

**GUIDELINES
FOR A.A. IN GREAT
BRITAIN**

The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain
Guidelines for AA in Great Britain
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GUIDELINES for A.A. in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

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Revised April 1998

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GUIDELINES for A.A. in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

GROUP MEETINGS

Revised January 2000 No. 1

The Traditions have these words to say on Groups in AA.

Tradition 3 (Long Form). Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.

Tradition 4 (Long form). With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.

TYPES OF MEETINGS

Whilst a Group is free to hold any type of meeting its members decide, Groups must work within A.A.'s Traditions and Guidelines. Our experience indicates that we must exercise certain precautions at our meetings or risk collapse.

THE CLOSED MEETING is for alcoholics only. Usually these are informal discussions devoted to members' problems and questions, the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, the Twelve Concepts, topics suggested by articles in the magazines 'Share', 'Roundabout' and 'Grapevine' etc. Many other formats are used but common to all meetings is the sharing of the Experience, Strength and Hope of its members

In many meetings it is the practice for the Chair to introduce speakers who relate what they were like, what happened in their lives and contrast this with what they are like now. This provides ready opportunity for identification by the newcomer and provides an encouraging and hopeful illustration of the possibility for their own personal recovery.

THE OPEN MEETING is one at which non-members (partners, friends and other interested people e.g. doctors, spiritual

leaders and social workers etc) may attend. Some Groups feel it is important to balance the programme, making sure that both men and women members, young and old in years and in sobriety, are on the panel of speakers. The Chair and speakers are, of course, all members of A.A. but, in any subsequent discussion, participation by non-members is welcome.

THE MULTI-MEETING GROUP is an A.A. Group that accepts responsibility for providing more than one meeting per week. The General Service Conference has recommended the establishment of such groups where favourable circumstances exist and the Group conscience approves. Examples of such circumstances are where:

- premises are already shared by Groups or where a number of Groups meet in the same area
- Group conscience has decided that the Group has developed to a point where further weekly meetings are needed and could be maintained
- there is a shortage of Group officers-e.g. in rural areas with a number of small groups. Because multi-meeting groups require a fewer total number of officers

they are also an effective means of freeing members to become involved in other service activities.

The meetings that constitute the multi-meeting Group are assisted in fulfilling the needs of the Group by a Steering Committee comprised of Group Officers and representatives from the constituent meetings. These Steering Committee Officers – i.e. Chair, Treasurer, Literature Sec. etc. as set out in the Guideline No 2 Group Officers – are elected from members of the constituent groups at a Group Conscience meeting attended by members or representatives of all these constituent groups.

To protect the Unity of the multi-meeting Group and to ensure that each constituent meeting of the Group accepts and implements decisions made at the Group Conscience/Business assemblies, it is vital that all of the constituent meetings be represented at these assemblies.

It has been found that there is *Unity* in multi-meeting Groups providing that the application of the principle of rotation of steering-committee officers is observed in order to avoid personalities becoming established at the expense of the Groups' welfare: also, that regular Conscience and Business meetings are held.

Disadvantages have been found when Group Conscience has permitted personalities to compromise Unity or where geographical location has compromised close liaison.

THE GROUP CONSCIENCE & BUSINESS MEETINGS are sometimes overlooked but they play an important part in our Group progress. Some Groups schedule these meetings several times a year. Depending on the wishes of the members, they may precede or follow the normal meeting or separate sessions may be arranged.

Business meetings provide an opportunity for Group officers to report on such matter as progress, future plans, Intergroup matters and

the financial position. The Group may also take this occasion as an opportunity to appoint its officers and to conduct a **Group Conscience** meeting – which usually takes the form of a Group inventory.

A HOME-GROUP is the group for meetings in which members feel most *at home*. In such Groups they accept service responsibilities, sustain friendships and celebrate anniversaries.

THE PUBLIC MEETING places emphasis on informing the general public about A.A. These are speaker-type meetings. Invitations are issued to persons who may have a specific interest, such as doctors, social workers, spiritual leaders and others who may have cause to refer to A.A. in the course of their daily work. In addition to the member-Chair and speakers, a guest is usually invited - frequently a friend of A.A., whose professional work involves them in the field of alcoholism - or perhaps an Al-Anon member to outline the family aspect. Such a meeting is an excellent way to celebrate Group anniversaries.

THE SHARED PLATFORM MEETING is an A.A. meeting where non A.A. speakers are involved and should be chaired by an A.A. member. Tickets and programmes should include a statement as to whether Al-Anon / Al-Ateen speakers are involved.

THE ANONYMITY TRADITION

At open, public and shared platform meetings, it is considered advisable to stress the importance of our Anonymity Tradition No. 11 as a precaution, should any members of the press or other communication media be present.

AA members remain anonymous in public for two reasons:

- our promise of privacy to the still-suffering alcoholic and to the family
- a spiritual reason summed up in Tradition 12 or in the word “humility”.

PARTICIPATION

The sole purpose of an A.A. Group is to offer sobriety through the teachings and practice of the Twelve Steps. To help achieve this objective it is desirable that as many members as possible who wish to participate in the discussions and service should be encouraged to do so.

The meeting most likely to attract and keep members is the one which starts on time, which has its stock of literature well displayed, where the seating is ready and where members of an unofficial “welcoming committee” are ready to help pass the message, each in their own way. There will be a warm welcome for all comers and in particular for the newcomer, ensuring that the newcomer is made aware of the possibilities and promises contained in the programme. Ultimately, the strength of any meeting depends on the support and involvement of the entire Group.

“WHERE TO FIND A.A.”

“Where to Find A.A.” is the national meeting directory for Great Britain and, as such, is an invaluable source of information for the new member and the travelling member. In order to ensure that it remains accurate, Group secretaries are requested to keep the General Service Office informed of any changes in the address of the meeting place, the starting time of the meeting or the telephone contact numbers for the meeting.

Members whose names appear in the “Where to Find” should be prepared to take full responsibility as contacts and delegate where necessary. This implies that such a telephone number will be freely available within the Fellowship and that the contact is prepared at any time to:

- accept a call for help
- give information to a professional e.g. a GSO number

- guide a family member to the right source for help e.g. to Al-Anon
- speak to members of the Fellowship enquiring about meetings.

OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE AND PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL

Tradition 5 (Long Form) quotes Bill W’s words “Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity *having but one primary purpose* - that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”

Where problems arise from the attendance of non-alcoholics at AA meetings, it is suggested that the above words are remembered and the following extract from the AA pamphlet “Problems other than Alcohol” is read out and, if appropriate, printed copies are distributed:

“Now there are certain things that A.A. cannot do for anybody regardless of what our several desires or sympathies may be. Our first duty as a society is to ensure our own survival. Therefore we have to avoid distractions and multi-purpose activity. An A.A. Group as such cannot take on all the personal problems of its members let alone the problems of the whole world. Sobriety - freedom from alcohol - through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps is the sole purpose of an A.A. Group. Groups have repeatedly tried other activities and they have always failed. It has also been learned that there is no possible way to make non-alcoholics into A.A. members.

We have to confine our membership to alcoholics and we have to confine our A.A. Groups to a single purpose. If we don’t stick to these principles, we shall almost surely collapse, and if we collapse, we cannot help anyone.”

Although these words were written by Bill W. in 1958 they continue to offer sound guidance on this difficult subject.



GUIDELINES for AA in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, Stonebow House, Stonebow, York YO1 7NJ

Group Officers

Revised November 2006 No. 2

This Guideline is based on the pamphlet *The AA Group* which shows for new officers, new members and other interested AAs many of the good and proved-by-experience ways other members have used in their Groups to fulfil our primary purpose of staying sober and helping other alcoholics to achieve sobriety”.

All sorts of jobs have to be done to service an AA Group and to keep it going; this is why we need officers. Tradition 9 states that “AA as such, ought never be organised; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”

The officers or trusted servants needed within the Group are usually chosen by the Group members for limited terms of service. The jobs they do may have titles but titles in AA do not bring authority or honour; they describe services and responsibilities. These are ways of *carrying the message*. They are forms of Twelfth Step work an AA member willingly undertakes, primarily to help personal recovery. Many AA members have found Group duties an excellent way to strengthen their sobriety.

The various jobs or services requiring to be done to run a Group successfully can be allocated over the responsibilities of Group officers as set out and outlined below: two or more services may be combined under a single officer when the Group is a small one. For example, an Group may have the following officers:

- **Chair**
- **Secretary**
- **Speaker Secretary**
- **Treasurer**
- **Literature Secretary**
- **SHARE / Roundabout Representative**
- **Refreshment Helpers**
- **Group Service Representative**

Each Group, being autonomous, selects the officers its members feel are necessary for the smooth running of the Group. Group officers usually serve for a year, since the principle of rotation of officers is important in order that each member should be given an opportunity to serve should they be willing. Each nominee is usually approached by other members in the Group and, if he or she agrees, that name is put forward at a business/service meeting, so letting the Group conscience decide the election.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR GROUP OFFICERS

Most Groups make sure that their officers have had a known period of continuous sobriety, at least one year, and have shown themselves willing and available to give dependable service through regular attendance at meetings. It has generally been found that giving a member a job solely to help that member stay sober does not work. The Group's welfare is of primary concern in choosing officers and in this sense, a mention of Traditions 1 and 2 is helpful at election times as is also an appreciation that familiarity with the *12 Steps, Traditions* and *Concepts for World Service* helps officers to do a better job.

CHAIR

Some Groups have no Chair because the Secretary serves as the Group's principal officer. In practice, it doesn't seem to matter which Group officer does which job as long as they all get done without confusion or conflict. It is however very important for

everybody to understand who does what.

While one year's continuous sobriety may be sufficient to undertake some other duties, the Group's principal officer, i.e. Chair or Secretary should have at least two years' continuous sobriety and have had other group experience.

- Co-ordinates Group activities, preventing confusion or misunderstanding in Group affairs
- Opens all regular Group meetings then turns them over to a speaker who is leader for that session only
- Has final responsibility for the smooth functioning of the Group and also conducts Group Conscience and Business Meetings.

SECRETARY

- Arrives some time before a meeting is due to start in order to arrange the room, usually with the help of other members and the refreshment helpers
- Encourages the meeting to start punctually
- Makes any AA announcements at the end of the meeting (e.g. news of conventions, new meetings, new literature)
- Practises Tradition 7 by passing the pot and then asking the speaker or Chair to close the meeting with the *Serenity Prayer*
- Keeps a confidential list of those members willing to do Twelfth Step work and passes on any calls for help
- Ensures, with the Treasurer's help, that the rent is paid
- Helps the Treasurer to count and keep a record of the Group's collections
- Informs the Intergroup Secretary and GSO of the names, addresses and telephone

numbers of the Group officers, together with up-to-date Group telephone contacts and of any changes in these or in the Group's venue. In this way the correct information is always available for inclusion in *Where to Find AA*

- Provides safe keeping for such Group records and correspondence that exist, thus preserving anonymity at all times. In addition, the Secretary, as well as other Group officers, has a special responsibility for seeing that newcomers get help, are made welcome on arrival and receive a starter pack on departure

SPEAKER SECRETARY

- Finds suitable speakers for each meeting who have a known period of sobriety, books them well in advance and informs them of the time, date and address of the meeting
- Explains to the speaker the usual format of the Group, e.g. length of the share or discussion and what time the meeting ends
- Tries to visit other Groups in order to book ahead a variety of speakers who are able to present a good cross-section of AA recovery

TREASURER

- Collects the money obtained from passing the pot at Group meetings, counts this with a responsible member's help and enters the amount into a cash book or balance sheet in the Group accounts book
- Makes regular reports to the Group showing how money has been used. After paying the approved expenses, eg rent, refreshments and literature and retaining a prudent reserve of one month's running expenses, any surplus should be sent to the Intergroup Treasurer – preferably by cheque and without delay. Blank signed cheques should never be issued. This is a recommended precautionary measure

taken on behalf of both the group and the Treasurer and applies to cheque payments at all levels.

- In effect, covers the cost of all legitimate Group expenses from Group funds, but does not use funds to reimburse members' expenses in relation to direct Twelfth Step work

The Treasurer should keep the Group's funds in a separate Group bank account, which requires two signatures on each cheque. AA experience clearly shows that it is *not* a good idea for a Group to accumulate large funds in excess of what is needed for monthly rent and bills. It is strongly recommended that, apart from a prudent reserve, all surplus money be sent promptly to GSO via the local Intergroup Treasurer.

The treasurer's responsibilities are fully explained in Guideline No. 12.

LITERATURE SECRETARY

- Ensures that the Group has available its own copy of the *Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous)*. Orders and keeps the Group supplied with books and pamphlets published by AA and available from GSO
- Puts together selected packs of literature for newcomers and makes sure stocks are replenished
- Ensures that literature is on display and available to members at Group meetings, encouraging members to buy from the collection
- Makes available the current edition of *The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain*, especially at business meetings
- Passes any accounts for payment of literature to the Treasurer
- Helps the Secretary to circulate *AA Service News*, convention flyers, notices from GSO, etc.

SHARE/ROUNDAABOUT REPRESENTATIVE

- Is responsible for promoting *SHARE/Roundabout*, by ordering sufficient copies for the Group members. Displays and sells copies as they arrive and encourages members to submit articles for inclusion in future issues

REFRESHMENT HELPERS

- Many AA members have reported they get almost as much good out of coffee and conversation before or after a meeting as they do out of the meeting itself. AA members consider sharing over coffee at these times a vital part of AA routine
- Often AA members say they first felt they belonged when they began helping with the chairs, tidying the room, making the coffee and tea or doing washing up. Some newcomers find such activity helps them to talk to other members. For many of us this experience is our first contribution to AA service
- Any expenses for refreshments may be reclaimed from the Group Treasurer
- After each meeting the room should be left clean, tidy and in proper order

GROUP SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (GSR)

The GSR's responsibilities are fully explained in *Guideline 3*.

Bill W said "The strength of our whole structure starts with the Group and with the General Service Representative that the Group elects. By choosing its most qualified man or woman as GSR a Group helps its own future and the future of AA as a whole."

To be chosen to represent a Group is to be given the opportunity to take part in AAs Third Legacy, that of service, and to have the chance to become a trusted servant. The GSR

should have at least two years' continuous sobriety and should serve for a minimum of two years.

THE TRADITIONS

While the above sets out how an ideal Group may operate, the conscience of each Group decides for itself how much it will do and the best way of getting it done. There are many ways of living up to Tradition 5, which says "Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers."

Tradition 2 reminds us that "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern."



GUIDELINES for A.A. in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES

Revised January 2000 No. 3

A quote from our co-founder Bill W on General Service in AA:

“An A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us reach a fellow sufferer - ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.’s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service.” (Pass It On, page 347)

This guideline outlines the work of:

- **The Group Service Representative**
- **Regional Representative**
- **Conference Delegate**

It is suggested these Trusted Servants have a good working knowledge of the following publications:

- **The Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous**
- **The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions**
- **The AA Service Manual combined with The Twelve Concepts Of World Service**
- **Alcoholics Anonymous Comes Of Age**
- **The AA Service Handbook For Great Britain**

GROUP SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE (GSR)

Bill W said, “the strength of our whole structure starts with the Group and with the General Service Representative (G.S.R.) that the Group elects”.

Working via the Intergroup the GSR is the Groups’ link with the General Service Conference, through which groups share experiences and voice AA’s collective conscience.

More from Bill W.....

“The G.S.R.- as the general service representative is known - has the job of linking his or her group with A.A. as a whole. The G.S.R. represents the voice of the group conscience, reporting the groups’ wishes to the committee member and to the delegate, who passes them on to the Conference and to the movement.

For this, G.S.R.’s need the confidence of the group. They also need a good ear for listening. We all realize whatever “authority” there is in A.A. resides in the group conscience. Because of this, a G.S.R. can determine exactly what a group needs, what a group thinks about a situation, and can pass this information along to where it will be most useful in policy-making.

This is a two-way street, allowing the G.S.R. to bring back to the group the problems and remedies that affect A.A. unity, health, and growth. To the extent that a G.S.R. keeps the group informed, then expresses the group conscience, only to that extent can the Conference feel it is acting for A.A. as a whole”. (From “The A.A. Service Manual”)

Responsibilities

The suggested responsibilities are:-

- Share with their group all Fellowship mail, communication and news items.

