

General Service Conference

- the Conscience
of AA GB



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Incorporating:

- The Role and Function of Conference
- How to Submit a Topic or Question for Conference
- The GSC Annual Process Map

For a more comprehensive guide refer to the
Structure of AA in Great Britain Handbook

What is the Purpose of Conference?

The General Service Conference (Great Britain) of Alcoholics Anonymous is the guardian of the services and of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of AA in Great Britain. Tradition Two states that the only authority in AA is that which expresses itself through the Group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants who do not govern. This Tradition is the basic authority for all AA services, whether for Groups, Intergroups, Regions or for the Fellowship as a whole. The General Service Conference therefore begins with the Group conscience. It also leads back to the Group, since the Group has final responsibility not just for initiating, but for implementing the decisions agreed upon by Conference. The General Service Conference is the practical means by which the Group conscience in Britain can express itself in matters that concern the Fellowship as a whole. The existence of Conference is moreover a guarantee that the Fellowship will be able to function under all conditions. It is, in effect, the successor to the founders of AA, ensuring the continuity of the work within the framework of the Twelve Traditions.

Composition of Conference

The Conference (Great Britain) is composed of:

- The Chairperson of Conference
 - Six delegates from each of the 16 Regions
 - Board Trustees of the General Service Board
 - One delegate each from the committees of SHARE and Roundabout
 - Non-voting foreign observers may be invited
 - The General Secretary and other staff attend and help to run Conference but do not vote
- Conference delegates serve for a maximum of period of three years.
Conference expenses are charged to the General Service Board other than hotel and travelling expenses of delegates which Regions pay.

What Happens at Conference?

1. Delegates listen to reports given by the Board Trustees including a financial report from the Honorary Treasurer.
2. Delegates vote to accept or reject proposals put forward by Board Trustees.
3. Much of the delegates' work is done in committee. There are six committees with one delegate from each Region plus Board Trustees and possibly observers.
4. Committees discuss and agree a response to topics/questions from the Fellowship.
5. Committees present their response to the whole Conference.
6. Conference accepts or rejects the response.
7. A simple majority vote by Conference constitutes a recommendation to the Board to take any necessary action. A proposal which is carried by a two-thirds majority of those voting at Conference is binding on the Board, provided that in each case the Board is legally competent to act.
8. There is a plenary session where any delegate may make a comment or ask a question.
9. The Chairperson of the next Conference is elected by the whole of Conference and the committee Chairpersons and Secretaries (6) for the next year are elected by their committees.

How to Submit a Topic or Question for Conference

Anyone can submit a topic/question: individuals, Groups, Intergroups, Regions or Board Members.

It should be something that you think concerns Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain (AA GB) as a whole. GSO will confirm that your topic/question has been received.

The Conference co-ordinator will pass on all topics/questions to the Conference Steering Committee (CSC) with no information about who sent them in. Items from an individual member or Group/Intergroup/Region are treated the same.

The CSC will consider all topics/questions. If yours is not accepted the CSC will write to you and explain why.

The deadline for submitting a topic/question to Conference is 31 August.

All topics/questions should be addressed to:

The Conference Co-ordinator
General Service Office of Alcoholic Anonymous Great Britain
PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green
York YO1 7NJ
United Kingdom

Email: aainformation@gsogb.org.uk

If you want to increase the chances of acceptance of your topic/question please:

1. Refer to the current Terms of Reference which lists the reasons for acceptance / non acceptance (these are reviewed annually and sent out with AA Service News-Summer issue).
2. Look through topics and questions discussed by Conference in previous years.
3. Look at the topics and questions that were not accepted in previous years.

Information related to the above 3 points can be found on the AA GB website.

4. Consider whether the topic/question is something more suitable for discussion at Group, Intergroup or Region level?
5. Check if the topic/question is already dealt with somewhere in our literature.
6. Make sure you include the supporting information which has led to your request for the topic/question to be discussed – this might include references to our literature, past Conference decisions or Board Reports.
7. Include the intention behind your suggested topic/question.

