

Hello! ELOs!

... and all members of the Fellowship of Alcoholics

Anonymous

Welcome to the Summer 2018 issue of **Hello ELOs**. This is the newsletter with information from, about and for Employment Liaison Officers (ELOs).

We hope you find this edition and the information it contains informative. The Employment Sub-Committee are here to support and assist all ELOs in their very important service liaison role and to ensure you know who we are our names are listed below.

Please feel free to contact us we work as a team but geographically we have taken individual responsibility for our regions as listed in the current sub-committee details below (Numbers are taken from the A.A. Regional map). Note: Region 15 Continental Europe (all members)

Denise Trustee and Sub-Committee Chair

Jim Secretary and Joint editor of Hello ELOs specific liaison with regions:

3 – Midlands, 4 - North East, 5 - North West

James Joint Editor of Hello ELOs – specific liaison with regions:

10 - Eastern Scotland, 11 – Glasgow, 12

12 - Highlands & Islands, 13 – Scotia,

14 - South West Scotland

Nick Specific liaison with:

1 - Eastern – 2, London North, 6 - South East,

7 – South Midlands, 8 – South West,

9 – Wales & Borders, 16 – London South,

A Newsletter issued specifically by and for:

Employment Liaison Officers

Issue – Summer 2018

REMEMBER – Our principal aim is to offer, with complete anonymity to all concerned, a publication where we can share our experiences of this vital service role.

Whilst fulfilling “primary purpose” of carrying our message of recovery by helping the alcoholic who still suffers.

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“Service Was the Key”

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Our secretary email address is: employment.sc@aamail.org

Or please feel free to contact us by writing to:

***The Employment Sub-Committee - Alcoholics Anonymous,
PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ.***

We will be contacting all regional ELOs or the regional chair if that service position is vacant, just to introduce ourselves and see how we can assist any activities you are either involved in or are considering. This can be: providing practical resources - attendance at your events – or just someone to talk to and use as a sounding board.

The employment sub-committee members are currently low on numbers due to rotation of service in line with our traditions and guidelines, so we are currently looking to encourage other members to come and join us.

We need fresh brains and new ideas so please see the latest edition of service news for further details of what is required and how to apply if this is of interest.

In the meantime

As always, we are grateful to receive submissions from ELO's for publication in future editions so please tell us your experiences in the employment service role and – or your experiences of and the impact on employment in your recovery.

This is your newsletter, and we rely on submissions from you, the ELOS at Intergroup and Region in helping to share our experiences, it would help us enormously if you can send us a brief report of your employment liaison activities as you do for your region, so we can share them with other ELOs.

“What are you looking for from this publication?”

Think of this as your ELO Seminar in print

Let us know about your experiences. Share your success stories and your failures. Let us know what works for you and what doesn't work.

We very much look forward to hearing from you.

Submissions can be sent to any of the committee members but as you will see currently James and Jim take joint responsibility for the publication of this newsletter:

SUMMARY OF *Employment AGM Meeting June 2018*

The chair gave the meeting a brief report outlining the sub-committee functions and provided brief details of the discussions in the earlier sub-committee meeting in relation to:

- Our current format and the current vacancies for members
- Details of where the vacancies are advertised
- The requirements for this service position
- How to apply and what references to provide
- Resources currently available for regional ELOs

The existing starter pack is still available to all ELOs this was discussed and though the current information it contains is still relevant it was thought that as most new laptop PCs do NOT have a CD drive that the presentations – sample letters and other relevant information provided on the starter pack CD would be more useful if provided on a USB drive, we will obtain costs for these.

It was agreed that we need an Employment Liaison Banner and pull up stand and the costs for these is being investigated.

It was agreed that the employment liaison starter packs should be made available to regional chairs in sufficient quantities for distribution to all inter groups. It was also agreed that this sub-committee should aim to have a presence with the above resource at all National Conventions and seminars these were determined to be as below:

- Region 13 Scottish
- Region 5 Northern
- Region 9 Welsh
- Region 6 Southern

It was also felt we should have a presence at any regional forums, the next of these is the Scotland Forum in Glasgow on the 13th of October the employment sub-committee chair will be speaking at this and will also contact the regional trustees for confirmation of dates and investigate us getting invitations to any other regional forums.

It is important that the 2019 dates for the National Conventions for next year are available to facilitate planning, this is also being investigated so “Watch This Space”.

Summary from the Regions Liaison Officers - Representatives

The difficulties in getting regular reports from inter groups were discussed we currently have only received feedback from only four out nine ELOs in post before this meeting.

It was commented that there appears to be a lack of sponsorship into service Jim and James felt they have sufficient information to hand to move forward with the summer edition.