- Keep members informed about local service activities.
- They may be contacts for referral to carry the AA message.
- GSRs can also help their Group solve problems by drawing upon the facilities of the General Service Office in York where the staff is ready to relay helpful AA experience from all over the World.
- They can help see that up-to-date group information for the AA directory is sent promptly to GSO.
- The GSR is the vital link in the chain of two way communication between the Group and Intergroup. Each represents his or her Group at Intergroup service assemblies, sharing experiences with neighbouring GSRs in workshops and sharing sessions.
- Prior to attending Intergroup Meetings, fully discuss agenda items with the Group.
- Represent and express the Group's conscience at all Intergroup Meetings. The GSR should faithfully express the Group's opinions whatever his or her feelings maybe: thus putting principles before personalities.
- Following Intergroup report back to the Group.
- The GSR has a responsibility to attend all such meetings and, if this is impossible, to brief thoroughly an alternate, chosen by the Group to stand in.
- Encourage observers to attend Intergroup in order to foster their interest in the Fellowship and sponsor other members into Service.
- Only GSR's and members of the Intergroup Committee are entitled to vote at Intergroup meetings.
- It is the GSR's responsibility to know the Group so well that should unexpected matters come before the Intergroup meeting he or she will have a fair idea of

Group's conscience.

Qualifications

Groups should take due care in electing their GSR, giving particular regard to the following:

- It is suggested that the GSR should have at least two or three years' continuous sobriety and preferably not hold any other Group office. (It should be remembered that the GSR may be eligible for candidature as a Regional representative or as a Conference delegate).
- The GSR should have a working knowledge of the AA publications referred to in the introduction
- The GSR should have a good knowledge of the structure of AA.
- The GSR should be a regular weekly attender at his or her own Group and therefore be able, should necessity arise, to stand in for any other officer of the Group who is unable to be present.
- The GSR should be prepared to serve for a minimum of two years.

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Regional Representatives and alternates should be elected by their Intergroup as carefully as Group Service Representatives. They should be chosen as a general rule from amongst serving GSRs but any member who has the necessary qualifications, even if not at the time serving as a GSR, may be elected. Such a representative will attend all Intergroup meetings to report from the Region and to hear from the Intergroup their wishes to be expressed at the next Regional Meeting.

Qualifications

- It is suggested that at least three years' continuous sobriety are necessary since it

is hardly possible for a person to gain enough Intergroup and Group service in less time than that to be of real use to the Region.

- They should have a good working knowledge of the AA publications referred to above.
- They should have good knowledge of the structure of AA.
- The Regional Representative would, in the interest of continuity, serve for three years, after which he or she must retire and cannot be re-elected for at least one year.
- It is suggested that three Representatives per Intergroup be elected to the Region since this would give proper continuity.

CONFERENCE DELEGATE

Qualifications

Delegates to the Conference should have a reasonable period of sobriety and at least five years as active members of the Fellowship. The final decision about the suitability of any delegate rests with the Region group conscience.

Rotation of Delegates

Delegates are elected by Regions to serve a maximum period of three consecutive years. If a delegate is unable to attend any Conference during the period of appointment, the place may be taken by an eligible alternate delegate appointed for that purpose. The eligibility of an alternate delegate to attend a Conference subsequently as a full delegate will not be affected by previous attendance as a substitute. Any attendance by an alternate delegate will count as part of the three year term of the delegate whose place is taken, and may not have the effect of extending the term of the delegate originally elected.

When a delegate has completed the three year

term, he or she may not at any future time be elected for a further term as a delegate or appointed as an alternate delegate for the electing Region or for any other Region. He or she may however attend Conference as a member of the General Service Board, if so elected.

How Delegates should prepare themselves.

Each delegate shall conscientiously prepare for the responsibility by:

- Becoming thoroughly familiar with the publications referred to in the introduction
- Studying the agenda for the Conference in the light of his or her understanding of AA principles, and making sure that he or she thoroughly understands what the agenda is about.
- Discussing the agenda in the Group, Intergroup, Region and among individual AA friends so that he or she comes to the Conference prepared to represent the views of the Fellowship as a whole as well as his or her own personal views on the matters that will be discussed.
- Getting to know how the Conference works and who the other members are, for example by discussing these matters with another delegate who is familiar with Conference arrangements.
- Going to the Conference with a firm conviction that he or she will be there for the purpose of more effectively carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic and helping the sober alcoholic retain sobriety.

Delegates on their return are expected to report the conclusions of the Conference to the Region which elected them. They should also make oral reports on the main conclusions of the Conference to as many of the Groups and Intergroups in their area as they can conveniently reach. Delegates should ensure that written reports are

delivered to all Groups and Intergroups in their area which cannot be readily reached at an early date after the Conference. Delegates must remain active in pursuing the aims of the Conferences they have attended during the periods between Conferences.

It would indeed be premature to imagine that, having served in all or most of the capacities listed in this Guideline, the end of the AA road has been reached. For the road of AA Service is one that has no end. One day at a time, the future will unfold in a way that today we cannot imagine. Let us therefore be ready at all times, as we have been each day during our period of sobriety, to remain a trusted servant, in whatever capacity is asked of us.

In conclusion, Regions, Intergroups and Groups should always bear in mind the value of keeping the experienced members in view

for further service or as a backup in consultation on service matters, ever being mindful of the principle of rotation. At both Intergroup and Regional level, use should be made of service committees which should contain a blend of members of varying degrees of experience and newcomers to service, whilst being careful not to deny the newcomer service opportunities.

The experienced member should be given the opportunity to talk at workshops designed to introduce the newcomer to service, encouraged to share from the top table and to write to "Share" and "Roundabout" magazines about the benefit of service, and for a period work in tandem with their successor. Many such members would be delighted to assist in service so the direct approach is often the best. Ask them!



GUIDELINES for AA in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

INTERGROUPS

Revised November 2006 No 4

The first Intergroup in Great Britain was formed in 1957, some ten years after Alcoholics Anonymous came to London, and incidentally in the same year that the General Service Board was incorporated in the British Isles.

These landmarks in our AA history were the initial steps towards the formation of a sound Service structure, which has over the years evolved and grown to help us meet our ever-increasing responsibilities.

The Fifth and Tenth General Service Conferences reviewed the purpose and work of Intergroups and from time to time committees at other Conferences have suggested activities which should be undertaken at Intergroup level. This Guideline gathers together these recommendations.

AIMS

The aims of an Intergroup are to aid the constituent Groups in their common purpose of carrying the AA message to the still suffering alcoholic and, by using their combined strength and unity, to improve and maintain good relations with all organisations in the community.

AREAS

When exercising their voluntary choice to co-operate within the AA service structure, Groups take into account that service activities are made more difficult where Health Service and local government boundaries do not coincide with Intergroup boundaries and that their ability to play their part in Intergroup will be affected by this and by the proximity of other Groups. Practice has shown that boundaries evolve without the overlapping of neighbouring areas. Where two or more Intergroups fall within a local authority area their liaison officers co-operate in trying to carry the message (e.g. prisons, hospitals etc.)

MEETINGS

Intergroup meetings should be held regularly, wherever possible six times a year. It should be remembered that these are business

meetings and should therefore be conducted in a businesslike fashion having particular regard to the guidance in the *Traditions* and the *Twelve Concepts*.

One meeting in the year should be set aside for the Annual General Meeting at which the year's accounts are reviewed and approved, and upon which date the rotation of officers should come into effect. A suitable agenda prepared by Intergroup officers should be sent to all Groups in good time so that the Group can discuss the subjects to be raised and make known their views to their GSR.

Observers are welcome at Intergroup meetings but may not vote and it is suggested may only express their views at the invitation of the Chairperson.

GROUP SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

By choosing as GSR one of the Group's most qualified individuals the Group helps its own future and the future of AA as a whole. It is suggested that Groups should also elect an alternate representative who would attend meetings should the need arise. The GSR is the first vital link in the communications chain between Group, Intergroup, Region and the General Service Board, carrying the Group conscience to Intergroup and the Intergroup conscience to the Group.

Groups should take care in electing their GSRs. It is suggested that the GSR should have at least two years' continuous sobriety, as a GSR may be elected to Intergroup office. The GSR needs to be familiar with the *Twelve Steps* and *Twelve Traditions* and be prepared to uphold them, as well as being conversant with the following books: *Alcoholics Anonymous*, *AA Comes of Age*, the latest edition of *The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain*, *The AA Service Manual*, and the pamphlet *The AA Group*.

OFFICERS

An Intergroup should appoint a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and members with other responsibilities as its officers. These officers should have an established period of sobriety, ideally not less than two years. It is recommended that they should serve for not less than two years and not more than three years. Careful consideration should be given to staggered rotation so that in the interest of continuity all the officers do not terminate their service at the same time. In the event of a vacancy occurring among the officers before the expiry of their term of office a member may be co-opted for a limited period of time until the next Intergroup meeting. At this meeting the member co-opted, along with any others, could be recognised for formal nomination and possible election to this post.

The officers can co-opt a member or members, either from GSRs or from Groups to perform a specific service such as organising a convention or convening a public meeting. The Intergroup may establish sub-committees for specific purposes.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

The CHAIR has the responsibility of convening and conducting the meetings, and approving the agenda and minutes before they are published.

The VICE CHAIR has the responsibility of conducting the meeting in the absence of the Chair.

The SECRETARY has the responsibility with

the Chair for preparing the agenda and minutes of meetings and for distributing these documents to the Groups well before meetings so that there is ample time to discuss the contents. The Secretary deals with all correspondence, passing for example requests for speakers to outside organisations to the Public Information Officer or a suitable member. The Secretary keeps in touch with the General Service Office making sure that it promptly has a copy of the minutes and notice of any change of officer.

The TREASURER has the responsibility for keeping a proper account of all Intergroup finances and ensuring that funds are available for its essential current requirements. An annual budget exercise should be carried out to ensure that appropriate prudent reserves are maintained. The Treasurer reports to Intergroup against the budget. Surplus funds should always be transferred promptly to GSO, ideally via the Region Treasurer.

The accounts should be open for inspection and presented to Intergroup at each meeting. Group contributions should be clearly listed so that GSRs can confirm their group's contributions have been received. This is a fundamental part of the audit trail. Having been audited or independently checked, annual accounts should be presented by the Treasurer to Intergroup for approval at the AGM.

The Chair will carry the executive authority of Intergroup but should account for any action taken at the next meeting.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

It is suggested that Liaison Officers work together through a service committee structure.

A Prison Liaison Officer should gather and collate all information about the prison Groups in their area (including open prisons, Young Offenders Institutions etc.) and forward the information to their Regions and to GSO. He or she should also keep informed via their Region and GSO on Home Office and Conference policy with regard to special

subjects, such as parole, the use of AA tapes and other AA published material, to help prison sponsors with any problems which may arise in the area. The General Service Office and General Service Board maintain excellent contact with the Prison Department of the Home Office, and Intergroups should communicate with GSO regarding any problems which may arise. *(See Guideline 11)*

A Public Information Officer is responsible for ensuring that information about the AA message and programme of recovery is conveyed to outside organisations to the best possible advantage. The provision of a panel of members to comply with requests for speakers is an important part of this activity. *(See Guideline 7)*

The Health Liaison Officer is responsible for establishing links with health professionals and co-ordinating all aspects of carrying the message within the healthcare system.

An Employment Liaison Officer assumes responsibility for liaising with all sectors of commerce and industry. *(See Guideline 8)*

A Probation Liaison Officer/Social Services AA Liaison Officer is responsible for establishing links with the probation services in England and Wales. In Scotland, Social Services are responsible for probation services.

SHARE/Roundabout Liaison Officers provide the essential contacts between members, Groups and the editorial teams. They actively encourage the contribution of articles and letters and the promotion of the magazines.

The Telephone Liaison Officer co-ordinates the working of the Telephone Service as recommended in *Guideline 6*.



GUIDELINES for AA in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P O Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

REGIONS

Revised November 2006 No. 5

In October 1965 an exploratory meeting was held to discuss if there was a need for a General Service Conference in the United Kingdom. A formal conclusion included this statement:

“The Conference would hope to further the aims and ideals, namely Recovery, Unity and Service, and ensure the healthy growth of an expanding Fellowship by fostering closer ties and greater co-operation throughout these Isles”.

This Guideline on Regions is one further step on the road of growth, development and co-operation.

The Fifteenth General Service Conference in 1980 approved and established Regionalisation throughout Great Britain.

Following further Conference recommendations in 1981, 1987, 1988 and 2004 we have seen the establishment of 16 regions in Great Britain and Continental Europe.

The growth of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain has been sure and steady, and this growth has always been accompanied by a service structure that has evolved to meet the need. A brief history of the growth in AA in this country can be found in *The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain*. The Tenth General Service Conference in 1975 made a recommendation that Intergroups should consider the formation of Regions - an assembly of neighbouring Intergroups - to prevent fragmentation which could follow Group growth and the formation of more Intergroups. This has created the opportunity for the maximum amount of participation involving more and more active and experienced members, and has strengthened our lines of communication as they have grown.

AIMS

- To promote communication and co-operation between neighbouring Intergroups, thus implementing our tradition of Unity and creating service boards or committees where needed
- To ensure that the Region recognise areas that are sparsely served by the Fellowship do not remain isolated but become part of that Region's responsibility
- To share Intergroup experience in the field of co-operation with outside agencies, prisons, health services, schools, social services, alcohol abuse agencies, churches, courts, Probation Service (Social Work Department, in Scotland), industry, and any other appropriate institutions and areas of society
- To increase opportunity for members to participate in our Third Legacy of Service
- To enable members with particular experience to serve a wider area

COMPOSITION

It is suggested that a Region should comprise a convenient number of Intergroups in a convenient geographical location with common internal and external interests (Committee 4, 1975). It is therefore likely that some Regions will be large territorially but not large in terms of population, while some will be relatively small territorially in

densely populated areas.

THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

It is suggested that a Regional Assembly should comprise up to three Regional Representatives from each participating Intergroup, who should be prepared to serve for a term of three years. Provision should be made for rotation to preserve continuity. It is recommended that Regional Representatives should have at least three years' continuous sobriety and sufficient Intergroup experience. An important factor is the availability of elected members to devote time to the work without adversely affecting their family or careers.

The Regional Representatives should elect their officers from members of the Assembly. These should consist of:

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer

In addition, members should be elected, taking into consideration their experience or interest, to the following positions:

- Prison Liaison Officer
- Health Liaison Officer
- Public Information Liaison Officer
- Probation Liaison Officer/Social Services AA Liaison Officer (Scotland)
- Telephone Liaison Officer
- Employment Liaison Officer
- *SHARE / Roundabout* Liaison Officer
- Electronic Communications Liaison Officer.

It is recommended that these officers should serve a maximum of three years and be confirmed annually.

The Regional Assembly may also co-opt a member of the Region, not necessarily a

Regional Representative, to carry out a specific task as a non-voting member of the Assembly for the duration of the work involved (e.g. Convention Convenor, Archivist).

Having served three years a Regional Representative should retire by rotation, thus providing a place for another to gain Regional experience and so enrich experience of service in the Fellowship. He or she could then be eligible for re-election after a minimum period of one year. When the Regional Representatives of an Intergroup are depleted due to the fact that one of their number has been elected to serve as an officer, then another suitable member may be elected by the Intergroup concerned to take their place.

Only Regional Representatives and Officers may vote. Observers and visitors are welcome, but may not participate unless invited by the Chair to do so.

It is suggested that the Assembly should meet 4 times annually. The meeting should be called in a proper manner with a settled agenda, and minutes should be circulated after the meeting with copies to interested persons such as GSO, the Board and neighbouring Regions for information as an additional means of sharing experience.

It is suggested that when time permits and business is completed a sharing session on some specific subject be held in which observers may participate, the object being to forward our primary purpose and improve services in the Region.

SERVICE STRUCTURE

The formation of committees along the lines proposed by the Board:

- Finance and General Purposes
- Internal Communications
- External Communications

should be encouraged in the Region wherever

appropriate, but there should be named liaison or contact officers for specific areas of service at all levels.

FINANCE

The Regional budget is financed by member Intergroup contributions.

The Treasurer should present an annual budget based on activities that Region has elected to fund during the coming year. These activities must include sufficient funds to pay conference delegates' expenses and previously agreed service commitments. The cost of officers attending national meetings should also be included.

Having been audited or independently checked, annual accounts should be presented to and accepted by the Regional Assembly. Intergroup contributions should be clearly listed in the accounts so that Region Representatives can confirm their Intergroup's contributions have been received. This is a fundamental part of the audit trail.

Any money surplus to a prudent reserve should be forwarded promptly to GSO.

Money should be kept in a bank convenient for the Treasurer and payments made by cheque signed by two of the three signatories authorised by the assembly. Telephone or Internet banking should only be used where payments and transfers still require authorisation by two signatories.

