approved by the Lodge. It is thereafter forwarded to the District Grand Almoner and then on to the President of the District Board of Benevolence .
- ❖ **ALL** application shall be countersigned by the District Grand Master prior to being sent to the MCF by the District Grand Secretary
- ❖ A District Grand Samaritan Fund has been established to be able to cover local costs incurred in medical examinations for any member of the District Grand Lodge of South Africa, North.



## Other areas of Assistance

### 1. State Pension:

You do not need to have a detailed understanding of state benefits, but a basic knowledge can be beneficial when signposting members or dependants.

### 2. Medical

- **No Medical Aid:**

In cases of DIRE NEED, the health portal of Freemasonry Cares may be applied to for assistance. After obtaining quotes for the procedure, you may, via the District Grand Almoner and the Board of Benevolence, gain access to our Healthcare specialists. They will endeavour to obtain the procedure, via their networks, at a LOWER COST. This will form part of our application process to Freemasonry Cares.

- **Medical Aid Members:**

Where limits have been exceeded or the fund won't pay for elective surgery, the Healthcare specialists may be approached to try and obtain discounted rates. Final payment will, however, be for the Brother's own account.

- For any other areas of assistance, consult the District Grand Almoner.

### 3. Mental Health Matters:

- **Counselling:** You may approach the following Organisations:
- SADAG is the South African Depression and Anxiety Group.  
0800 21 22 23  
SMS 31393
- Lifeline: 0861 322 322
- Netcare 911: 082 911
- Childline: 0800 055 555

### 4. Masonic Care Homes:

- Masonic Haven for the Aged  
54 Jukskei Avenue, Die Wilgers, Pretoria.  
Manager: Bro. Dr. Roelf Bothma (082 260 3037 or 082 260 3033)

### 5. The Compassionate Friends (TCF):

- Offering friendship and understanding to Bereaved Parents, Siblings and Grandparents  
122 Athol Street, Highlands North, Johannesburg, 2192  
Chapter Leader: Debbie James (011-440 6322)

Elizabeth Gilbert

*“Deep grief sometimes is almost like a specific location, a coordinate on a map of time. When you are standing in that forest of sorrow, you cannot imagine that you could ever find your way to a better place. But if someone can assure you that they themselves have stood in that same place, and now have moved on, sometimes this will bring hope”*

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS (TCF)**

We are a Charity Organisation and our aim is to help bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents cope with their loss. Our services are free of charge.

We are looking forward to your participation in putting together our Newsletters by writing your own story.

Send your story to the TCF at the beginning of the month and we will do our best to publish it. We would like to support you in your grief journey. Writing brings healing.

Contact the office to set up an appointment with any of our Counsellors for one-to-one sessions.

If you know of any organisation (schools, hospitals, work places) that would benefit from our services at TCF, please inform them about our work. Often people do not know what to say or do or how they can help someone who has lost a child or a sibling. Our contact details are in the Newsletter.

#### **Private Support Group of Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/261700337645037/>

#### **Private Suicide Support Group on Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/161407418848531/>

#### **YouTube Channel for TCFJHB**

The link is: [https://youtu.be/RzF\\_xsRzwfQ/](https://youtu.be/RzF_xsRzwfQ/)

#### **Bereaved Father's WhatsApp Group**

Message Graeme on 066-129-7772

#### **Bereaved Siblings Group**

For 15-30 year olds = message Sage Sharp 078-460-1555

## **MEN AND GRIEVING**

Men and emotions and their way of dealing with and showing feelings to those around them is, I think, something worth understanding – and particularly so in tragic situations such as what we have all lived through, where the world as we know it is suddenly turned upside down and life becomes a different experience. After a major tragedy we all sooner or later come to the realisation that we are going to be living our lives differently, with a new perspective and outlook which will hopefully be more positive and loving to both ourselves and those around us.

But how do we all handle this process of grieving and reaching this goal of a new understanding? Both sexes live through a tragic experience together and have to deal with the same hurt, pain, bewilderment, helplessness and all the rest of the emotions and then have to try and make some sense of it all and rebuild lives of acceptance and greater awareness. I have seen a few instances where relationships have stumbled and even fall apart because of:

**First** – a lack of communication. All of us need to feel that we can talk freely, deeply and meaningfully to those closest to us without fear of judgement. Isn't it so much better to live through a tragedy being able to openly share your innermost feelings with trust?

