

The first year

Impact report 2016/17



Start

For Freemasons, for families, for everyone



➤ A new charity with 230 years of history

It is my pleasure to introduce the Masonic Charitable Foundation's first impact report.

We are a new charity with almost 230 years of history and experience – this may sound contradictory, but let me explain. The Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF) was launched in April 2016 to build on the legacy of separate Masonic charities that had supported people in need since the eighteenth century.

The MCF aims to build better lives by encouraging opportunity, promoting independence and improving wellbeing. Our grants and services are funded entirely from the donations of Freemasons, and their families and friends.

We protect the financial stability of families and individuals, we help those with disabilities or limited mobility to retain independence, and we support people through illness, provide quality care and fund medical research. We also aim to reduce social exclusion and isolation,

and support education and employability for people of all ages.

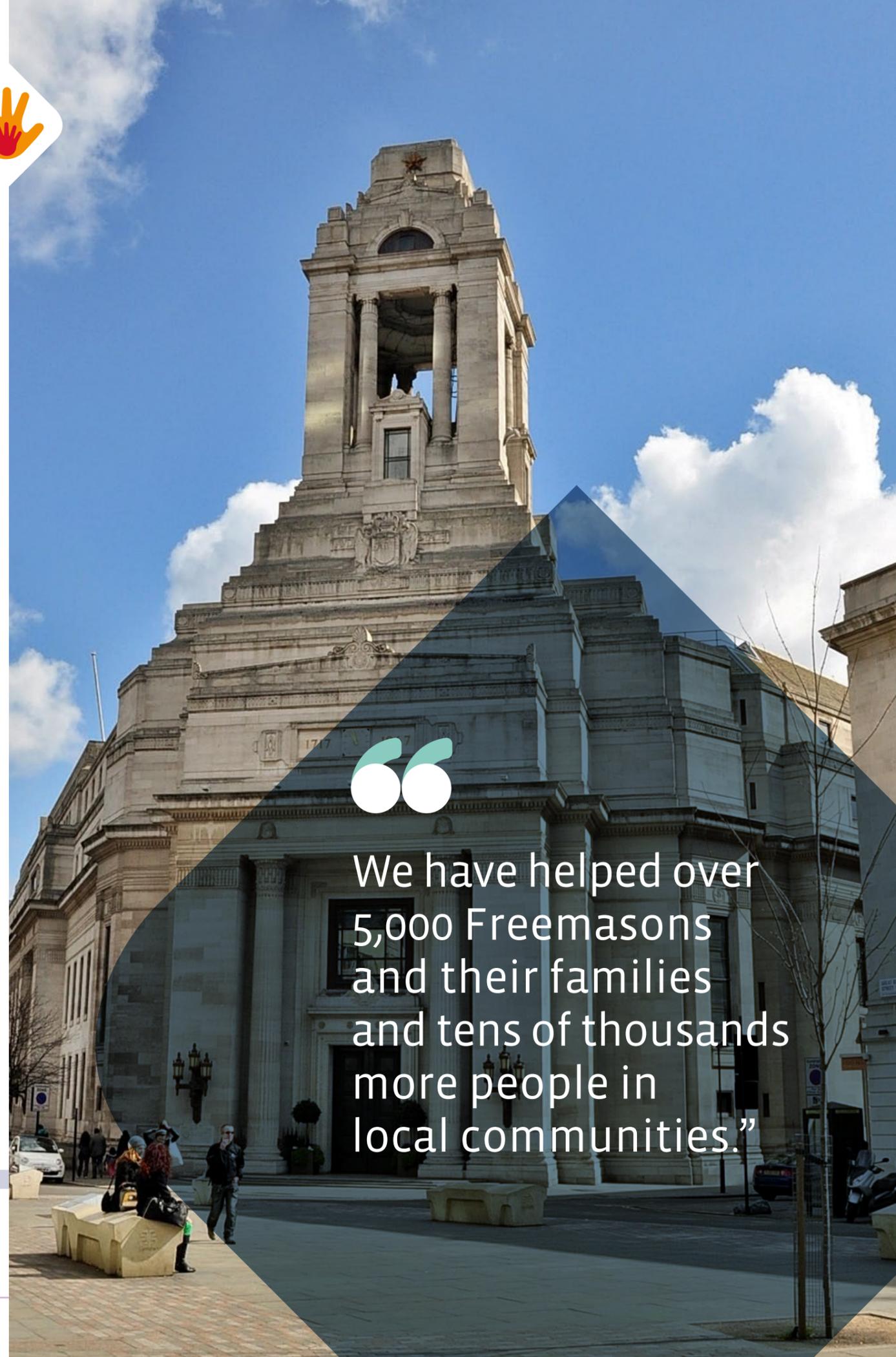
To achieve these aims, we have developed two grant-making programmes and a number of services to support both the Masonic community and the wider public. In this report, you can read more about what we have achieved so far.