CONFERENCE

DELEGATES/ALTERNATES

A Region is entitled to send six delegates to Conference. These should be from suitably experienced members able to conform to the requirements set out in *The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain* and who have been nominated either by the member Intergroups or the Regional Assembly for election by the Regional Assembly. They should be elected well before Conference so

that their names may go forward when required by GSO and so that they will have time to absorb the relevant papers and re-read the suggested literature.

Quality of sobriety and service record should be the guiding principles when electing delegates. It is recommended that delegates have a minimum of 5 years continuous sobriety and that before electing a delegate, a Region satisfies itself that the member has demonstrated a commitment through service to the Fellowship.

Potential delegates should be made aware, before election, of the commitment this post entails. In order to be elected as a delegate a member need not be a serving member of their Region at the time of the election but an elected delegate becomes a full member of Region.

While remembering that the best person for the job should be elected for the sake of AA as a whole, consideration should be given to ensuring that Intergroups have easy access to a Conference delegate.

A Conference delegate's duties do not finish with the end of the Conference. In fact this is only the beginning. He or she should be available and willing to report back fully to the Region and also be willing to travel to Intergroup and Group meetings if invited to do so.

Conference delegates' duties are fully explained in *The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain*.

WORKSHOPS

The following suggestions have been prepared to assist those planning workshops.

Finance workshops are an excellent method of emphasising that carrying the message incurs costs by all parts of the service structure.

- Workshops should be well-structured

with a commitment to planning.

- One format, which appears to work well, is using multiple speakers sharing on the topic, breaking into discussion groups, and reconvening for a report-back session with everyone.
- They should be publicised well in advance utilising flyers and service representatives to promote them.
- To maintain interest, they should be regular, using experienced speakers from outside the immediate Intergroup/Region area. Consider using PI Committees to organise them.
- Workshops might be considered for part of a convention/mini convention.
- Consider publicising “discussion meeting” rather than “workshop”.
- Intergroup/Region officers should lead by example, by attending workshops and by offering transport to those who might not otherwise be able to attend.
- Time permitting, Regional Assemblies should hold workshops and these should be minuted as an agenda item. Experience shows that morning

workshops lead to a better attendance.

- Those attending should be welcomed and encouraged to get involved in the discussions. Make it clear that everyone has a right to be heard.
- Workshops should be fun as well as informative.
- It is suggested that reports on Region workshops should be submitted to *AA Service News* whenever possible. A summary should be given of any workshop and circulated to all those attending.
- Service representatives should try to make reports interesting and informative and, if necessary, ask for more time to give their report.

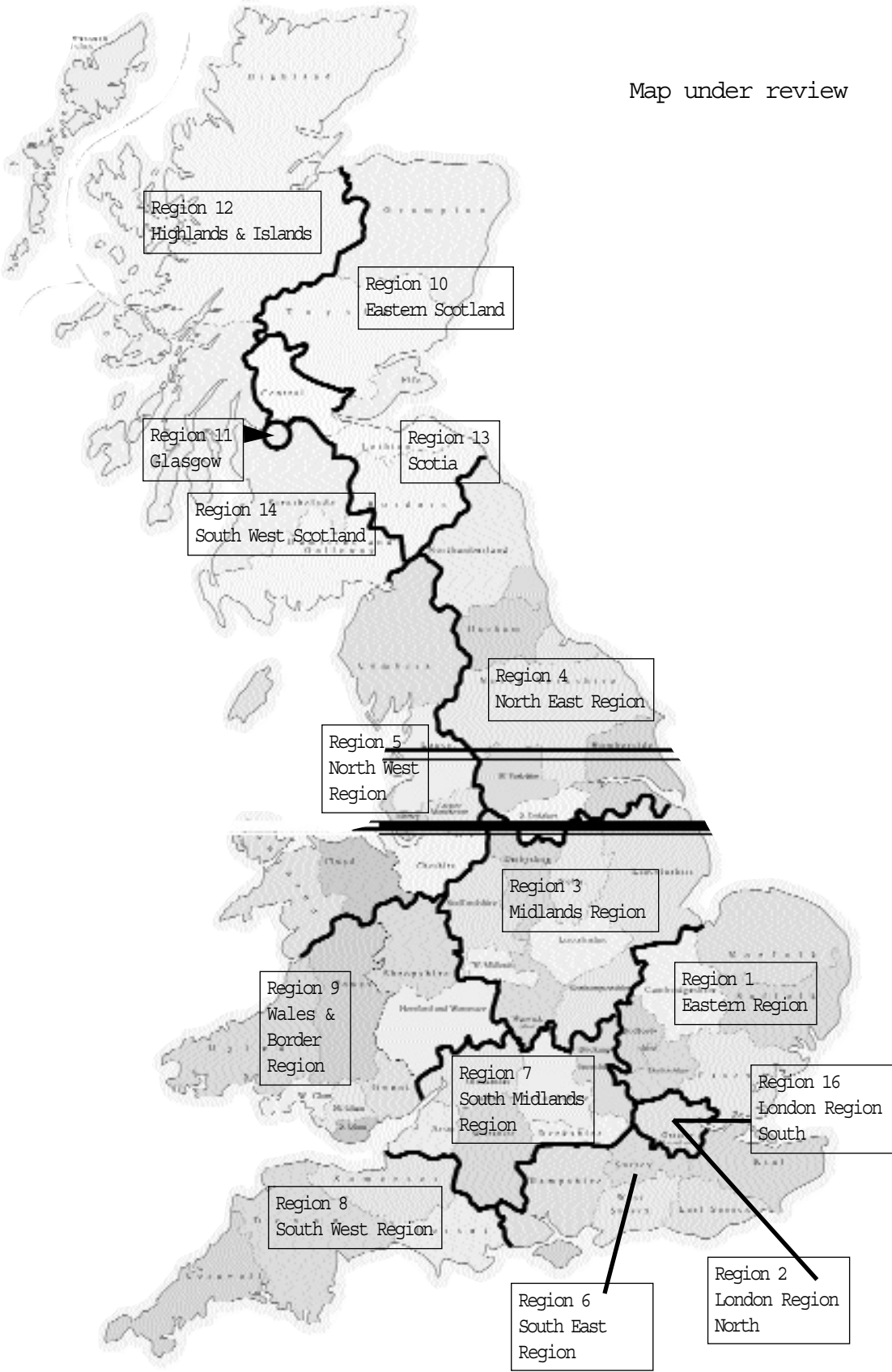
This Guideline has been produced as the result of experience to date, but possibly in time modifications may become necessary.

“When we get into questions of action by groups, by areas, by AA as a whole, we find that we must to some extent organize to carry the message or else face total chaos. And chaos is not simplicity.”

Bill W. (Letter 1966)

Regions England, Wales & Scotland

Map under review



Continental European Region

Region 15

Map under review





GUIDELINES for A.A. in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

A.A. TELEPHONE SERVICES

Revised April 2009 No. 6

Our national Telephone Service operates throughout Great Britain using the telephone number

0845 769 7555

This number links the caller geographically to a local responder who will take incoming enquiries and, where appropriate, pass details of the request for help on to a member who has been listed, under local arrangements, to carry out Twelfth Step work.

The National Helpline is intended for the use of the still suffering alcoholic.

The purpose of this Guideline is to make officers aware of recommendations that may enhance helpline operation and provide safeguards to both callers and members.

Please check with your local Intergroup/Region for information on how the Telephone Service operates in your area.

STRUCTURE

Responsibility for telephone services begins with Intergroups; however in some areas it has been agreed to devolve this responsibility to Regions. Officers within the structure are Intergroup TLO; Region TLO; Telephone Committee and the GSB member with responsibility for Telephone Service.

FINANCE

Our Traditions of autonomy and self- support apply to all Helplines.

Operation of the national system means that there are two sets of telephone accounts generated for each Helpline number. It has been agreed generally that "local" numbers (usually Intergroups) will continue to take responsibility for their account while Regions meet payment for the 0845 portion of the account which is paid nationally. Expenses incurred by members participating in telephone service may be claimed from their Intergroup.

TELEPHONE SERVICE AND TWELFTH STEP WORK

The main purpose of telephone services is to put the suffering alcoholic in touch with an individual contact or AA Group. It is the responsibility of the members of the local Group to carry out the necessary Twelfth Step work, to provide a welcome to the new members and to share their experience, strength and hope with them and to help them on the road to recovery.

The Hints and Suggestions card for 12 Steppers has been acknowledged for its simple and comprehensive guidance. Awareness of this card needs to be emphasised throughout the Fellowship.

A telephone service requires support and participation by the Groups and members in its area, not only in a financial sense, but in every aspect of its existence. To ensure that this support is maintained it is essential that 12 Step contact lists are kept up to date.

Common sense with a regard to AA principles is of much more help in maintaining a telephone service than is the establishment of administrative procedures.

However, certain recommendations can be made from experiences of telephone services to date:

- Responders and 12 Steppers should be chosen with care and endorsed through an agreed Intergroup procedure. A minimum of 12 months continuous sobriety is ideal.
- Landlines are strongly recommended for home-based telephone responding. If an Intergroup allows the use of mobile telephones, to permit AA members without a landline to participate in telephone service, these should only be used at home. The use of mobiles in other locations or on the move is not acceptable due to the possibility of poor reception, lack of privacy along with the threat to anonymity. Another problem that can occur is when the caller gets through to a responder on a mobile with a pre-recorded message (when phone is busy) that gives out the responders name and/or number. This confuses the caller and affects AA as a whole.
- The Responder answering the call should remember the first time caller is nervous and may have been drinking, so the response should be positive and sympathetic. Calling the emergency services should be the last resort of responders if they are worried about a caller. Although such calls are very few in number it is recognised they can be distressing. Responders should be made aware that the caller should be encouraged to take the responsibility of calling the relevant service that may help him/her, i.e. Samaritans, Police, NHS. However, where the life of the caller, or the lives of others, is apparently at risk, we should notify the appropriate authority of the emergency.
- The Responder's role is to pass on the caller's details to a member on the 12 Step list. The Responder needs to keep the call brief and confined to taking the

necessary particulars, so that the telephone is kept free for other callers.

- Details of phone numbers of AA members, nominated by local groups, who are ready and willing to carry out Twelfth Step work should be to hand and listed on an area basis for speed of reference. Experience has shown that it is vital to link “male to male” and “female to female” when placing Twelfth Step calls. When making Twelfth Step visits, it is strongly recommended that more than one person should make such visits.
- An up to date list of Group meetings should be available for immediate reference.
- Intergroup and Regional officers' phone numbers, together with the SSO, NSO, and GSO phone numbers, should be readily available to responders so that calls from the media or other agencies can be referred to the correct source. Other agencies and Al-Anon contact numbers should also be available.
- Calls received from employers, doctors, social workers, newspapers, radio and TV should be passed to the relevant Service Officer. Calls from national press, radio or television should be referred to the General Service Office in York so that a coordinated response can be made.

Great care should be taken regarding the confidentiality of members' phone numbers. The information as to how an enquirer can be contacted is taken by the Responder and passed on to the member. It then becomes the responsibility of that member to take whatever action is appropriate. Responders should not give the caller an AA member's phone number under any circumstances.



GUIDELINES for A.A. in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Revised April 2005 No. 7

Public Information is the Third Legacy of Service in action. Along with Recovery and Unity we have inherited this legacy from the co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous. One of the co-founders, Bill W, has this to say:

"To reach more alcoholics, understanding of AA and public goodwill toward AA must go on growing everywhere. We need to be on still better terms with medicine, religions, employers, government, courts, prisons, mental hospitals and all enterprises in the alcoholism field". Concept XI. Twelve Concepts for World Service.

AA needs effective communication with the general public and professional communities involved with the alcoholic.

What is PI?

PI work is sometimes referred to as "Carrying the message to the general public". This includes giving talks to doctors, nurses, social services, police, magistrates, community groups, business groups, schools and colleges and trade and professional unions and associations. Open and public meetings, exhibitions, displays, posters, newspapers, magazines, radio and television also come under the heading of PI.

It is often said that the best example of Alcoholics Anonymous is its own sober members, particularly when a sober AA member is speaking to the general public or a group of professional people. We are the face of the Fellowship. For this reason, it is important that members carrying out PI work should have solid continuous sobriety, regular attendance at home group meetings, be conversant with the service structure and have a full working knowledge of the Twelve Traditions.

Experience has shown that Intergroup and Regions are the bodies that can most usefully discuss PI matters and from which one or more PI committees can be formed. Depending on the geography of an Intergroup

area and the number of large towns or cities within it, an Intergroup may form a Committee within itself or, with the initiative of local members, form two or more Committees. Local PI Committees are usually informal with at least one member attending Intergroup. **PI is a co-operative venture and there is no place in it for single isolated acts.** In this way, communication with other parts of Intergroup is maintained and the sharing of service experience is commonplace. Before going ahead with the formation of a local PI Committee in a large town or urban area, it is as well to check Health Authority and Social Service boundaries, so that the work of one Committee does not overlap another. Here again, a discussion at Intergroup will be most valuable. The service structure of AA also allows for the appointment of a Regional PI Officer.

Internal communications are complete when each Intergroup in a Region shares its PI experience at a Regional meeting.

The drawing of formal boundaries for service work should be avoided and positive steps should be taken to keep the Health, Prison, Probation\Courts and Social Services in Scotland and all other Liaison Officers

informed of PI developments, with the Liaison Officers becoming members of the Committee whenever possible, particularly in overlapping geographical areas.

Contacting Professionals

The first contact with a professional body is by telephone. Members should ask for the name of the relevant manager/professional who deals with alcoholism in the organisation. If it is not possible to speak to that person a typewritten letter, on headed Intergroup paper should be sent, giving a name and address for a reply. The objectives of the letter, or telephone call, are threefold and should be stated clearly:

- to establish formal contact between the organisation and AA
- to ask for an appointment with a representative of the organisation and
- to provide speakers to give talks about AA

It is important to involve as many members as possible when giving talks, from as wide a range of age groups and backgrounds as appropriate, e.g. young people giving talks to schools and colleges. The PI Officer acts as a clearing-house for talks and these should be allocated to local AA members, always remembering that those selected are ambassadors of the Fellowship.

Ideally, two members should share a talk - a man and a woman when possible. It is advisable to invite newer members of AA, who are young in sobriety, to sit in the audience and listen. Sponsors may wish to invite sponsees and, in the practice of sponsoring into service, attendance at a talk provides a valuable learning experience. On some occasions it may be convenient to play an AA Conference approved video when giving the talk. This will depend on the time allotted and the type of audience.

Some members prefer to provide AA published literature at a talk and it is suggested that an AA telephone number should be given out. It has been found that

most people at a non-AA meeting want to know what AA is and what it does, rather than hear a drinking story; although some such incidents may be related in order to illustrate a point. A short history of AA can be mentioned, if desired, and it is important to mention the Traditions. Flexibility is always a useful attribute on these occasions.

Working with the Media

Ever expanding contact with the media is vital for carrying AA's message. The Features or Community Features desks of local newspapers, radio and TV stations can be contacted by telephone. There are opportunities for anonymous interviews, phone-ins, articles and programmes on AA as well as advertisements and community service announcements.

Any contact from the national media should be passed to GSO at York as this could affect all groups.

AA has no opinion on outside issues. Even when a member states that an opinion is his or hers, and not AA's, it might be seen by others as AA's opinion. It is usually better to give no opinion at all.

It is important to explain the relevant Traditions **before** an interview or talk takes place.

In all media reports of any kind, try to ensure that the AA help line number and website address, <http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk> are mentioned at least once.

We are not able to participate in discussions on alcoholism and treatment methods, other agencies and organisations or medication and drugs. We are simply there to carry the message of AA.

Personal Identification

Conference 1998 decided:

In today's society there is an ever-increasing

requirement for security and personal identification. It is important that members of Alcoholics Anonymous remember that they are guests and co-operate fully.

Members of the Fellowship visiting outside agencies should conform to their procedures remembering that each agency, whether prison, hospital, school or other, is autonomous.

Notification of the arrangements made for visits or talks including, where appropriate, the sponsoring PI Officer, should provide the names of members attending to the host organisation.

The host may require personal identification, such as a letter from Intergroup or Region, passport, ID card, driving licence or letter of invitation from the host.

It is important that Alcoholics Anonymous does not become invisible - some loss of anonymity is inherent in PI work.

