

# National Telephone Sub Committee

## N.T.S.C. News April 2017

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



So we have passed the meteorological start of spring and the clocks have gone forward; we have seen a few days of glorious spring weather – as well as hailstorms and torrential rain. April and Easter are upon us once again. I hope this indicates a new lease of life for our News Letter this year!

Firstly, I would like to welcome the newest member of our Committee, Allie F, who is our Secretary and has taken over editing this News Letter.

Please send any articles that may be interesting, exciting and informative to her through the official NTSC email address:

[telephones.sc@aaemail.org](mailto:telephones.sc@aaemail.org)

She will also be shadowing Mike K, our Regional Telephone Liaison Officer contact.

We hope you have enjoyed reading our News Letters over the last year. We have shared some important experiences within the Telephone Service. Past copies of these are available in our file store and in the Telephone Section on the AA website:

[www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

As you will be aware, the file store is now up-to-date. Copies of the information held therein are available to Intergroup and Regional telephone Liaison Officers for downloading and distributing to all our Responders, in order that they have accurate information. Please keep the NTSC informed of any amendments, as soon as possible, in order that this information can be updated prompt. The NTSC email address is to be found at the top of this News Letter.

Vacancies still exist for new members of the National Telephone Sub Committee. The closing date for applications is 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2017. We look forward to hearing from you.

***May I remind everyone, again, that although a number of organisations have already been advised of the new number –0800 917 7650, the older 0845 number is still being displayed. The Committee needs the help of all AA members in this matter. Where the 0845 769 7555 is encountered we would ask that the company is informed of the correct telephone number in order that amendments may be made as soon as possible.***

***We are all responsible.***

***"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."***

Lastly, and importantly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the support you have given me during my time as Trustee for the Telephone Service. This has been more than rewarding and I have made many new friends over the last few years.

Thank you all again. Judy F.

## What the Statistics show

Jonathon has produced the following précis of statistics for the first quarter of 2017.

The call volume has continued to increase. In Q1 2017 total calls nationally were 21,311, a 13% increase from Q1 2016. However, this wasn't a uniform trend across the UK.

Metropolitan areas e.g. London, Glasgow saw a larger rise in call volume while more rural areas in some cases saw a decline, e.g. Wales and Borders, S.W. Region. Time will tell if this is just a quarterly blip.

Calls to the 0845 number have continued to decline as expected. In Q1 2016, 1306 calls compared with 940 in Q1 2017. A 28% decline.

The average call length has been 4.9minutes in the first quarter. However, there has been an increase in calls lasting more than an hour.

Calls from landlines continue to decrease (17% compared with a year ago), while calls from mobiles increase. This as we know might lead to more calls being routed to the wrong area.

Jonathon P. 14.4.17

The closing date for articles for the July 2017 issue is 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017. ***When sending contributions to the News Letter or Regional and Intergroup reports, please send to:***

[telephones.sc@aaemail.org](mailto:telephones.sc@aaemail.org)

The News Letters may be found on the AA website:

[www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

Once again, thank you to those of you who have taken the time to contribute articles for this April 2017 issue.

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## **A member's experience – and gratitude**

### **“Don't be a visitor to AA – become a member. Get involved.”**

At first that meant clearing ashtrays after the meeting (in the days when we could smoke!), making teas, setting out literature, greeting members, etc. I soon found myself really enjoying helping out and feeling part of something much, much bigger.

Later, as my recovery began and I grew stronger, I was encouraged to get involved with the telephones as a responder on an evening shift and to join the 12-Step list. What better way to show gratitude for my sobriety?

At first I was scared. What if I did or said the wrong thing, made a mistake, got it wrong? Old fears came crashing back.

Thankfully there was great help and support along the way. Lots of guidance from kind members with masses of experience and friendly advice were available if I ever had a query.

AA really came alive for me then. Speaking to suffering alcoholics took me right back to my dark days. I could see how far I'd come. I no longer felt despair. Filled with gratitude, I had a new way of expressing thanks. The joy of giving without reward helped fill that huge void I'd always felt. I truly was no longer alone.

Ten years ago I moved back home to Scotland. It was hard leaving my regular meetings – I still miss so many wonderful people who helped me in my early recovery.

Luckily, I now have new friends and fellowship back in my home county of East Lothian. My local meetings these days have perhaps fewer people, the phones are less busy, the 12 Step calls less frequent but AA is a wonderful Fellowship and every day without a drink is a good day. And of course I got back into service again. A great way to show gratitude – and it helps keep me sober.

I spent a period as Telephone Liaison Officer (TLO) for Borders and East Lothian Intergroup and it is now a joy and a privilege to be part of SCENE Telephone Committee where I am part of a great team if people helping the suffering alcoholic to find sobriety. I really enjoyed being trainer on the team for a while – helping new responders the same way I was helped myself – and am now the Secretary/Treasurer.

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SCENE is a 24/7, 365 days a year Helpline with a large geographic coverage (Scotland Central, East and North—East).

We work with Scotia and East of Scotland Regions and nine intergroup areas and have about 75 monitors who help cover shifts on a rota basis.

Members of the Committee arrange the rota, keep the database of monitors up to date, train new monitors, handle shift changes, send out rotas and packs, and try to keep on top of all the many amendments to groups, monitors and 12 Steppers.

We meet in Perth five times a year and all are welcome to come along and attend and get involved.

Keeping close to AA's "front-line" and being able to put gratitude into practice is one of the greatest gifts of my sobriety. I am eternally grateful to the many who have given me support and encouragement.