Our first year as a single charity has been extraordinarily busy but, throughout the process, we have kept those we support at the heart of what we do. We have helped over 5,000 Freemasons and their families and tens of thousands more people in local communities.

Looking to the future, we have now finalised a dynamic strategy that will enhance our support and services, improve the way we work and raise our profile. We are looking forward to the journey ahead.



David Innes
David Innes
Chief Executive



We have helped over 5,000 Freemasons and their families and tens of thousands more people in local communities.”

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➤ Building our charity

The creation of the MCF on 1 April 2016 was a significant milestone.



The MCF was established **for** Freemasons, **for** their families and **for** the wider community, **for** the big issues in society and **for** the small things in life that make a huge difference.

Previously, four national Masonic charities supported Freemasons and their families, as well as local and national charities, in the areas of financial hardship, education, health and care.

Over 230 years, the charities supported hundreds of thousands of people but recently it became apparent that a unified charity would be more efficient, more effective and more accessible for all.

After a great deal of careful planning, it was exciting for us all when the charities joined together to form the MCF – the new charity at the heart of Freemasonry.

Throughout this process, we have been driven by a desire to improve the services provided for Freemasons, for their families and for the wider community.

Our first year has focused on the integration and consolidation of four ways of working and creating grant-making programmes and a suite of services to improve support for our beneficiaries.

The transition has been challenging at times but, thanks to the determination of our staff and the help of our volunteers, the people and charities we support have remained our priority throughout the process.

Our first year in numbers



Establishing

2 new **grant-making** programmes

Masonic Support – grants, support and services for Freemasons and their families who have a financial, health, family or care-related need

Charity Grants – awarding grants to local and national charities that support the most vulnerable people in society

93

staff working together as **1 team**

79% would recommend the MCF as a good place to work
Charity sector average: 70%

86% get a sense of personal achievement from their work
Charity sector average: 82%

Supporting

£13.9M awarded through 7,746 grants

£9.2M spent supporting Freemasons and their families, through 7,332 grants

+ £4.7M awarded to 414 charities across a range of sectors

Communicating

5,051 people

from the Masonic community contacted us to ask for help **and 75% went on to apply for a grant**

4,000+

conversations and visits took place between our regionally based Advice & Support Team and Masonic families

Promoting

97,000 people visited our new website

453,609 leaflets were distributed

2,996 people are wearing the MCF lapel pin

A lot has happened over the history of Masonic charity – too much to fit into this report – but here are the key points:



For financial stability

We want everyone to have the opportunities and resources they need to participate actively in society.

There are around 13 million people living in poverty in the UK. This is a huge number that represents 20 per cent of the population.

Poverty levels have changed little over the past decade as household incomes for many pensioners and families on low wages or out-of-work benefits have not increased in line with the cost of food, transport and household bills.

Living in poverty means a person does not have enough money to pay their bills, but we also know that the long-term effects reach almost every aspect of life, including physical and mental health, educational attainment, personal relationships and happiness.

Our grants to relieve financial distress totalled **£2.8M**. This included daily living grants, practical support to increase families' income, and grants to charities that support vulnerable people facing financial hardship.



1,986 families were able to stop worrying about bills and focus on the important things in life



For being able to focus on the more important things

Mark's story

“Our son, Adam, spent 42 days of the first three months of his life in hospital. I was constantly back and forth between home and the hospital, trying to be there for Adam and my wife while maintaining some sense of normality for our daughter, Aimee.

First, I used up my paternity leave, then my holiday days, and then I went unpaid. On top of that, it's really expensive to live in hospital. Between parking, petrol, eating... the nurses would tell us to get a coffee, but we'd be worried about how to pay for it!

