



GUIDELINES for AA in Great Britain

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REGIONS

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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

