



GUIDELINES for AA in Great Britain

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

FINANCE

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

AA MONEY

Most AA's revenues in Great Britain consist 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). 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 required 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.