

LionHeart

FOR RICS MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

How we help

A guide for beneficiaries

WHAT IS LIONHEART

LionHeart is the benevolent fund for past and present members of the RICS and their families who have experienced difficulties in their lives. We are an independent charitable company which is neither funded nor managed by the RICS. LionHeart is governed by a Board of Trustees, and dependent on the generous support of members and firms in the property industry to raise much of the money needed each year to fund LionHeart services.

We provide confidential advice, information, support, and in certain circumstances financial assistance to people of all ages, from a few months old to over 100, who have experienced difficulties in their lives including bereavement, accident, ill-health or disability, unemployment, the separation of families, difficulties in retirement or other problems. Past and present members of the RICS and of those organisations that have merged with the RICS, and their dependants, are eligible to apply for assistance but there is no automatic entitlement to financial help. Assistance is offered at the absolute discretion of the Trustees according to the applicants' individual circumstances. Our aim is to provide the right help when it is needed.

HOW WE HELP

Advice

LionHeart has a 24 hour helpline staffed by trained advisors and counsellors who listen to your problems in confidence and offer constructive advice, information and strategies for coping with a wide range of problems.

We help people access statutory health and social services and State Benefits to which many do not know they are entitled, and obtain help from other charities.

We also offer access to a legal helpline in appropriate circumstances.

Befriending

The knowledge that someone cares can be a good support in times of difficulty. Many volunteers befriend those who are elderly or socially isolated, perhaps in ill-health, caring for someone who is sick or disabled, a single parent, or trying to regain employment in the property industry after a period of absence. This may be by telephone or personal visit.

You may have little time for expressing your own needs and would welcome contact with someone who can talk to with you about things you may not want to discuss with family or friends, or perhaps go out for a coffee, shopping or social activity.

Counselling

Counselling can give people an opportunity to explore various aspects of their life and feelings, talking freely and openly in a way that is rarely possible with family and friends. Feelings such as anger, anxiety, grief and embarrassment can become very intense and counselling offers an opportunity to discuss these. Counselling can help people develop a better understanding of their situation and so initiate change.

Our Welfare Advice Team includes experienced counsellors who offer a telephone counselling service. People using this service include those who have been bereaved; experienced ill-health; or who have an addiction of some nature that they are looking to resolve; those who are caring for sick or dependant relatives, or who are experiencing stress in their work or personal lives; or relationship or financial problems. After an initial telephone contact with a counsellor, it may be appropriate to agree telephone contact on a weekly basis for a period of time. If it is agreed that more frequent face-to-face counselling could be beneficial, this may be arranged with a counsellor in your area registered with the British Association of Counsellors and Practitioners.

Legal advice

You may need to know your legal rights and responsibilities, for example regarding employment, property disputes, accident claims, debt, matrimonial or family matters.

A LionHeart Welfare Advisor can listen to your problems and, if appropriate, give you the telephone number of a trained Legal Advisor who will return your call within the hour to discuss your problem.

They will offer general guidance based on what you tell them and indicate whether you have a legal remedy, what action you could take and whether it is likely that legal aid could be granted. This service cannot represent you in any subsequent legal action. In many cases legal action may not be appropriate, but sound advice may assist you to resolve your problem by other means.

Financial help

Financial help may be offered by grant or by secured or unsecured loan according to individual circumstances and subject to a confidential assessment of your household income and expenditure.

Help may typically be given with:

- Daily living expenses
- Replacement of essential domestic appliances, furnishings, re-decorations and property repairs
- Aids, adaptations and equipment to promote the independence of disabled children and elderly people
- Education and recreational activities for disadvantaged children of beneficiaries of LionHeart
- Care in the community, residential and nursing home care for frail elderly and disabled people, including respite care and holiday for carers
- Holidays for people in need of a break which they cannot afford from their own resources
- Gifts and additional financial help for those most in need at Christmas, including families and those who are alone
- Practical help for job-seekers

One off payments are usually made direct into a beneficiaries' bank account, often following receipt of an invoice or receipt, or direct to a third party. Regular grants are usually paid monthly into a beneficiaries' bank account.

Even in situations where financial help cannot be given, constructive advice may be offered in coping with difficult circumstances, including referral to other sources of help, and maximising income through claiming State Benefits to which many people do not know they are entitled.

HOW YOU CAN SEEK HELP

Telephone our helpline – 0845 6039057 and speak with one of our Welfare Advisors. Alternatively you can email info@lionheart.org.uk or visit our website www.lionheart.org.uk or you can write to us at LionHeart, Surveyor Court, Westwood Way, Coventry, CV4 8BF. Your enquiry will be received by one of our Welfare Advisors who will contact you by your preferred method.

