



AA Service News

Spring 2019

No.178

From the General Service Office of Great Britain

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Twelve Concepts. Personal Checklist. Following the General Service Conference recommendation in 2006, the original Twelve Concepts Checklist was adapted to reflect the structure of the Fellowship in Great Britain and approved by Conference in 2007:

Concept XI

The Trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

- Do we understand how the role of the non-alcoholic Trustee members help serve and strengthen the committee system of the General Service Board and General Service Conference?
- How do we encourage our special paid workers to exercise their traditional “Right of Participation”?
- Do we practice rotation in all our service positions?

Two Ways to Share Your Service Experience!

AA Service News

Contributions regarding service in the Fellowship are welcomed from all areas - individuals, groups, intergroups, regions, Sub-committees, GSB.

AA Service News is published in early March, June, September and December each year with deadline dates of the last Friday of January, the last Friday of April, the last Friday of July and the last Friday of October. The General Service Conference report is published each year in the summer issue and Questions and Topics for the following year's Conference in the winter edition.

What's Happening in Your Intergroup and Region?

Are you sending in your region and intergroup Minutes and Agendas to aainformation@gsogb.org.uk ?

Article: The General Service Conference

Alcoholics Anonymous: General Service Conference

Every year, Conference happens towards the end of April, from Friday afternoon until Sunday afternoon. Over the years it has been debated: Do we need a longer Conference? Should it be shorter? What about every two years? How do we get better questions more relevant to us?

I have had the pleasure and privilege to serve both as a Conference Delegate and as a member on the Conference Steering Committee (CSC). This is an experience I think everyone interested should try.

The Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Conference of has two main purposes. First, so that members, groups, intergroups and regions can ask questions of the Fellowship on subjects pertaining to them on Fellowship matters. And second, so that the General Service Board (GSB) can report to the Fellowship on work undertaken over the past year, thus being accountable to the Fellowship.

The last thing that usually happens at each of the six committees is electing a chair and secretary for the next year. The newly elected chairs, along with the person elected by Conference to chair the next year's Conference, two GSB Trustees, the General Secretary and the Conference Coordinator from the General Service Office (GSO), make up the CSC for the next year. Then, at end of every Conference, the process starts all over again.

The CSC meets four times in the year to set out terms of reference and decide if the two GSB Trustees should be able to vote. Then start to go through the questions submitted to GSO for next year's Conference. All submissions need to be at GSO by the last day of August to be considered for the following year.

The CSC sifts through submitted questions, rejects questions not thought to be relevant or those that have already been debated within the last three years, and boils them down to the final questions and topics. They reply to unsuccessful submissions and ask others for more background on the questions that might be worthy of discussion. Not an easy task to be done in four meetings.

This all results in the final questions for Conference. It takes a huge amount of work from all the members, groups, and intergroups of the Fellowship who took the time to submit questions. Work from the Conference Coordinator for coordinating those submissions. And work from the CSC for debating and deliberating, without trying to answer them.

To the groups, intergroups and regions: Thank you for taking the time to debate the questions and topics. To the Conference Delegates: thank you for your service and time to attend Conference on behalf of your region and for coming up with the right answers - every single year.

A very important part of this service concerning Conference questions is the fact that when they are given to the CSC for discussion, no one on the committee (with the exception of the Conference Coordinator) is aware of who made the submission. Once the questions and topics have been selected, the CSC then has the task of notifying the unsuccessful submissions at the proper time, and giving the reasons for this.

But here is the best part: the only people in the entire fellowship who know about all of these goings-on are the CSC members! It is completely kept within this small, closed and confined group! No talking to sponsors, to spouses, to groups or service colleagues. These are huge secrets to keep - and I think a head nod in the direction of the CSC members is well due for this. It cannot be easy to keep this embargo!

Then, through the AA Service News (AASN), the topics and questions are revealed to the Fellowship at the exact same time, not giving any members or service entity an unfair advantage of previewing the topics and question before anyone else. Some people may get their post before others, but the fact is, all envelopes are posted on the same Monday morning. Everyone theoretically has the same chance of reading them at the same time. The questions are then posted to the AA GB website after it is felt that the entire fellowship, near and far, have had ample amount of time to rip open their envelope.