Conference Report:

It is the responsibility of Conference delegates to report back on Conference. A full report is sent out to:

- Groups
- Intergroup Officers
- Regional Officers
- Conference delegates, who are responsible for reporting back to Regions
- Board Trustees

This report will also be available on the AA GB website.

The report includes:

- A record of delegates attending, which includes Conference Chair, Board Trustees, General Service Office staff, representatives from SHARE and Roundabout and the Conference delegates who make up the six committees
- Chairperson's opening and closing remarks
- Board Trustee presentations of Service Board Reports
- National Conventions Update
- Report from Open Forum
- CSC Report
- Committee responses to Conference Topics/Questions, and the results of voting on the outcome of these and proposals brought to Conference
- Names of next year's committee Chairpersons and Secretaries
- Election of next year's Chairperson
- Ratification of Board Trustees-Elect

Implementation of recommendations

- The General Service Board shall be responsible for taking any action that may be required arising from the resolutions adopted by the Conference, and a report on such action shall be presented to the General Service Conference the following year
- The Fellowship shall be informed of action that may have been taken by means of publication in AA Service News
- The CSC should monitor progress of Conference recommendations in accordance with its Terms of Reference

If you would like to know more then refer to Sections 9 and 10 of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain.

Who Organises Conference?

The Conference Steering Committee (CSC) which comprises:

- The annually elected Conference Chairperson acting as Chair
- All the annually elected committee Chairpersons (6)
- Two Board Trustees for guidance, support and continuity
- General Secretary (non-voting)
- Conference Co-ordinator (non-voting)

The CSC meets 4 times in the year preceding Conference. Its remit includes:

1. Review the Terms of Reference by which they work.
2. Review the timetable and running of Conference.
3. Decide which topics/questions submitted by Fellowship members will be discussed in committee.
4. Consider any further resolutions from individuals, Groups, Intergroups or Regions which must be submitted at least two months before the Conference for possible inclusion in the final agenda.