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PI Reading

- AA Service Handbook of GB (Section 17 on PI)
- AA Comes of Age
- Twelve Traditions Illustrated
- Pamphlet "Speaking at non-AA Meetings"
- Pamphlet "How AA Members Co-operate"
- Pamphlet "A Message to Professionals"



GUIDELINES for A.A. in Great Britain

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www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

AA AND EMPLOYMENT

Revised November 2008 No. 8

Section A of this Guideline is published to assist Employment Liaison Officers (ELO's) to carry AA's message to Employers and also contains suggestions for AA Groups in industry while Section B is published to help individual members who are employees.

SECTION A

Since the early days of our Fellowship, AA has sought to carry its message to Employers, hence Chapter 10 of the "Big Book" *Alcoholics Anonymous*. In Great Britain the General Service Conference has considered since as early as 1982, how best to carry the message to the workplace in a structured way. At present Intergroups and Regions support and appoint Liaison Officers at local level to deal with this branch of service within PI/Service Committees (see Guideline No.7).

Employment Liaison Officers

The responsibility of ELOs is to carry AA's message to employers within their local area supported by Intergroup and Region and a PI/Service Committee if one exists. Employment specifically concerns any organisation employing or serving staff companies, trade unions and associations, government departments and/or related agencies. An established period of sobriety (ideally not less than three years) and a thorough knowledge of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain are necessary before accepting this role. Willingness to commit to three years service, and the ability to deal with a wide range of professional people and talk about AA when invited to do so, are also qualities that have proven to be desirable.

Activities

Experience has shown that a business-like approach to employers is most likely to succeed. Often a phone call to ascertain the right person to contact is required, asking for

the name and title of the person who deals with alcohol policies or employee welfare. This could be the Personnel Manager, Welfare Officer, Occupational Health Nurse, Health and Safety Officer, Company Doctor or Managing Director. An approach should then be made by telephone, to that person, requesting an interview and followed up by a letter of confirmation if requested. (Intergroups and Regions should supply properly headed paper for this purpose).

CO-OPERATION WITH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES

Experience has shown that A.A. can help in the following ways:

- by making posters, literature, local contact numbers and details of local meetings available
- offering to talk to staff or management about the AA programme including showing appropriate presentations
- by making available the cumulative experience of over two million recovering alcoholics
- by explaining what AA is and how AA can help with the problem of alcoholism in the workplace
- by putting employers in direct contact with men and women who have achieved sobriety in AA and who are willing to share their personal experience freely with any problem drinker who seeks help

- by welcoming into the local group the employee who wants to do something about a drinking problem, where he or she will find the environment and friends to help them to achieve sobriety.

AA DOES NOT PLAN OR SET UP ALCOHOLISM PROGRAMMES

It is important to establish that AA does not plan or set up alcoholism programmes for industry, rather AA should be presented as a community resource available to the employee with a drinking problem. Bodies such as Alcohol Concern and its affiliated Regional Councils, the Medical Council on Alcohol and the Scottish Council on Alcoholism provide such a service and many AA members are active in the work of these. We are reminded that AA has no opinion on outside issues including alcohol policies but that does not mean we cannot co-operate within our Traditions.

LARGE COMPANIES

In larger companies, which may have formal programmes for problem drinkers, one employee may be given the job of acting as a counsellor for alcoholic employees. He or she may sometimes be an AA member who has had the necessary training to qualify for such a job. The counsellor generally works closely with the medical department and since this kind of work constitutes professional activity, it is therefore not Twelfth Step work.

AA GROUPS

Tradition six-

An AA Group ought never endorse, finance or lend the AA name, to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

Some companies that have formal programmes for problem drinkers may support the formation of an AA Group. Experience suggests that an AA Group is

most successful when the non-alcoholics who have co-operated limit their “support” to making facilities available for Group meetings. Meetings held on company premises, whether on company time or not, are within the Traditions of AA, provided that no strings are attached. AA Groups within a company made up of entirely employees of that particular company can be helpful in introducing the AA programme to the problem drinker. Experience has indicated that the “specialised” Group is not totally successful, unless the newcomer is also encouraged to participate in the activities of regular AA Groups.

Where a company employs a recovering alcoholic as a counsellor, an AA Group can usually be set up without difficulty, following traditional AA procedures. In such cases, it is appropriate for the counsellor to take his or her place as a member of the Group. Where there is no recovering alcoholic on the company's staff, an outside AA Group may be invited to assist with the responsibility of forming and sponsoring a Group made up of company employees. In most areas the local AA Groups should be able to handle all referrals, making “employee only” Groups unnecessary.

TRADE UNIONS

Unions should be dealt with in similar ways to employers. However, our experience shows that before contacting local branch officers an approach initially to their headquarters is not only courteous but also beneficial in carrying the AA message. Often they will supply you with details of who to see or may arrange it directly.

Many unions and employers organise conferences, trade shows and information meetings. Attendance at these meetings can usually be arranged through the organisers or the support of a friendly contact. The display of literature and providing information can involve a PI/Service Committee with much follow-up work in carrying the message to those who attend.

TO SUMMARISE

Guided by our Traditions the Employment Liaison Officer can, while acting as a contact for employers within an Intergroup area, working as part of a PI/Service Committee and sharing information with other Intergroup officers and in particular the Region Employment Liaison Officer, offer our programme of recovery to all problem drinkers who come to the notice of employers.

AA welcomes any opportunity to:

1. Meet with an employer to discuss ways AA can co-operate
2. Present meetings to explain the AA programme of recovery to employees
3. Take employees with a drinking problem to AA meetings

ELO READING/LITERATURE

AA Service Handbook for Great Britain
Speaking at Non-AA meetings
How AA members Co-operate with Professionals
A member's eye view of AA
AA Fact File

The Problem Drinker in Employment
AA Information Sheet for Employers
When Drink Stops Working
If you are a professional AA wants to work with you
A Brief Guide to AA
AA at a glance
A4 display leaflets (with local contact numbers)
Contact Postcards (with local contact number)
Is AA for YOU
Who Me
List of local AA meetings (without telephone contact numbers)

AA Presentation "*An inside view of AA for professionals*"
AA Presentation "*One day at a Time*"

PART B

PERSONAL ANONYMITY

Perhaps one of the most frequent questions asked by newer members at Group meetings is “Should I tell my employer that I am an alcoholic?” Clearly the answer to this must rest with the individual, but it is likely to be influenced by whether or not the employer in question is enlightened on the subject of alcoholism.

Where an employee is reasonably confident that the employer is sympathetic towards the problem and has decided to disclose that they are alcoholic, it is suggested that they tell their employer that Alcoholics Anonymous would like to offer help to any fellow employee who may have a problem with alcohol.

PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

Because of the complexity of the circumstances, which can arise when members find themselves becoming involved in this field, we should be aware of the dangers to our security and sobriety unless we tread carefully.

In some situations it may be appropriate to Twelfth Step a fellow employee, but it is usually better for an AA member to refer a problem drinker to another AA member outside the company. This can often be the case within small companies where informal arrangements between management and AA members can lead to referral, of those with a drinking problem who are willing, directly to the AA member.

Whether the contact takes place during working hours or not depends largely on how the request for help arose in the first instance but it is generally better to undertake a Twelfth Step contact outside business hours, unless the introduction is made with the knowledge of management.

If the problem drinker declines the help proffered, members should be aware that there is always the possibility they may be judged adversely by management because of their inability to help the suffering employee.

The employer should be told that Alcoholics Anonymous has no financial interest in recruiting members; that there are no dues or fees and that outside contributions must be declined. The sole concern of AA is the personal recovery and continued sobriety of those who turn to it for help with their drinking problems.

The Fellowship is committed to remaining forever non-professional, and the AA approach is essentially a simple one based on the unique ability of recovered alcoholics to work effectively with other problem drinkers. This approach is already being used productively in many company programmes to combat alcoholism.



GUIDELINES for A.A. in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

A.A. AND HEALTHCARE IN THE COMMUNITY

Revised April 2008 No. 9

The purpose of this Guideline, in conjunction with the AA Health Resource Pack, is to assist Health Liaison Officers (HLOs) to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic through co-operation with professional health care workers.

INTRODUCTION

Intergroups and Regions are responsible for the appointment of an HLO who ideally should work as a member of the local AA combined services or other appropriate committee. The HLO establishes contact and maintains communication with healthcare professionals, and reports back to Intergroup and/or Region.

- National Health Areas may not coincide with Region or Intergroup areas and it is important to identify where these differences occur.
- The emphasis on hospital based treatment for patients with alcohol problems has shifted to community based initiatives.
- Healthcare is no longer the sole province of the health service; depending on the area, healthcare may also include the local authority social services departments and private sector care providers.
- Familiarity with the local area and a thorough knowledge of *The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain* are vital to the role of HLO.

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

By this we mean doctors, nurses, GPs and others whose remit includes contact with the active alcoholic. It should also include hospital and treatment centre administrators/managers. We may also be required to talk to student health care professionals. Do not be surprised if professionals do not use the word alcoholic, and instead refer to "problem drinker",

"alcohol dependent" and "alcohol abuse" or "misuse".

MAKING CONTACT

It may be useful together with the Public Information Officer and/or combined services committee to map the healthcare professionals, hospitals, treatment centres and other healthcare providers within your area. From this information an action plan for making contact can be developed. It is important for a list of existing contacts and hospital groups to be included with your map, as their experience will be a valuable asset in developing new contacts. Teamwork is the key for this to work effectively. It is also helpful to have a list of AA members who can help give talks and send out information.

As with other external services, contact by letter or e-mail asking for an appointment is the first step with perhaps a follow up telephone call. (Intergroups and Regions should have headed paper for this purpose).

MEETING A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL

Professional workers tend to have a clear understanding of their areas of responsibility but few will understand ours. Initially, our role might be that of providing information as to what AA can and cannot do, always remembering that as a Fellowship we are committed to remaining non-professional. Our approach is based on our ability as recovering alcoholics to work effectively with the still suffering alcoholic. When co-operating with professionals we should

always adhere to our Traditions.

It is suggested that we:

- Are fully aware of the Traditions.
- Turn up on time, suitably dressed.
- Politely make ourselves known.
- Take writing materials and record items relevant to our Region/Intergroup.
- Do not engage in debates about budgets, bed shortages or any outside issues.
- Never discuss individual AA members.
- Do not report to non-AA committees but we can and should make AA information freely available.
- Do not give medical advice to anyone.
- Provide current times and venues of meetings, the National Telephone Service number and details of AA literature.
- Never commit Alcoholics Anonymous or other AAs beyond your remit or our Traditions.

Don't be afraid to ask questions; it's the only way to learn. Enjoy your role, safeguard the position and pass on your experience and contacts at rotation. AA has been co-operating with healthcare professionals for over fifty years but, if the experience is new to you, make use of the experience of other members in your area.

HOSPITAL/TREATMENT CENTRE MEETINGS

There are two forms of meeting suitable for these premises. First there is the regular AA group meeting, run according to Guideline 1, using the hospital/treatment centre as a venue. These meetings welcome patients being treated for alcoholism, and should be subject to Tradition 7. Second there is the AA sponsored meeting held for in-patients. The outside sponsors attend these meetings, regularly bringing in outside speakers. These meetings are not open to AA in general nor listed in AA's *Where to Find*. This second type may not be self-supporting so it may be necessary to provide

refreshments and AA literature. In-patients undergo treatment for relatively short periods so the continuation of the meeting depends heavily on the outside sponsors. It is usual for these meetings to be open to allow health professionals to attend.

STARTING A HOSPITAL/TREATMENT CENTRE GROUP

Discuss the idea at Intergroup, Region and combined services meetings to establish the need and the support of local members. Experience suggests that a minimum of four AA members are required who are committed to support the Group for at least one year. The Health Liaison Officer and another member of the services committee should then make contact with the hospital/treatment centre so as to discuss the form of meeting to take place on their premises.

- National Health Service hospitals function through three departments – Medical, Nursing and Administration. Ensure that each is fully informed as problems can arise when AA has contacted a person who, though helpful and understanding, may not have the necessary authority to implement the decisions or arrangements.
- Courtesy and experience tell us that we cannot occupy premises without the permission of the Administrator; that we cannot approach patients without the permission of the doctor in charge and we cannot enter a ward without the permission of the Nursing Officer/Charge Nurse/Ward Sister.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF HOSPITAL/TREATMENT CENTRE GROUP

Once a Group is established, members may be invited to visit patients in their wards.

We do not solicit members; rather this is an opportunity to share our experience, strength and hope. You might consider leaving literature or asking if the patient would like to attend a meeting of the Group. Always ask if the staff on duty can make the necessary arrangements and gain their consent. It is helpful if one or two members take on the responsibility of visiting wards each week to carry out this task, remembering to be courteous to all staff and to thank them for allowing admittance to their premises.

ADDITIONAL HINTS

- We may be required to register as a volunteer.
- Abide by the rules of the hospital/treatment centre, we are only guests.
- Limit yourself to carrying your own simple message of recovery.
- Be willing to listen as well as talk.
- Have a thorough knowledge of the Traditions and live by their spiritual foundation.
- You will be known to be a member of AA by people in the hospital and your appearance, language, manner and conduct may influence their opinion of AA.
- Always maintain a cheerful humility about the amateur status of AA. We are not professionals.
- Do not talk about medication psychiatry or scientific theories on alcoholism.
- Never interfere or comment on the treatment or drug regime of patients. This is the sole responsibility of doctors.
- Do not boast about AA. Let results speak for themselves.

Finally, when taking responsibility for meetings in a professional centre it is necessary to keep in frequent, friendly contact with members of staff at the centre.

COMMUNICATION

Regular reporting by Intergroup and Region Health Liaison Officers is a vital part of their role. This will keep the Fellowship aware of progress or problems. It will ensure that all areas of service work together, regardless of boundaries and service titles, to carry AA's message to all Health Professionals and, more importantly, the alcoholic who still suffers. Consider responding flexibly to the needs of the professional community and, through regular service meetings/workshops, a plan for your area will emerge. Do not be afraid to ask for help or to contact members in similar service positions in other areas. The Health Sub-committee members are also available to support and sponsor members into the role of Health Liaison Officer. A resource pack is also available.

Remember your primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

This is not an exhaustive list of Health Liaison functions/duties.

Suggested Literature:

AA Health Resource Pack
AA as a Resource for the Medical Profession
If you are a Professional
44 Questions and Answers
A Member's Eye View of AA
Speaking at Non-AA meetings
A brief guide to AA
Let's be friendly with our friends
Who Me?



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FOR A.A. MEMBERS EMPLOYED IN THE ALCOHOLISM FIELD Revised 2006 No. 10

The Guidelines below have been compiled not only from existing material but also from the shared experience of AA members in the USA, Canada and UK. They also reflect the guidance given through the Twelve Traditions, The Twelve Concepts of World Service and the General Service Conference.

"We see that we have no right or need to discourage AAs who wish to work as individuals in these wider fields. It would be actually antisocial were we to discourage them".

Bill W. AA Comes of Age. p117

PURPOSE

This guideline is primarily for the benefit of AA members considering employment (or employed) as counsellors in Treatment Centres, as self-employed counsellors, or in the wider field of alcoholism. These suggestions and experiences from other members, covering a wide variety of jobs and occupations, may well also help other professionals such as doctors, nurses, social workers and researchers.

As AA members we do **not** presume to advise about professional matters. However the strengths and hopes shared here do stress the real value of a strong foundation in AA recovery.

SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions are based squarely on factual experience within the Fellowship, obtained from scores of AA members in USA, Canada, as well as up to date information obtained in the UK.

1. It is recommended that members have several years of good and uninterrupted AA sobriety before undertaking any paid alcoholism job or prior to enrolling in any alcohol related training programme. Five years sobriety has been suggested as the minimum.

2. It is strongly advised to have experience not only of several AA groups but also at Intergroup, and at least Regional level; as well as a full knowledge of the AA telephone services (local and national). Some AAs have held positions as trusted servants within the Fellowship and worked for alcoholism agencies at the same time without adverse effect. Experience has proved that a member well-informed about AA, combined with a professional responsibility can be invaluable to both roles.

The UK General Service Conference has affirmed that an AA member employed in the alcoholism field should be eligible for service within the Fellowship, provided he or she has the necessary qualifications, as outlined within the Guidelines.

3. An individual working in the alcoholism field may well be the only AA member that his or her colleagues have ever met. Consequently a good and sober example needs to be set. Also it should be made clear from the start that they do not represent AA as a whole.

4. Understanding the Twelve Traditions and how they developed 'out of experience' is absolutely indispensable. At the same time up-to-date familiarity with developments in

AA certainly helps prevent any misrepresentation.