**Secondly** – a lack of understanding that we all grieve in different ways and everyone needs to be allowed their own reasonable way of living through their own process. Everyone is different and so handle any situation differently and with a different time span. Trying to force anyone through this process is going to be counterproductive – we each arrive at our destination of realisation at our own pace.

Directly related to this is the fact that men and women are different in the way they handle and express emotions – they just are! I hope that what I am saying and am about to say does not come across as a lecture – that is not the intention – but I have done some reading over the past few months and will be quoting from those who have dedicated a considerable amount of quality time to this topic. For example, studies have shown that men rate just as high as women in emotional awareness and, with married couples, husbands proved as attuned to their mates' stress levels as their wives – and just as capable of offering support. So, we all experience the same emotions with the same degree of intensity – but we process them differently.

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## SEVEN WAYS TO HELP WHEN SOMEONE DIES

### 1. FIND THE TIME

Most people “find the time” to attend the funeral, but seldom keep “finding the time” to stay in touch with bereaved friends. At the time of the death and for many months afterward, your companionship and thoughtful concern are very important! Since bereaved persons seldom call for help when they need a friend, make it your business to “find the time” and call on them.

### 2. RESPOND

Bereaved persons need to be reassured that no matter what has happened, or is yet to come, there are people who genuinely care for them, and who cared about the deceased. However, expressions that say, “I understand” or attempt to explain “why”, often carry unintentional assumptions that do more harm than good. As a rule, remember:

*“A simple hug or handshake will show them that you care;  
They’ll appreciate a memory, if a short one you can share;  
But as much as any other thing you give a grieving friend,  
It’s your patient gift of listening he’ll remember in the end.”*

### 3. INVOLVE

Involvement with others is the very elixir of life, but finding your place in the human race is tough when you’re suddenly running solo. Encourage your friend to become involved again but resist the temptation to become a “match-maker”. Expect him or her to relate differently to old friends and allow enough “latitude” for him or her to try on new roles. In short “involve” the bereaved person in life again by inviting them to share freely in yours.

### 4. ENCOURAGE

True encouragement is more than just a pat-on-the-back with a handful of platitudes! It is born of an honest belief in someone and must be communicated sincerely in both word and deed. It is the power that gives us the strength to believe in ourselves. Like vitamin “C”, you need a little encouragement every day. If you would help a grieving friend, be sure you give your share – today!

### 5. NEVER ASSUME

Never assume you can’t make a difference. It was Longfellow who wrote, “Give what you have, to some; it may be far greater than you dare to think”. The three most important things we have to give to each other are our time, our undivided attention and our unfailing love. The least important is our advice.

### 6. DESERVE CONFIDENCE

The word “confident” is derived from the word “confide” and alludes precisely to that quality of trust we place in our true friends. If the burdens of grief are to be borne successfully they must be shared, “confided”, with someone we can trust implicitly. As friends, when we are called up to share another’s sorrow, we must keep watch of ourselves that we always deserve such “confidence”.

## 7. SHARE YOUR FRIENDSHIP FREQUENTLY

Bereaved persons often feel isolated because friends are unsure of what to say. Usually, a cordial enquiry will open a conversation but from there it is best to let your friend lead the way. Try not to make judgements or give advice unless asked, but know that learning to express all the mixed emotions of grief is the key to their healing. As the sun's rays help heal the body, so friendship is a sunshine to the soul. Share your friendship frequently, and let its light shine in the darkness of those you love.

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## E. Keeping yourself and other people safe

### 1. Safeguarding:

When meeting with an individual or family, it is important that some basic rules are followed to ensure everyone's safety. You should consider the following in these circumstances:



- Never exchange communications or engage with beneficiaries or potential applicants on **social networking sites**.
- Do not visit vulnerable adults or children **alone** – an appropriate adult should always be **present**.

### 2. Recognising the types of abuse:

#### 1. Physical

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing significant harm to a child or adult.

