

National Telephone Sub Committee

N.T.S.C. News July, 2016

"Each day, somewhere in the world, recovery begins when one alcoholic talks with another alcoholic, sharing experience, strength, and hope."



This is the third issue of our Telephone Service News letter. It is hoped that by sharing information throughout the fellowship on telephone matters, we can continue to pass on our experiences and improve the service we offer. Unfortunately, due to lack of communication, the July edition has only two Regional contributions. We hope you will find these interesting.

The closing date for articles in the October issue is 20th September, 2016.

When sending contributions to the Newsletter

or Regional and Intergroup reports, please send to:

telephonesubcom@aa-email.org.uk

The News Letters may be found on the AA web site:

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

The Preparations for the seminar to be held in August have been finalized and details may be found on the AA website. Invitations and an agenda have been sent to all Regional and Intergroup Telephone Liaison Officers. There are three topics for discussion. These are: Communication; 24hr Service and Recruitment and Training.

The CD for the Telephone Service is now available from GSO on request. Copies of these along with the Service and Structure handbooks will be distributed at the Seminar. We look forward to seeing you in August.

Firstly there are reports from our Statistician and Treasurer and following these are contributions from two Regional Telephone Liaison Officers and an article from an Intergroup Liaison Officer.

Judy F. Trustee

*"I am Responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."*

Statistics.

The NTSC July 2016 newsletter is pleased to provide a summary of the impact of our new 0800 free phone helpline on the number of calls received in its first year. The new number (0800 9177 650) was introduced to the fellowship on 1st July 2015. Since that time, calls have been made to both the free phone number and the former 0845 help line number (0845 7697 555) for which a call cost was incurred by both mobile and landline users. Summary below:

National Statistics	July 2014 – June 2015	July 2015 – June 2016	2014/5 v 2015/6
0800 9177 650	50,146	54,317	
0845 769 7555	Number not available	7,072	
Total Answered Calls	50,146	61,389	+11,243 (+22.4%)
Total Ineffective Calls	9,212	13,384	
Total Calls	59,358	74,773	+15,415 (+26%)
Landline Calls	34,581	35,385	58% of calls v 47% of calls
Mobile Calls	24,286	38,537	41% of calls v 51% of calls
Other Calls	491	851	
Total Calls	59,358	74,773	

After several years of year on year decline in call volumes (averaging -10% per annum), NTSC is pleased to report that call volumes have risen by 26% since the introduction of the new free phone facility. The increase (from just under 60,000 to nearly 75,000 calls) is mainly attributable to the new free phone number (over 88% of answered calls). Callers using the 0845 number are advised that a new free phone number is available. However, in some cases (12% on answered calls) the caller continues to communicate with AA despite the cost of the call.

The most significant change to have occurred during this period is the increase in the number of calls from mobile phones. Possibly due to the poor reputation of 0845 numbers in general when using mobiles, the free phone facility has resulted in an increase in mobile phone calls from 41% of all calls in 2014 / 5 to 51% of all calls in 2015 / 6. Calls from landlines in the corresponding period have reduced from 58% of all calls to 47% of calls, but in actual number they have increased slightly from 34.6k to 35.4k calls. Calls from mobile phones to AA's national helpline number now exceed calls from landline phones for the first time.

It is important to note that the NTSC measures statistics provided by BT on calls to the national helpline (non-geographic) numbers. The data does not include calls made to local intergroup or telephone office numbers. Part of the increase could therefore be attributed to call volumes being switched from local numbers (for which the caller could incur a nominal charge) to the new free phone number (free to all users whether by mobile or landline).numbers (for which the caller could incur a nominal charge) to the new free phone number (free to all users whether by mobile or landline). Bob S. Statistician, NTSC.

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Financial report

As stated previously the General Service Office took over the responsibility for paying our entry in BT's white pages phone book and the monthly telephone bill for the 0800 917 7650 helpline number .

The NTSC had their quarterly meeting on the 1st and 2nd of July 2016 where at this meeting any monies left in our inbound services account was transferred to the account of the General Service Office. Minimal amounts have been left in our current and our business reserve accounts which amounts to under £2 in each. These accounts have been left open in case they are ever needed in the future.

Any Region who had overpaid their annual contribution for the year ending 29th February were sent a cheque for the amount to which they had overpaid. 6 regions in total received cheques for varying amounts.