Every year at the beginning of December, we eagerly look forward to receiving the Annual Questions for Conference. Opening our envelopes with "Winter Edition of the AA Service News" headlining "Questions for Conference".

If we are current Delegates, we head straight to the page with "our" committee on it. What have we gotten to get our teeth into this time? Group consciences all over debating and deliberating the points for and against. Some wondering

the value or merit of these topics and questions. Some saying, “Has it really been over three years since we last debated this issue?” Others, “Where do they get these questions from?”

I personally think that this embargo within AA is very important and vital to make sure we are as open and transparent as we can possibly be. Through this embargo, we can gain transparency, openness and fairness.

In the Fellowship of the Spirit,

Wullie I

Report: Glasgow Regional Forum

Glasgow Region Forum

“By our Twelve Steps we have recovered, by our Twelve Traditions we have unified, and through our Third Legacy – Service – we shall carry the AA message down through all the corridors of time to come.” (The Language Of The Heart, pg134).

After Glasgow Region reconvened in November 2016, the conscience of the newly formed assembly felt it necessary to host a Regional Forum in order to refresh and reinvigorate our purpose and duty in regards to the Third Legacy. The theme of the Forum was ‘Understanding Service’ and a number of presentations and workshops were organised to demonstrate what ‘service’ means at each level of our service structure triangle. It was also an opportunity for members to meet Trustees of the Board and staff from the General Service Office (GSO).

The Forum was held on Saturday 13th October 2018 at Renfield St Stephen’s, Bath Street, Glasgow. Arriving at this point had taken months of planning by committed Forum sub-committee members who met regularly to discuss and organise the event. What follows is a brief summary of the steps the sub-

committee took in the hope that the information may be of use to others.

The first two decisions were when to hold the event and which two disciplines (service areas) we would request presentations on. The serving Trustee at the time, Charlie, after looking at the Trustees' calendar was able to give us three possible dates which did not clash with pre-arranged Trustee meetings in York. It was then agreed that the Trustee for Young Persons, Amanda, would be invited; this being a newly formed service position and then, using The Confidential Directory, the sub-committee looked at which services were most commonly left vacant in Glasgow Region and the five constituent intergroups. We decided we would shine a light on that service and that is how Denise, NW Trustee, came to be invited to present on Employment. Our next step was then to write to GSO informing them of our preferred dates and preferred disciplines.

By December 2017 we had our date and the disciplines agreed upon which allowed us to focus on planning the event at a local level. Venue and catering were in place by January 2018 and then the sub-committee concentrated on the running order of the day. Using the Service and Structure Handbooks, we organised the day based on previously held Forums with the presentations from GSO and the two Trustees being held in the morning. The afternoon workshops, which concentrated at looking at service at group level, were decided upon after support and guidance from Denise, NW Trustee, whose region had held a forum in 2014. The final decision made was to kick the afternoon session off with a service film show showcasing the new films if they were passed by Conference 2018 – which they were!

The flyers for the Forum were created in time for them to be available at the 61st Scottish Convention and the sub-committee chair ensued that the event was mentioned on Glasgow Region's microsite; on the 'Upcoming Events' section of the website as well as being in all three AA UK publications: Roundabout, Share and AA Service News. The final decision the sub-committee made was to compile a literature pack for each attending member. The pack would contain the Service Structure Handbooks, a back copy of Roundabout and the leaflets referred to by all those doing presentations on the day.

On the day of the event members of Glasgow Region arrived early to set up the registration desk, the stage and banners. (We made sure that people signing in were aware of how their personal details would be used by having the new General Data Protection Regulation document available.) Glasgow East intergroup had kindly offered to bring their literature stock to the event and were kept very busy.

Michael, the Chair of Glasgow Region welcomed everyone and read the Preamble before handing over to Roger B., the General Secretary of AA, who talked about the role of the General Service Board of AA and how it acts as the chief service arm of Conference. By giving a brief overview of each role of the Trustees – from Chair, Vice Chair, Honorary Treasurer, etc., the audience, which totalled ninety on the day, quickly realised the amount of work carried out by the Trustees on behalf of the Fellowship. The role of non-alcoholic members on the Board was also discussed followed by a Q&A session.