#### 2. Sexual

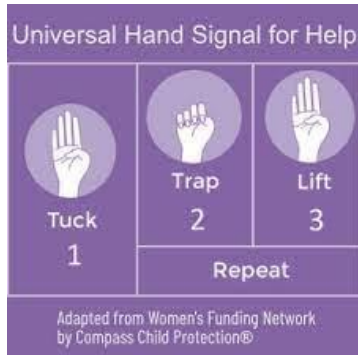
Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or adult to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.

#### 3. Emotional

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or adult such as to cause severe and ongoing adverse effects on their emotional development. It may involve conveying that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving them opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making fun of what they say or how they communicate.

#### 4. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or adult's basic physical and/or psychological need, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, their basic emotional needs.



### International Hand Signal for Help

The Signal for Help is performed by holding one hand up with the thumb tucked into the palm, then folding the four other fingers down, symbolically trapping the thumb by the rest of the fingers. It was designed intentionally as a single continuous hand movement, rather than a sign held in one position, so it could be made easily visible.

### Responding to concerns on the welfare of vulnerable people



**If you believe someone is being abused or have concerns about the welfare of a child or an adult, it is important that you do not ignore them.**

- Listen but do not comment or give an opinion should a child or adult confide in you.
- Take notes at the time or shortly afterwards and don't forget to date and sign them.
- Do not undertake any investigations.
- If a child or adult is at serious risk, and if the case is urgent, **inform the DISTRICT GRAND ALMONER IMMEDIATELY. (NO EXCEPTIONS)**
- He will advise on the appropriate next step
- Do not promise the child or adult that you won't share the information they give you.
- A good rule of thumb is **"if in doubt, shout"** and if it looks or feels wrong then it probably is.





## Lone Working

Almoners will often visit Lodge members and their families alone. Although such occurrences are rare, the lack of immediate support places you at risk of injury through aggression or violence.

It is important to remember that you are entering someone else's territory and there are some simple steps you can take to reduce the risks you encounter.

- Trust your instincts. If you feel uneasy about anything – whether when first speaking on the phone or when at the person's home – take immediate action to improve your safety. If in doubt, do not visit.
- Be aware of your exits and have a pre-planned excuse to get away, for example, you could say you have left something in your car.
- Tell someone where you are going, when you expect to return and what to do in an emergency. Check in with them if your visit goes on longer than expected.
- Always carry a charged mobile phone so you can summon help quickly in an emergency.

## F. Data protection



### What is data protection and why does it matter?

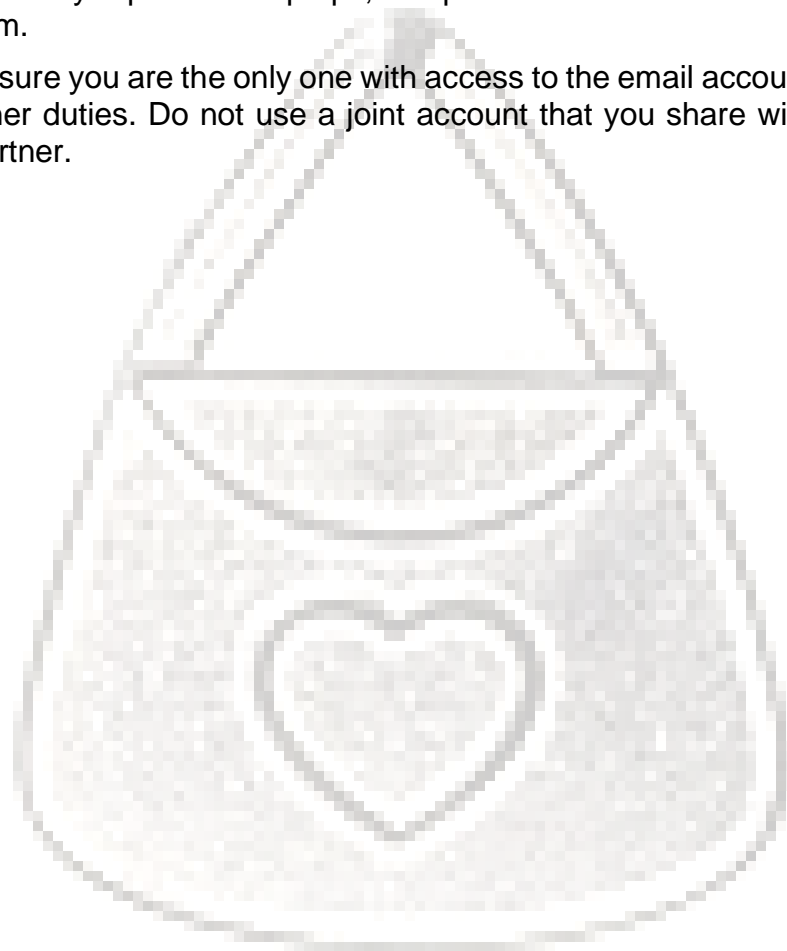
Every organisation or group that holds and uses information about individuals must comply with data protection laws or risk costly fines. Ensuring personal information is accurate, up to date, kept securely and only shared with those who have permission helps to maintain trust in the office of Almoner and the important work linked to the role.