5. As much Twelfth Step experience as possible will prove to be invaluable. Many members have also found it essential to have a sponsor who does not work in the alcoholism field.

In addition AA contributors to these Guidelines overwhelmingly agreed that it is professional skill and experience, not AA membership, which qualify one for professional positions. Some said that continuing professional education and work had also enriched their AA life, although the ability to be objectively critical of your own performance and motives was particularly useful.

LITERATURE

"To deepen my understanding I read the books Alcoholics Anonymous, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and AA Comes of Age, over and over again," wrote one member.

Added to the above list the literature indicated below will be found to be especially helpful:

The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain
How AA Members Co-operate with Professionals
Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts Illustrated
AA in Prisons
If you are a Professional
The AA Member - Medication and Other Drugs
AA and the Armed Services
Understanding Anonymity
AA Service News
Share
Roundabout

OTHER AGENCIES

In the public mind, AA is often confused with other agencies in the alcoholism field. It is important to know what these other agencies offer, how they differ from AA and be aware of the work they carry out in your locality.

- for example:

Al-Anon Family Groups and Alateen
61 Great Dover Street
London
SE1 4YF

Alcohol Concern
Waterbridge House
32-36 Loman Street
London
SE1 0EE

It is important to remember that members working within other agencies can ensure that neither the name of the institution or any of its promotional literature uses the AA name or any other such language that implies endorsement by AA.

AA does not recommend people for jobs in the alcoholism field. Individuals may recommend another member, but on the clear understanding that the reference is strictly personal.

ANONYMITY

The value of Traditions Eleven and Twelve for individual recovery as well as protection of the Fellowship have been clearly spelt out.

Whether or not to disclose AA membership is up to the individual, remembering it is important not to violate Tradition Eleven. Saying publicly or in print, on television or anywhere else "I am an alcoholic" or "a recovering alcoholic" does not break an AA Tradition provided AA membership is not

included in that statement. It is vital to remember never to reveal another member's identity.

SECRETS OF SUCCESS

-Personal recovery comes first!

- Sticking to one role at a time, clearly demonstrating the difference between AA and the job
- Maintaining a personal AA life with a strong network of friends who treat you as equal
- Being in regular contact with a strong sponsor
- Attending AA meetings as an ordinary member, on a regular basis
- Using common sense
- Approaching every situation on its own merits and watching your language carefully
- Using the term 'Alcoholism Counsellor' **NOT** 'AA Counsellor'
- Being professional at all times
- You may encounter resentment from other AA members but this may be minimised provided AA guidelines and Traditions are respected.
- Being prepared for criticism such as working in a 'harm reduction' framework as opposed to 'total abstinence'
- Being wary of sponsoring more members than you can actually handle
- Not sponsoring clients
- Always being aware of motives

AA MEMBERS WORKING IN THE ALCOHOLISM FIELD GIVE THEIR VIEWS

AA members with sobriety ranging from six to thirty two years who work in the field of alcoholism were asked to contribute their experience and suggestions.

Sobriety

Two counsellors, over 10 years sober, working at residential Twelfth Step treatment centres suggested that alcohol

workers should have at least five years sobriety. A trainee counsellor felt that two to three years sobriety was enough - dependent upon the quality of sobriety. Generally it was felt that three to five years sobriety was sufficient, but because working in the alcoholism field can be quite stressful, the longer the sobriety and the stronger the grounding within the Fellowship the less likely the member would get into difficulties.

Experience

Most members agreed that service work at Intergroup and at least Regional level and a good knowledge of the Traditions was essential. Also necessary was the membership of a 'home' group and good personal sponsorship. One counsellor with 32 years sobriety said that he would have been lost without the AA guidelines.

Meetings

All counsellors were in agreement that they would not go to the same meeting as their clients because they go to meetings only for their own recovery.

Should this, for some reason, be unavoidable, common sense and good judgement should prevail. Also, it was worth remembering that the client could well feel uncomfortable. But should they unintentionally find a client at a meeting, they would not give AA advice themselves, they would direct them to someone should they be asked for it. Most of the counsellors said they would not share at a meeting should a client be there. Two counsellors said they would certainly not sponsor a client. However all the counsellors were adamant that they went to AA meetings for themselves and no one else and that their personal recovery was first and foremost.

Problems that may arise

All except one worker in the alcoholism field said that they had experienced no problems within the Fellowship and felt that their job was completely separate from their personal recovery. This professional was working within a 'controlled drinking' centre and consequently some AA members considered the individual to be in opposition to AA.

One Doctor said that if he were asked if certain pills were addictive, he would give the relevant information. But if he were asked for medical help he would tell them to see their own doctor.

Another person was seen as being somehow superior and was considered more of an 'expert' than other members of the Group.

Although one counsellor never shared **any** area of his work at meetings he found himself being quoted outside of 'the rooms' and not even accurately at that. (Beware of gossip!)

All the Nurses spoken with found that they could work with alcoholics under hospital guidelines and would always stick to these, whatever their feelings. Sometimes they suggested AA to patients but they did not do any specific Twelfth Step work themselves during the course of their duty.

FUNDRAISING, RESEARCH & AA DIRECTORIES

Fundraising

It is particularly important to consider the Twelve Traditions, especially six, seven and ten, where fundraising is concerned and certainly **not** use the Fellowship to raise funds from fellow members for any reason whatsoever.

Research

Some AA members are not interested in

alcoholism research and some even fear that such research could publicise their AA membership. Therefore when a professional agency wants to use AA members in research projects it becomes a delicate subject indeed. Remember that some professional agencies do not yet understand AA's primary purpose, or that no AA office, Group or any other unit can require AA members to do anything. That being said a number of very worthwhile research projects, involving AA members as private citizens, have been accomplished when properly prepared for.

AA Directories

The purpose of the national 'Where to Find' or any other similar directory is to enable AA members to contact groups in other areas as well as other services and offices elsewhere. These directories should be used with discretion and on no account should AA confidential directories be used outside of the Fellowship.

HISTORY SHOWS

For many years AA members have been working professionally in the field of alcoholism and many of these members have made remarkable contributions to the world's knowledge and understanding of the illness of alcoholism. All this work has been carried out by AA members acting fully within both the letter and spirit of the AA Traditions.

While the Fellowship has profited from the experiences of those members working in the alcoholism field, particularly from USA and Canada it is very necessary to continue gathering our own experiences. This is an important and still debatable issue. Any member who can contribute their experience to our knowledge of what is happening in the alcoholism field is urged to write to the General Secretary at GSO in York.



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A.A. IN PRISONS

Revised April 2008 No. 11

Our Fellowship has long recognised our responsibility for carrying the message of AA to the suffering alcoholic in prisons in Great Britain. It is recommended that AA Groups should be established in all prisons and young offenders establishments.

INTRODUCTION

Responsibility for sponsorship of prison groups has been placed by Conference with the Intergroup and is exercised through the Intergroup Prison Liaison Officer. As a member of Alcoholics Anonymous you are there by permission of the Governor and staff and it must be remembered that every Governor, although working within a national framework, has the right of decision in his or her own institution.

Familiarity with prisons in the local area and a thorough knowledge of the *AA Service Handbook for Great Britain* are vital before accepting the role of Prison Liaison Officer.

PRISON GROUPS.

Prison group sponsors are appointed according to the Intergroup conscience. It is recommended that sponsors have a minimum of three years' continuous sobriety. Security clearance is invariably necessary. Wherever possible, a team of AA sponsors should be maintained so that inmates will gain a broader view of how AA works.

So far as the Fellowship of AA is concerned, female members may be included in the panel of agreed sponsors for male prisons, provided they are accompanied by a male AA member, or male members on the panel for female prisons, provided they are accompanied by a female AA member, subject to the approval of the Governor.

As with all meetings, it is desirable that prison groups discuss the whole of the AA programme of recovery using every opportunity to introduce the Steps and Traditions and referring to the Big Book. In this way, it is possible to make the inmate member aware that he or she can live the AA way of life prior to release.

Prison group members should, wherever possible, be encouraged to take an active part in their Group in accordance with AA Traditions and, whenever possible, prison sponsors should adopt only a supporting role.

AA members who are invited to speak at a prison Group meeting may also require security clearance.

COMMUNICATION

- Prison group sponsors should pass on reports to their Intergroup Prison Liaison Officer on a regular basis, outlining what is occurring within their establishment.
- Prior to release prisoners should be encouraged to make contact with the Fellowship within their local area through the relevant Service Offices. Members who wish to correspond with prisoners should only do so through the correspondence scheme operated by the General Service Office.
- Where no AA Group exists at a prison, the local Intergroup should make every attempt to form one. Permission to

establish a new prison group has to be obtained from the Governor and the initial approach should be made by the Intergroup Prison Liaison Officer.

- Participation of prison group sponsors in meetings at national Conventions and in Regional Prison Sponsor meetings is useful in sharing and extending our experience in this form of service.

LITERATURE

Every effort should be made to ensure that the prisoner induction pack, together with sufficient literature, is available to prison AA members. Additional AA publications, eg *SHARE* and *Roundabout* (with contact details removed), can also be provided by the local Intergroup.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Abide by the laws and regulations governing visitors to prisons. These are very clear and very strict. Check with the particular establishment you will be visiting.

As a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, you are there by permission of the Governor and staff. Act accordingly. From their point of view, you will be AA's representative and their respect and esteem for the Fellowship as a whole will depend on your conduct.

- Act always with courtesy and diplomacy.
- Your appearance, language, manner and conduct will affect everyone's opinion of AA.
- Failure to observe prison rules is a criminal offence and could cause AA to be banned, so do not be tempted to do favours for prison group members and give them cigarettes that are forbidden, or carry in or take out a card, letter, money etc. The message is all we take in, and we take nothing out.

- Obey smoking regulations. If inmates can't smoke, AA visitors shouldn't either.
- In accordance with our Preamble, we have no authority to discuss medication, theories on alcoholism, professionally prescribed treatments or obtaining parole. We are there only to carry the AA message.
- AA does not participate in meetings which are the responsibility of another agency in the field of alcoholism. If other agencies also have meetings within the establishment, the authorities should be informed that we are not affiliated.
- Be punctual and observe the establishment visiting times.

The personal example of the prison sponsor is our greatest asset with prison authorities and in carrying the message to prisons.

WHO YOU SEE THERE

WHAT YOU HEAR THERE

LET IT STAY THERE



GUIDELINES for AA in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

FINANCE

Revised November 2006 No. 12

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

AA MONEY

Most of AA’s revenue in Great Britain consists of the voluntary contributions of members at Group meetings. The remainder comes (predominantly) from literature surpluses, from interest on investments and from convention surpluses. There has been, and still is, other money in the form of gifts, bequests and legacies. The annual value of this money was significant, and notwithstanding the second part of Tradition 7, the General Service Board was legally bound to accept them.

On 25 July 1986, therefore, a private Act of Parliament was obtained, known as the *Alcoholics Anonymous (Dispositions) Act 1986*, empowering the General Service Board to disclaim all, or part, of such donations. The Board has set an upper limit of £6,000 per year direct personal contribution to the General Service Office and a “one-off” contribution by way of a legacy to the amount of £6,000.

Money, whatever its source is AA money and should be spent only to further our primary purpose of helping the still suffering alcoholic. All who are trusted with the responsibility of handling AA money at every level should remind themselves constantly of this simple traditional principle. Responsibilities at the various levels of service are outlined in the following sections.

GROUP

The job of Group Treasurer is one which requires honesty and reliability. As with any

other trusted service, the task should be carefully specified and its measure of authority and responsibility made clear and well understood. Responsibility and a reasonable period of continuous sobriety (preferably at least one year) are important.

- Treasurers should keep good, simple records, which should be open to inspection, should report on the Group finances at least once a month and encourage the Group to talk about financial matters.
- Experience has shown that the use of a current bank or building society account in the name of Alcoholics Anonymous and the Group (see Section 12 of *The General Service Handbook for Great Britain*, entitled *Governance*) is recommended for good financial management of the Group funds. The bank statement then provides an additional record of the Group’s finances.
- All cheques should be secured by two signatures (two out of any three duly authorised). Blank signed cheques should never be issued. This is a recommended precautionary measure taken on behalf of both the Group and the Treasurer and applies to cheque payments at all levels.
- Contributions should be collected by passing the pot at Group meetings and the Treasurer should count and record it with the help of another responsible Group member.
- The Treasurer should enter the amount in a cashbook and pay the money into the

Group's bank account at the earliest opportunity.

- After paying the approved expenses of the Group, e.g. rent, refreshments and literature, and retaining a prudent reserve of one month's running expenses, any surplus should be sent to the Intergroup Treasurer - preferably by cheque and without delay.
- For those Groups who do not hold a bank account, it is recommended that a paying in book is used to deposit funds directly into their local Intergroup account.
- Expenses do not include the use of Group funds for social purposes such as dances, bus trips and birthday cakes. Accumulation of large funds is inefficient, wasteful and a denial of Tradition 7.

INTERGROUP

In addition to the guidelines suggested for a Group Treasurer the following points should be considered seriously by the Intergroup Treasurer.

- A current bank account in the name of Alcoholics Anonymous and the Intergroup is recommended for running the Intergroup's finances. All cheques should be secured by two signatures - any two from three duly authorised. Normally these would be the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. In the interest of safety blank cheques should never be signed.
- The Intergroup Treasurer should produce a statement of accounts in writing including a list of all contributions, at least quarterly with copies available for all GSRs in the Intergroup.
- Intergroup Treasurers, by means of workshops, discussions on sound AA financial practice, patience and tolerance, should encourage all component groups

to contribute to Intergroup on a regular basis. Intergroup Treasurers should not be reluctant to approach non-contributing groups.

- The accounts should be open to inspection and be properly audited or independently checked once a year.
- Experience shows that the Treasurer when making any payments, whenever practical, should do so by cheque. Receipts should be received for all cash payments and retained.
- It is suggested that a prudent reserve for an Intergroup is three months' running expenses.
- Intergroups should bear in mind that regularity and evenness in the flow of cash to the General Service Office, ideally via their Region, is essential for GSO to meet its day-to-day obligations and operate in an efficient and economical manner.

REGION

For the important position of trust as a Regional Treasurer it is recommended that candidates have had previous experience of a Treasurer's role at Group and Intergroup level.

- An annual Budget should be prepared and presented so that Intergroups may have awareness of the contribution they are suggested to make to their respective Regions.
- It is recommended that Region Treasurers should serve a maximum of three years and be confirmed annually. (*Guideline 5*).
- To facilitate the running of Region finances, a current bank account in the name of Alcoholics Anonymous and the name of the Region is recommended (see Section 12 of *The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain*, entitled Governance).

- The accounts should be open to inspection and be audited or independently checked once a year.
- The Region Treasurer should also seriously consider, for personal protection as well as the safeguarding of AA money, the prudence of not sending or issuing blank signed cheques.
- An important item in any Region accounts is the expense incurred in sending Delegates to Conference. This should reach GSO by 31 December for the forthcoming year. Another item of significance is the cost of sending a variety of Region trusted servants to national meetings in York concerned with a range of service activities.
- At the Thirty Third General Service Conference, it was agreed that the recommended system for funding the national telephone number would be for Groups to continue to fund Intergroups, Intergroups to fund Regions, and for Regions to take the responsibility for payment of the telephone accounts.
- Regions should bear in mind that regularity and evenness in the flow of cash to GSO is essential for it to meet its day-to-day obligations, and operate in an efficient and economical manner.

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:

The Financial Controller at GSO is central to the day-to-day financial operations, and also participates fully in the policy discussions and recommendations of the Regional

Treasurers' meetings, the Finance Committee and its working groups. Computerised accounts (based on cost centres), and financial statements are prepared monthly following the recommended practices for charitable organisations. Annual accounts and a balance sheet are audited by registered auditors and a simplified version, together with diagrammatic presentations, are included in the Annual Report of the Board.

The emphasis in all financial accountability is simplicity, realism and openness with no more demand on resources than is required to do the job well including a prudent reserve equivalent to the budget expenditure for the forthcoming year.

MONEY, EXPENSES & SPIRITUALITY

“An AA service is anything whatsoever that legitimately helps us to reach our fellow sufferers.”

There is a vast array of these services, rolling endlessly from emptying ashtrays, through telephone calls, travel, meeting places, literature, delegates, committees, Conference and on to the General Service Office. They add up to our Third Legacy.

“Without its essential services AA would soon become a formless, confused and irresponsible anarchy.”