The grants we received from the MCF lifted a huge weight from my shoulders. They have taken the pressure off during expensive times of the year like Christmas and the summer holidays, and have meant we can focus on Adam's health and the happiness of both our children during a worrying time for us all.”

➤ For a helping hand during difficult times

As well as supporting families affected by financial hardship, we also fund charities that provide financial guidance and support for people and families who are struggling to meet the everyday costs of living.

“ We’re extremely grateful to the MCF for their generous support, which will enable FareShare West Midlands to distribute more good, surplus food to charities and community groups that provide vital and life-changing support to vulnerable people in the local area.

– **Lindsay Boswell, Chief Executive, FareShare**



£60,000



To provide quality food for vulnerable people in the West Midlands.



Through this grant from the MCF, we aim to increase the number of charities we support to 227, potentially feeding 19,000 people each week.”

➤ For living independently



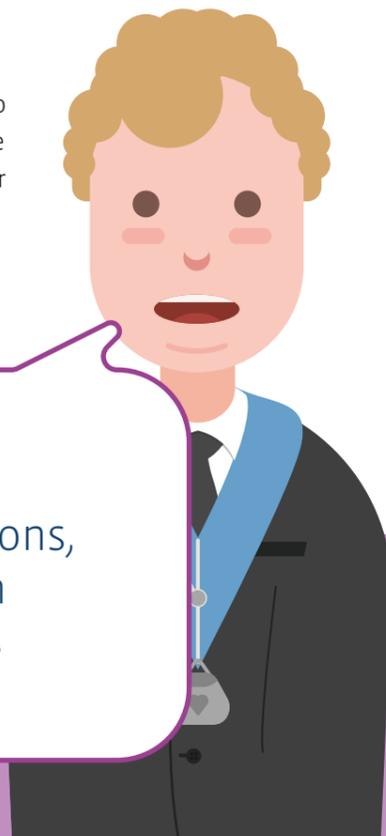
We want disabled people and those with mobility problems to live as independently as possible and have opportunities that improve their wellbeing and happiness, and that of their families.

Without the right equipment and adaptations in and around the home, a lack of mobility can often result in a lack of independence. If you can't walk, drive or stand, then you can't go to the shops, climb the stairs or take a shower. You can't go to work or socialise with friends.

Waiting times for mobility aids and home adaptations through local authorities are sometimes very long, and frequently the equipment provided is too heavy or impractical to be of any real benefit. This puts a huge strain on people with disabilities, their carers and their families.

705 grants for wheelchairs, stairlifts, rise and recline chairs and hoists made people more comfortable in their own homes

Our grants to address health inequalities totalled **£4.8M**. We provided and maintained mobility aids, funded home and car adaptations, and supported opportunities for people with disabilities, both directly and through grants to local and national charities.



➤ For enjoying the time we have

One of the ways we have helped to provide independence and opportunities for people affected by disability is a £39,989 grant to the Bendrigg Trust – a residential activity centre that provides adventure activities for disabled and disadvantaged people of any age or ability.

The Bendrigg Trust welcomes 3,000 visitors each year and, thanks to our grant, its new residential building has been fitted with crucial ceiling-mounted hoists that help visitors and their carers feel secure.

We recently invited a Masonic family – Jason, Liz, Lilly and Poppy – to visit the Bendrigg Trust to be among the first to stay in the new residential building.

Jason is living with motor neurone disease, a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects his ability to move and talk. We support the family with grants to relieve the financial pressure they face now that Jason is no longer able to work. We also provide grants to fund family days out as well as horse-riding lessons for Lilly and Poppy.

The family is making the most of the time they have together, and our support is helping them to build lasting memories.



It's becoming increasingly difficult to go away as a family, as we're always so worried about Jason and whether we'll have the equipment he needs while we are away from home. Places like the Bendrigg Trust are so important for families affected by disabilities – it's given us a chance to get away and feel a sense of normality and adventure. The support of the MCF has allowed us to focus on making happy memories as a family.”

– Liz



£39,989



To fund ceiling hoists for the on-site accommodation block.



Watch Jason and his family's trip to the Bendrigg Trust on our YouTube channel



The MCF has enabled us to buy hoists for our new building, Acorn House, a fully accessible building that will support families like Liz, Jason, Lilly and Poppy. Without funding from charities like the MCF, we wouldn't be able to provide the services we do.”