If financial help is needed, and in some other circumstances, one of our volunteer Local Representatives will be asked to arrange to visit you at home. This is an opportunity to discuss your personal and financial situation in more detail. If you are married or have a partner, it is preferable that you both meet with the Local Representative. They will help you complete an application for financial help. You will be advised in advance of the information that they will require so that you can prepare for the meeting. They will need to see evidence of household income and expenditure, investments and savings, as we need to verify that you have a financial need under the terms of our charitable status. This information is treated in strict confidence.

We frequently assist separated couples. Where possible, each is assigned a different volunteer Local Representative, although they may have the same Welfare Advisor since we work on a regional basis. No information about our work with either separated partner is shared with the other by the volunteer Local Representative or Welfare Advisor.

In some cases it may be necessary for us to approach a separated partner in order to verify the circumstances of the partner who has applied for assistance. We do this in strict confidence.

PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP YOU

The Welfare Advisor is a trained employee of LionHeart who will receive your enquiry and offer appropriate help and advice. They will initiate a visit by the Local Representative if necessary. Their report together with your application will provide the substance of a report to the Grants Committee who consider all applications for financial help.

The volunteer Local Representative will be an RICS member in your region. Most will have received training for the role and will be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority. Emphasis is placed on volunteers being discreet, empathetic, impartial and non-judgemental.

If they are known to you and this would cause you embarrassment or concern, please let the Welfare Advisor know and they will try to find an alternative volunteer.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All dealings between yourself and the volunteer Local Representative, staff and Trustees of LionHeart are managed in strict confidence. No information will be shared with the RICS or other third parties without your permission, although your permission to share information may be sought where this will enable us to help you.

Information that you provide to us will be retained electronically on our secure database for so long as is necessary to provide you with assistance and to satisfy our statutory legal and financial duties.

HOW WE HELP BENEFICIARIES IN NON-UK COUNTRIES

The way in which we work with non-UK beneficiaries and volunteers is necessarily different from our work in the UK for a number of reasons.

We do not employ staff outside the UK and all business is conducted from our office in Coventry. We do not have detailed knowledge of the financial and social support systems, if any, applicable to every country where we have beneficiaries. We rely upon volunteer Local Representatives in each

country to give us an understanding of the circumstances in which people are living. Because of the small number of people in each country receiving help, we only have a limited number of volunteers. On some occasions the LionHeart volunteer may live or work too far away to visit the beneficiary, in which case contact will be by email, letter or telephone. Conversely, in close knit communities it may not always be possible to find a volunteer Local Representative who is not known to the beneficiary.

We cannot generally offer befriending and advice to non-UK beneficiaries and help is mostly financial.

For logistical reasons, non-UK volunteers are not offered the same induction and training as it is in the UK, although they are briefed about their role, and particularly the need to be impartial, objective and non-judgemental. They are made aware that all information is strictly confidential and not to be shared with third parties. Character references are obtained on all volunteers.

HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS

Decisions regarding grants and loans are made by the **Grants Committee** which is comprised of representatives of the Board of Trustees. The committee consider information provided by yourself, the volunteer Local Representative and the Welfare Advisor, in accordance with the LionHeart grants and loans policy guidelines.

Past and present members of the RICS and their immediate family are eligible to apply for assistance but none have an entitlement to receive specific assistance. All help is offered at the absolute discretion of the Trustees.

You will be advised in writing of the decision by the Grants Committee and an explanation will be given if financial help cannot be offered.

LionHeart aims to provide the best possible service to beneficiaries, but inevitably there may be times when we do not get it quite right. All complaints, expressions of concern or adverse comments are treated most seriously and we seek to resolve matters speedily where possible.

If you are dissatisfied with our service, it is preferable that you write to the Chief Executive, LionHeart, Surveyor Court, Westwood Way, Coventry CV4 8BF or to ask someone to do it for you. Alternatively you or someone on your behalf can email info@lionheart.org.uk, or telephone a Welfare Advisor on 0845 6039057 who will write down details of your complaint.

Details of our complaints procedure can be found on our website www.lionheart.org.uk and a paper copy can be provided on request.

WE WELCOME YOUR SUGGESTIONS

Please let us know if you feel we could improve any aspect of the way in which we provide help or the range of help available.

LionHeart

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Registered Charity No 261245

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