

## Step Guide - Step 4: Responding to Enquiries from Potential Candidates

The activities and records referred to in this Step are likely to be coordinated by the appointed Lodge Membership Officer (LMO).

Approaches to Lodges may come direct to a member from an interested party, via a Lodge website or social media, or as information from Provincial Grand Lodge. As such It will have acknowledged and recorded the initial approach and will be interested in the outcome, for monitoring and follow-up purposes. It is therefore important to create and maintain clear and accurate Lodge records to track contact and progress and to respond promptly (within 48 hours) to all enquiries and communications in a warm manner, perhaps by phone or email. If at any point no response is received from the potential candidate within the expected time, one reminder would be acceptable. If this fails to elicit a response, do not prompt again. Be prepared for some enquiries to come from people unsuitable to become Freemasons or whose motives or expectations are inappropriate. Lodges must be prepared to reject them. On receipt of an enquiry, seek further information to help screen the potential candidate's initial suitability for your Lodge, without being intrusive or asking for too much detail.

Information that is appropriate at this stage is name, home address, phone, email address occupation, religion (belief in a Supreme Being), personal interests, reason for interest in Freemasonry, previous applications to any Lodges, days of week when available for meetings and time in the day when available for meetings.

If the information received is satisfactory, arrange to meet the potential candidate in a neutral and public place, such a coffee shop, restaurant or pub. Plan for this first meeting to last up to an hour and a half. Bring another Lodge member if preferred. Prepare for the first meeting by referring to the Lodge profile developed in Step 1.

At the first meeting: - Ask the potential candidate about himself, his lifestyle and his interests. - Identify whether he seems to have some alignment with Masonic principles and values. - Consider whether he would be likely to become a friend and brother to members of the Lodge. - Find out why he is interested in Freemasonry and what he seeks or expects from membership. - Provide some core written information about Freemasonry.

If both parties are satisfied with the first meeting and agree to take matters further, arrange a second meeting so that the potential candidate can meet a few other members of the Lodge – and so that they can meet him. The second meeting should be at a Masonic Centre and include a tour of the facility, to gauge their response, existing knowledge and interest. The second meeting could be at an informal Masonic gathering, such as before or after a rehearsal or Lodge of Instruction. If this second meeting is satisfactory and all parties agree to pursue matters towards an application for membership, spend some time getting to know the potential candidate, and his spouse or partner, further.

Invite him, with his wife or partner, to social and other events, where friendships can form and discussions about Freemasonry and the membership of the Lodge can be held. In all such discussions, be open, honest, clear and direct about the commitment involved in becoming a Freemason. Once two members of the Lodge feel that they know the potential candidate well enough and offer to become his sponsors, proceed to Step 5, during which the sponsors take the prospective candidate through screening. If at any point in the process it becomes clear that the potential candidate is not suitable to become a Freemason, or to join the particular Lodge, politely thank him for his time and interest. If his enquiry came via another Masonic authority explain that that authority may wish to put him in touch with another, hopefully more suitable, Lodge. Keep your Provincial Membership Officer informed.

To comply with privacy and data protection requirements, delete the personal details of those who do not become members of the Lodge once outcomes have been recorded.