It is agreed that no expenses are paid for individual face to face Twelfth Step work. But it is also widely held that trusted servants should be reimbursed for reasonable expenses even if they are subsequently returned to the pot. Such claims should be made and accepted lest the less privileged feel denied the right of participation.



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PROBATION/SOCIAL SERVICES

Revised April 2009 No. 13

The term Probation/Social Services is used in the document to indicate Probation for England and Wales, Social Services for Scotland

Experience has shown that positive results can follow when Groups, Intergroups and Regions co-operate with the Probation Service/Social Services with a view to helping the still suffering alcoholic.

INTRODUCTION

In our pamphlet *How AA Members Co-operate*, the following appears:

“We cannot discriminate against any prospective AA members, even if he or she comes to us under pressure from a court, an employer, or any other agency.

Although the strength of our programme lies in the voluntary nature of membership in AA, many of us first attend meetings because we were forced to, either by someone else or by our inner discomfort. But continual exposure to AA educated us to the true nature of our illness. Who made the referral to AA is not what AA is interested in. It is the problem drinker who is our concern. We cannot predict who will recover, nor have we the authority to decide how recovery should be sought by any other alcoholic”.

A good working relationship between AA and the Probation Service/Social Services often takes many months and sometimes years to build. Experience shows that, as in many areas of service, setting up a system of co-operation between AA and the Probation Service/Social Service is most likely to prove successful if patience and perseverance is practised.

A plan of action could be:

INTERGROUPS

(Refer to Guideline 4 INTERGROUPS)

- The election of an Intergroup Probation/Social Services Liaison Officer who should have an established period of sobriety, ideally not less than two years. It is recommended she/he serves for a maximum of three years.
- The person elected will be responsible for establishing links with the Probation Service in England and Wales or with Social Service departments in Scotland. Liaison with the Probation Service/Social Services often leads directly to contact with magistrates who will need to be informed about AA in a similar manner.
- The officer should familiarise him or herself with the 12 Traditions, the *AA Service Handbook for Great Britain* and the *AA Service Handbook on Public Information*.
- A report should be made to each Intergroup meeting by the officer to keep Intergroup informed on a regular basis.
- The officer should send a copy of the report to the Regional Probation Liaison Officer and keep him/her informed of developments in the Intergroup.

INTERGROUP PROBATION LIAISON OFFICERS

Some Intergroups have a flourishing relationship with their local Probation/Social Services department. In others there will have been little contact. It is for each officer to decide the best way of taking the role forward. Some suggested methods are as follows:

- The officer might set up a committee or team to assist in the work and to Twelfth-Step any probationers.
- Establishing a named contact with each Probation/Social Services office in the area.
- Distribution of AA approved literature and posters for display in the Probation/Social Services offices and to be given to offenders, including, where appropriate, use of the stories in the new Prison Induction Pack.
- Attending meetings with the Probation/Social Services to inform them of how AA works and what it does and does not do.
- Take other opportunities to carry the message, for example he or she may be asked to provide a speaker for a "drink drivers" or "domestic violence" group or other sections of the criminal justice system such as bail hostels, magistrates etc.
- Keep accurate records of Probation/Social Services officers' contact names and addresses, details of meetings with Probation/Social Services, and of the Twelfth Step list so that in the event of someone having to take over at short notice, all ground gained would not be lost.

GROUPS

Tradition Five tells us that *“Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers”*.

Sometimes the way in which a person enters AA may seem unorthodox, controversial or even in breach of our Traditions; however, a closer look will show us that AA is not interested in how a person comes to us but simply in how we can help in that person's release from alcoholism. Each group is autonomous and how it chooses to co-operate (if at all) with Probation/Social Services is for the group conscience to decide.

REGION

REGIONAL PROBATION/SOCIAL SERVICES LIAISON OFFICERS (Refer to Guideline 5 REGIONS)

It is recommended that officers should have at least three years' continuous sobriety. Consideration should be given to their experience or interest.

It is recommended that the officers should serve for a maximum of three years and be confirmed annually.

It is through the Regional Assembly that the Regional Probation/Social Services Liaison Officer is elected, ideally, though not essentially, being a member with some experience at Intergroup level.

The task of the Regional Probation/Social Services Liaison Officer is:

- To communicate with, and to collate information from, the Intergroup Probation/Social Services Liaison Officers within the Region. This information is passed on to Region in the form of a report, given at each Regional Assembly. A copy of each report should be sent to the Board Trustee looking after Probation/Social Services matters.

- Another function is often to encourage Intergroups where activity is slow or non-existent.
- To support Intergroup Probation/Social Services Liaison Officers, especially if they are newly elected or are being elected to a post which has been previously vacant.
- To liaise with the Probation/Social Services at senior management level, as frequently a Probation/Social Services area will cover several Intergroups.
- To send an annual report on the Region's Probation/Social Services liaison activities to the annual meeting of Regional Probation/Social Services Liaison Officers, if possible to attend that meeting, and to report to Region relevant items from the annual meeting.

Experience has shown the following activities to be helpful:

- Holding probation workshops, perhaps under the umbrella of a regional 'combined external services' workshop where all Liaison Officers and helpers are invited to share their experience and to encourage others into service.
- Intergroups needing help, assistance and guidance on probation/social services liaison may invite visits by officers and helpers from other Intergroups where AA and the Probation Service/Social Services already co-operate. Visits may be directed to Intergroup meetings and individual groups, or perhaps to the Probation/ Social Services by accompanying the local AA Liaison Officer to lend support.
- Holding meetings of Intergroup Probation/Social Services Liaison Officers between Regional Assemblies, in order to share experience.

SETTING UP A CONFIRMATION OF ATTENDANCE/CHIT SYSTEM

Sometimes Courts or the Probation Service/Social Services ask for confirmation of attendance at AA meetings. The reporting of attendance is not part of AA procedure. Each attendee reports on him or herself, at the request of the referring agency.

Each Group, Intergroup or Region is autonomous and free to use any method it sees appropriate. It is suggested that the following method of setting up a system could be used:

- Intergroup considers setting up such a system in their area. A workshop or presentation from the Regional PLO or someone who has operated the system in their own area may be of assistance in understanding how it works and answering any questions.
- Each Group considers if they want to operate such a system. The Probation/Social Services Liaison Officer may be invited to a group conscience meeting to explain the system.
- Systems of confirming attendance may vary. Some areas distribute pre-printed "attendance notes" to each meeting which can be signed by the Secretary or GSR and given to anyone requesting them. Other areas hand out a sealed envelope containing a card which identifies the Group by number or code and which has the date written across the envelope by the Secretary.
- Conference 1987 recommended that arrangements allowing members to self-report attendance to an outside body are within the Traditions.

EXPENSES

(Refer to Guideline 12 FINANCE)

The payment of expenses depends upon the group conscience of the Region or Intergroup, always bearing in mind our Tradition of self-support.

- Service is defined as that which makes the Twelfth Step possible.
- It is agreed that no expenses should be claimed for individual "face to face" Twelfth Step work.

In principle, any member who is qualified to carry out a particular task in our service should not be prevented from doing so for financial reasons, and should be offered expenses.

When carrying out an Intergroup or Region function, duly authorised service workers should be offered expenses.

For a variety of reasons Regions and Intergroups will probably differ in their approach to this question, and there may be no uniformity, but there need be no controversy if decisions are taken in the spirit of AA and with common sense.



GUIDELINES for A.A. in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A.A. AND AL-ANON

Revised April 2002 No. 14

The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous and the Al-Anon Family Groups have a unique relationship. They are naturally drawn together by their close family ties. Yet the Twelve Traditions, the General Service Boards, and the General Service Conferences of both Fellowships suggest that each functions more effectively if it remains separate, co-operating but not affiliating with the other.

Each Fellowship has always had its own General Service Board, General Service Office, Conference, publishing company and World Directory. Each has established its own policies and maintained its own services. This separate functioning has served both AA and Al-Anon Family Groups well. As a matter of fact, AA's policy of 'co-operation but not affiliation' was established as long ago as the early 1950's, and both Al-Anon and AA recognised at that time the importance of maintaining separate Fellowships.

However, from time to time, questions come to both AA and Al-Anon General Service Offices indicating confusion as to how AA and Al-Anon may best co-operate in the area of Groups, Intergroups or central services and Conventions and get-togethers. Trustees of AA and members of Al-Anon have met and discussed these questions. The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain approved the following suggested guidelines.

SEPARATE GROUPS

Since the primary purpose of the AA Group is to help the sick alcoholic to recover, and the primary purpose of the Al-Anon Family Groups is to help the Al-Anon to live with herself or himself as well as with the alcoholic, they should not be combined but remain separate Groups. This should enable both Fellowships to function within their Twelve Traditions and to carry their message more effectively. Thus, the Group name, the officers, and the meetings should be either AA or Al-Anon but not both. Naturally, all are welcome at open meetings of both AA and Al-Anon Groups. The word 'family' is part of the Al-Anon Fellowship's incorporated name, and should not be used in an AA Group's name.

COMBINED INTERGROUP SERVICES

Both experience and the Twelve Traditions of AA and Al-Anon suggest that each Fellowship will function more effectively if each retains separate committees, separate staff and facilities for handling telephone and personal calls as well as separate telephone answering services, Intergroup activities, bulletins, meeting lists and all types of Twelfth Step services. Members who are involved in a service committee or office should be AA members, if it is an AA facility, and Al-Anon members if it is an Al-Anon facility.

Where AA telephone services exist, only the National Contact Number for Al-Anon should be made available for partners, family, or involved friends enquiring. AA members on telephone duty should never attempt to deal with calls which are matters connected with the family and which should rightly be dealt with by Al-Anon.

CONVENTIONS AND MINI-CONVENTIONS

In accordance with the Twelve Traditions, a Convention would be either AA or Al-Anon - not both. However, most AA Convention Committees invite Al-Anon to participate by planning their own programme, and the Committee arranges for facilities for the Al-Anon meetings. If AA invites Al-Anon to participate in this manner, all expenses involved in the Al-Anon meetings are paid from the funds of the AA Convention Committee.

Since Conventions and Mini-Conventions are primarily for AA members and do not seek to attract the general public, the meetings will no doubt be either "Closed" or "Open" and reference should be made to Guideline No.1. At an "Open" meeting, the Chair and speaker are, of course, all members of AA but in any subsequent discussion, participation by non-members is welcome. Al-Anon have produced their own Guideline for co-operation with AA at national Conventions or local mini-Conventions.

If an Al-Anon member is invited to attend an AA Convention Committee meeting, it should be remembered that Al-Anon have agreed procedures for dealing with such requests. Requests should therefore be directed to the Al-Anon District involved and not in the first instance to an individual Al-Anon member.

CONVENTION FINANCE

In accordance with the self-support Traditions of both Fellowships and to abide by the concept of 'co-operation but not affiliation', it is suggested that AA should not make gifts or contributions to Al-Anon from the financial profits of a Convention. By the same token, AA should not accept contributions from Al-Anon. Any collections at Al-Anon meetings belong to Al-Anon funds.

ALATEEN

These groups are part of Al-Anon Family Groups, and their formation and servicing is not an AA function or responsibility.

It was the desire of the Fifteenth General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain to place on record and confirm the relationship between Alcoholics Anonymous and the Al-Anon Family Groups and to acknowledge A.A.'s debt of gratitude to the Al-Anon Family Groups, and it unanimously approved the following resolutions:

"It is RESOLVED that Alcoholics Anonymous recognises the special relationship which it enjoys with the Al-Anon Family Groups, a separate but similar Fellowship. It is further RESOLVED that Alcoholics Anonymous recognises the great contribution which Al-Anon Family Groups have made, and continue to make in assisting the families of alcoholics everywhere."



GUIDELINES for A.A. in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

CONVENTIONS

Revised April 2002 No. 15

A Convention offers the opportunity for a number of members to gather and share their experience, strength and hope.

“Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers” (Tradition 5)

Separate social events may add to the enjoyment of a convention.

The following guideline suggests the basis for all conventions and a convention planning checklist can be found at Annex A.

ORGANISATION

- The decision to hold a convention ought to be made by the group conscience of the appropriate Intergroup or Region (the Sponsoring Body).
- A committee should be elected for the purpose of planning, organising and running the event. The convention committee should have overall responsibility and be accountable to the Sponsoring Body for financial and all other matters. They should bear in mind the need for conventions to be self-supporting.
- Intergroups and Regions are advised to appoint a chairperson or convenor. At National level the convention committee elects its own chairperson and convenor from experienced members. A local General Service Board member serves in an ex officio capacity on the committee of each national convention, i.e. Northern, Scottish, Southern and Welsh (GSB suggests that Trustee attend at least two meetings as agreed with the committee).
- For all convention trusted servants the normal principle of rotation should apply.
- Children and babies. Conference recommends that accompanied children should not be excluded from conventions, organisers must therefore be mindful of relevant health and safety issues.

FINANCE

- In all financial matters Tradition 7 should be taken into account:

“EVERY A.A. GROUP OUGHT TO BE FULLY SELF-SUPPORTING, DECLINING OUTSIDE CONTRIBUTIONS”

- Where it is felt necessary to charge a registration fee, the organising committee should have the final decision. At the planning stage it is sensible to cover all projected costs through the registration fee.
- The “Pot” is traditionally AA money.
- Funding of the convention. The Sponsoring Body should provide the committee with sufficient funds to start the convention organisation. Registration fee income should be used thereafter. If an excess of income is finally generated, the Sponsoring Body may wish to consider retaining a prudent reserve to fund the next convention.

CHAIRPERSON AND SPEAKERS

- Usually conventions invite the chairperson and speakers to participate well in advance. When planning the programme, Committees may wish to consider the various types of AA meetings outlined in Guideline

No. 1 (Group Meetings). In addition to closed meetings, committees may also consider shared platforms thus inviting speakers from our sister organisations Al-Anon and Alateen.

- The Chairperson should bring Tradition 11 to the attention of the audience at all meetings by reading the AA ANONYMITY ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR MEETINGS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:

- There may be some here who are not familiar with our tradition of personal anonymity at the public level:
- **“OUR PUBLIC RELATIONS POLICY IS BASED ON ATTRACTION RATHER THAN PROMOTION; WE NEED ALWAYS MAINTAIN PERSONAL ANONYMITY AT THE LEVEL OF PRESS, RADIO AND FILMS”**
- Thus, we respectfully ask that no AA speaker - or indeed, any AA member - be identified by full name or photograph in published or broadcast reports or our meetings.
- The assurance of anonymity is essential in our effort to help other problem drinkers who may wish to share our recovery program with us. And our Tradition of anonymity reminds us that AA principles come before personalities.

LITERATURE

- It is advised the practises and procedures relating to sale or return from GSO be adhered to. Ideally orders should be received at GSO at least one calendar month before the event. Final settlement be effected within the same period after the event, after which the return element in the arrangement will be considered null and void. Stock returned damaged or any surplus not returned will be charged for.

- The Sponsoring Body be responsible for the ordering and final payment of any sale

or return literature for conventions.

- Literature stalls should be attractive and well stocked with AA published literature.

- Where the Group Conscience or the Sponsoring Body allows the sale of non AA published literature, separate facilities should be provided. AA money should not be used to purchase this material

AUDIO TAPES AT CONVENTIONS

- The decision to tape the convention should be made by the Sponsoring Body and the organising committee.

- It can be a difficult, expensive and time-consuming task. A high level of expertise is required.

- Legal and financial issues need to be considered.

- Advance publicity should indicate the convention will be taped.

- Chairpersons, speakers and reserves must be advised individually of the taping well in advance of the convention.

- A thorough briefing of each speaker is vital to ensure that no inadvertent breach of anyone's anonymity occurs.

- The Sponsoring Body and the organising committee will have the right to edit tapes.

- No video taping should take place.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- It is strongly recommended that all applicable Health and Safety regulations be adhered to.

CATERING ARRANGEMENTS

- Sometimes convention organisers elect an individual and form a sub committee to deal with catering.

- Some conventions invite participants to 'bring their own lunch'.
- Where food or drinks are supplied, costings should be supplied and prices displayed.
- Where outside caterers are used, it would be prudent to establish provisional costs.