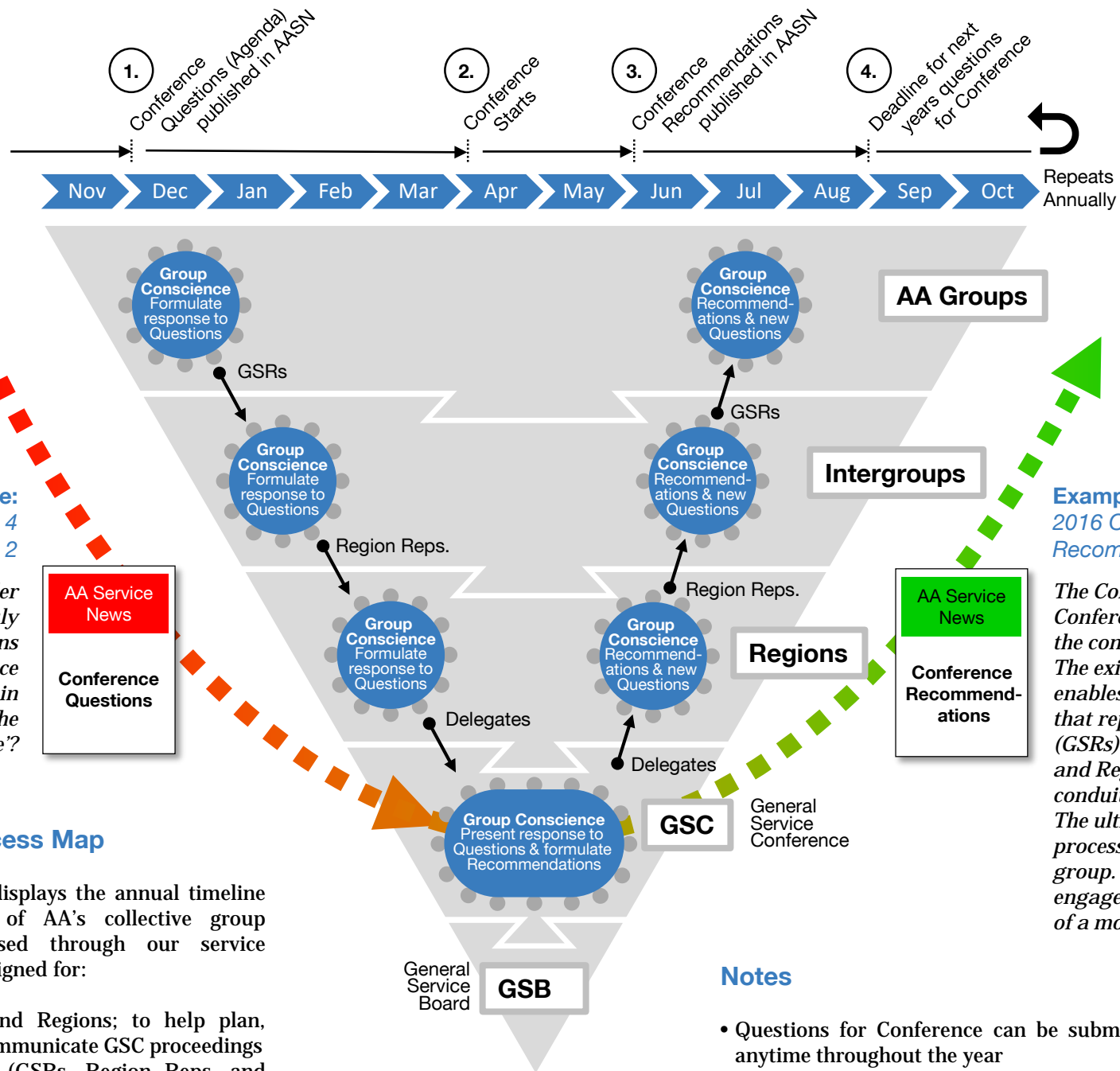
Terms of Reference of the CSC

The Terms of Reference are reviewed annually by the CSC, being mindful always to observe our Traditions, Concepts and Warranties. They are distributed to the Fellowship with AA Service News and published on the AA GB website.

Topics / Questions for Conference

- Submissions to Conference can be made by individual members, Groups, Intergroups, Regions or Board Trustees
- All items are passed to the CSC with no information about who sent them in
- Items from an individual member or Group/Intergroup/Region are treated the same
- Items which are accepted together with support material and background information will be distributed by the end of December to:
 - Conference delegates
 - Regional Secretaries and Chairpersons
 - Intergroup Secretaries
 - Board Trustees
- The accepted topics/questions will be published in AA Service News and on the AA GB website.

This starts the process of individuals, Groups, Intergroups and Regions discussing the topics/questions, the outcome of which is taken to Conference by the Conference delegates.



Example:
2016 Committee 4
Question 2

Would the Fellowship consider to what extent Conference truly represents 'the practical means by which the Group conscience in AA GB can express itself in matters that concern the Fellowship as a whole'?

Example:
2016 Committee 4
Recommendation 2

The Committee considers that Conference adequately represents the conscience of the Fellowship. The existing service structure enables this process to the extent that representatives of Groups (GSRs), Intergroups (Region Reps) and Regions (Delegates) act as a conduit for the group conscience. The ultimate responsibility for this process starts and ends with the group. Where there is full engagement, it is hard to conceive of a more effective alternative.

The GSC Annual Process Map

This process map simply displays the annual timeline and the various stages of AA's collective group conscience being expressed through our service structure, and has been designed for:

- Groups, Intergroups, and Regions; to help plan, prepare, discuss, and communicate GSC proceedings
- Service representatives (GSRs, Region Reps, and Delegates); to support their role as a conduit for the group conscience

Notes

- Questions for Conference can be submitted at anytime throughout the year
- This process map is a general guide only; there may be variations each year as necessary
- All dates are approximate only