### Some simple steps to follow

- ◆ Let people know what you intend to do with their personal information: they should know why you need their personal information, how long you will keep it and who it is going to be shared with. This information can be given verbally or in writing.
- ◆ Only collect the information you need. Don't collect extra information just in case.
- ◆ Let people know they have the right to correct any information if it's wrong and inform them how to get in touch if they decide they don't want you to use the information anymore.
- ◆ Share the information you hold about an individual with them if they request a copy.
- ◆ Only keep information for as long as it is needed. Have a schedule for reviewing and deleting information – and follow it.

- ◆ Ensure the information you have is kept up to date. If possible, take a moment to check and update records with individuals whenever they contact you.
- ◆ The information you collect can only be used for the purpose(s) you gave when you collected it.
- ◆ Make sure you have a strong password for files and portable devices. Use symbols, numbers, and upper- and lower-case letters to make the password stronger.
- ◆ If you plan to store information on laptops and other devices, consider installing a remote 'wiping' solution that will delete your hard drive in the event it is stolen.
- ◆ Shred paper files before throwing them away and make sure that files have been permanently wiped from laptops, computers and other devices before you get rid of them.
- ◆ Make sure you are the only one with access to the email account you use for your Almoner duties. Do not use a joint account that you share with your married or life partner.



## **G. Summary of Benefits (Details may change)**

1. District Grand Charity
  - Contact District Grand Secretary
2. Masonic Services Committee
  - Contact John Harmse (063 844 2769)
  - Howard Harris (072 694 4231)
3. The Transvaal Inter-Constitutional Masonic Charity (T.I.M.C.)
  - Refer to pages 10-13
  - Contact Board of Benevolence
4. Children's Education, including Bursaries for Tertiary Education and The Transvaal Inter-Constitutional Masonic Charity (T.I.M.C.)
  - Refer to pages 10-13
5. Application to the (U.G.L.E.) – Samaritan Fund and Freemasonry Cares
  - Refer to pages 10-13
6. State Pension
  - Refer to page 14
7. Masonic Care Homes
  - Refer to page 14
8. District Grand Samaritan Fund
  - Contact District Grand Secretary
9. Dentistry – University of The Witwatersrand (Department of Community Dentistry)
  - They offer a walk-in Service Only
  - You cannot phone to book an appointment
  - You must go in person to book an appointment
  - You could wait up to 6 months for an appointment
  - Booking at Hospital Street, Hillbrow, Johannesburg
  - Phone Miss Lucy Ndlovu for directions on 011-717 2593/4
10. Operation Brightsight ( Lions Club of S.A.)
  - Contact Kirsty Mackenzie on 011-422 5577 to make an appointment
  - On arrival, patients must wear a mask, temperature will be taken and you will be asked to sanitise.
  - The eye test is R100.00
  - All costs and appointment enquiries must be made through Kirsty Mackenzie on 011-422 5577
11. Chiropractic Clinic - University of Johannesburg
  - Contact District Grand Secretary



