

# COMPANIONS

## SCENARIOS



*Over the next few meetings choose some of these scenarios and discuss how they should be dealt with by your Conference.*

**Scenario 1:**

Thirty families have requested a visit in one week, but there are only six Conference members, and each can only visit on two evenings during the week. Is this feasible? What would you do in this situation?

**Scenario 2:**

During a visit, the companion mentions they are in urgent need of food and offers to show you their empty cupboards to prove it. What should you do?

**Scenario 3:**

You are visiting a family of the Islamic faith, and they request that you remove your shoes before entering their home. How should you respond?

**Scenario 4:**

During a visit, a companion confides that her partner has been physically abusive and asks to show you her bruises in a private area because they are on her back, and she doesn't want her 2-year-old daughter to see. How should you handle this situation?

**Scenario 5:**

Frank regularly attends Conference meetings but often makes "uncharitable judgments" about certain community members. Some members have expressed discomfort with Frank's behavior and have requested not to accompany him on visits. What should the Conference President do?

**Scenario 6:**

Joan often goes on visits alone because there isn't always another Conference member available. She believes that companions open up more when she visits by herself. What are the implications of this practice?

**Scenario 7:**

Billy, a former accountant, has improved the Conference's financial situation since becoming President. With about \$1000 available each month, he has decided that the maximum amount any companion can receive is \$50 per month no matter what the situation. This procedure he proposes is not negotiable. What effect might this have on the relationship with the companions?

**Scenario 8:**

Mavis is an enthusiastic Conference member who volunteers extensively, including with Meals on Wheels and fundraising for the Guide Dog Association, while also caring for her grandchildren. However, her home visits average only 3-4 minutes. What issues does this raise? What would be an appropriate time frame for a visit?

**Scenario 9:**

Fred and Rosie visit a family and report back to the Conference, focusing on details like dusty windowsills, pet hair everywhere, an overgrown yard, the smell of overflowing ashtrays, and unwashed crockery. What does this convey about the visit in your opinion?

## RESPONSES

### Scenario One

With each member only available for two evenings a week, there are a total of 12 available evenings for visits. Visiting 30 families in a single week under these conditions is not feasible. In this situation, you should:

- Prioritise visits based on the urgency of the need.
- Communicate with the families to explain the limitations and set realistic expectations.
- Seek additional volunteer support or temporary assistance from other conferences or community organizations.
- Explore the possibility of conducting some visits during daytime hours, if possible.

### Scenario Two

Respectfully decline the offer to see their cupboards, assuring them that I trust their need is genuine. I would then discuss the available resources and support that can be provided to help them obtain food, such as arranging for food vouchers, directing them to a food bank, or organizing an immediate food delivery if necessary.

### Scenario Three

Respectfully comply with their request and remove my shoes before entering. This action shows respect for their cultural and religious practices.

### Scenario Four

Do not follow her to the private area to see the evidence of abuse. You should reassure her that you believe she has injuries. You should encourage her to seek professional medical support.

If you feel the person is in imminent danger you must call the police. As a matter of priority you need to contact the SVdP CG Safeguarding Helpline. You are required by law to act on this matter. You do not need evidence.

### Scenario Five:

The Conference President should address the issue with Frank privately, explaining the concerns raised by other members and stressing the importance of treating all companions with respect and empathy. The President might also consider providing Frank with additional training on compassionate communication and perhaps arrange for him to shadow a more empathetic member to improve his approach. If the behavior continues, further actions might be necessary, including limiting Frank's participation in visits.

### Scenario Six

Visiting alone can pose safety risks and decrease accountability. It may also weaken the support system that pairs of visitors can provide. The Conference should adhere to its policy requiring at least two members for every visit, prioritize scheduling to ensure pairs, and consider recruiting more volunteers to ensure no member has to visit alone.

### Scenario Seven

While setting a strict limit may help manage finances, it could also lead to dissatisfaction if companions feel their needs aren't being fully met. It's important to communicate transparently about the financial limitations and explore additional ways to support companions beyond monetary aid, such as connecting them with other resources and services. Conferences should be wary of setting hard and fast rules with no flexibility.

### Scenario Eight

Short visits might indicate that the companions' needs aren't being fully addressed. A visit should allow enough time to understand the companion's situation, provide support, and build rapport. Ideally, a visit should last at least 20-30 minutes to ensure a meaningful interaction and a thorough assessment of needs.

### Scenario Nine

Environmental details should be considered in context, not as judgments, but as potential indicators of challenges the family may be facing. This can help guide appropriate support or referrals. At the same time, if you have concerns about safety for yourself or fellow members during a visit, these should be raised respectfully with your Conference President or Regional Support Officer as part of your WHS responsibilities.