– Nick Liley, Principal, Bendrigg Trust

➤ For support through illness

We want everyone in society to feel supported through illness and have timely access to the treatment they need to live a healthy, happy life.

Four million people in England and Wales are currently on a waiting list for medical treatment or surgery. Many will receive very different standards of treatment depending on where they live, and often extra support is needed beyond medical treatment.

Being diagnosed with a medical condition can be stressful and scary, and delays and restrictions on treatment can cause tremendous emotional and physical distress. In some cases, the longer a person waits for the treatment they need, the less likely it is that the treatment will be effective.



Through **£3.5M** in grants, we have funded private medical treatment for Freemasons and their families, as well as support services and medical research studies to benefit the wider community.

1,905

grants were awarded to members of the Masonic community to help them get faster treatment

We funded **68** local and national charities that provide helplines, nursing care, support workers and sensory spaces that reduce pain, stress and discomfort.

Researchers are getting closer to finding new cures and treatments for **nine** medical conditions, following grants totalling **£1 million**.

➤ For walking the dog with my wife again **Keith's story**

“With my new knee, I can do what I want without a second thought – I can walk the dog with my wife or nip down to the shops to pick up a paper. I even work four mornings a week! Thanks to the MCF, there's nothing holding us back anymore.”





➤ For finding more effective treatments

We fund medical research studies that hope to develop new cures and treatments into conditions that affect many people in society.

£90,000



To develop better treatments for rheumatoid arthritis.



The microbiome is a burgeoning area of science, the frontier of medical research, and the MCF has helped us to take a leading role in funding research of international quality and relevance.”



We are incredibly grateful to the MCF for their generous support. It is helping us to fund research, led by Professor Frances Williams at King’s College London, to explore how the microbiome (the trillions of bacteria and other microbes that live in and on our bodies) could help revolutionise treatment for people with rheumatoid arthritis.”

- Stephen Simpson, Arthritis Research UK, Director of Research and Programmes





➤ For educational opportunities for young people

We want every child to have access to the same opportunities as their school friends, regardless of financial difficulties at home.

There are almost four million children growing up in poverty in the UK. Child poverty is now at its highest level since 2010 – that’s the equivalent of nine children in a classroom of 30.

Families experience poverty for many reasons, such as a rise in living costs, a drop in earnings, job loss or poor health. Whatever the reason, for many families, education-related costs are a significant proportion of outgoings and, when a family struggles to make ends meet, children miss out.

For some, growing up in poverty means being cold or going hungry, while for others it means wearing school shoes that are too small or missing activities like sports lessons or school trips.

Child poverty has a long-lasting impact on educational attainment, with just 34 per cent of pupils that are entitled to free school meals achieving five GCSEs at grade C or above, compared to 61 per cent of other pupils.

With **£4.8M** in grants, we provided educational opportunities for young people across England and Wales from primary school through to university. Our grants also supported charities that provide learning opportunities for disadvantaged, vulnerable and disabled young people.

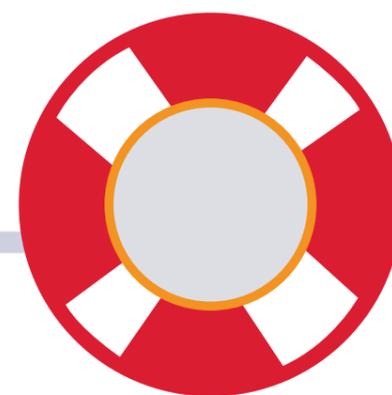


642 young people are now able to focus on their studies at school, college or university

646 children and grandchildren of Freemasons can take part in extracurricular activities