Sophie and Sharon, who work at GSO, also answered various questions after jointly describing the work carried out at York. With 11 full time staff, (all of whom had pictures of themselves displayed, putting faces to names) the office is very busy dealing with all types of requests. It is from here that all literature is dispatched, enquiries about AA answered, the website updated and many sub-committee meetings and annual service workshops are held. The office has 16 AA regions, 120 intergroups, and over 4000 groups to deal with, sending information to them. The list seems endless. The Northern Service office, based in Glasgow, has 2 part time staff. The Southern Service office has 1 full time, and 1 part time member of staff. All staff at these offices are proud and grateful to work for the Fellowship.

During their presentations, both Amanda, Trustee for Young Persons and Denise, Trustee for Employment invited a member of their sub-committees to share their own service experiences which was an innovative way of allowing more members of the Fellowship to share on their passion and commitment towards service.

After lunch the new PI films were shown, the audience applauding after each one and then it was time for members of Glasgow Region to lead on the three afternoon workshops. Pat, Glasgow, was first up and spoke with passion and

enthusiasm about the structure of AA. Stevie, a former Treasurer for Glasgow Region, spoke knowledgeably on the importance of who the money in The Pot belongs to – AA. He explained eloquently what the money should be used for and, just as importantly, what it should not be used for. Finally, Elaine, a Conference Delegate for Glasgow Region, spoke about the Group Service Representative (GSR) – the most important service role of all. All speakers based their workshops on Conference approved Literature and ably answered questions after their presentations.

The Forum was concluded by Kate, RECLO for Glasgow Region. Thanks were given to the Board Trustees, the staff from GSO, and all those present. Ninety members of the Fellowship, from across Scotland and the UK had shown their commitment to the Third Legacy of AA by attending and hopefully understood at a deeper level by the end of the day that it is “Services Which Make AA Tick” (The Language Of The Heart, pg131).

The meeting ended with the Serenity Prayer.

N.B. All minutes of the sub-committee meetings can be viewed in the Glasgow Region File Storage on the AA GB Website.

Kate

Chair Forum Sub-Committee, Glasgow Region.

Creating “Awareness” in Scotland

The "Awareness Team" – AA members from intergroups and the Highlands & Islands Region, have made several presentations over the last few months to medical professionals about Alcoholics Anonymous. In addition, Terri S, General Service Board Trustee for Health, also spoke at the Scottish Parliament event in November. Terri has shared the feedback from these presentations with the team and shares them here with the Fellowship.

Many thanks to Marion M, Regional Public Information Liaison Officer (RPILO), and Jan O, Intergroup Health Liaison Officer (IHLO) and the many AA members who travel huge distances to take part in the Open Meeting Demonstrations.

Dear All,

Being ever mindful of Tradition 1 'AA Unity' and Tradition 2, 'our leaders are but trusted servants' I was humbled recently by feedback afforded Alcoholics Anonymous via myself to pass on to our Awareness Team.

I am aware that the team, which has been working together for years to fulfil AA's Primary Purpose, and to Carry the Message to the still suffering alcoholic, comprises intergroup and regional members, and it would be remiss of me as your Trustee not to share this with you all.

Last Wednesday I attended my local medical centre and was very surprised by the enthusiastic welcome from the phlebotomist and her team, who could not wait to tell me how much they had enjoyed the recent AA Open Meeting Workshop and presentation, delivered during their recent Protected Learning Time training session. They confirmed it was the most informative and moving training session they had ever experienced. They said they felt privileged to witness the humility and honesty of all the members present and were astonished at the diversity of the age range. They all said they would never look at an 'alcoholic' in the same way again.

Yesterday I received this email from Dr Fletcher:

Dear Terri,

I am grateful to be asked for feedback for the above event. Staff and doctors at the health centre have said nothing but praise too for the teaching session. Jan was an excellent speaker and the heartfelt and candid presentations by all involved were moving; a real lesson to all of the good work AA does.

Practically, as clinicians, I think the session was very useful for helping us ask more meaningful questions about the social harms of alcohol and to counsel patients more accurately about AA's services.