Current employment activities across the regions include:

- Working with local job centres organising pit stop meetings
- Contact has been established with the West York's Police via P.I. activities
- Organised meeting for fifty G Ps
- Lots of work taking place with H.R. departments in railways
- Focus on large employers in the area finding they are referring to employer's assistance programs
- Some success and currently in discussions with the BBC
- Employers contacted are requesting information in an electronic format
- Approaches made to local job centres
- Large hotels are seen as good potential employers there are many in the region
- Several health and wellbeing events attended
- A blog is being produced for the employee local website to coincide with alcohol awareness month
- Contact is being established with the heads of HR in major construction companies
- Workshops being organised in local job centres via job coaches signposting to AA literature
- Outreach centres management teams are being contacted
- Contact with the Institute of Personal Development has opened an opportunity for e-learning platform
- Good contact established with the Metropolitan Police in London

Denise explained the background to the new videos which have been produced to support each of the liaison officer service positions, they were then each demonstrated:

Videos being:

- Armed Services
- Prisons
- Public Information
- Employment
- Health

Discussion took place and there was a positive feedback from the meeting that the videos would be very useful, that they were very professionally presented and very true to life due to the use of AA members instead of actors.

Article – “Every Picture tells a Story”

Every picture tells a story.....

A picture is worth 1,000 words - that saying is said to have been coined more than 100 years ago by an American newspaper editor.

It sprang to mind when I looked at the photograph on my old work security pass. It tells a story in itself.

The photo was taken when I was drinking, and it shows someone without hope, and without a future. I would have been stupid, boring and glum on a good day.

I still clearly remember the day that photo was taken. I had reported to work, for my final appointment with the company doctor before my final disciplinary hearing - the result of my drinking. I was facing the prospect of dismissal.

On the way to the medical centre, I had to report to Security, to have my photo taken for a fresh identity pass being issued under a new digital system.

"There's no point taking this," I thought, as I sat before the camera. "I won't be working here much longer".

Well, Someone, somewhere had other ideas. Not long afterwards, I reached my rock bottom – and the compulsion to drink was lifted.

I survived the disciplinary hearing, kept my job and - most important of all – started to get sober.

I re-joined AA, after nearly two years' defiance, delusion and denial. I got a Sponsor, read the Big Book from cover to cover, and worked through the Steps.

At work, I kept my head down and my mouth shut. I regained my reputation, integrity and the trust of my colleagues.

In my third year of sobriety, I took voluntary redundancy. After three months, I survived a heart attack. The following year, I found myself in another city re-joining the same organisation that nearly fired me.

Upon arrival, I was told I'd need a new Security pass because I was in a different centre.

“Great!” I thought. "I can throw away the old one - they'll take a new photo". It would be a truer reflection of the new 'me', in the new life I was leading. Or so I thought. Someone - Somewhere had other ideas.

I got a phone call to say my new pass was ready for collection. "That's strange", I thought again. "They haven't taken a new photo".

I collected my pass - and found that my old photo had been lifted from the digital database. My 'brand new pass' had my 'Old Face' staring back at me.

Although I'm now retired, I used the same pass recently when I visited a friend and former colleague.

My 'Old Face' is still there – staring back. It's a permanent reminder of where I've come from – and where I never want to return.

JB, Coventry & Warwickshire

Article “Service Was the Key”

Having finally accepted that I was an alcoholic and that I could never drink again in safety, I knew that this was not the end but just the beginning. I turned to my long-suffering sponsor and told him that I thought that I was ready to go through the program with him. He raised eyes and said “we'll see”.

Recovery was slowly taking place – and still is slowly taking place- and I began to believe that maybe it might just work this time. Honesty, open mindedness, willingness and trust were the keys for me at this point.

Very gradually I started to feel better within myself. Peace and contentment started to come into my life, something that was alien to me before.

I came to believe in a Higher Power. Spiritually I was beginning to develop in to the person I had been looking for - for years. In reality, up to this point I had no idea who I really was

Home life improved, work became enjoyable and I felt that maybe I was becoming a reliable employee. However, as my life was improving for the better due to the program of Alcoholics Anonymous I still felt that there was something missing in my recovery.

Service, that was what was missing.

I had been involved with Intergroup in the past and had some idea of how it worked, but I really needed to get involved, Alcoholics Anonymous had given me so much and now it was my turn to pay back. I had served in my home group as Chair, secretary, treasurer and general gopher and this was very rewarding.

I became GSR for my home group and headed off to Intergroup within a very short time I became an Intergroup Rep at Region this very quickly led to being appointed as TLO for my Region.

It was during this time I was put forward as a delegate for Conference. Meanwhile, my understanding of the workings of Alcoholics Anonymous: the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts became a major part of my recovery.

Having attended Conference and rotated out of post as TLO I was selected by Intergroup to be chair but I still continued to attend Region.