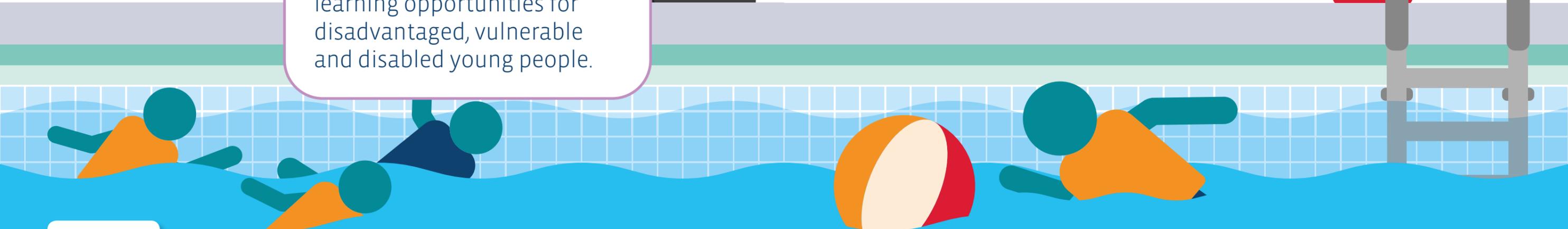
53 exceptionally talented young people can pursue a professional career in sport or the performing arts

Children and young people will have a better start to life following our grants to **21** local and national charities



SWIMMING POOL RULES

- NO Running
- NO Jumping
- NO Diving
- NO Food or Drink in pool area

➤ For breaking down barriers to learning



Our £240,000 grant to Achievement for All has provided educational programmes to improve the reading, writing and maths skills of disadvantaged children.



“ We are delighted that the MCF has donated such a huge amount to our charity, the impact of which will reach thousands of children and their families.”

– Sonia Blandford, Chief Executive, Achievement for All

➤ For following my dream **Christopher's story**

“ My dad was made redundant just before I started university. I knew he wanted to support me while I was studying, but he was struggling so much. The MCF supported me through my Bachelor's degree and my Master's.

I now work full time as a Performance Analyst for the Cardiff Blues rugby team and I'm about to start a four-year PhD that will run alongside my job.”



I really am grateful to the MCF – I've had so much support all the way through my studies, and I'm now in a position where I can support myself, which I didn't think would be possible.”



➤ For mental health and wellbeing



We want people who are experiencing mental health issues to receive the support and therapy they need to help manage and cope with their feelings.

Every year, one in four people experiences a mental health issue and 43 per cent of adults think that they have had a diagnosable mental health condition at some point in their life.

Mental health service providers often receive lower funding relative to need and struggle to offer sufficient access to services. It is estimated that 75 per cent of people with mental health problems in England may not get access to the treatment they need.

We provide a free and confidential Counselling Careline service for Freemasons and their family members. We also fund local and national projects that support those affected by mental health issues.

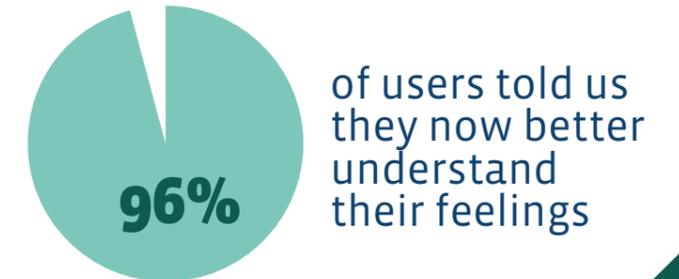
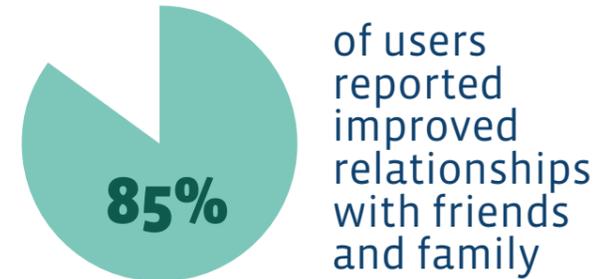
532 people instantly accessed our Counselling Careline

All callers were offered face-to-face counselling within **2 weeks**



➤ For getting back to my usual self

“Through the Counselling Careline, you pulled me out of a dark place and helped me back to my usual self. I have told my friends about my experiences and how good it was. Thank you.”



➤ For providing practical advice about bipolar disorder

Our grant to Bipolar UK has helped them to deliver their Support Line for people affected by bipolar disorder.

“The support of the MCF means we’ve been able to provide somewhere for people to turn when facing distressing and difficult situations. This year, our Support Line has been able to assist 7,565 people over the phone and by email, providing practical information and advice on a range of issues and concerns around bipolar. Whether someone is concerned about themselves or a friend, family member or loved one, our Support Line is open to everyone.”



