



## 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*.