ANNEX A - CHECK LIST FOR CONVENTION COMMITTEES

The following list is not comprehensive but it is intended to be an aid to cover all conventions from mini one day to National:

- Validate all decisions against the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts of AA.
- Gain support of Sponsoring Body and establish a regular system for reporting back.
- Define broad principles, venue, cost and theme.
- Investigate the facilities available at the venue.
- Set target dates for task completion and try to stick to them.
- Set budget business plan and theme.
- Take into account all health and safety implications, fire precautions, the security of monies and books overnight.
- Transport details.
- Publicity.
- Decide upon the role of Al-Anon and Alateen.
- Agree a detailed plan on:
 - AA meetings and workshops
 - Entertainment
 - Al-Anon and Alateen participation
 - Printing and publicity fliers, possible to include a location map
 - Convention details to SHARE and/or Roundabout
 - Raffle tickets in accordance with the gaming laws
 - Convention design - banners, top table arrangements
 - Registration area
 - Accommodation and refreshments
 - POT how and when it is to be passed. Security of POT
 - Literature stands
 - Archives and security
 - Raffle ticket sales and display of prices with security
 - Information stand
 - Technical systems-communication, light and sound systems
 - Access and facilities for the disabled

ANNEX B- TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONVENTION COMMITTEES

Convention Committees are formed by intergroups and regions to plan and execute conventions in accordance with the recommendations of the General Service Conference. The following Terms of Reference may be adapted for use by all Convention Committees and should be read in conjunction with this Guideline 15.

1. Convention Committees comprise delegates elected from the Regions or Intergroups that sponsor the Convention. Their objective is to prepare and provide for a Convention to promote our primary purpose within an agreed budget and according to Tradition Seven.

2. These Committees are accountable to the sponsoring Intergroups and Regions, which exercise their responsibility for the Convention by the provision of elected delegates for the Committee and through the regular reporting back of these, at their assemblies.

3. An appropriate number of members are elected as delegates to serve for three years on the Committee. The Committee elects its officers from these to serve for a suitable term, ensuring the principle of rotation.

4. Committee officers rotating out of service are ineligible for re-election during the next three years. Other delegates rotating out are ineligible for re-election during the next twelve months.

5. Delegates who miss two consecutive meetings without adequate explanation, or who miss three consecutive meetings, are deemed to have resigned.

6. The frequency and location of Committee meetings is at the discretion of the Committee, but costs and cost effectiveness should be borne in mind. All expenses should be approved.

7. Dates proposed by the Committee for the Conventions ought to be checked for possible clashes with other significant AA events.

8. All meetings should be reported, and copies of minutes sent to the secretaries of the sponsoring bodies and to GSO.

9. All Conventions should be run in accordance with this Guideline (No 15) on Conventions



GUIDELINES for A.A. in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

VIOLENCE

April 2002 No.16

Conference 2000 determined that: "Violence in any form is not acceptable at any level of the structure; our members have the right to feel secure and safe in meetings and whilst going about A.A. service/business".

"For our Group purpose there is but one ultimate authority -a loving God as he may express himself in our Group Conscience". (Tradition 2 long form)

"Each Alcoholics Anonymous Group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose -that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers" (Tradition 5 long form)

The aim of this Guideline is to provide a framework for AA groups seeking to tackle incidents of violence, including all forms of harassment, within meetings. People may be harassed in various ways, for example because of their ethnic origin, nationality, age, stature, appearance etc.

It is important to note that one need not be the direct object of such behaviour to feel harassed. A person witnessing such an event may deem it necessary to take appropriate action to stop such behaviour.

What can be done?

Some groups through their Consciences have found it helpful to agree contingency plans to deal with violence, including harassment.

In dealing with any incidents the response must be measured and reasonable, given all the circumstances. Members should not place themselves in danger physically, nor open to legal repercussions.

If an incident cannot be defused quickly and safely, members and groups should consider involving appropriate agencies -e.g. police.



GUIDELINES for A.A. in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

PERSONAL CONDUCT MATTERS

April 2002 No. 17

Introduction

The final report of the General Service Conference 1979 (Committee 1, Attraction by the Individual) contained the following statement:

"The importance of the individual member in drawing the suffering alcoholic to the way of recovery was stressed. By guarding his/her own behaviour, morals, dress, ethics, tolerance, sympathy, compassion and understanding of all human beings [a member] carries the message or leaves a slur on the name of AA."

In recent decades, society has become progressively more concerned with the rights of the individual. The awareness that that concern has generated has been reflected in recent changes in the law. The Protection Against Harassment Act, 1997 and the Human Rights Act, 1998 are specific examples. Some say that we are moving towards a "litigation culture".

The potential damage to AA's unity and reputation arising from the wrongful/criminal acts of individual members and, of course, the associated publicity is of natural concern to the Fellowship.

History and Background

A continuing function of the General Service Board as custodian of the Traditions is to inform and guide the Fellowship as a whole.

Every AA Group makes an open invitation to any member of the public having a desire to stop drinking to attend its meetings. In terms of AA Tradition, it is the responsibility of all of us to ensure that the carrying of the message, whether to prospective or new or vulnerable or established members, is done honestly and decently. We also understand that our Twelve Traditions including that of Group autonomy does not place Groups or members above the law, and that when individuals act injuriously to others they are legally accountable. This will, of course, be generally understood in that our First Tradition reminds us that all members and Groups have a responsibility in respect to the common welfare and protection of the individual member.

Every AA Group needs to recognise and accept responsibility for dealing with bad behaviour and thereby protect the overall good name of AA as a respected Fellowship.

AA and Society

While Alcoholics Anonymous seeks to maintain its singleness of purpose, and its simple principles, society is growing increasingly diverse and complex. Indeed, AA can sometimes seem like a refuge, set apart from the harsh realities of 21st century living.

The healthy AA Group is largely self-regulating, operating within the Twelve Traditions and the unity of all our AA principles that are founded in love, with our Steps, Traditions, Concepts and Legacies underpinning our recovery.

By regular examination of Group Conscience, the healthy Group enjoys good behaviour at both individual and Group level.

About Behaviour

Bullying, harassment and offensive behaviour are negative and unacceptable forms of discrimination that are in conflict with the AA Traditions and our way of life in recovery. Any such behaviour needs to be taken seriously, and sober AA members must deal with it as it arises. Whether or not the behaviour is intended to be hurtful is irrelevant, the important point is that it is offensive. AA members, within their Groups, need to recognise the power of their behaviour in their relationships with other members of the Fellowship and with potential newcomers. Members in recovery will understand that the behaviour we choose to adopt influences others. Recognising that we can control our behaviour, we have a responsibility to set a good example.

Members have a right to expect that they will be reasonably safe at a Group meeting. It is the responsibility of the Group holding the meeting, through its members and leaders, to ensure that no member or visitor is subjected to or experiences bullying, harassment or offensive behaviour of any kind.

What can be done about Unacceptable Behaviour?

1 Personal Action

- a) It is often sufficient for the recipient to raise the difficulty with the person creating the problem by pointing out that his/her conduct is offensive. Anyone has the right to challenge unacceptable behaviour of any other members of AA at any stage, and request that the behaviour stop.
- b) Support and help - it should be possible for the recipient to prepare for this conversation with the help of his/her sponsor or another member if she/he wishes. Should the recipient find it too difficult or embarrassing to raise the issue with the person creating the problem, it may be

appropriate for the recipient to have the conversation with his/her sponsor or another member present.

2 Group Action

- a) When a personal approach fails or the recipient feels that this method is inappropriate, the recipient should approach the Group chairperson, or other trusted servant for help and advice feeling secure in the belief that any complaint of bullying or harassment will be considered as a serious matter.
- b) The alleged offender should be told of the complaint as soon as possible
- c) If the situation is sufficiently serious or complex, it may be necessary to involve members from outside the Group.

3 At Group Meetings

- a) Members should be encouraged to choose a Home Group in which true bonds of fellowship will lessen the need to fear behaviour they might find offensive.
- b) Group Conscience meetings should be held regularly (many Groups hold them every 3 months at, say, the first meeting in March, June, September and December) plus additional conscience meetings as they become necessary.
- c) Where unacceptable behaviour (verbal abuse, discriminatory jokes, disparaging remarks etc) occurs in a Group situation, members in recovery have a responsibility to ask for the offending behaviour to stop.
- d) An explanation of the dangers of unacceptable behaviour in AA should be given at the time, or at the end of the meeting.
- e) Offensive behaviour should not be condoned. Failure to challenge and stop inappropriate behaviour gives the offender permission to repeat the offensive behaviour and encourages others to follow suit.

Suggestions at a personal level

- Treat other people with respect and dignity
- Recognise that newcomers to the Fellowship may be severely damaged 'victims'
- Don't travel alone with newcomers of the opposite sex
- As a newcomer, don't travel alone with an existing member of the opposite sex.
- Don't 12th Step or home visit newcomers or potential newcomers alone.
- When making home visits, leave details of where you are going with a trusted friend or relative. Make sure this person knows when to expect you to return.
- Be aware of the dangers of opposite gender Sponsorship: man to man and woman to woman Sponsorship is strongly recommended.
- Never respond to offensive behaviour in a like manner.
- Should someone speak to you about your unacceptable behaviour, listen to his or her criticism, think about what they have said and react appropriately. You may even at a later stage wish to thank them for pointing it out to you!

Suggestions at Group level

- Your Group may wish to discuss and agree, at a Group Conscience meeting, upon a 'clear statement' to display, for example:

This Group does not tolerate:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Discriminatory behaviour

Personal Conduct Matters!

**Bad Language often offends....
But its absence never does**



GUIDELINES for A.A. in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

REGIONAL FORUMS

April 2005 No. 18

“Regional Forums assist in furthering A.A.’s Legacy of Service”.

Regional Forums originated in 1975, and they are basically sharing sessions designed to improve communication and to encourage direct communication and personal contact between members in service including current Board members and those who may wish to become involved in service. All services in AA have one purpose and that is to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

A Forum in no way affects the role of the annual General Service Conference which remains the decision making body within AA. Forums provide a unique opportunity to share valuable experience, ask questions and to encourage members to participate in service work within the Fellowship. It may also be of assistance to a Region to discuss any problems concerning the development of services, internal and external communications, Conference, finance, archives and other matters relating to sponsoring into service.

Provision is made to hold five forums per year and this means that it would be possible for a Region to hold a Regional Forum every three years. The location and agenda for a Regional Forum are decided by the Region and it is suggested that the agenda is flexible enough to be adjusted to any needs that may arise during the meetings/workshops. It is suggested that the Regional Board member may be in a position to help and to offer guidance.

Requests to hold a Forum should be forwarded to GSO for consideration by the General Service Board well in advance of the planned date in order to avoid clashing of dates with other planned events. It is recommended that a number of suitable

dates be submitted for consideration by the Board to give the Board time to consider each request and to advise the availability of Board members who may be invited to attend. A maximum of two Board trustees should be invited to attend with consideration being given to the topics to be covered at the Forum.

There is not normally a registration fee for a Regional Forums although some thought should be given to a budget covering any expected expenditure. This is best determined by the Region concerned. The General Service Board will cover all expenses in relation to the attendance of Board members and Staff. The arrangements regarding the venue, hotel accommodation and programme for the Forum are the responsibility of the Region or organising committee.

The most common format for a forum is workshops (2 or 3) to discuss/share on particular matters/topics which are relevant within the Region. Forums are intended to be one day events but in special circumstances Forums have been held over a two day period at the request of a Region. It is recommended that these should be agreed well in advance in consultation with the trustees of the General Service Board.

It is suggested that the most appropriate times to hold a Forum would be around May, June or November. The planning of Forums and dates is essential to avoid disappointments in a very busy calendar of scheduled events throughout the AA year.

Suggested Format for a Forum (one day).

Forum co-ordinator or committee to liaise with the Regional trustee regarding the format, venue, programme and approximately how many members are expected to attend and to outline the most relevant topics for discussion at each workshop and to agree the proposed timetable for the Forum.

Opening session to last approximately one hour (10 minutes for each of the guest speakers) for introductions and opening remarks.

The body splits up into two-three workshops (allocating members to workshops) which could be colour coded for easy identification. Each workshop to have a Chairperson/Secretary and experience suggests that it is best that the speakers rotate and address each workshop in turn, answering questions for one hour and then move on to the next workshop. In this way the skills and service experience of the Board members and GSO staff can be utilised and everyone would have had the opportunity to share and/or to ask questions.

The Chairperson and secretary prepares a summary report for their workshop and presents a report to the Body of the Forum. Time permitting further talks could be given and/or further discussion of the selected topics.

A final report should prepared for circulation to Intergroups and one copy sent to the General Service Office. It is not necessary to report all discussions - only the subject and the "sense of the workshop" need be reported.

Suggested Topics to cover all service disciplines and principles

AA Service News
Concepts
Electronic Communications
Employment
Health
Prisons
Public Information
Telephone Communications
Telephone Service
Traditions
Warranties
Young People.

In the past workshops have been held to discuss particular subjects eg Traditions, Concepts, finance and archives and in some instances have been incorrectly described as Regional Forums. It is important to identify the major difference between a forum and a workshop and it may be useful to describe a forum as a series of structured workshops to discuss mutually agreed service topics to meet the needs of members in the groups, intergroups and/or region.

Why Do We Need Service Entities Other Than The AA Group?

Other service entities are needed within the Fellowship to perform the services that the groups cannot perform for themselves: e.g. public information, prison and health liaison, probation and employer liaison and internal/external communication. Helping new groups to get started, sharing with them the experience of already established groups, handling pleas for help, publishing a national magazine, and carrying the message in other languages into other countries.

GSO June 2004 (Revised)



GUIDELINES for A.A. in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

AA AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

April 2005 No. 19

The purpose of this guideline is to provide practical help for AA members, groups, Intergroups and Regions who wish to use electronic communications in their service work.

From the 12 Concepts: "Quite rightly, each new generation of AA world servants will be eager to make operational improvements. Unforeseen flaws in the present structure will doubtless show up later on. New service needs and problems will arise that may make structural changes necessary. Such alterations should certainly be effected, and these contingencies squarely met. Yet we should always recognize that change does not necessarily spell progress. We are sure that each new group of workers in world service will be tempted to try all sorts of innovations that may often produce little more than a painful repetition of earlier mistakes."

Introduction

This Guideline is not intended to be a technical manual - it outlines the broad picture for members intending to use these communication methods. It includes experience on using email and on producing and using websites. There is also information available on the web site www.aaservice.org.uk.

Email

Electronic mail is a widely used and accepted method of person-to-person written communication; it is cheap, effective and very fast. It is used regularly as a service tool in AA, but as with any service, we need to ensure the Fellowship's Traditions are maintained whilst getting the most from this "modern colossus of communications".

When using email we should consider the anonymity of the recipients of messages. Sending messages to multiple recipients that disclose the email addresses of everyone on the list is a potential break of someone else's anonymity. However if all recipients' contact details are available in the Service Directory, or are already known to each other, then it

may not be a problem. It is also a good idea to obtain a recipient's explicit permission before using their workplace email address for AA correspondence. As an alternative, when using internet access from work, members can set up a free "web based" account. These are password protected and the emails sent and received from them cannot be seen by anyone else. They are easy to set up.

Use can be made of the BCC (Blind Courtesy Copy) facility when sending AA mail to multiple recipients who wish to remain anonymous from each other.

It is also worth noting that email address books used for AA correspondence on a home PC may be available to all residents in the home.

Bulk Email or Spam

The term "Spam" is now widely seen as a derogatory term for unsolicited email. That is - email sent to a recipient who is either not known to the sender, and/or mail that has not been specifically requested by the recipient. It is seen as a major nuisance.

Individuals or groups who use email to spam or 'bulk mail' messages to recipients who have not specifically requested such messages run grave dangers:

- They are in danger of losing their Internet account. All UK Internet Service Providers (ISPs) prohibit the use of bulk mailing in this way.
- Some states in the USA already have legislation allowing people to seek damages against "spammers".
- Your Service Provider (ISP) may be legally entitled to pursue damage claims where the bulk mailing has caused disruptions to the equipment or services offered to other users on the system.
- There is a very real danger of loss of reputation: Organisations that indulge in bulk emailing, very quickly obtain bad reputations for themselves.

It is strongly suggested that AA members do not send bulk unsolicited email messages for AA service, i.e. email "mail shots". By doing so they could be 'bringing the AA name into public controversy' and damaging the reputation of A.A as a whole.

Electronic Communications Liaison Officer

Various Regions and Intergroups have produced their own websites. It is helpful to remember that there is no need to let the speed of the technology dictate the speed of our actions in these matters. Some of these Local Service bodies have found it helpful to appoint an Electronic Communications Liaison Officer (ECLO).

The ECLO should have at least 2-3 years of sobriety (ideally more for a Regional ECLO), together with a strong understanding of the Traditions. Given that many local websites are visible by the

general public nationally, a potential ECLO should have as good a practical understanding of the Traditions as a PI Officer. This qualification is more important than any technical knowledge. It is helpful if the ECLO is comfortable with technology, understands its potential, and is able to guide the implementation and maintenance of a website (either themselves or through hired help). However picking the first technically able and enthusiastic person for the ECLO position is not necessarily a good way forward.

