



Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain and English Speaking Continental Europe



Probation/ Criminal Justice Social Work Services

Liaison Officers' Pack

Updated: November 2023

Forward

The probation/Criminal Justice Social work service had its origins in the philanthropic work of the Church of England and other churches in the late Nineteenth Century, particularly with drunken offenders who frequently found themselves before a court and who were often dealt with by prison sentences. The first 'police court missionaries' were appointed by the church in London in 1877. Their aim was to lead offenders back to a crime-free life by helping them to give up drink, and to find work and accommodation. There is an interesting book on the origins and development of the Probation Service from 1876 to 2005. It is *The History of Probation*, ISBN: 9780721917009 by Whitehead and Statham, published by Sweet and Maxwell, but you may need to find it through a second-hand dealer as it is not in their current catalogue.

This Information Pack has been prepared for the use of Probation and Criminal Justice Social Work Services Liaison Officers working in AA's Intergroups and Regions. The authors have all been involved in Probation or CJSWS Liaison at Intergroup and Regional levels.

When we started as Liaison Officers in our Intergroups several of us found that the position had been vacant for some time. The same was true at regional level. This Pack is the result of some Liaison Officers trying to gather together and write down information in the hope that it might help those coming into this area of service, especially those who have not been sponsored into post by a predecessor.

This Pack is intended to offer some help, hints, and tips to Probation and CJSWS Liaison Officers, especially those new to this area of service. It has been put together by Regional and Intergroup Liaison Officers around the UK who wish to share their experiences and is produced by the Probation/Criminal Justice Social Work Services Sub-Committee of AA's General Service Board.

At the time of preparing this Pack, the structure of probation services in England and Wales is adjusting to significant recent changes. We have included the most up-to-date information we have, and web links are provided so that you can check the situation when you read this.

Parts of the Pack consist of AA approved literature and are labelled as such. These parts should not be amended when used. However, most of the contents may be modified by Probation/CJSWS Liaison Officers to suit their needs, as these 'working' pages have been designed to provide ideas and templates for our liaison activities.

The basic message is the same for the whole of the UK: our purpose in this liaison service is to bring AA to the attention of the still-suffering alcoholic.

It is **not** intended to be an instruction manual or a 'best practice' guide. Rather, it shares with you our experiences and gives you some background information to allow you to draw up your own plans and hopefully to make your service work as fruitful and enjoyable as possible.

If you have any suggestions for changes to the Pack, please do make them to the Probation/CJSWS Sub-Committee, which will be very pleased to receive your comments.

Contents

- Forward 1
- Glossary of terms used within Probation/Criminal Justice Social Work Services 4
- The Criminal Justice Systems of England and Wales, and of Scotland 6
- Non-custodial arrangements 8
 - Probation: England and Wales 8
 - Community Payback Orders: Scotland 8
- Types of Courts in the two Criminal Justice Systems 9
 - England and Wales 9
 - Magistrates’ Courts..... 9
 - Youth Courts..... 9
 - Crown Courts..... 9
 - High and Supreme Courts..... 9
 - Scotland..... 10
 - Justice of the Peace Courts 10
 - Sheriff Summary Courts 10
 - Sheriff and Jury Courts 10
 - The High Court..... 10
- Who might be ‘on probation’? 11
- What we hope to do as Liaison Officers. 12
- Co-operation between Alcoholics Anonymous, Probation Services and Criminal Justice Services 13
 - Some examples of areas of co-operation 13
 - Who can be involved in AA Liaison service?..... 14
- Basic Hints and Tips for Liaison Officers..... 15
- Suggestions about anonymity, safety and security 16
- Some suggested activities for Liaison Officers 17
 - Criminal Justice Social Work/Probation Offices 17
 - Probation Boards..... 18
 - NACRO (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders.) 18
 - Magistrates’ and Justices’ Courts 18
 - Police..... 19
 - Solicitors 19
 - Prisons..... 19
 - AA Telephone Service..... 19
 - Other AA Service Areas 20
- Starting up and running a confirmation of attendance or ‘chit’ system in your area 21
 - Introducing a confirmation system 21
 - ‘Where to Find’ and the Telephone Service 22
 - Possible problems and solutions 22

Probation/CJSWS Liaison and Chapter 9 of The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain	23
Probation/CJSWS Liaison at Intergroup level	24
Probation/CJSWS Liaison at Regional level.....	26
Probation/CJSWS Liaison at national level	28
The AA Board’s Probation/CJSWS Sub-Committee.....	28
Other activities.....	28
The AA Web site and what it offers you http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk	29
Members’ area for Probation/CJSWS Liaison.....	29
Professionals’ area	29
AA Meetings area	30
Shop area.....	30
Region and Intergroup web site links	30
Future development of the AA Web site	30
Other sources of information within AA helpful in Probation/CJSWS Liaison	31
The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain and The AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain	31
AA Service News.....	31
AA Literature: a short list	31
Local and National ‘Where to Find’ booklets.....	31
Directory of Intergroup and Regional Officers	32
AA Service Offices	32
Some external web sites with useful information	33
APPENDIX I – Confirmation of Attendance Chits	34
Some examples of different formats of ‘chit’ which can be used.....	34
Sample letter to Group GSRs to explain ‘chits’.....	35
APPENDIX II – Example Presentations	36
Suggested material for a PowerPoint or other presentation	36
Suggested Format.....	37
APPENDIX III – Sample letters/emails	39
Sample of a letter from a Probation/CJSWS LO to GSRs, used when an Intergroup is starting or re-launching a chit system	39
Standard letter of introduction sent by a P/CJSWS LO to offender managers	40
INFORMATION SHEET FOR OFFENDER MANAGERS	41
Example of note explaining the confirmation of attendance or ‘chit’ system given to offender management offices: it will need to be changed to reflect the type of chit in use	42
Example of a covering note to offender management services used as the front page of the list of meetings in a city, county or other appropriate area.....	43