Thank you to all who attended.

Kind regards,

Jonathan Fletcher / General Practitioner / Dingwall

The feedback from the University of the Highlands Islands presentation to the Nursing degree students, (256 students to date) was that it was the most enjoyable presentation of the year. Following this year's presentation and before the Awareness Team had left the lecture theatre, they were unanimously invited back to deliver the presentation again in 2019. The team explained a request must be made via PI and of course will depend on continued support from intergroups and region.

These comments were forwarded to the Awareness Team following an Open Meeting Workshop presentation to a group of clergy in Inverness;

Please tell them their preparedness to share their experiences with perfect strangers certainly meant my eyes were opened to the battle they fight every day.... Society needs to get its head around it... It is an unrecognised disease... Most people think it is selfish behaviour and lack of control rather than addiction. I don't think anyone entering the room, if asked who were the alcoholics, would have been able to pick them out.

And these from the professionals who attended the Open Meeting Workshop held during Alcohol Awareness Week in November:

Greatly enjoyed the event!

Feel inspired by everyone who took part and gave of their time to educate me.

Amazing people and programme.

The presenters were inspirational honest and open.

I enjoyed the opportunity to view a sharing group and learnt how I could understand AA and signpost clients.

I loved how they shared their personal experiences that professionals don't really get the opportunity to hear about.

More time please to talk to and listen to these people.

As the Trustee with responsibility for Health for AAGB, I had the privilege to speak on behalf of the Fellowship at the Scottish Parliamentary event In November. I spoke of the work being done in Highland & Islands Region and throughout the Scottish Regions and AAGB. The work was noted and applauded by those in positions to cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous.

This is a snapshot of the feedback from the participants who have witnessed the H & I's AA Awareness Team carrying out it's Primary Purpose to Carry the Message to the still suffering alcoholic, and to inform those professionals, and others working on a daily basis with those alcoholics who impact on their resources. That AA is a free resource, that we are able to cooperate but not affiliate and that together as a region we can support each other in unity and to continue to work in harmony to fulfil AA's primary purpose.

Love in Fellowship,

Terri S

GSB Sub-Committee Vacancies

When applying for any of the vacancies below please note that forms are available from Jenny Pryke at GSO, PO Box 1,10 Toft Green, York, YO1 7NJ; 01904 644 026; jennypryke@gsogb.org.uk or in the Document Library of the AA (GB) website www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk.

The Chair, Vice Chair or Secretary of the sponsoring Region or Intergroup must endorse the application by way of a covering letter. The deadline for ALL applications is 19th April 2019.

Archives

Vacancies for the Archives Sub-Committee

Two vacancies exist for members of the General Service Board Archives Sub-Committee.

The Archives Sub-committee works to preserve the history of the Fellowship as well as aiming to develop its network of Regional and Intergroup archivists. The Sub-committee reports to the Board through the Trustee responsible for Archives.

Applicants should have a minimum of five years sobriety, will normally serve for a period of four years and should be familiar with Conference approved literature, Alcoholics Anonymous, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, AA Service and Structure Handbooks for Great Britain. An interest in AA history, good communication and IT skills along with an ability to work as part of a team would be highly advantageous. Some knowledge and/or experience of archival work would also be useful. The successful candidates would be required to attend up to four meetings a year in York.

Clive K

Armed Services

Vacancies for the Armed Services Sub-Committee

There are four vacancies on the Armed Services Sub-committee of the General Service Board.

Applicants who are serving members of the Armed Forces, or ex-Service men and women would be an advantage but not essential.

The aim of the Sub-committee is to raise awareness of Alcoholics Anonymous within the Armed Services community, both serving and ex-serving personnel, including their families.

Main aims are:

- Offer support and advice to regional Armed Services Liaison Officers.
- Help promote and encourage the appointment of Liaison Officers.
- Support the development and sharing of good practice and review and update literature, media resources and guidelines as necessary.
- Establish and maintain good relations with professionals and professional bodies connected with the Tri-Services.

