



Province of East Lancashire

Sir David Trippier, *RD, JP, DL*
RW Provincial Grand Master ME Grand Superintendent

Rossendale Masonic Hall, Ashday Lea, Haslingden Road,
Rawtenstall, BB4 6QX

web site: www.pglel.co.uk

secretariat@eastlancsmasons.org.uk Telephone: 01706 833170



WBro Martin P Roche, PSGD
Provincial Grand Secretary

EComp Martin P Roche, PGStB
Provincial Grand Scribe E

Dear Sir and Brother/Companion

Applications to the Central Masonic Charities and introduction of Provincial Welfare Officers

I am contacting you about an important change concerning the way in which applications to The Central Masonic Charities namely The Grand Charity, Royal Masonic Trust for Girls and Boys and Masonic Samaritan Fund are made.

Due to the amount of incorrect application forms received by the Central Masonic Charities (which is currently around 25%) they are to implement a new application structure which will eventually be rolled out across the 48 Provinces under the United Grand Lodge of England.

In order to facilitate this change seven Provinces are to pilot the new structure; East Lancashire is one of those selected.

Part of the structure involves the recruitment of a number of experienced Almoners/Visiting Brothers to specialise in the completion of the Central Masonic Charities Joint Application Forms.

The New Provincial Welfare Structure for East Lancashire will be formed as follows:

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| • The Provincial Grand Almoner | PGA |
| • Two Senior Provincial Welfare Officers | SPWO |
| • Ten Provincial Welfare Officers | PWO |

All will work in conjunction and alongside the ELMC Welfare Office at Hewlett Court.

From January 2016, anyone applying for support from the Central Charities will be visited by a fully trained Provincial Welfare Officer who will assist with completing and submitting the required application form and supporting paperwork. **This change only affects the way in which the application form is completed.** All the other important support and assistance that the Lodge/Chapter Almoners provides will continue unchanged.

Why is this change happening?

The Charities want to make the application process easier and less time consuming for everyone. Most Lodge/Chapter Almoners are only ever involved in completing one Joint Application Form and many have told the Charities that it is a daunting task and can be a difficult task to complete with little experience or training.

The Provincial Welfare Officers will be trained to take on the sensitive task of gathering the detailed personal information and all the supporting documents needed to fully assess each request. Lodge/Chapter Almoners will continue, as now, to play a vital role in the care and welfare of their members by encouraging applications and offering support during times of need.

What does the Lodge/Chapter Almoner, need to do?

A Lodge/Chapter Almoner does not need to take any special action as a result of this change. From January 2016, whenever an Almoner or individual contacts the Provincial Welfare Team, Freemasonry Cares or the Charities about an application, we will ensure arrangements are made for one of the trained Provincial Welfare Officers from our Province to make a visit.

The Provincial Welfare Officer will help the applicant to complete and return the form and let the Lodge/Chapter Almoner know when this has happened so that he can continue to provide the care, support and assistance on behalf of the Lodge or Chapter.

What if someone wants to apply to the Charities before January 2016?

Until the end of 2015, the Almoner/Visiting Brother can continue to help in making an application. This can be done by contacting the Provincial Welfare Team, Freemasonry Cares or the Charities to request an application form. He can then arrange to visit the applicant and help them complete the form and return it to the Provincial Welfare Office at Hewlett Court.

Grand Lodge recognises that the role of Lodge and Chapter Almoners is one of the most important and rewarding offices in a Lodge or Chapter and by instigating this change to the application process it will allow Almoners time to focus on the important pastoral support and assistance they provide to members and their families without the stress of completing the Joint Application Forms.

I look forward to reporting back to you on the outcome of the trial of this new approach in due course.

Yours faithfully and fraternally,



Brian J Carter PAGDC
Provincial Grand Almoner