

Community Help Offering Independent Care and Effective Support (C.H.O.I.C.E.S.)

The First Nine Months of Resounding Success Provides A Ringing Endorsement!

My Beloved Brethren,

“Because I have a Brother – I’ll always have a Friend”

I chanced on this unattributed quotation and it struck me as capturing the essence of being a Freemason. When we have something that is good, we should to share that good news with Brothers and Friends.

CHOICES is indeed good news to be shared and I have a personal objective of further increasing awareness of this wonderful initiative among all of my Brethren and their dependents.

CHOICES is one of the most innovative support initiatives that has been introduced recently in our Province.

This is Brotherly Love, Fraternal Affection and Support in action!

CHOICES is designed specifically to assist our Brethren and their dependants in time of need.

With increasing demand for guidance and support it was resolved to increase of the Care and Support Team within our Province. I am delighted to report that we now have a team of two experienced professionals: Anne Harrison in the North and West of our Province and Sharon Mees in the South and East. Both are doing a brilliant job and their efforts are greatly appreciated.

The primary role of our Care and Support Officers (CSOs) is to visit any Brother, his family or dependents in time of need and then to advise on the most appropriate support network. The provision of such professional help, advice and assistance to our Lodge Almoners by CSOs is highly valued.

Since the introduction of **CHOICES** it is most pleasing to report that the initiative has been well received by all and especially by Brethren and dependents that have been in need of immediate support.

***The Facts - Since the launch of CHOICES in October 2015:
200 visits conducted by CSOs and over £32,000 in grants provided to 34 applicants.***

CHOICES is able to respond quickly and effectively, in some cases in 48hrs, to provide immediate financial support and/or assistance through our Care and Support Officer network.

The scope of help available from **CHOICES** is wide and varied, it is not means tested.

All applications require the support of the Lodge Almoner or Area Almoner or via the Confidential Help Line, the Provincial Almoner.

Here are some typical, but certainly not exhaustive, examples of the assistance that **CHOICES** can provide:

Relief of urgent financial distress: Immediate financial assistance to help to secure the future for Brethren and dependants and to assist families to come to terms with grief, trauma and distress.

Essential home furnishings and equipment: Replacement of central heating systems, cooking and food storage facilities, specialist equipment to aid and assist around the home and replacement of home furnishings that represent a risk to the occupant are just a few examples in this category.

Minor home adaptations, repairs and maintenance: Bathing aids, replacement baths with sit in shower facilities, install grab rails, hand rails, security facilities, ramps to replace steps and all forms of minor home maintenance.

Health, social, respite and convalescent care: Assistance with transport costs for hospital appointments, specialist medical checks, respite care for fulltime carers and the provision of specialist equipment, are but a few of the areas of assistance available in this category.

Now the Provincial Grand Master’s Request – “Please Do This For Brothers and Friends”:

Please go out and spread the Good News about **CHOICES** and make use of **CHOICES**.

My thanks to the Board of Directors of West Riding Masonic Charities Ltd who have provided me with the essential information to compose this article.

RWBro. David S. Pratt – Provincial Grand Master

Additional Information regarding **CHOICES** is available via the following links:

<http://wrprovince.net/2015/10/27/west-riding-masonic-charities-choices-initiative/>

<http://www.choices-wrml.org/>