Glossary of terms used within Probation/Criminal Justice Social Work Services

Accredited Programmes	Evidence-based interventions which are normally delivered in groups and comprise a specified number of sessions to be delivered in a prescribed manner. They are used as part of a community order, or in prisons or as licence requirements, and each Accredited Programme is targeted against a specific type of offending behaviour (such as violence or domestic abuse) or a specific need (such as alcohol misuse or drug abuse).
Alcohol Treatment Requirement (ATR)	A requirement that a court may attach to a community or suspended sentence order aimed at tackling alcohol abuse
Approved Premises	Residential units (formerly bail and probation hostels) run by The Probation Service, primarily used in the management of higher risk offenders.
Community Offender Manager/COM	A Probation Practitioner who is based in the community
Community Sentence Treatment Requirement/CSTRs	Community sentences issued by courts where the offender has consented to complete treatment for mental health problems, drug and/or alcohol misuse problems. Treatment will have been arranged as part of the sentence and can last for a maximum of three years as part of a Community Order, and for a maximum of two years as part of a Suspended Sentence Order.
Court	One of the wide range of judicial bodies responsible for passing sentence on offenders.
Through the Gate / Enhanced Through the Gate	A policy first launched in 2015, which established new services in prisons aimed at preparing prisoners for release and resettlement.
HMPPS	Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, which is an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice. The NPS is one of three operational arms of HMPPS (the others are the Prison Service and the Youth Custody Service).
Liaison Officer (LO)	The AA Probation Liaison Officer or CJSWS Liaison Officer at Intergroup or Region level. Other service areas' Liaison Officers will be given their service title, e.g., Prison Liaison Officer.
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements: where NPS, police, prison and other agencies work together locally to manage offenders who pose a higher risk of harm to others.
Offender Management in Custody (OMiC)	A model which provides the framework to co-ordinate and sequence an individual's journey through custody and post release, with an emphasis on the development of rehabilitation cultures in prisons. OMiC supports the reduction of re-offending in custody and the community and supports individuals' re-integration into the community.
OASys	Offender Assessment System: The computer based system currently used in England and Wales by Probation Officers to measure the risks and needs of offenders under supervision

Person on Probation	The latest preferred term used by professionals. Previous terms (some still in common use) include Probationer, Service User, Client and Offender.
Prison Offender Manager /POM	A Probation Practitioner who is based in a prison
Probation	(England & Wales) Used to indicate a non-custodial sentence, a Community Payback Order, a suspended sentence with conditions, and a release from prison under licence or conditions.
Regional Probation Director	(England & Wales). The new senior leader who provides strategic leadership and is responsible for overall delivery and commissioning of probation services in each region.
Rehabilitation Activity Requirement (RAR)	Is one of the requirements that can be included within a community order or suspended sentence order, whose main purpose is to secure someone's rehabilitation. This may include activity designed to address an offender's misuse of alcohol
Resettlement	The part of probation services which focuses on preparing individuals for release from custody, including by ensuring that the right services, practical support, and approaches to monitoring are in place in advance of release (see also the definitions for OMiC and Enhanced Through the Gate).
Sentence Plan	With respect to an individual subject to a community order, a suspended sentence order, a licence on release from prison or a post-sentence supervision period, a <i>sentence plan</i> is a document that sets out sentence objectives and comprises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The identification of the present risk of harm of that individual. (ii) The proposed management and mitigation of the present risk of harm. (iii) The needs of the individual in the context of the delivery of the services and identification of the likelihood of that individual reoffending. (iv) The activity to be undertaken with the individual to deliver that part of the of the sentence of the court to be served in the community and to reduce the likelihood of reoffending.
Unified Model	The new operating model for probation services in England and Wales launched on 26th June 2021 bringing responsibility for the management of all supervised individuals into the new probation service (integrating CRC and NPS).