– **Rosie Phillips, Support Line Manager, Bipolar UK**

£60,000



To fund the role of a part-time Information and Support Officer working for the Bipolar UK Support Line service.



For social inclusion

We want to reduce loneliness and social isolation for everyone in society by increasing the quality of their relationships, and helping them to build new ones.

36 charities can now support people to live more independent lives

75 people went on MCF holidays with Masonic volunteers and made new friends

Loneliness and social isolation are widely recognised as among the most significant issues facing our society.

They are particularly an issue for older people – 23 per cent of people aged over 75 who live alone do not see or speak with someone daily – but people of any age can be affected, including those who are homeless or disabled, and those who act as carers for loved ones.

Physically, loneliness and social isolation can be as harmful for a person's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, and is more damaging than obesity. It can also increase the risk of cognitive decline.

546 grants made it possible for people to leave the house

For something to look forward to

“We are incredibly grateful to the MCF for their generous grant which will continue to help us to reach more lonely and isolated elderly people. The act of attending a tea party is simple but profound and can make an enormous difference to someone who might not have spoken to anyone for weeks.”

- Cliff Rich, Acting CEO, Contact the Elderly



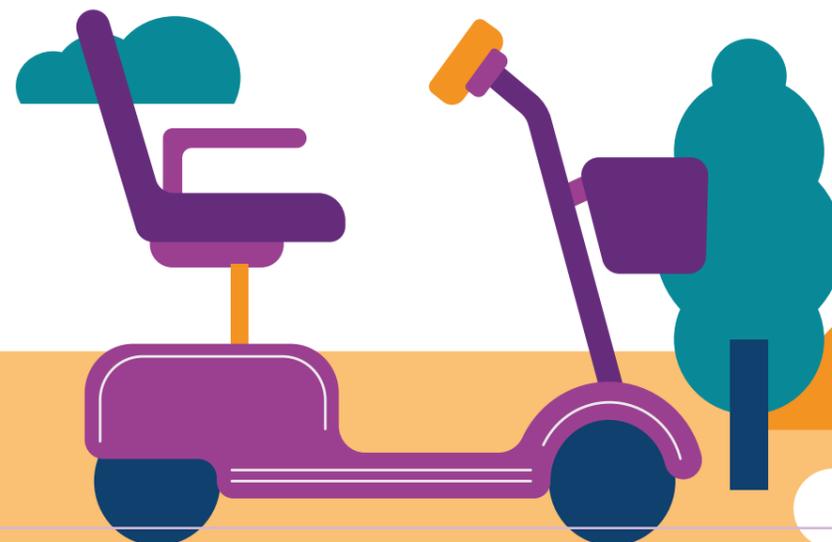
All of our grants aim to reduce isolation by helping people to participate in society. We also fund UK group holidays and support local and national projects that specifically encourage social inclusion for people who are lonely or isolated.

For popping out to see my daughters

Steve's story



I was struggling. I couldn't go out. I sat in the dining room for months on end, watching daytime TV and looking out at the rain. The MCF provided a mobility scooter that means I can travel with my oxygen tank with ease. My friends and daughters live within two miles and once I'm on the scooter I can go wherever I like!”



➤ For quality care



We want every person to have access to high-quality care suited to their needs and the needs of their carer.



We operate Masonic care homes through the RMBI Care Company and provide grants for residential, domiciliary and day respite care. We also fund local and national projects that support young and adult carers.

Due to the rising cost of care and our ageing population, it is increasingly difficult to access quality care services. This can mean elderly people are forced to stay in hospital because their own homes are not suitable for their care needs.

It can also mean that people who care for elderly or disabled family members at home are unable to take a break.

Forty per cent of unpaid carers have not had a break from their responsibilities in over a year, while a quarter have been unable to take a break in five years – citing high costs and low confidence in the quality of respite care as barriers preventing them from taking a break.



1,000 residents are receiving residential, nursing or dementia care at **17** RMBI care homes across England and Wales

97% of residents said their care home is a safe and secure place to live

97% of relatives said staff treat residents with kindness, dignity and respect

We awarded **80** respite care grants to ensure carers could take some time for themselves

245 local hospices received funding towards their work

➤ For creating a Home that feels like home **Hollie and Mary's story**



The RMBI Home is designed to recreate normal, everyday moments for residents. The doors to residents' rooms are actual front doors with house numbers and the garden recreates a street with a zebra crossing, a bus shelter and a row of shop fronts. Since I've worked here, I've found that a lot of people with dementia think that they need to go shopping."