12. Podiatry Clinic – University of Johannesburg
  - Contact District Grand Secretary
13. Job Assist
  - Contact Board of Benevolence
14. The Funeral of a Member
  - Thom Kight & Company have for many years assisted Masons and their families by giving very fair deals. Their services are extremely good and are highly recommended by the District Grand Almoner. They offer a R1,000.00 discount to all members of D.G.L.S.A. North.
  - Corner Hull and 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Vrededorp, Johannesburg  
The Chapel can accommodate at least 100 people.
  - Phone Number: 011-837 5531
  - Cell: 082 776 2189
  - Email: [ADMIN@THOMKIGHT.CO.ZA](mailto:ADMIN@THOMKIGHT.CO.ZA)
  - Web: <https://www.thomkightfuneraldirectors.co.za>
15. Property Rebates for Pensioners
  - Contact District Grand Secretary
16. Mental Health - Counselling Services - (See page 12)
  - SADAG – 0800 21 2223
  - Lifeline – 0861 32 2322
  - Family Life Centre – 011 788 4784
  - FAMSA – 011 975 7108 / 0866 41 6882
  - Childline – 0800 055 555
  - Netcare 911 – 082911
17. Municipal Accounts
  - Many Municipalities offer subsidised or discounted rates for the over 60's. Assist the Brother in applying to his local municipality.
18. Retail Pensioners Discounts
  - Most Major retailers offer “Pensioners Day” discounts. Ensure that the Brother is aware of this.
19. Clubs and Gyms
  - More and more Clubs and Gyms are offering discounts to Senior Citizens. Encourage the Brother to enquire should he be interested in joining a club of Gym.
  - Virgin Active
20. The Internet
  - There are numerous sites on the internet that offer specials to Senior Citizens. Encourage and or assist the Brother to review what available options are available when a large expenditure is planned.

## H. Mauritius



### Areas of Assistance

#### 1. State Pension:

- **None in Mauritius**

#### 2. Medical

- **The public hospitals offer free healthcare**, while private clinics and practices can get quite expensive, but are easily accessible throughout the island.

#### 3. Mental Health Matters:

- Psychiatric treatment in Mauritius is mostly based in five general hospitals (in Flacq, Pamplemousses, Port Louis, Rose-Belle, and Candos) for mild-to-moderate conditions and one major mental health centre (in Beau-Bassin) that can accommodate up to 700 admissions for severe cases.

#### 4. Masonic Care Homes:

- **None in Mauritius**

### Data Protection

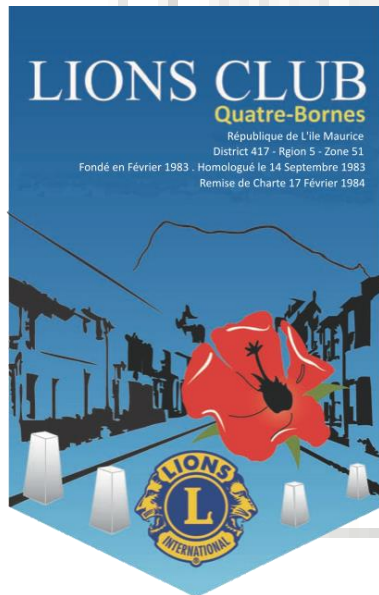
The Mauritius Data Protection Act, 2017 (DPA) governs privacy rights of individuals in relation to requirements of collection, processing, storage, transfer and handing of personal information / sensitive personal information.

Almoners in Mauritius should be guided by the practice of UGLE and the District Grand Lodge of South Africa. See District Grand Secretary +27 11 643 3311 or +27 11 643 3312.

### Summary of Benefits (Details may change)

1. District Grand Charity
  - Contact District Grand Secretary
2. Masonic Services Committee
  - Contact John Harmse (+27 63 844 2769)
  - Howard Harris (+27 72 694 4231)
3. The Transvaal Inter-Constitutional Masonic Charity (T.I.M..C)
  - Refer to pages 10-13
  - Contact Board of Benevolence

4. Children's Education, including Bursaries for Tertiary Education and The Transvaal Inter-Constitutional Masonic Charty (T.I.M.C) and Freemasonry Cares.
  - Refer to Pages 10-13
  - Contact the Board of Benevolence
5. Application to the (U.G.L.E.) – Samaritan Fund and Freemasonry Cares
  - Refer to Pages 10-13
  - Contact the Board of Benevolence
6. State Pension
  - Old age pension
7. Masonic Care Homes
  - None
8. District Grand Samaritan Fund
  - Contact District Grand Secretary
9. Dentistry
  - Local hospitals and dispensaries
10. Operation Brightsight (Check with the Lions Club in Mauritius)