The Criminal Justice Systems of England and Wales, and of Scotland

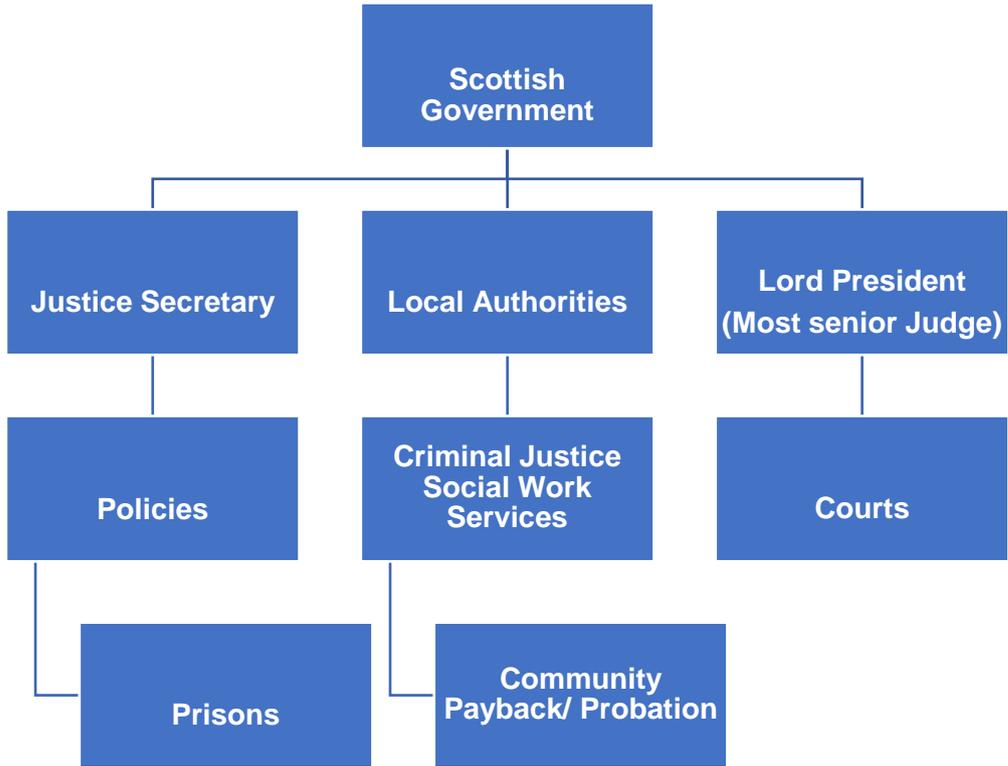
In terms of the work that is actually carried out in the supervision of offenders in the community, the range of activities is very much the same in all parts of Great Britain, whether in England, Scotland or Wales. The main services that are provided are as follows:

- Providing effective supervision of offenders within the community
- Assisting offenders to recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, their families, the community and others
- Assisting with problems related to offending e.g. drug/alcohol use
- Assisting individuals to make those practical and behavioural changes required to sustain a reduction in offending in the longer term
- Increasing community safety by reducing and managing risk
- Providing the Courts with a range of effective alternatives to prison
- Assisting those released from prison to settle back into the community

However, there are major organisational differences in offender management in Scotland and England and Wales.

Scotland's Government has a Justice Secretary responsible for policy matters, and for prisons. The Government provides funds to Local Authorities (e.g. counties) for them to run Criminal Justice Social Work Services (CJSWS). Offenders serving sentences in the community are (usually) on a Community Payback Order. This might involve undertaking unpaid work, education, and programmes aimed at those with alcohol or drug abuse problems. (In 2009 the name 'Community Payback Scheme' was introduced to replace 'Probation'.)

Scottish Courts which mainly sentence offenders to community punishment are the Justice of the Peace Courts and Sheriff Courts.



In England and Wales the Government's Ministry of Justice is responsible for policymaking, the Courts, and for the running of prisons and probation services.

The most relevant Courts giving probation sentences are Magistrates Courts and to some extent the Crown Courts.

In England, Scotland and Wales all those released from prison will be subject to supervised 'probationary' requirements imposed as a condition of their release.



Non-custodial arrangements

Probation: England and Wales

On 26th June 2021, a new 'unified model' came into being, comprising eleven probation regions in England and one region in Wales. This service falls within Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service and is responsible for supervising (a) people who have been released from prison under license conditions and (b) those on community sentences made by judges and magistrates in the courts and also These sentences may involve doing unpaid work, completing an education or training course, getting treatment for drug, alcohol and other addictions, and having regular meetings with a Probation Practitioners'. The link below can be used to find details of the probation services in your area.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/probation-finder>

Approved Premise (hostels) are run by Probation Practitioners for people on probation with a residence requirement on their sentences or licenses. Offender management staffs also work in prisons, assessing offenders, preparing them for release, running offending behaviour programmes and supervising released prisoners.

Community Payback Orders: Scotland

The Community Payback Order came into force in Scotland on 1 February 2011 and replaced provisions for Community Service Orders, Probation Orders and Supervised Attendance Orders.

Other community-based court Orders include the Drug Treatment and Testing Order and the Restriction of Liberty Order (electronic tagging).

The Community Payback Order is supervised by Criminal Justice Social Work Services organised on a county basis. It consists of a number of requirements. From these, the court may select one or more in deciding on the makeup of the Order. These can be tailored specifically to each offender based on the nature of their crime and the underlying issues which are fueling it, and which may need to be addressed in order to stop them re-offending in the future.

For example: the Order might include a requirement to carry out hours of unpaid work in the community with benefits for the community, completion of intensive supervision, alcohol, drug or behavioural programmes.

Clearing pathways of snow and ice, building eco-plant areas for school children, repainting community centres or churches, cleaning up beaches, growing vegetables and distributing the produce to care homes and local charities, are just a few of the unpaid work activities being carried out by offenders in communities across Scotland.