It is suggested that applicants would fulfil the following criteria:

- A minimum of five years continuous sobriety at time of application
- A sound grasp of AA Service Structure, Guidelines and Traditions
- A personal service history at either intergroup and/or region in this discipline
- Good organisational and communication skills are desirable. The ability to produce written and verbal reports would be an advantage, as well as relevant IT skills.

Armed Services Sub-committee members will normally serve for a period of four years. There is an expectation that Armed Services Sub-committee members normally attend two meetings a year in York and participate in possible 'conference call' meeting(s) as and when required, giving notice to the GSB Trustee if unable to attend/participate.

Sub-committee applicants should be endorsed by the AA structure, i.e. a serving officer of their intergroup or region. The serving officer's endorsement should be in the form of a letter attached to the completed nomination form.

Mike P

GSB Trustee for Armed Services

Electronic Communications

Vacancies for the Electronic Communications Sub-Committee

**Two vacancies exist for membership on the Electronics
Communications Sub-Committee.**

Five years continuous sobriety is required, as well as a good understanding of the AA Programme, 12 Step work, the Traditions and Guidelines. Applicants will require to be endorsed by their Intergroup or Region.

It would be of help to the team if applicants are reasonably conversant with either web page design or website administration, or have CMS experience which they can bring to the team, and can be fairly flexible in terms of time commitments, so as to assist in the Sub-Committee's activities. The Sub-Committee may meet in person in York up to four times per year.

For details of where to obtain and return the application form please see the website at:

<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Service/Vacancies>

Norman B

GSB Trustee for Electronic Communications

Employment

Vacancies for Employment Sub-Committee

The Employment Committee is a Sub-Committee of The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

We have a vacancy for two Sub-Committee members.

Our Primary Functions are:

1. Create a consistent message externally that differentiates AA from other bodies
2. Establish and maintain good relations with professionals and professional bodies at national level
3. Establish and maintain good relations with employers and companies at national level
4. Increase public and professional knowledge of the AA programme
5. Offer support to Regional and Intergroup Liaison Officers
6. Create and maintain an accurate system of record keeping for future officers and events
7. Communicate effectively with the Fellowship
8. Comply with the principles and guidelines of AA.

The committee meets up to four times a year in York, although some of the meetings may take the form of telephone conferencing. (Skype). Much of the work is done in the interim generally in partnership with the other members of the committee.

The post is subject to rotation after four years.

It is suggested that we follow the following criteria:

- A minimum of five years continuous sobriety
- A sound knowledge of the AA Structure, Steps, Traditions and Concepts

- Sub-Committee applicants should be endorsed by the AA structure i.e. a serving officer in their Intergroup or Region. The serving officers endorsement should be in the form of a letter attached to the completed nomination form.

Application forms are available from GSO and can also be found in the Document Library on the AA GB website.

Mike P

GSB Trustee for Employment

Literature

Vacancies for the Literature Sub-Committee (up to four)

To enable the Literature Sub-Committee of the General Service Board of AA GB to fulfil its role of:

- Considering needs for new literature
- Undertaking selective review of the content and appearance of the entire range of the literature published by the Fellowship in Great Britain
- Assessing literature for its suitability for revision or discontinuance.

Its members meet the following criteria:

- Have a minimum of five years continuous sobriety
- Have a sound understanding of the Twelve Steps
- Have a working knowledge of the AA structure, the Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts, obtained through service at various levels
- Show a commitment to service through personal experience at their home group, intergroup and/or region

- Have a sound understanding of the Conference process (which does not solely need to come from having attended Conference)
- Are endorsed by the AA structure, i.e., a serving officer of their Intergroup or Region. (The serving officer's endorsement letter is to be attached to the completed nomination form.)

Essential requirements:

- Be able to travel to York, UK, four times a year (Fridays and Saturdays)
- Have time between committee meetings to work on assigned projects, liaise with other committee members, provide feedback on projects other members are working on, and prepare for committee meetings by reading all relevant materials
- Be able to serve a four-year term
- Be familiar with the wide range of AA literature
- Have a sound command of English written grammar and style
- Be familiar with word processing and email programmes, as well as file-sharing
- The ability to work collaboratively as a contributing member of the sub-committee. Most projects require members to work together in close collaboration, including in pairs or small groups, in the production of multiple drafts, with detailed editing, towards a final version.
- The ability to work towards set deadlines.