11. Chiropractic Clinic
  - Contact District Grand Secretary
  - Several private Chiropractic clinics
12. Podiatry Clinic
  - Contact District Grand Secretary
  - Public hospitals and private clinics



13. Job Assist
  - None
14. The Funeral of a Member
  - Immediate family takes charge
15. Property Rebates for Pensioners
  - N/A
16. Mental Health - Counselling Services - (See page 14)
  - There are several organisations offering these services. Please check on-line or your local telephone directory or your local Doctor.
17. Municipal Accounts
  - N/A
18. Retail Pensioners Discounts
  - N/A
19. Clubs and Gyms
  - N/A
20. The Internet
  - N/A

**PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU SHOULD CHECK WITH THE DISTRICT GRAND SECRETARY (+27 11 643 3311 OR +27 11 643 3312) TO FIND OUT IF ANY OF THE BENEFITS STATED IN THE SUMMARY OF BENEFITS ON PAGES 22 AND 23 ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU.**

### **VITAL PHONE NUMBERS**

- Almoner  
W.Bro. Deva Veerasamy – +230 5 255 3811
- Secretary  
W.Bro. Lee Meng How Onsiong – +230 5 258 5326
- Worshipful Master  
W.Bro. Ashvin Mooneeram – +230 5 254 3427

## I. Botswana

### Summary of Benefits (Details may change)



21. District Grand Charity
  - Contact District Grand Secretary
22. Masonic Services Committee
  - Contact John Harmse (+27 63 844 2769)
  - Howard Harris (+27 72 694 4231)
23. The Transvaal Inter-Constitutional Masonic Charity (T.I.M..C)
  - Refer to pages 10-13
  - Contact Board of Benevolence
24. Children's Education, including Bursaries for Tertiary Education and The Transvaal Inter-Constitutional Masonic Charity (T.I.M.C) and Freemasonry Cares.
  - Refer to Pages 10-13
  - Contact the Board of Benevolence
25. Application to the (U.G.L.E.) – Samaritan Fund and Freemasonry Cares
  - Refer to Pages 10-13
  - Contact the Board of Benevolence
26. State Pension
  - Old age pension
27. Masonic Care Homes
  - None
28. District Grand Samaritan Fund
  - Contact District Grand Secretary
29. Dentistry
  - Local hospitals and dispensaries
30. Operation Brightsight (Check with the Lions Club in Gaborone)
  - <https://www.facebook.com/Lions-Club-of-Gaborone-Botswana-1203837483024904/>
31. Chiropractic Clinic
  - Contact District Grand Secretary
  - Several private Chiropractic clinics
32. Podiatry Clinic
  - Contact District Grand Secretary
  - Public hospitals and private clinics

- 33. Job Assist
  - None
- 34. The Funeral of a Member
  - Immediate family takes charge
  - Check the Internet
- 35. Property Rebates for Pensioners
  - N/A
- 36. Mental Health - Counselling Services - (See page 14)
  - There are several organisations offering these services. Please check on-line or your local telephone directory or your local Doctor.
- 37. Municipal Accounts
  - N/A
- 38. Retail Pensioners Discounts
  - N/A
- 39. Clubs and Gyms
  - N/A
- 40. The Internet
  - N/A

## **Areas of Assistance**

### **1. Medical**

- **Medical Aids are available**

## **Data Protection**

Almoners in Botswana should be guided by the practice of UGLE and the District Grand Lodge of South Africa. See District Grand Secretary +27 11 643 3311 or +27 11 643 3312.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU SHOULD CHECK WITH THE DISTRICT GRAND SECRETARY (+27 11 643 3311 OR +27 11 643 3312) TO FIND OUT IF ANY OF THE BENEFITS STATED IN THE SUMMARY OF BENEFITS ON PAGES 22 AND 23 ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU.**

## **VITAL PHONE NUMBERS**

- Almoner  
W.Bro. Arthur Moore – +267 7131 2261
- Secretary  
W.Bro. John Ebdy – +267 7173 2224
- Worshipful Master  
W.Bro. Vikash Ponangi – +267 7214 7142