As well as an ECLO, a small Electronics Communications Committee can be set up. This could include the PI officer, and Vice Chairman of the sponsoring body (Intergroup, Region, etc). Also this committee is the ideal forum for less experienced, but very technically skilled members, to be involved. Having a committee like this helps to ensure a website is set up based on the group conscience of the sponsoring service body. While planning and setting up the website, the Committee can inform and consult with the local AA community and any other service bodies which may be affected.

Local Website Address

All websites have an address. For example: www.aaservice.org.uk is the address of our national service website for members, and www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk is the website address of our national "newcomer" website. Other examples of websites include www.southwestregion.org.uk. The ".org" refers to the fact we are a non-profit organization, and the ".uk" refers to the fact we are in the UK. The vast majority of such addresses begin with "www." (which means World Wide Web). A web address like this is also called a "domain name".

The local service committee will need to register, and probably purchase, a domain name. To preserve Alcoholics Anonymous'

trademarks and service marks, individuals and AA groups are asked to avoid using certain marks ("AA"; "Alcoholics Anonymous"; "The Big Book") in their domain names.

This whole issue of choosing and buying a domain name can be bypassed by the local service committee if they utilize the website space provided free of charge to groups by GSO. The local service committee can place their website there and it will become accessible through the address www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk. This free web space is in the interest of maintaining unity and protecting the integrity of the A.A message. To find out more go to www.aaservice.org.uk.

Content of Local Websites

The group conscience of the local area will determine the specific contents. However the type of content usually comes under two broad headings:

1. Services for members
2. Information for newcomers and professionals

The first could include such items as digital copies of the last few year's minutes of the Intergroup or Region, password-protected contact details for members of the service body, local experience of previous service officers, etc. The second type could include a list of local meetings and information about what AA is. It could also have information about AA for probation officers, doctors, etc.

Regarding the information about what AA is, and information for professionals - it is worth noting that the national AA website (www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk) already provides this service. So it is questionable whether it is helpful for local AA websites to repeat this information. In fact such a large amount of repeated information around the

internet in the UK could make AA seem disorganised to a professional or newcomer searching the internet for information about us.

In regard to local meeting details, it is vital to ensure these sites are kept up to date.

Permission should be obtained from G.S.O. prior to including published AA material in a web site. However, web sites created by AA Intergroups, Regions and central offices are permitted to quote a phrase, sentence or brief excerpt from AA literature - such as the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous), Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, The AA Service Manual, and Conference approved pamphlets - without a prior, written request to do so. When this occurs, the proper credit line should be included to ensure that the copyrights of AA literature are protected. After a quotation from a book or pamphlet, the credit line should read: "Reprinted from (name of publication, page number), with permission of AA World Services, Inc."

The AA Preamble is copyrighted by the AA Grapevine. Beneath it, and beneath any article or cartoon reprinted from the Grapevine, these words should appear: "From the (insert date) Grapevine. Reprinted with permission of The AA Grapevine, Inc." If you wish to include items on your web site that are currently available on the G.S.O. web site, we suggest that you link to the appropriate pages of that site.

Paying for the Local Website

If the local service body uses the "official" web space provided by GSO, then the whole process can be free, and need not be paid for. Otherwise the Intergroup, Region, etc will need to pay to have its web pages kept online (or "hosted").

In keeping with our Seventh Tradition, AA pays its own expenses and this applies on the internet as well. Free web hosting sites are

available on the Internet (apart from the GSO one), but often require the inclusion of mandatory advertising space or links to commercial sites as consideration for their use. To avoid confusion and to guard against inadvertent association or promotion, care should be taken in selection of the web host site.

Linking to other Websites

Since an Internet site may be viewed by the general public and is capable of potentially being seen by millions, it constitutes a form of 'broadcast media'. The major difference between conventional broadcast media and the Internet is the ease with which items may be copied and linked together electronically, which can cause an implied affiliation.

Linking to other AA web sites may have the positive effect of significantly broadening the scope of your site. Information contained on these sites becomes instantly available to those visiting your site. However, since each AA entity is autonomous and has its own group conscience, an AA site to which you have linked may start to display information which your group conscience finds objectionable; and there is no way to know when this might occur, or to prevent it from happening.

Linking to non-AA sites is even more problematic. Not only are they much more likely to display non-AA and/or controversial material, but linking will imply endorsement, if not affiliation, regardless of the contents. In the final analysis, experience suggests that, when considering linking to another site, one must proceed with caution. G.S.O. has attempted to avoid some of these pitfalls by not linking to any other site.

Private and Public websites

Unless the Region, Intergroup, etc specifically sets up its website to be private,

the site will be publicly viewable by anyone - member or non-member who can get hold of the web address. However, certain information that could be usefully put on a local website (e.g. service officer email addresses, group contact numbers, conference delegate phone numbers, confidential minutes, discussion forums, etc) may not be suitable for public viewing.

The national service website for members, www.aaservice.org.uk, is password protected. Local service bodies can take a similar approach. Either members could register to get access to the website by some procedure (e.g. emailing the ECLO, or by an automated online procedure). Or a single password could be used and changed every few months with that password being published in the regular paper minutes.

Attraction and Promotion

We observe all AA's principles and Traditions on our web sites. We practice anonymity on AA web sites. An AA web site is a public medium which has the potential for reaching the broadest possible audience and, therefore, requires the same safeguards that we use at the level of press, radio and film.

However simply putting up a website available to the general public is not breaking the Traditions. As our co-founder, Bill W., wrote: "Public information takes many forms - the simple sign outside a meeting place that says 'AA meeting tonight'; listing in local phone directories; distribution of AA literature; and radio and television shows using sophisticated media techniques. Whatever the form, it comes down to 'one drunk carrying the message to another drunk,' whether through personal contact or through the use of third parties and the media." The needs and experience of people in your own area, will affect what you decide to do.

"Unofficial" AA Websites

There are no "unofficial" AA websites as such. The only websites which can truly be called AA websites are those endorsed by an official AA body e.g. www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk, Regional, and Intergroup websites. Members are obviously free to produce their own websites as they see fit. However, just as outside of the electronic arena, members are responsible for ensuring the Traditions are followed in their own sites. For example:

- Personal anonymity at the Internet level - if a member states in the website that they are an AA member, then they would not normally give their full name or photo on that website.
- Non-affiliation with outside organisations - if the website is clearly AA related, then anything that makes the website seem to affiliate to outside organisations can also cause an implied affiliation with AA.
- Not stating opinions on outside issues, avoiding public controversy, etc - Once again when a website is clearly AA related anything that is an incitement to public controversy, or states opinions on outside issues, could make the general public believe that AA itself is actually saying these things.

Although we are all free to produce websites, we are each responsible for protecting AA so that it is there for the newcomer, just as it was there for us.

National AA Websites

As already mentioned, AA UK has two national websites:

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk and **www.aaservice.org.uk**. The first provides services for newcomers and for PI. The

second website provides many useful services for AA members, including creating local websites and stored copies of the Service Handbook and Guidelines, AA Service News, forums and online meetings.

Summary

The internet can be used to help AA PI work and 12th Step work, as well as increasing the efficiency of our internal AA services. We are responsible for making the best use possible of the internet. However, we also need to take responsibility to use it in a way that fits in with AA's Traditions.



GUIDELINES for AA in Great Britain

From the General Service Office, P.O. Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

ARCHIVES

April 2007 No. 20

Alcoholics Anonymous Guidelines are compiled from the shared experience of AA members in various service areas. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference. In keeping with our tradition of autonomy, except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole, most decisions are made by the group conscience of the members involved. The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist in reaching an informed group conscience.

PURPOSE

Like any other AA service, the primary purpose of those involved in archival work is to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. Archives service work is more than mere custodial activity; it is the means by which we collect, preserve and share the rich and meaningful heritage of our Fellowship. It is by the collection and sharing of these important historical elements that our collective gratitude for Alcoholics Anonymous is deepened.

AA members have responsibility to gather and take good care of the Fellowship's historical documents and memorabilia. Correspondence, records, photographs, newspaper and magazine articles from the past need to be collected, preserved and made available for the guidance and research of AA members and others (researchers, historians and scholars from various disciplines) – for now and for the generations to come.

POLICY STATEMENT

In 1995 the General Service Board adopted a policy statement, subsequently ratified by Conference, which reads:

“Where any civilisation, or society perishes, one condition is present, they forgot where they came from.”

Carl Sandburg

These words represent one good reason why the General Service Board (and Conference) re-affirms its commitment and support for archival activity as a vital and integral part of the healthy life and growth of the Fellowship in this country. Just as each of us feels that it is essential to recall and appreciate where we came from, and how we got here, so it is with the Fellowship as a whole. The General Service Board recognises the urgent need for accurate records to be rescued, retained, collated and used in a manner which will serve to dispel some myths which swirl distortingly around our past, thus allowing us to obtain a truer perspective and reveal to us our real heritage, so that our future may be ensured. Archive activity may be regarded in the same light as the myriad (but minimal) support and services which we provide, in order that we may fulfil our primary purpose to the best of our ability. This is a responsibility and a debt, no less, which we owe to ourselves and to others; it is as richly endowed with the simple spiritual principles of humility, sacrifice and prudence as the rest of our work. It is also an act of practical simplicity and efficient business practice. Sound and prudent performance cannot be achieved on a basis of chaotic business records or the absence of a data base. Planned and co-ordinated records are an essential tool to efficient administration and the basis of any history to come.

This combination of practical and spiritual simplicity can now be cemented by the

continuity and commitment of its trusted servants, the flexibility of its form and the support of the General Service Board.

The Archives of Alcoholics Anonymous are the repository of personal collections, manuscripts, publications, photographs and memorabilia related to the origin and the development of the AA Fellowship.

Consistent with AA's primary purpose of maintaining our sobriety and helping other alcoholics achieve recovery, the Archives of Alcoholics Anonymous will:

- Receive, classify and index all relevant material, such as administrative files and records, correspondence, and literary and artefactual works considered to have historical import to Alcoholics Anonymous.
- Hold and preserve such material.
- Provide access as determined by the Fellowship Archivist in consultation with the Trustees' Archives Sub-Committee, to members of Alcoholics Anonymous and to those of the public who may have a valid need to review such material; access to be provided only during business hours and with a mindful view toward the anonymity of our members.

GETTING STARTED

One of the best ways to get started in archival service work is to obtain a copy of the Archives Service literature available from GSO. This Literature contains helpful information gathered from shared experience over many years.

THE ROLE OF THE ARCHIVES SUB-COMMITTEE

The Archives Sub-Committee was set up in 1991 by the General Service Board. It recommends policy, projects, budgets and

procedures to the General Service Board. It advises the Fellowship on the storage, conservation and preservation of archival material deposited in trust.

Members of the Sub-Committee are appointed by the General Service Board as required. The Fellowship Archivist and the Board Trustee are integral members of this committee.

One of the most important functions of the Archives Sub-Committee is to develop and maintain a network of interest within the Fellowship at all levels. Conference has recommended the appointment of Archivists within our service structure.

THE ROLE OF THE ARCHIVIST

Archivists are:

- a) an informal network of enthusiasts who share the same aim of preserving the Fellowship's past and ensuring that fact prevails over fiction or myth. This network exists outside the formal service structure of the Fellowship but runs parallel to it.

Archivists are not:

- a) officers in the Fellowship's structural sense, rather willing enthusiasts with a life-long desire to work in the name of, and be accountable to, their Region or Intergroup.
- b) voting members of their respective assemblies and, as such, are simply observers with no voting rights.
- c) subject to the principles of rotation, since continuity at all levels has been shown, through experience, to be a vital aspect of archival work.

The Archivist is the person responsible for the collection, its documents and artefactual

items. He or she takes care of, and maintains, the physical integrity of the collection and is instrumental in its further development. The Archivist is also responsible for ensuring the protection of the anonymity of its members and the confidentiality of the AA records.

The function of the Archivist can be considered therefore to be two fold: primarily, a custodial responsibility for assuring the physical integrity of the collection and its availability to persons with a valid reason for study; and also the parallel and critical role of data gatherer. It is in this latter capacity that service can be rendered to Bill W's urging that archives are needed "so that myth doesn't prevail over fact." In a real sense then, AA Archivists are "keepers of the past."

THE ROLE OF THE NETWORK

The function of the informal network of Archivists is to further or facilitate the identification, recording and securing of archival material, as well as stimulating interest in archival activity by carrying the message of "Don't throw me away, I belong to AA."

Experience shows that this can be furthered by promoting workshops based on such archival topics as:

- Anonymity
- Ownership of Materials
- Storage and Accessibility
- Classification
- Cataloguing
- Conservation
- Confidentiality
- Questions to ask Old Timers.

FINANCING THE ARCHIVES

By necessity storage of archival material in any system GB may operate has to be implemented on a decentralised basis. GSO

has not the space to store all the archival material in the Fellowship, and Regions and Intergroups cannot afford to hire storage facilities that they can easily access in order to work on their collections. If an Archivist or an individual member is able to store material in their home it should be kept as close as possible to the optimum storage conditions. If this poses a problem, please contact your Regional or Fellowship Archivist. An Intergroup or Regional Archivist cannot be expected to store vast amounts of archival material, nor should this factor be a barrier to taking up the post. The important fact here is that talks take place with the Fellowship Archivist as to what arrangements can be made if storage is required.

DEVELOPING A COLLECTION

Books, pamphlets, world directories, local meeting lists, GSO bulletins, Conference reports, international Convention booklets, newsletters, Regional and Intergroup minutes, written histories, photographs and audio tapes all serve as the foundation of a collection. The Archivist might also arrange to audio-tape local old-timers, thus adding historical oral histories to the collection. Local AA historical material, such as letters, bulletins and photographs, need to be sought out and gathered regularly from old-timers, past delegates, various committee members and so on. It is important to note that whenever a donation is made to the archives, it should be recorded and should indicate clearly that the material has been presented to the archives (rather than the Archivist) to avoid any misunderstanding later on regarding ownership of the gift. An example of this would be the signing of our standard form on Copyright for an audio tape.

The Archivist can contact other archivists through the Network. In addition they can participate in and publicise local history gathering efforts, can make presentations and offer table displays at AA events.

ARCHIVAL PROCEDURES

As soon as an item is received in the archives it should be added to the inventory list. Next, the conservation and preservation needs of the collection should be evaluated and followed up on. As a general rule any action on an original document or item that is not reversible, should never be performed. For example, sellotape or lamination ought never be used.

Removal of tape, repair, deacidification and encapsulation are some of the steps necessary to protect the integrity of a document. Sometimes it may be necessary to seek outside professional help through GSO to help ensure the integrity of an item. Once prepared an archival item should then be categorically classified, entered into a retrieval system either manual or computerised, in order to provide readily accessed information to researchers.

CONTROL OVER AND ACCESS TO MATERIAL

The degree of access to archival material is divided into four areas. The main criteria on which the classification largely depends are dependent upon the nature and sensitivity of the material, or the wishes of the donor. Permission to access any material should be made in writing via the General Secretary.

The classifications are:

a) GENERAL

Open to public access.
Photocopying may be allowed.

b) SUPERVISED ACCESS

Permission required from the Archives Sub-Committee.
Under controlled conditions material may be withdrawn in certain circumstances, for a limited period.
Limited photocopying may be permitted.

c) FOR RESEARCH ONLY

Permission required from GSB.
Full rationale for the research is required in writing. Removal of originals from the Archives Collection at GSO is not permitted.

d) CONFIDENTIAL

Access only by agreement of GSB.
Photocopying not permitted.

RESEARCH IN THE ARCHIVES

Researchers working in the archives ought to be informed that they will be expected to adhere strictly to our anonymity Traditions – only first names and last initials of AA members may be used by them. It is recommended that there be no photocopying of private correspondence. This recommendation whilst designed to assure anonymity protection also helps maintain the physical integrity of archival documents. In addition to the preservation of the anonymity of the author of the correspondence, the writer's private opinions and observations, some of which might be highly controversial, must be treated with extreme delicacy. It should be remembered that members share these documents with a trust and expectation that their remarks will be held in confidence. No one has an intrinsic right to view another's private correspondence at will; it is essential that the Archivist's chief concern of assuring the spiritual wholeness of the collection be understood and supported.

REFERENCES

For more detailed discussion of archival matters please read the Archives Service literature available from GSO and liaise with your Intergroup and Regional archivist.