

ALL MEMBER ALERT – COVID-19 REGIONAL COMMS GROUPS

The United Grand Lodge of England has implemented an emergency structure – in response to Covid-19 – consisting of a lead Provincial Grand Master and Province for each of the Regional Communication Groups (RCG). In addition to the Grand Secretary and the Chief Executive of the Masonic Charitable Foundation, they form the UGLE Covid-19 response group.

The aim of the Covid-19 Group will be to foster closer operational working within and between the RCGs in order to deliver visible and effective help, on a national scale, to our members and their dependents in need and also to members of the wider community.

The groups are constituted as follows:

Regional Communications Group	Provinces	Covid-19 Response Group Lead
RCG 1	Cumberland and Westmorland, Durham, Yorkshire North and East Ridings, Yorkshire West Riding, Northumberland.	John Arthur <i>(Durham)</i>
RCG 2	East Lancashire, West Lancashire, Isle of Man, Cheshire, North Wales.	Sir David Trippier <i>(East Lancashire)</i>
RGC3	Shropshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire.	Robert Vaughan <i>(Worcestershire)</i>
RCG4	Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, South Wales, West Wales, Bristol.	Gareth Jones <i>(South Wales)</i>
RCG 5	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Middlesex, Oxfordshire.	John Clark <i>(Buckinghamshire)</i>
RCG 6	Bedfordshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire.	Dave Wheeler <i>(Lincolnshire)</i>
RCG 7	Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Suffolk.	Stephen Allen <i>(Norfolk)</i>
RCG 8	East Kent, West Kent, Surrey, Sussex.	Ian Chandler <i>(Surrey)</i>

RCG 9	Devonshire, Cornwall, Somerset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Wiltshire, Dorset, Guernsey and Alderney, Jersey.	David Medlock <i>(Somerset)</i>
A	Metropolitan Grand Lodge.	Andrew Manasseh <i>(London)</i>

The structure has been implemented as – at a time of national crisis – it would not be possible to achieve the same ends in the required time scale working directly with 48 separate areas.

There will be extensive communication with other members of the RCG, and also with UGLE and the MCF who will share good ideas with other RCG leads for their consideration.

The Covid-19 group is tasked with identifying and recommending a wide variety of Provincial projects that could be replicated, potentially on a national level. The group is currently investigating initiatives to feed the homeless, the manufacturing of Personal Protective Equipment through local contacts, helping to purchase essential patient monitoring equipment for the Nightingale hospitals and creating meals on wheels services from Masonic Halls with professional kitchens.

In addition, UGLE is working alongside the MCF, the Freemasons' charity, who have provided an initial sum of £1m to support strategically important, high impact, grass root projects throughout the Craft. The fund will be evenly split to provide each RCG with £100,000 to allocate to such projects.

We are also pleased to announce the launch of a national UGLE Covid-19 relief chest, which the MCF will match fund donations made to it, up to £1m. We are asking members to support this with charity collections through virtual pub nights, quizzes or LOIs they may be attending. Donations should be sent to the Masonic Covid-19 Relief Chest (Number: COVID19). A donation guide has been produced by the MCF which explains how to make payments into the Relief Chest. The funds raised will be allocated by the Covid-19 Group to support further charities that are responding to the current crisis. Please consider making a donation, without detriment to yourself or connections.

David Staples, CEO at UGLE said: "I am sure you will appreciate that these are extraordinary times, and that such times call for extraordinary measures if we are to remain relevant, effective and also, to be seen to be so by our membership and the world at large.

"At this time of national crisis, we see the potential to impact significantly and positively within our communities by doing those things that Freemasons have always done, but by doing them proudly and visibly.

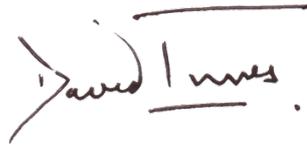
"In order to maximise this potential and ensure that what we do is effective, it will be necessary to coordinate activity throughout the whole of the Craft in a way that has never been done before."

David Innes, Chief Executive of the Masonic Charitable Foundation said: "During these challenging times, I am delighted that the MCF has been able to set aside £2 million to support the two initiatives outlined above, as well continuing to support members and their families. All of us will be acutely aware of the extraordinary efforts of local charities and other community initiatives that are delivering vital work across the country in response to the Coronavirus.

"I encourage all Provinces to identify and recommend, via their respective RCG, local charities and projects that are making a real difference to people's lives that would benefit from financial assistance from the MCF so that we can help them expand or continue their support."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Staples', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr David Staples FRCP
Chief Executive and Grand Secretary
United Grand Lodge of England

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David Innes' in a cursive style, with a horizontal line above and below the name.

David Innes
Chief Executive
Masonic Charitable Foundation