## J. Eswatini (Swaziland)



### Summary of Benefits (Details may change)

1. District Grand Charity
  - Contact District Grand Secretary
2. Masonic Services Committee
  - Contact John Harmse (+27 63 844 2769)
  - Howard Harris (+27 72 694 4231)
3. Children's Education, including Bursaries for Tertiary Education
  - Refer to Page 10-13
  - Contact the Board of Benevolence
4. Application to the (U.G.L.E.) – Samaritan Fund and Freemasonry Cares
  - Refer to Page 10-13
  - Contact the Board of Benevolence
5. State Pension
  - None
6. Masonic Care Homes
  - None
7. District Grand Samaritan Fund
  - Add Contact District Grand Secretary
8. Dentistry
  - None
9. Operation Brightsight (Lions Club of S.A.)
  - Manzini Lions Club (Falls under South Africa District 410 and includes South Africa, Namibia and Eswatini)  
District 410-E, Eswatini
  - <https://lionsclubs.co.za/>
10. Chiropractic Clinic
  - None
11. Podiatry Clinic
  - None
12. Job Assist
  - None
13. The Funeral of a Member
  - Dups Funeral Home and Crematorium - +2505 2028
    - M200, 105 Mahleka St, Manzini, Eswatini

14. Property Rebates for Pensioners
  - None
15. Mental Health - Counselling Services - (See page 13)
  - SADAG – 0800 21 2223
  - Emafini - +2404 1284
  - Mental Health Centre - +268 2505 5170
16. Municipal Accounts
  - None
17. Retail Pensioners Discounts
  - None
18. Clubs and Gyms
  - Contact Bro. Nigel Taft +268 7602 3446 to enquire, should someone be interested in joining a club or a gym.
19. The Internet
  - EPTC
  - MTN
  - Swazi Mobile
  - Realnet
  - SwaziSat
  - Jenny
  - A number of internet cafes located in the main centres.

## **Areas of Assistance**

### **1. Medical**

- Check your local telephone directory, the internet and your local doctor

- **Data Protection**

Almoners in Eswatini (Swaziland) should be guided by the practice of UGLE and the District GL of SA North. See District Grand Secretary – see District Grand Secretary.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU SHOULD CHECK WITH THE DISTRICT GRAND SECRETARY (+27 11 643 3311 OR +27 11 643 3312) TO FIND OUT IF ANY OF THE BENEFITS STATED IN THE SUMMARY OF BENEFITS ON PAGES 22 AND 23 ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU.**



## VITAL PHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency Paramedics 977
- Accidents and Fires – 933 or +268 2404 3333 (Nation wide)  
W.Bro. Nigel Traft - +28 7602 3446

## K. Acknowledgements



The following sources of information were used:

- ◆ The Masonic Charitable Foundation - The Almoner's Guide – October 2017 ([www.mcf.org.uk](http://www.mcf.org.uk))
- ◆ DGL SA North Almoner's Manual 2012 and 2014
- ◆ Yvonne Woodward – research, layout and design
- ◆ Debbie van Zyl – research, layout and design

## VITAL PHONE NUMBERS

- District Grand Almoner  
W.Bro. Richard Woodward – +27 82 379 4889
- District Grand Secretary  
W.Bro. Roland Dunstan – +27 11-643 3311
- President of the Board of Benevolence  
W.Bro. Chris Adams – +27 83 654 5555









## Almoner's Record Card (Craft) – ANNEXURE E

**Lodge name:** .....

**Lodge No.:**.....

**Brother's details**

**Partner's details**

Name: .....

Date of Initiation: .....

Wife/Partner: .....

Date of birth: .....

Date of joining: .....

Date of birth:.....

Address: .....

Offices held: .....

Anniversary date: .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Rank:.....

.....

.....

Membership of other Lodges etc.:.....

Next of kin/Family contact

Post code.....

.....

Name: .....

Tel:.....

.....

Relationship: .....

Mobile:.....

.....

Tel: .....

Email:.....

.....

Email: .....

**Explanatory notes**

**Collection and retention of information:** When collecting information for the Record Card the Almoner should explain they are acting as a representative of the Lodge and how the information provided will be used. The Almoner should assure the Brother that the information is for use solely within the Lodge and will not be circularised outside of the Lodge (save with the Brother's specific permission). The Record Cards should be retained in a safe place with the Almoner's Handbook and passed on with the Handbook as succession takes place.