In 2013/14 a vacancy for Trustee for our Region arose. My initial reaction was not to put my name forward as I was fully employed at work. I was enjoying my service roles at that time and I felt that someone more deserving should be appointed. However, my Higher Power had other ideas and I was persuaded to put my name forward. It was an honor to be selected as a Trustee for my Region.

My main roles within the Board were Employment, Scottish parliament and Finance, I was to shadow the existing Trustee for Employment with a view to taking over when he rotated out of post unfortunately due to personal reasons he had to resign as a trustee and I was very quickly in post as Trustee for Employment.

This was a challenging role as the Employment discipline had only recently been resurrected.

It is with grateful thanks to the then three Sub Committee members that we began to form a plan to take Employment forward.

We planned for and delivered the new Starter pack, "Hello ELO's" and updated the Website and terms of Reference contact with Liaison Officers was established and maintained. New Sub Committee members were appointed and continued the roles with enthusiasm. We eventually reached our six-member limit within the Sub Committee.

Today four of these Sub Committee members are now Trustees for their Regions on the Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. Congratulations to them all. They truly deserve to be there. Four years came and went and it was now time to hand over the reins to someone else.

Employment is now in the very safe hands of Denise H. and I wish the Employment discipline well as they go forward carrying the message of recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous. It is customary with all trustees that a year away from service roles is recommended.

My experience of all my service roles - I am still active within my home group has been a humbling one, my spiritual development has been enhanced.

The gratitude that I owe Alcoholics Anonymous will never be paid back.

The people that I have met on my journey -and still meet - have guided me, taken my hand when I have been lost and loved me unconditionally.

Where else would this happen?

On my journey through service I have learned that I am on a 12-step journey down to humility and as a result of this I must “keep coming back”.

I know I will never be humble enough to stop coming so I think that I'll just stay.

I owe Alcoholics Anonymous my life and for that I will be eternally grateful.

Thank you one and all.

Sandy.

Article “*Service in the Employment Discipline*”

My name is Clive and I'm an alcoholic. I was inspired into service in the Employment discipline by our then Regional Employment Liaison Officer (RELO) Nicki. Her enthusiasm was infectious as she spoke at my Intergroup. She explained the role of Intergroup ELO concisely. I found myself putting my name forward for election as the new Essex Intergroup ELO (The post had been vacant for a while due to the former incumbent having to resign due to serious ill health). I had to start from scratch as there was no handover.

I found the AAGB website very informative as it contained some valuable resources on Employment. These resources included some literature geared to professionals and some past copies of the newsletter HELLO ELO's. I also contacted GSO who kindly sent me a copy of the latest Employment CD. I started to contact Employers in my area but to no avail. I tried not to get too disheartened and was encouraged by those around me who were also involved in service. At the end of the day I was still sober Thank God!

After a while I spoke with Nicki when she was due to rotate from her role as Eastern Region ELO. She again encouraged me to put my name forward as a possible replacement. I was duly elected at the next Regional Assembly. Like my predecessor, I saw the role as one of providing support and encouragement to Intergroup ELO's within Eastern Region. During my time as RELO. I was invited to speak at some of our Intergroups on the role of Employment Liaison Officer. This generated interest in this service role and one Intergroup elected it's new ELO there and then! I also attended the Annual General Meeting for RELO's which is held at GSO in York in June. I found this meeting very inspiring and was able to hear of many mainly positive experiences of RELO's from across the UK. I also came into contact with the

Employment Sub Committee for the first time. They helped set the agenda for the AGM with welcome participation from the RELO's present. They are also responsible for putting together many of the resources found on the website, (for example, the past editions of HELLO ELO's and the hints and tips leaflets), the Employment CD and Starter Pack for new ELO's.

I applied to become a member of the Employment Sub Committee in November 2015. I gained the support of my Intergroup at its December meeting. Everyone who applies to become a member of any of the Board's Sub Committees is required to be sponsored by their Intergroup or Region. My Intergroup Chair and Secretary wrote a covering letter to support my application following the meeting. I then had two separate telephone interviews by members of the Board's Nominations Committee. These were informal affairs but covered the questions that they asked fully.

I received a letter a couple of weeks later from the General Secretary congratulating me on my appointment to the Employment Subcommittee. I attended my first meeting in May 2016 and was thrust into action straight away as the new Editor of the newsletter HELLO ELO's, a role which I have thoroughly enjoyed. I didn't have to work alone Thank God as I had another member as part of the small editorial team. The Sub Committee were also discussing and putting together the new Employment Starter Packs. These include some literature pamphlets addressed to Employers and Professionals, Hints and Tips and the updated CD. We also got busy preparing for the upcoming Employment Seminar which took place at the Park Inn Hotel in York in June 2016. This was one of the highlights of my whole service history and was a privilege and pleasure to be involved with. I learned so much about team work and it has been wonderful to be part of such an industrious bunch of people! The summer 2016 edition of HELLO ELO's was my first as editor and I'm forever grateful to Maxine who helped me put it all together. I'm also forever grateful to Sandy and All the Sub Committee for their support, encouragement and contributions.