Types of Courts in the two Criminal Justice Systems

England and Wales

Magistrates' Courts

All criminal cases start in a Magistrates' Court and 97% of all cases are completed there. Cases are heard by either 3 magistrates or a district judge. There isn't a jury in a Magistrates' Court. A Magistrates' Court normally handles cases known as 'summary offences' like most motoring offences, minor criminal damage, being drunk and disorderly. It can also deal with some of the more serious offences, like burglary and drugs offences. (These are called 'either way' offences and can be heard either in a Magistrates' Court or a Crown Court. After a preliminary hearing Magistrates' Courts always pass the most serious crimes like murder, rape and robbery to the Crown Court

The Magistrates' Court can impose punishments including up to 6 months in prison (or up to 12 months in total for more than one offence), a fine of up to £5,000 and a community sentence, like doing unpaid work in the community. Courts can also give a combination of punishments – e.g., a fine *and* unpaid work in the community. If the Court decides a sentence should be for longer than 6 months, it can pass a case to the Crown Court for sentencing.

Youth Courts

A Youth Court is a special type of Magistrates' Court for people aged between 10 and 18 and has either 3 magistrates or a district judge. There isn't a jury in a Youth Court. Youth Courts are less formal than adult Courts, and members of the public are not allowed into the Court (unless they get permission) A Youth Court deals with cases like theft and burglary, anti-social behaviour and drugs offences. For serious crimes the case starts in the Youth Court but will be passed to a Crown Court. The Court can give a range of sentences including community sentences and Detention and Training Orders carried out in secure centres for young people.

Crown Courts

These higher courts normally have a judge and a jury. They deal with more serious cases, including murder, robbery, and rape, and can give a range of sentences including community sentences and prison sentences - including life sentences. Crown Courts deal with much local crime, with murder and other very serious cases being dealt with by Higher Courts.

High and Supreme Courts

As far as we need information on these, High Courts hear appeals against decisions of lower courts, and the Supreme Court is the final court of appeal for the whole of the UK.

The following web site (and the further links on it) covers courts in England and Wales:

<https://www.gov.uk/courts>

Scotland

Justice of the Peace Courts

The Justice of the Peace determines whether an accused person is guilty or innocent, in addition to presiding over the trial and sentencing the accused. The Justice of the Peace is advised on points of law by a qualified legal adviser. Justices of the Peace are a crucial part of Scotland's Criminal Justice system, dealing with many of the types of crime that impact most on our communities

Sheriff Summary Courts

In sheriff summary cases a sheriff determines whether an accused person is guilty or innocent, in addition to presiding over the trial and sentencing the accused. A Sheriff Summary Court can impose a custodial sentence of up to one year, and impose a fine of up to £10,000

Sheriff and Jury Courts

Cases heard here are presided over by a sheriff and tried by a jury of fifteen men and women. A Sheriff Court can impose custodial sentences of up to 5 years.

The High Court

When sitting as a court of first instance, it deals with the most serious crimes such as murder, rape, culpable homicide, armed robbery, drug trafficking and serious sexual offences, particularly those involving children. Cases are presided over by a single Judge and tried by a jury of fifteen men and women.

The following web site covers courts in Scotland and clicking on its section 'The Courts & Tribunals' will provide much more detail.

<http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/>

Who might be 'on probation'?

Some of those on probationary community sentences have been found guilty of crimes which don't normally lead to a prison sentence. They have been sentenced to a fixed period of supervised work, treatment, education etc. whilst still living in the community. If they fail to satisfy the terms imposed on them, they can be given an extended community sentence, or may go to prison for breaking the terms of the agreement.

Others could have gone straight to jail for their crimes, but the Court has decided that it would be better to give them a fixed period of time to make changes to their lives, with a spell in jail held over as a punishment if they don't make these changes (a 'suspended sentence').

In England and Wales, the term 'on probation' still covers the above people, whilst in Scotland the phrase 'on probation' was changed following legislation in 2011 to 'under a Community Payback Order'.

There is a third category: people who have served all or part of a prison sentence, and who are released subject to various conditions being placed on what they can do and where they can go. If they breach these conditions they can go back to prison. In these cases AA's Prison Liaison has hopefully been able to make contact whilst the offender was in prison, and will keep up the contacts and help when they are released. In other cases this will not have happened, and our Liaison service then has a role to play. (Co-operation with our Prison Liaison Officer colleagues is important.)

Any of the above people may be required to address their alcohol use or abuse and if they choose to come to AA they can, if they so request, be given chits to confirm that they have attended meetings. On occasion, probationers wishing to attend AA meetings have found that the timing of the meetings clashed with curfew requirements placed on them. When this has happened an approach to the relevant offender manager has led to variations to the curfew restrictions being agreed for specific meetings.

Not every 'problem drinker' is an alcoholic. It's worth noting that offender managers running courses to educate their probationers about the dangers and effects of alcohol abuse put onto those courses a wide range of probationers in whose crimes alcohol has played a part. Some may be 'occasional' drinkers who lose control under the influence, some may be heavy drinkers, and some may be alcoholics. Experience gained from giving shares to people on such courses, and talking about the impact of our drinking, is that we can bring a strong message about the progression of alcohol abuse, which might lead the not-yet-alcoholics to change their habits, as well as fulfilling our main purpose of attracting the alcoholics amongst them into our rooms

What we hope to do as Liaison Officers.

We are trying to bring AA to the attention of those who have committed crimes which haven't led to them being in prison but to 'probation' sentences in the community, and to those released from prison under probationary conditions.

We hope to show the alcoholics amongst them that it is possible to live a good and happy life without alcohol, and that they can, if they wish, get out of the downward spiral of their repeat drinking and offending cycles.