Glasgow Region were having difficulties so their over payment of the annual contribution was transferred into the account of the GSO

On behalf of everyone on the NTSC can I take this opportunity to thank all regions especially the treasurers past and present these past four years for their continued support as at times the telephone charges from BT were fluctuating rather dramatically which meant that the regional contributions had to fluctuate rather dramatically too; at one point it reached as high as £800 annually but not one region ever missed a contribution .

At our forthcoming AGM on Friday the 12th of August the NTSC will have available a financial spreadsheet covering the last four years showing everyone just how much each region contributed and a summary of all the charges from BT. This spreadsheet will be a paper copy, an electronic version will also be sent to each regional treasurer

YIF Davie D Treasurer, NTSC

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Eastern Region - May 2016:

The 9 Intergroups which form the Eastern Region Telephone Service all have a TLO in post, although Fenland still lacks a permanent TLO. This quarter, we have welcomed 3 new TLOs (North Herts, South Beds, and South East Anglian) to service in the wider world of AA. We are meeting on 11 June from 11.00-13.00 at our usual venue in Baldock, partly as an opportunity for us all to meet each other before the Telephone Seminar in August.

I have spoken to all the TLOs and apart from duty slots without a permanent Responder and 12-Step lists needing more names, all the Telephone Services are running smoothly.

This quarter has seen an unexpected rise in the cost of including local helpline numbers in the White Pages (telephone book) for at least two joint Telephone Services (NEAIG/Fenland and Essex/Nth Thames). I know that one Treasurer has cancelled their Intergroup entry. To my knowledge, Eastern Region does not have a blanket policy covering these entries (as do some Regions). For example, SEAIG does not have their local number in the White Pages. It is therefore, up to each Intergroup to decide their own policy on this matter. Allie F.

ANSWERING THE PHONE.

We can all answer the phone. After all, most of us have been doing it since we were children. The phone rings, you pick up the handset or press a button on your mobile, say "Hello" and you're off!!

However, let's just think about how we should do it when we have the Helpline and it's a call from a suffering alcoholic. Firstly, we should always remember that anyone calling the Helpline will think that their call is being answered by person in a call centre....a professional so to speak. So if you commence with "Hello, can I help you?" this is a caring professional way to start – whilst ensuring your own anonymity is not broken if the call is not for AA but for you personally.

Secondly let's not forget that for the person calling, this will probably rate as one of the hardest calls they will ever make in their life! So how can we put warmth and compassion into our voice so that instinctively the caller will feel welcome? I have a little trick I'd like to share with you. I have done a lot of telephone work outside of AA and this tip was given to me years ago. It's simply to **SMILE** when you answer the phone. Sounds daft I know but it really works! You can almost "hear" a smile down the phone line.

Thirdly, let's never forget the privilege we have when we become Telephone Responders! I am Responsible.....When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for Help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that I AM RESPONSIBLE.

Pam N. Nth. East Anglia TLO

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Wales and Borders Region – June, 2016:

DEAR FELLOW PHONE RESPONDERS

As you know, I have recently taken over from Jonathan P as Regional Telephone Liaison Officer for Wales and Borders. Since then we lost 3 regular responders and gained one. We currently have now 27 responders and 6 emergency responders.

WELSH NATIONAL CONVENTION

I made arrangements for a little stand next to reception and the literature stand. I used this as a focus point to meet existing responders and also in the hope of recruiting some more. I had an excellent day: not only was this well received, I spoke to some awesome people doing phone service in other areas, I recruited four responders. Combine that with some real heart felt platform shares and this makes for an excellent day in A.A.CALLS

Calls have increased since the introduction of the 0800 number. From the latest BT statistics available we received a total of 613 calls of which 450 were answered (75%) and 163 were ineffective (25%). type of calls made: from a landline: 431. (70%). from a mobile: 181. (30%). Most are made to the 0800 number, which doesn't recognize the area phoned from a mobile, which means that those can come from anywhere in the U.K.

OTHER MATTERS - Another issue we face from time to time is the difficulty of getting hold of a 12stepper during the duration of our shift, and when we do get through, it feels like we have interrupted them in the same way as an unexpected salesman might come knocking at your door. Therefore I am considering looking at a way of improving our service by obtaining times of availability and inconvenience for each 12 stepper. What I am proposing to do: to distribute a form to existing Intergroup, who then in turn can pass on the form to the G.S.R's? The idea is that each group then can submit new and existing 12 steppers to be added to a revised 12 steppers list. I will be attending the phone seminar in August and hope to hear from other R.T.L.O.'s experiences in how they go about updating their 12 steppers list.

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