Desirable requirements:

- Have some experience in copy-editing, design, document drafting or similar work
- Be familiar with social media and other communications platforms.

Application forms are available from the Region Secretary, or directly from GSO.

Denise H

GSB Trustee for Literature

Public Information (PI)

Vacancy on Public Information Sub-Committee

The PI Sub-committee (PISC) is looking for two new members to join a committed team who are passionate about finding innovative ways of passing the message of recovery to the public, professionals and the still suffering alcoholic at a National, Regional & Group level.

Our primary functions are to:

- Create a consistent message externally that differentiates AA from other bodies
- Increase awareness of the AA programme with professionals and professional bodies; members of the media and journalists at national level
- Offer support and advice to Regional PI committees and liaison officers
- Provide leadership to the PI network through national projects
- Communicate effectively with the Fellowship
- Comply with the principles & guidelines of AA.
- Update the PI web site and other PI resources
- Publish the PI Newsletter and Newsletter for Professionals.

Role requirements are:

- The position is rotational after four years and requires a minimum of five years sobriety at the time of applying
- A sound knowledge of the service structure and Traditions of the Fellowship
- To provide guidance on media projects
- To work within PI Sub-Committee Terms of Reference
- To attend up to four PI Sub-Committee meetings and 'teleconference' meetings.

Application forms are available from GSO. (Contact Jenny on 01904 644026).

They can also be found in the document library at:

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Please forward applications to:

GSO of AA, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

Peter F

GSB Trustee for Public Information

Those in Receipt of AA Service News

Three copies are posted to the mailing contact for all Groups in the GB Service Structure. It is also posted to all Intergroup and Regional officers and the General Service Board.

If your Group is not in receipt of AA Service News please contact GSO and check who is the “mail contact” on your Group’s **PINK FORM** and if necessary update it. Thank you.

Please note that the opinions expressed in *AA Service News* may not necessarily represent the view of the General Service Board.

The Editor, AA Service News, GSO, PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

Email: editor.aasn@btconnect.com

Seventh Tradition

“Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

“All groups, intergroups and regions should accept responsibility for the funding of the General Service Office. The financial operations at GSO, the methods of accountability to Conference through the Board, and the broad financial strategies adopted on behalf of the Fellowship, are all subject to continuous review.

Services can require committees, Delegates, Trustees and Conferences. They include small voluntary money contributions so that the group, the area, and AA as a whole can function. They range all the way from the cup of coffee to AA’s General Service Headquarters for national and international action. The sum of *all* these services is AA’s Third Legacy”

From Regions October – December 2018	Contributions £s
East of Scotland	£ 2.215,00
Eastern	£ 17.348,00
Glasgow	£ 21.125,00
Highlands & Islands	£ 2.350,00
London North	£ 590,00
London South	£ 650,00
Midlands	£ 19.170,00
North East	£ 13.475,00
North West	£ 1.011,00
Scotia	£ 1.734,00
South East	£ 30.752,00
South Midlands	£ 527,00
South West	£ 12.200,00
South West Scotland	£ 4.290,00
Wales & Borders	£ 5.681,00
Continental Europe	£ 1.712,00
Sundry (unidentifiable) contributions	£ 1.194,00

- *AA Comes of Age*, page 140

The Role of GSO

With four thousand groups to service, GSO is the vital administrative centre of our Fellowship, supported by Northern and Southern Service Offices. It produces and distributes AA literature and publications and is responsible service meetings of Liaison Officers, for Conference and for meetings of the General Service Board (GSB). GSO liaises with and supports European and World Services. It is also responsible for Fellowship archives. Staff also deal with all telephone calls from members, the media and outside organisations.

- *Taken from GB Conference approved pamphlet ‘The Pot’*

In Memoriam

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2018

Bude Monday	£ 217,00	In memory of Julia A
St Ives Cambridge Tuesday	£ 64,40	In memory of David S
North Watford Baptist Church	£ 111,50	In memory of a member
Kendal Monday	£ 30,00	In memory of Florida Helen