Showing them this other way of life involves us in getting AA literature to them, talking to alcohol awareness and other courses, and getting probationers to attend AA meetings. When we give talks we try to make sure that at least one of us can share his or her story about their experience of the criminal justice system and how stopping drinking has enabled them to avoid reoffending, and to break the cycle which could lead to prison. When appropriate we can arrange for individuals to be 12-Stepped and brought to the rooms.

In order to gain access to the persons on probations we have to approach the offender managers. We might ask to meet them individually or to talk to their office team meetings. AA literature is made available to them. Officers may be invited to attend an 'open' meeting of a Group to hear and see what AA members are like and what they have achieved. They are told what AA can and cannot promise. We can offer a way to sober living if someone wants this enough, but we cannot guarantee someone's recovery.

Initially, offender managers often have misconceptions about AA and find it difficult to understand us, but when they become aware of our strengths and limitations, and when they have heard shares from those who have been in trouble and are now in sobriety, they usually become enthusiastic about the Fellowship. After all, we are willing, free, and have a 24-hour telephone and sponsorship coverage across the country.

Having gained the support of offender managers we hope to get invitations from them to meet and talk to their probationers, individually or in groups. Those offender managers who have listened and have come to believe that AA can help some of their more difficult probationers will be firmly behind our efforts to reach these still suffering alcoholics.

So, to sum up, we want to inform offender managers about AA and, through them, reach and get our message of hope to those who are in trouble with the law because of their drinking, at a time when they can still turn their lives around.

Co-operation between Alcoholics Anonymous, Probation Services and Criminal Justice Services

The main object of liaising with the Probation Services (in England and Wales) and the Criminal Justice Social Work Services (in Scotland) is to carry the message that AA exists, and that its members are freely available to help those who have got into trouble under the Criminal Justice System because of their drinking. It is estimated that a significant number of cases coming before the courts involve some element of alcohol abuse, and that many of those appearing in such cases have a history of sentences for re-offending. It is hoped that engagement with AA will provide an opportunity to help reduce this. AA welcomes the opportunity for Offender Managers to consider asking the Fellowship to provide information and help where possible.

AA literature is available for these professionals to inform them of what the Fellowship can and cannot do. It will provide experience to inform the design of Criminal Justice System policies relating to alcohol abuse. AA will co-operate in Probation Officers' and Criminal Justice Social Workers' training. It will give presentations and literature not only to Probation and Criminal Justice Social Work Services, but also to magistrates, judges, courts officials, lawyers' groups and the police. The AA 'contact card' giving the Helpline number is made widely available to those in contact with offenders.

Experience has often shown that offenders who come to AA Groups and keep coming back have often changed the direction and quality of their lives. This in turn can also have a considerable impact upon other offenders and Officers when they subsequently share their experiences with them.

Some examples of areas of co-operation

Members of AA have established working relations with their local Probation or CJSW Offices. They have provided literature, posters, and DVDs to inform professionals and persons on probation that AA exists, how it works, what it can and cannot do, and that it is free. The professionals have invited AA members to talk to their own staff as part of formal team meetings. Some offices have nominated a professional to act as their Liaison Officer with AA.

Probationers, mainly those who are assessed by Probation/CJSW as being dependent on alcohol, or using it dangerously, have been advised by their case officers that AA exists and might be able to help. The information provided by AA enables the person to make contact by telephone with the local AA. Its members will then visit the caller (known as a '12 Step Call') and offer to arrange for them to be taken to an AA meeting. It is hoped that this will be the first of many meetings that they will attend.

If a professional wishes to be assured that a person is attending meetings a simple 'Confirmation of Attendance' ('chit') may be provided at the person's request, to be handed to the case manager. (Not all AA Groups have this system in place, but alternative arrangements can usually be made in such cases.) This may be useful if the client is subject to an Alcohol Treatment Requirement or similar directive.

AA members, including some with first-hand experience of being on probation or being in jail, have been found effective when taking part in Alcohol Awareness, Alcohol Abuse and other courses run by Probation/ CJSW, where they share their experience of alcoholism and the changes made possible when they turned to a different way of life. Experience has shown that persons on probation willing to listen to the AA

message *can* stop drinking, transform their lives, and have no future troubles with the Criminal Justice System. Not all are as fortunate, and there is no guarantee that AA will work for all individuals. However, often those who *really* want to stop drinking *have* found a way out from their cycle of alcohol and crime.

In some Probation Areas like the Thames Valley Area sophisticated systems have been built out of this co-operation. AA has been asked to co-operate in the provision of training courses for Probation staff. Elsewhere there are as yet less formal but still effective links, like contributing sessions to Alcohol Awareness Courses, and more will develop in time.

At a more general level, AA has enjoyed attending and providing speakers for conferences on alcohol-related topics, at events organised at Parliamentary and Ministry levels, and has been invited to submit comments to policymaking bodies. A group of AA and senior criminal justice service managers hold regular meetings to discuss shared interests in Probation and Prisons.

As the role of Probation/CJSW has expanded to include prisoners released from custody, so AA has worked to improve the links and effective working relations between its members serving in liaison with Probation/ CJSW and those members working with Prisons, to provide for some continuity of care, particularly when prisoners are released, perhaps on licence. Such prisoners who have found their way to AA *via* prison meetings will usually find guidance and support from AA on their release.

