

Helping your community through the cost of living crisis



The Advice and Support Team (AST) at the Masonic Charitable Foundation (MCF), is committed to supporting Freemasons and their family members through financial, health, and other issues, and has had to step up its game in 2022 once the cost of living crisis struck.

Since February 2022, the UK has been battling with a spiralling inflation, which is currently at over nine per cent. More and more people are worried about putting food on the table, being able to afford transportation to get to work or send their children to school, as well as paying for gas, fuel and electricity.

Seeing these prices increase daily can cause a lot of anxiety; according to the Office for National Statistics, 77 per cent of adults in the UK reported feeling very or somewhat worried about the rising costs of living, and 50 per cent of those who stated being very worried think about it nearly every day.

Thankfully, the MCF Advice and Support Team (AST) is here to help Freemasons and their family members with a free and confidential service, with advisers based regionally throughout England and Wales. Once a referral has been made, a local team member will call to discuss the situation and offer advice on any support or services available.

“There is a surprisingly large amount of people who are eligible for benefits but do not claim them because they are unaware or uninformed. One example that comes to mind is a recent conversation I had with a woman whose husband died after she had cared for him for 10 years. Her caring role was so all-consuming that she hadn’t considered or been aware of the benefits she was entitled to – and desperately needed when the cost of living started to rise – for her own financial and mobility struggles. Thankfully, we have been able to help her access disability credit and pension credit which she was entitled to all along.” – Caroline Wales, MCF Adviser.

As well as informing people of their eligibility, the AST can offer guidance and support with applications for state benefits. For those applying for an MCF grant, the team will take time to check the applicant’s eligibility by assessing their financial, personal, and/or health situation, as well as their link to Freemasonry. But the support doesn’t stop there; the MCF’s free and confidential counselling service has been crucial for many people dealing with the cost of living crisis and mental health illness as a result. Financial woes and poor mental health are strongly linked, as living in debt and struggling pay bills to can invite conditions such as anxiety, depression and stress – so it’s unsurprising that one in two adults with debts also has a mental health problem.

“There has been a significant increase in referrals to our free counselling service, and some financial support cases have even been recategorised as safeguarding cases.”

– Caroline

As always, the Advice and Support team is continuing to monitor and respond to the current issues of today, and is able to make a difference to the lives of families in the Freemasonry community in these challenging times, thanks to the generosity of Freemasons.

Contact our enquiries team for more information and to get support

0800 035 60 90

help@mcf.org.uk

mcf.org.uk/get-support

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