

Why do we have Conference?



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Every year, London Region (North & South), sends 10/12 delegates to the national conference for AA in GB.

Each delegate is charged with discussing, in a committee comprising one delegate from each region, the questions allocated to that committee.

The committee makes recommendations; then the recommendations are discussed at a 'plenary' session (i.e. with everyone participating), to produce the recommendations made by conference, to be implemented by groups, Intergroup, Regions, the General Service Board, etc. . . .

The job of a GSR is to provide a link between the AA members and the delegates. The delegates, in their decision-making, are focussing the conscience of the fellowship as a whole rather than making personal decisions. They unite to produce a single spiritual entity. Each of the questions gets to be discussed within the group.

Some questions will not be relevant to groups; others will. Some are appropriate for groups to comment on; others less so, if relevant experience concerning, say, a particular domain of service is lacking at that group (e.g. the topic of interaction between regions or Intergroup or the work of a national sub-committee). It is fine for groups to 'pass' on a particular question without feeling guilty that this represents a dereliction of duty.

The discussions really are a free-for-all. We don't need to vote except to get a sense of the room's predominant view, as the endeavour is not subject to the Concept XII principle of 'discussion, vote, and substantial unanimity'; decisions not being made: we're simply harvesting views so that decisions can be made taking into account these views. The discussion is, however, subject to Concepts IV and V (participation and minority opinion) and the democratic principle enshrined in Concept XII, so, when I'm a GSR, I write down all of the views expressed, and maybe write down if there is a preponderant view on a particular topic.

As a GSR try to guide discussion to sharing experience on a topic rather than theorising. This can produce more valuable insights.

It's also terribly important that the group conscience be informed. This means, unfortunately for GSRs, quite a bit of background reading, to be able to help out group members who don't understand the structure of AA in GB or who are not familiar with the service and structure handbooks.

Once a GSR has held (a) group conscience meeting(s), she or he can put together a little document summarising the views expressed, committee by committee and question by question. You can forward it to all of the delegates through your intergroup.

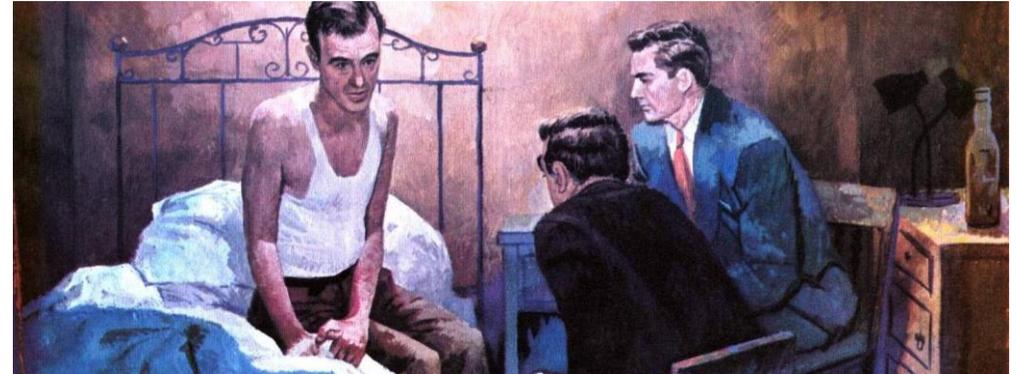
SOUTHERN SERVICE OFFICE BULLETIN

Our primary purpose is to stay sober, and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety



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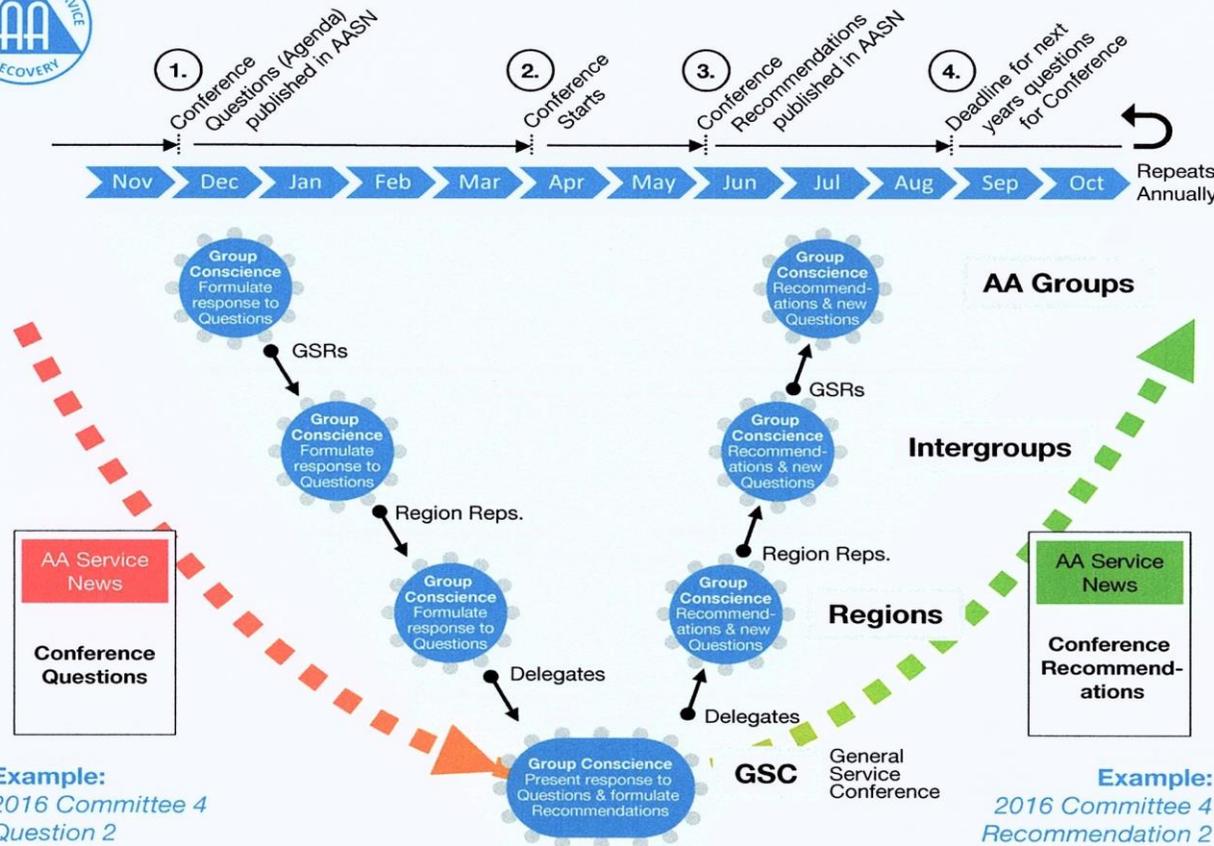
What is the Purpose of Conference?

The General Service Conference (Great Britain) of Alcoholics Anonymous is the guardian of the services and of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of AA in Great Britain. Tradition Two states that the only authority in AA is that which expresses itself through the Group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants who do not govern. This Tradition is the basic authority for all AA services, whether for Groups, Intergroup, Regions or for the Fellowship as a whole. The General Service Conference therefore begins with the Group conscience. It also leads back to the Group, since the Group has final responsibility not just for initiating, but for implementing the decisions agreed upon by Conference. The General Service Conference is the practical means by which the Group conscience in Britain can express itself in matters that concern the Fellowship as a whole. The existence of Conference is moreover a guarantee that the Fellowship will be able to function under all conditions. It is, in effect, the successor to the founders of AA, ensuring the continuity of the work within the framework of the Twelve Traditions.

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Note: Questions for Conference can be submitted at anytime throughout the year



This is AA General Service Conference–approved literature.

The General Service Conference Annual Process Map

AA's Group Conscience

The General Service Conference (GSC) of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) Great Britain (GB) means both the service structure of AA as well as the annual general meeting of Conference delegates. The GSC is the practical means by which the group conscience in Great Britain can express itself through the service structure in matters that concern AA as a whole.

The annual process begins with the group conscience. It also leads back to the group, since the group has final responsibility not just for initiating, but for implementing the decisions agreed upon by Conference.

This process map simply displays the annual timeline and the various stages of AA's collective group conscience being expressed through our service structure, and has been designed for:

- Groups, Intergroups, and Regions; to help plan, prepare, discuss, and communicate GSC proceedings
- Service representatives (GSRs, Region Reps, and Delegates); to support their role as a conduit for the group conscience

More information on Conference available from the General Service Office

- The Role And Function Of Conference
- How To Submit A Topic Or Question For Conference
- The Structure of AA in Great Britain Handbook
- AA Service News (AASN)
- www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

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Example:
2016 Committee 4
Question 2

Would the Fellowship consider to what extent Conference truly represents 'the practical means by which the Group conscience in AA GB can express itself in matters that concern the Fellowship as a whole'?

Notes

- This process map is a general guide only; there may be variations each year as necessary
- All dates are approximate only
- Please refer to our website for additional information: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Example:
2016 Committee 4
Recommendation 2

The Committee considers that Conference adequately represents the conscience of the Fellowship. The existing service structure enables this process to the extent that representatives of Groups (GSRs), Intergrups (Region Reps) and Regions (Delegates) act as a conduit for the group conscience. The ultimate responsibility for this process starts and ends with the group. Where there is full engagement, it is hard to conceive of a more effective alternative.

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