Who can be involved in AA Liaison service?

Members of AA who get involved in Probation/CJSW Liaison come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some have themselves been on probation or in prison. Others have other experience in many jobs and professions. The officers will have at least two years' sobriety, but many members of the Fellowship contribute to this service without holding formal posts. Anyone who is interested Probation Liaison can just let their local Liaison Officer know and will be encouraged to play a part. The only requirements are continuing sobriety and a wish to carry the message to others.

Basic Hints and Tips for Liaison Officers

One thing that might be worth noting from the start: it's usually very difficult to work in this area of service without breaking your personal anonymity, as the external organisations are unlikely to be prepared to deal with someone who won't disclose their full name, and often an address.

Enlist help as soon as possible from interested members of the Fellowship who have sufficient sobriety. Liaison, once up and running, involves more work than a single person can reasonably be expected to handle. Bear in mind our responsibility as LOs is not only to the suffering alcoholic outside the Fellowship. We also have a responsibility to our own recovery and to offer service opportunities to as wide a range of our members as possible.

- The offender management services sometimes have difficulty understanding our democratic structure and in particular the fact that, unlike other agencies, we do not accept payment or financial contributions, nor can we provide statistics on 'outcomes'
- Be clear in your own mind what you are offering.
- Don't promise anything you can't deliver
- Always try to heed the Twelve Traditions but don't beat yourself up when you make a mistake. We all make many mistakes in service. Just accept it as part of the growing process
- Be prepared to knock on any and every door
- Expect positive outcomes – most professionals genuinely welcome us
- Be mindful of the fact that cooperation with the offender management services is simply a means to an end, i.e., it is another route for us to make contact with suffering alcoholics who otherwise may never come in contact with our Fellowship. Cooperation that does not have this objective is fruitless
- Remember you are doing service to keep you sober as well as helping still suffering alcoholics
- Remember: the best endorsement of AA is a clean and sober recovering alcoholic recounting their experience with humility and honesty. This is particularly true when someone who has experienced the Criminal Justice System shares about their new life without alcohol
- Don't be afraid to publicise your activities at AA meetings. Members will then frequently come to you after the meeting with suggestions or snippets of information based on their own past or present experience of being dealt with by the offender management services. Some members may also listen, and be attracted into giving service in the liaison area. To run effective liaison programmes we need all the help we can get

Offender managers are sometimes confused about what we are offering. It can help to reassure them if you make it clear we are not in competition with alcohol treatment agencies they may currently use. Our Fellowship offers an additional resource, not an alternative.

- We are available all day and every day
- We are available immediately – no waiting lists
- We are open to all
- We offer support for life
- We are free

Suggestions about anonymity, safety and security

It is rarely possible to maintain complete personal anonymity when undertaking liaison service involving contact with professionals in the field of offender management. At the very least most managers will expect to know your name and telephone number.

Liaison officers are expected to apply for official AA email accounts, the use of personal email accounts is discouraged. AA email accounts can be applied for by selecting "Application for an AA email address" in the Topic box on the AA support team form at the following address:

<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Service/Helpdesk>

It is worth preserving your anonymity by asking offender managers to make sure that your personal details, like your full name and phone number, are not released to their probationers without your express permission, and that they do not appear in paperwork circulated beyond offender management staff. A note about confidentiality of personal information might be added to letters and papers sent to offender managers and their offices.

When it comes to meeting with people who are on probation, either those on community sentences or those released from prison on supervision requirements, here are some things that members of the Fellowship have found helpful to bear in mind. (They are based on part of a training programme for liaison volunteers in Cheshire East Intergroup, and the Intergroup is thanked for them.)

- Don't give out your full name, telephone number or address unless and until you are convinced that the information will not be misused.
- Don't give out other personal information unnecessarily.
- Some people involved in liaison have a second mobile phone reserved for contact with probationers.
- Where possible, men should meet male probationers and women should meet female probationers.
- Initial meetings (at least) should be in a neutral location such as a church, library, offender management office or public place, and not in your home or place of work
- It might be wise to have two members of the Fellowship involved in these meetings, and in travelling with probationers to and from a Group meeting.
- It may take time and effort to gain probationers' trust: take it easy a day at a time.
- Try to stay calm and non-judgemental, listen, and keep focussed on the possibility of recovery.
- Be careful about physical contact.
- Don't offer money or gifts (except AA literature) nor accept presents.
- Don't detour to houses etc when taking a probationer to a Group meeting or other destination, nor accept anything to be carried by you on their behalf.
- Don't make promises you can't keep.

The usual AA principles of individual confidentiality should be observed between members and probationers. However, there are some situations in which we are required to make a report on the probationer to the offender manager. These include planned or actual violation of the terms of probation; abuse of or endangering children or elders by the offender or others; intended or actual drug abuse, and indications of an intention to self-harm or commit suicide.

Some suggested activities for Liaison Officers

Criminal Justice Social Work/Probation Offices

Introduction letters - In the first instance write to the senior offender manager in each office in your area, preferably on Intergroup/AA notepaper. There is a standard letter example given at the end of this pack which you can use or you can compose your own.