- Hollie

"I think it's lovely! I feel very at home which is important, and I've got to know the staff who are all nice. It's a nice place to live and every time my family visit they always say how lucky I am to be here and how jealous they are of it!"

- Mary

➤ For a little bit of time for myself **Linda's story**



I enjoy caring for Dad but it can be overwhelming at times and my own health began to suffer due to the stress. The MCF pays for Dad to visit a day centre twice a week, which helps with his loneliness and also allows me to spend time with my husband, children and grandchildren or focus on work."





➤ For emergency response

We want people who have been hit with unexpected problems to have easy access to a range of support services to get them back on their feet. We also want to help communities in times of crisis.

All of the people we help have experienced an unexpected change that has made life more difficult, but sometimes the situation is even more urgent.

Emergencies come in many different forms – from evictions to medical crises to natural disasters.

It is in these moments that people are at their most vulnerable and often it can be hard to know where to turn.



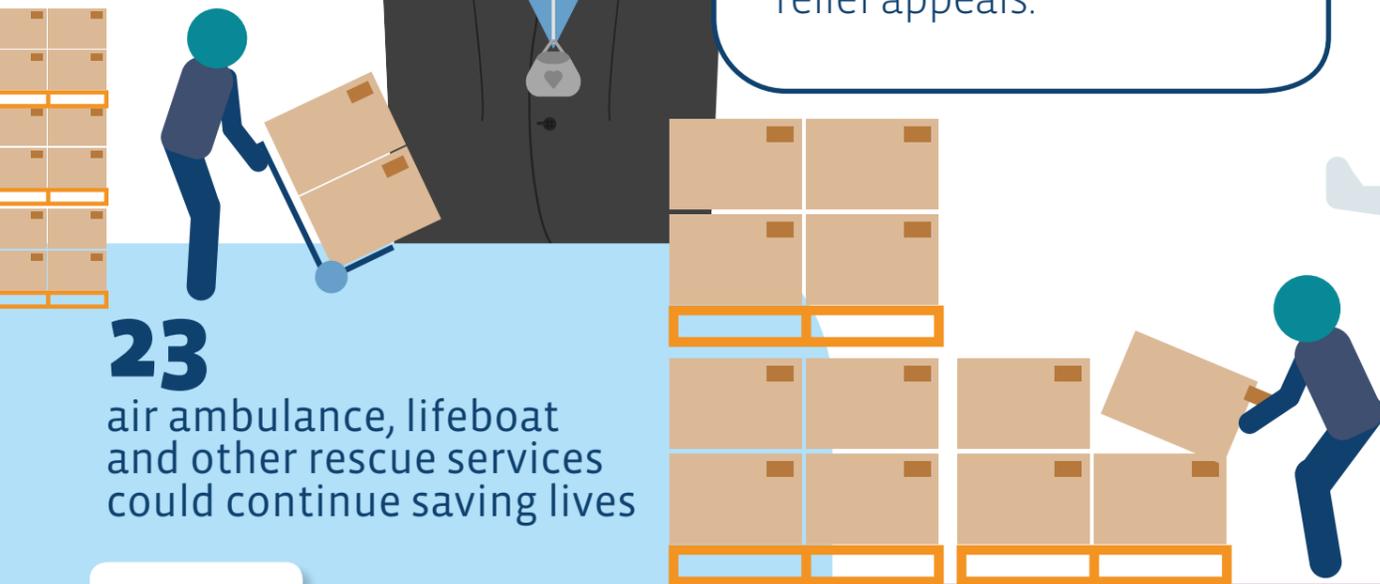
We provide emergency grants for Freemasons and their families facing an unexpected personal crisis before an application for long-term support can be processed. In wider society, we fund rescue services across the country, and support natural disaster relief appeals.



➤ For reaching families on the brink of starvation



Through our partnership with Plan International UK, we were among the first to respond to an appeal for support for the 20 million people on the brink of starvation in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Somalia.