Jeannie F

## ***REGIONAL ROUNDUP***

### **Wales and Borders**

**Calls:** We received 368 calls from a landline and 122 from a mobile. That is about the same ratio as in the last quarter. Of the 324 answered calls, we received on average 11 12-Step calls, 2 Al-Anon calls, 12 meeting enquiries, and 3 other calls per week. That's 38 calls a week, 5 a day, 1 per shift.

I have been made aware of nuisance callers calling us by mobile. Responders are advised, when receiving such a call, and it is clear that the caller isn't ready yet to receive our help, to cut short the conversation. At no point are our Responders to tolerate verbal abuse and this should be made perfectly clear to the caller. Any Responder should know that as R.T.L.O. I am there to support them in such matters.

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**New Lists:** I have contacted all Intergroups in Wales and provided them with copies of the new 12-Stepper and Responders lists. The idea behind this is not only to inspire someone to take on the vital role of T.L.O. but also to equip and motivate the group to update the 12 Stepper list and help with any other phone-related issues they may have. I am happy to report that some areas have responded positively to this and that some individuals are being very helpful indeed. I received one invite to give a presentation at a service workshop organised by Welsh Borders Intergroup and one provisional to be arranged by South Glamorgan Intergroup.

Our logo encircles the words UNITY, SERVICE and RECOVERY. As I reflect on my first year as Regional Telephone Liaison Officer, I realise how privileged I am. I see those three principles at work as our team is united in service, helping those who suffer into recovery. As the suffering alcoholic gets better, in turn we see family and friends getting better too. At this, we have a unique opportunity to show the professionals in the health service that AA does work, and as they refer those who suffer from alcoholism to us, they complete our circle. How wholesome and cool is that!

I can't think of a better place to get involved and give something back to the Fellowship that has given me so much more than just sobriety.

Yours in fellowship,

Nico

## ***NEWS FROM THE INTERGROUPS***

### **Inverness and District Intergroup:**

From 9<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 12 12-Step calls were received, 3 Al-Anon calls, 2 meeting enquiries and 2 other calls with two 12-Step follow-up home visits in our area (in Inverness and Wick).

Linda C (Paisley and District TLO) reported that she experienced problems when putting operators on duty. Calls were being routed to Coventry and London which do not have 24-hour cover and use an answering machine. I discussed this problem at length with Judy F, Trustee at York, and it is almost certain that this is a mobile phone problem. Linda C does not have a landline, which is becoming more common these days. The relevant details have been passed to Judy who is exploring this with BT.

John M

### **Mid Surrey Intergroup:**

With the handover from outgoing TLO Rebecca completed at the end of 2016, I started 2017 by attending the Burgess Hill Regional Workshop on 22<sup>nd</sup> January. It proved to be an excellent morning

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meeting with fellow TLOs from South Downs and Kent Intergroups. Top of the Agenda was a discussion around how best to approach clearing out of date phone numbers on our 12 Step list. Other topics discussed were best practice for dealing with nuisance callers and the redirection of calls from the new freephone number to other Intergroups.

Over the coming months, I will be working closely with our Responders team to continue to gather numbers which no longer function on the 12 Step list to help improve the response time it takes to get a 12 Stepper out to the still suffering alcoholic. I've also undertaken a mini-tour of our Intergroup's meetings to introduce myself as the new TLO and to try to engage with the Fellowship on a personal level to gather feedback and thoughts on how the telephone service is currently performing and how it could be improved.

We currently have a full complement of responders, three new ones shortly to join the team and the service performs well on a day to day basis.

#### **Manchester Intergroup:**

The new chair of the Telephone Committee is in place. There will be a training event for new Telephone operators to be held around the middle of March. The full time rosters position is yet to be filled (Andrea covering) and a member from E. Lancs will be rotating in as Treasurer.

The usual operating costs for the Telephone office are £750 per month, or £9,000 per annum, though additional expenses have been incurred recently due to problems with the computer system. The Telephone Committee have requested an increased donation of £800 this quarter which has been agreed by ourselves and E. Lancs. The decision from E. Cheshire is pending.

#### **Durham and Cleveland Intergroup:**

The new Responders booklet has been issued.

Sunderland TLO informs me that they are considering adopting a similar Telephone Service to that which is currently running in the Hull area and that their enquiries would not affect the contributions to the current North East Telephone Service.

There remain shortages of responders, reserve responders and 12 Steppers in all areas although we have had some additions.

#### **North West Intergroup:**

The North West Lancashire and Cumbria Telephone Service (NWL&CTS) met on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2017 in a private room at Garstang Library. The main points arising were:-

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1. All slots are currently covered and we have nine relief responders.
2. We still need to recruit new responders for slot sharing and relief cover.
3. Everybody was reminded that responders are asked not to leave messages on answer phones.
4. Committee members were asked to try and find somebody to sponsor into their role as they approach the three year mark.

**North East Anglia Intergroup:**

The Telephone Service continues to run without major problems. We currently have three overnight shifts which are vacant. These are being covered by myself, Geoff, the Fenland TLO and Martin, ex-TLO. I feel it is now time to start another recruitment drive and to that end shall be visiting the Norwich meetings. Could all GSRs take this back to their groups and if anyone is interested' please give them my number. Pam N

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***END NOTE***

A brief reminder us all that the **London** number changed some time ago and is now **0207 407 0700**, so please can you make sure that all your Responders have this number to facilitate passing on 12-Step calls. Thank you.

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