Posters - Place AA's "Trapped?" and similar posters and cards in offender management offices, bail hostels, magistrates and other courts, and police stations, and remember that literature can be obtained in languages other than English

Invite offender managers - to 'open' or public meetings and Conventions. There may be some initial resistance, but experience elsewhere has shown this is probably the most effective way to convince them of the effectiveness of our Fellowship. We must never under-estimate the power of an alcoholic openly sharing hope, strength and recovery. Ensure that the meeting is aware that there is a visitor present.

Team Meetings - Try to make arrangements with individual senior offender managers to attend specific Team Meetings (which the services seem to hold regularly) to give an AA presentation, and to try to get asked to help with induction and training sessions.

Literature – Provide suitable basic AA reference literature, like 'A Message for Professional', the A5 brochure on co-operation with offender management (see Section 3), local 'Where to Find' sheets and Starter Packs, to all offender management offices. Give them AA pamphlets, including those in other languages. Show them examples of other material, like the National 'Where to Find', and leave them a copy of the AA 'Outside Agencies' Literature Order Form.

Meeting Prisoners on Release - Possibly by arrangement with your Intergroup's Prison Liaison Officer and the offender management service, meet prisoners on release who have been attending AA in prison and help them to get to meetings. Be careful to preserve your anonymity: see the section on personal security in this Pack.

Other Agencies - Many offender management offices refer their drinking and drugging probationers to particular local drink/drug agencies. It can be worthwhile making contact with these agencies to carry the AA message and make sure they have specific local contacts in AA, and the local Helpline number, rather than them having to phone the National Number or GSO.

Alcohol-Related Programmes - There are Drink Impaired Driver Programmes which aim to re-educate offenders in certain categories. There are also Alcohol Treatment Requirement (ATR) programmes and Alcohol Awareness courses. AA members can co-operate by giving talks and shares to attendees on these courses, and our input is usually seen as carrying a powerful and effective message.

Hostels (Approved Premises) - Most probation and bail hostel managers, when asked, will claim that almost all the people who pass through the hostels have alcohol problems. Most managers are willing to display AA posters and literature. Some run programmes about alcohol abuse and might welcome co-operation.

Dedicated Contacts - It is important to ensure the offender management services are given local AA contacts who can respond fairly readily to telephone requests for

assistance. In this respect it is good practice to give several telephone contacts, for example having 'Alternates' in post and a 'liaison team' to help you.

Twelve Stepping - It is recommended that persons on probation referred to AA by the offender management services are Twelve Stepped in the usual way by at least two members of the Fellowship. It is wise to agree in advance with the management service where this will take place, and Offices usually have meeting/interview rooms that can be made available. AA suggests the formation of a dedicated twelve step list specifically for such probationers once links are formed and referrals start taking place. However, if this is not possible then the usual systems for Twelve Step phone calls and visits are fine. (It is important, we think, to make it clear that the persons with problems ask for AA's help and make the Helpline phone calls themselves.) Again, see the section on personal anonymity.

Probation Boards.

In England and Wales these have responsibilities to ensure the proper discharge of probation duties in a given area. It seems fairly universal that most Intergroups experience difficulty in establishing initial contact with their local offender management service offices. However, one approach that has proved successful in one Intergroup is to make contact with the Area Probation Board as well as locally with individual probation offices. Most importantly the members of each Probation Board are not probation staff and as such are free to take a rather different view of anything we have to offer. However their views and recommendations do carry a great deal of influence within the Probation Service.

NACRO (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders.)

NACRO is a charity which works to help offenders in many ways including finding housing on release from prison, resettlement of offenders with substance abuse problems, working with families and youth offending teams and developing local strategies to reduce crime and disorder. NACRO runs projects in most centres of population and are worth contacting since their aim is to help offenders and former offenders, many of whom will be under the supervision of the probation service, live a life free from crime.

Magistrates' and Justices' Courts

It can be of great value if we can get our message across to Magistrates and Justices, most of whom are likely to be uninformed about our Fellowship. Their courts deal with many of the cases leading to community sentences. Any chance of carrying the message to judges in the higher courts, and to their court staffs, should also be followed up wherever possible.

Magistrates and Justices are encouraged to regularly attend organised training events. The programme of events is usually extensive and is organised annually by the local or area Bench Training and Development Committee. The Chair or Deputy Chair of this committee is usually the best person to approach. (Alternatively write to the Clerk to the Justices at the local Court.) However, as the programmes are planned well in advance (12 months or so) it probably is not possible to get an AA input immediately.

Most Courts have regular open days and some Intergroups have been very successful in being allowed to have a display or stand at these.

Usually, local Magistrates' Benches have an Annual General Meeting followed by a talk from a guest speaker. In some areas, a Liaison Officer, supported by other AA members, has obtained an invitation to give this talk.

Police

We are not aware of many long-standing initiatives involving AA cooperating with the Police Service except in Scotland where in some areas custody officers hand out AA contact cards. However, at some stage, the police undoubtedly are in contact with those people who ultimately find themselves being supervised by the probation or Criminal Justice Social Work Services. Additional to this are those alcoholics who may find themselves temporarily in the police's custody but who are not ultimately prosecuted. Some Intergroups have made it their business to ensure all local police stations have AA posters displayed in the waiting areas and holding cells as well as in custody suites.

Some Intergroups have been successful in being invited to give talks at the local attendance centres to groups of teenagers subject to attendance centre orders imposed by the courts.

The various police forces, of course, are also large employers and their employees are not immune to this illness either. There may also be an opportunity to contribute to Police training sessions.