One of the most over riding lessons I've learned through my time as a member of the Employment Subcommittee is that I don't have to be alone in service. The subcommittee has gone from strength to strength and I believe it has an exciting time ahead. It has a new editorial team for HELLO ELO's and a team who will liaise with RELO's and provide support when requested. I will miss working with the subcommittee but I look forward to challenges in my new role as Board Trustee for Eastern Region.

In conclusion I'm so very grateful for being able to play a small part in the Employment service discipline.

Clive K

Article “*Employment Liaison*”

My name is James, I am an alcoholic and a Sub Committee member for Employment and I have been looking through the Confidential Directory and what I found is that there are only 4 out of 16 Regions with Regional Employment Liaison Officers (RELO) listed. For Intergroups there are 30 out of 118 listed. While other members of the Sub Committee and myself tried to reach out to all these ELOs some we never got a response from. So, they could be less ELOs in post or maybe more.

So what I am looking at is if there is an enquiry received at one of the Service Offices, or anywhere, in lots of areas, there is no-one to refer these Employers to. Then I looked in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and there is a whole chapter dedicated to the Employer. Bill and Bob knew, right back a long time ago, that going to the Employer to talk about alcoholics is important, to get the Employer to help us to help the suffering alcoholic.

So what is happening in your Intergroup, in your Region? There is fantastic work going on and a lot of people are doing a lot of things. I know that Employers are being approached but it be through other disciplines and in your areas, I am sure there is a lot of hard work going on in Public Information, Health, Prisons, Probation, it's fantastic but why are we waiting until an alcoholic is in the hands of the medical profession or the legal profession before we get near them. We need to do something about that.

What are we trying to do with employment? We need to let the Employer know that Alcoholics Anonymous is out there, that we have something to offer the workforce. Alcoholics cost employers money because they don't come into work because they come in late, because they have accidents and because employers have to let them go, people who they have trained and are skilled workers.

We want to talk to Employers, we want to help them help the people they employ. We want to get a poster on their staff notice boards, get one of our helpline cards up there. We want to be invited to give presentations to HR departments or managers. We want to let them know that there is a free service to help their workforce and really what we want to get to is the suffering alcoholic.

The Region Employment Liaison meeting was held over the weekend 15th/16th June Only four regions were represented, 2 by RELOs, one by the Chairperson and one by the Vice Chair

I was encouraged by the enthusiasm and the wealth of ideas on how to reach out to the suffering alcoholic through the workplace. This proved to be a valuable meeting with the sharing of experiences and best practice.

They were also some reports sent in from ELOs who could not attend the meeting and they were read out.

There was also discussion around how to encourage members into this area of service and once they are in position, how to help them fulfil their role. A list of suggestions was put together. One of the ideas that were suggested is to for the Sub Committee members to get in contact with the ELOs at both intergroup and regional level which was in progress, but also to get in touch with the Regional Chairs if there is no ELO. Also, ELO starter packs were to be given to the Regional Chairs at the Region Chairs meeting. A new AA poster for Employment has also been suggested. Resources to take around the country to trade shows, regional forums and service workshops.

They were also a few reports from some ELOs of the difficulty of carrying the AA message to employers particularly if companies are using Employment Assistant Programs and Occupational Health Suppliers. The employment Sub Committee are continuing to investigate how best to get in touch with these companies. We may not know the answer but someone reading this article could be working in these fields or knows how to get in contact with these companies and we gratefully appreciate any ideas.

What's happening now? There is a lot happening, but perhaps not under the name of Employment. Employment Liaison Officers have been in touch with The Department of Works and Pensions, Legal Practices, Occupational Health, The Health Centre, Banks, Marks and Spencer's, John Lewis plus other mainline stores, Drug and Alcohol Partnerships Public Companies, Local Councils, Trade Unions and many others, passing on our message of Alcoholics Anonymous.

We contact national Employers and local Employers who want to know what AA has to offer and how we can help them with their problem with their employees that they know are under-performing.

What help is available for the ELO? There is a lot available to help ELOs There is the ELO starter pack which contains useful material and suggestions. They are members of the Sub Committee willing to offer any advice to any new or current ELO. They are current members out there who had previous experience as an ELO they will be willing to 12 step anyone into the post.

James C

Footnote and Close

The employment sub-committee sincerely hope you have enjoyed reading this publication, if you have please by your enthusiasm and sponsorship encourage others to consider "service" in our wonderful fellowship. Why not put "pen to paper" or "fingers to keyboard" and tell us honestly what you think of this publication and how we may improve it for you our readers.

With Thanks "The Employment Sub-Committee"