**Personal details:** Name, address, etc. Self-explanatory

**Details of Installation, birth dates, anniversary dates:** Can be used as a prompt and reminder of any special events such as may be mentioned in the Almoner's Report (with the appropriate permissions, of course); also, at the Lodge's discretion cards and/or flowers can be sent to celebrate special occasions – Lodge finances permitting.

**Masonic details, Offices held and Rank:** These details are for the Almoner's information but when collating or updating this information can assist in generating conversation and in providing good background information.

**Membership of Other Lodges, etc.:** Having a full list of a Brother's membership of other Lodges is exceptionally important. One of the most frequent complaints received from Masonic widows is that no sooner were they starting to recover from the death of their loved one when they received a Summons or subscription demand from another Lodge – unaware of his death. Armed with the list of a Brother's Lodge membership the Almoner can notify all other interested Lodges of a Brother's demise so as to ensure that the widow is not exposed to unnecessary distress.

**Next of kin/Family Contact:** This information is important whether the Brother is single, married or a widower. Brethren, or Masonic widows, may lose contact with the Lodge – they may move, enter residential care, fall ill, or pass on. If a Brother, or widow, falls off the radar, an Almoner has the telephone number of a family member that he can contact to find out what has happened – and it may be in appropriate circumstances offer Masonic assistance. If a tragic accident should befall both the Brother and his wife together the Almoner will know who to contact to offer the Lodge's condolences. It is **important** that the family contact member is aware that his/her details are recorded and that his/her consent is forthcoming.



## Almoner's Record Card (Chapter) – ANNEXURE F

Chapter name: .....

Chapter No.: .....

**Companion details**

**Partner's details**

Name: .....

Date of Exaltation: .....

Wife/Partner:.....

Date of birth: .....

Date of joining:.....

Date of birth:.....

Address: .....

Offices held:.....

Anniversary date:.....

.....

Initiated: .....

.....

.....

Rank: .....

.....

.....

Other Lodges /Chapters:.....

Next of kin/Family contact

Post code.....

.....

Name:.....

Tel:.....

.....

Relationship:.....

Mobile:.....

.....

Tel: .....

Email:.....

.....

Email: .....

**Explanatory notes**

**Collection and retention of information:** When collecting information for the Record Card the Almoner should explain they are acting as a representative of the Chapter and how the information provided will be used. The Almoner should assure the Companion that the information is for use solely within the Chapter and will not be circularised outside of the Chapter (save with the Companion's specific permission). The Record Cards should be retained in a safe place with the Almoner's Handbook and passed on with the Handbook as succession takes place.

**Personal details:** Name, address, etc.: Self-explanatory

**Details of Exaltation, birth dates, Anniversary dates:** Can be used as a prompt and reminder of any special events such as may be mentioned in the Almoner's Report (with the appropriate permissions, of course); also, at the Chapter's discretion cards and/or flowers can be sent to celebrate special occasions – Chapter finances permitting.

**Masonic details, Offices held and Rank:** These details are for the Almoner's information but when collating or updating this information can assist in generating conversation and in providing good background information.

**Membership of Other Chapters, etc.:** Having a full list of a Companion's membership of other Chapters is exceptionally important. One of the most frequent complaints received from Masonic widows is that no sooner were they starting to recover from the death of their loved one when they received a Summons or subscription demand from another Chapter – unaware of his death. Armed with the list of a Comp.'s Chapter membership the Almoner can notify all other interested Chapters of a Companion's demise so as to ensure that the widow is not exposed to unnecessary distress.

**Next of kin/Family contact:** This information is important whether the Companion is single, married or a widower. Companions, or Masonic widows, may lose contact with the Chapter – they may move, enter residential care, fall ill, or pass on. If a Companion, or widow, falls off the radar, an Almoner has the telephone number of a family member that he can contact to find out what has happened – and it may be in appropriate circumstances offer Masonic assistance. If a tragic accident should befall both the Companion and his wife together the Almoner will know who to contact to offer the Chapter's condolences. It is important that the family contact member is aware that his/her details are recorded and that his/her consent is forthcoming.