“We’re enormously grateful to the Freemasons for their very generous £100,000 grant. More than 800,000 children under five are severely malnourished. This grant will help us reach affected children and their families with urgent support.”

– **Tanya Barron, Chief Executive, Plan International UK**

23 air ambulance, lifeboat and other rescue services could continue saving lives



I went through a very dark time. I lost everything and ended up living in a tent in the woods for eight months. In desperation, I moved into a bedsit, but without enough money for rent I was given a few days' notice of eviction.

My Almoner came to visit and, seeing the situation I was in, asked the MCF for urgent help. An emergency grant was quickly approved to save me from eviction, and, soon after, the charity approved grants to support me in the longer term. The MCF has given me breathing space to get my life back on track.”



➤ For our supporters

Trained volunteer and Almoner support programmes

We piloted a new approach to completing applications for financial support through our 'Visiting Volunteer' scheme. Trained volunteers across England and Wales visited applicants at home to make sure the necessary information was collected to complete applications.

The new approach was a success, with beneficiaries receiving a more efficient service and faster provision of support. At the conclusion of the pilot, the Provinces involved strongly endorsed a national roll out of the scheme.

Meanwhile, we have also focused on support for Almoners to help them fulfil their charitable role. We have provided a range of resources, as well as a biennial Provincial Grand Almoner conference.

91 visiting volunteers trained

1,305 supporters have downloaded online training resources from our website

Over 500 visits made to complete applications for support

98% of Provincial Grand Almoners and their teams felt better equipped to carry out their duties following a two-day training conference



An Almoner is a Masonic officer responsible for the wellbeing of Freemasons and their families.

Fundraising support

The Masonic community raises funds for the MCF during five-year Festival Appeals' – something that is unique to Freemasonry.

20
Provinces are 'in Festival' for the MCF at any one time

The MCF provides support, guidance and practical help for fundraisers. Our Fundraising department attends Provincial Festival Committee and planning meetings and delivers presentations and talks to all Provinces that are 'in Festival'. The MCF also provides a range of fundraising and Festival materials such as booklets, display equipment and merchandise.

On average,
Freemasons donate
£630
per head during a
Festival Appeal

England and Wales is geographically divided into 47 Masonic Provinces in addition to the Metropolitan Grand Lodge of London.

Efficient charitable giving

We provide the Masonic community with charitable giving accounts, or 'Relief Chests', to generate, hold and disburse funds for all types of charitable purposes.



The Relief Chest Scheme is transforming Masonic charitable giving and inspiring greater generosity from our community by allowing Freemasons to give to charitable causes efficiently. Relief Chests allow donors to give in a variety of ways and offer a range of free tools and materials to support fundraising campaigns.

4,668 Relief Chests hold **£22.6M**

£8.6M donated into Relief Chests

£1M Gift Aid tax reclaimed from HMRC

£9.2M in payments to charities from the Scheme

➤ Our income and expenditure

All our income comes directly or indirectly from the efforts and donations of Freemasons and their families and friends.

We aim to ensure that as much of this passionately raised and generously donated money is spent on supporting the people who need it, so we work hard to keep our overhead costs as low as possible.

By keeping overheads low, 82 per cent of our expenditure – or 82p of every £1 spent – is used to provide charitable grants and services.

➤ Our plans for the years ahead

Enhancing our support and services

- Adapt to the changing needs of the communities we support and extend the range of our activities and services.
- Increase the number of enquiries and applications received, leading to more individuals and families being supported.
- Improve the beneficiary journey from initial contact to grant payment and ongoing support.
- Develop a new vision for supporting other charities to help disadvantaged people to participate actively in their communities.

Improving our ways of working

- Launch a new five year strategy providing a clear vision for our future.
- Utilise the most effective technologies to provide live application and grant information to staff and volunteers.
- Host national conferences and develop new practical tools to support our volunteer fundraisers and Almoners.
- Measure the impact of our support and services and evolve what we do based upon what we learn.

Raising our profile

- Become better known and admired throughout Freemasonry.
- Play an active role in the charity sector, contributing to debates and events that increase shared knowledge and good practice.
- Engage the general public in our charitable activities.
- Develop new and engaging ways to communicate with our donors and those we wish to support.



Masonic

Charitable Foundation

For Freemasons, for families, for everyone

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