In Scotland the new unified force Police Scotland presents opportunities for AA to try to get its message to a very large number of officers if senior police staff can be convinced that the Fellowship can be helpful.

Solicitors

Some Intergroups make contact with the local legal associations and societies, and in particular with those specialising in defence work, and give presentations to them on the Fellowship, and its liaison with parts of the Justice System.

Prisons

If you have any prisons in your Intergroup area each of these will have a dedicated offender management team dealing with reports for cases for possible early release, and for the supervision of offenders released on licence and/or subject to continuing supervision outside jail. Under the new organisation of probation in England and Wales early release from prison will have a much greater involvement of the probation services.

This will be an opportunity for co-operation with your Intergroup or Regional Prison Liaison Officer.

AA Telephone Service

It is very valuable to keep in contact with your local Telephone Liaison Officer, especially when making arrangements with probation/CJSW offices which could involve calls being made to the Telephone Service. Some Intergroups have lists of telephone responders who have past experience of Criminal Justice systems and who are willing to respond to calls from those on probation.

Please be wary of giving out your personal number, certainly in the first instance.

Other AA Service Areas

With the release from prison on supervision requirements becoming general it will be wise to maintain close contact with your Prison Liaison colleagues to help each other and to avoid overlapping service work.

Health Liaison Officers may find that they are becoming involved in discussions about alcohol-related crime and rehabilitation. Some Casualty staff and nurses visiting custody suites are happy to take along AA cards. See whether you can help your Health colleagues.

Another important area is the local AA Public Relations service. Often, they will get requests to put on talks or run stands about AA in areas where an input from Probation/CJSWS LOs would be appropriate.

Convention organisers can be approached about having a session on your liaison work, and offender managers can be invited to attend, if the meeting is 'open'.

An increasing number of Intergroups and Regions are bringing together their service areas which deal with the public into small committees, mainly to share information and avoid duplication of effort, but also to provide a small number of members who can temporarily cover the needs of service areas where a post falls vacant. It is recommended that if such a committee exists you seek to become a member of it.

Seeking help and support from the Groups in your area can be done by asking at Intergroup for the Group GSRs to tell their Groups what is going on, and what help is needed. Their support is also important if you are setting up and running a 'chit' system.

Starting up and running a confirmation of attendance or 'chit' system in your area

The confirmation of attendance system, often called 'the chit system', is simply a scheme to let people have some document to show that they have attended a particular meeting. The confirmation can then be given by that person to offender managers, Social Services, an employer or any other body.

The system has been endorsed by AA Conference (1987 and 2009) and operates without compromising anyone's anonymity. Whilst AA has endorsed the system, actively reporting on a person's attendance is definitely not part of AA procedure. It is up to the person requesting the chit **to report on themselves** to whoever is supervising them.

The statement which confirms a person's attendance at a particular AA Meeting can be of several types. The traditional 'chit' is simply a sealed envelope provided by Intergroup or made up by the Group. The envelope contains a slip of paper on which is printed the Group's unique Group Registration Number as allocated to all Groups by General Service Office (GSO). When this is given to the person requesting confirmation of attendance, a Group officer just writes the time and date (not the location) over the sealed flap of the envelope and initials it.

Some Intergroups now give Groups supplies of blank certificates, which can be given to anyone who asks, and which don't involve using the Group number. It is also quite acceptable for Groups to give people a completely informal 'chit' – just a piece of paper on which a Group officer has noted that a person has attended a meeting of AA at a certain place and time. Examples of suggested formats of 'chit' are given in Appendix I.

Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain
Confirmation of attendance
To be issued by Secretary, GSR or other designated group officer

Name of attendee _____

Date / time of meeting _____

Meeting address _____

Group registration number _____

[Please note: Members do not have to disclose their name when issuing this document]

Blank confirmation of attendance certificates are available free of charge from GSO and can be requested by any group, intergroup or regional officer. They are printed with anti-counterfeit ink and use the group's number as a 'signature' thereby ensuring the anonymity of the member filling them out. They will only be posted out to a group, intergroup or regional officer's address already registered with GSO, so before requesting any please ensure that your contact details are up to date, filling out a 'pink form' if necessary.

Introducing a confirmation system

It is, of course, entirely up to each Intergroup and Group whether and how they choose to introduce the confirmation system. One common scenario has been for Intergroups to initially discuss and vote on whether to endorse the use of the chit system in that particular Intergroup. If the Intergroup decides to endorse the introduction of the chit

system the next step would be for GSRs to take the matter back to their individual Groups, to discuss at a conscience meeting whether that Group wishes to participate. The Intergroup P/CJSWS LO might wish to attend any meeting debating the 'chit' system and to offer a point of view.

Each Group that agrees to participate tells Intergroup so, and the P/CJSWS Liaison Officer would add that Group's details to the list of participating Groups prepared for the local offender management service.

'Where to Find' and the Telephone Service

It is useful to show in the local 'Where to Find' which Groups participate in the chit system, and to give this information to the Telephone Service and to the Regional Liaison Officer.

Possible problems and solutions

Experience has shown that a minority of members will object to the concept of the chit system, often incorrectly arguing that it contravenes our tradition of anonymity, which in fact refers to "...at the level of press, radio and television". It is true that members' details are rightly confidential to the extent that they wish to remain personally anonymous in meetings. However, the chit system has been endorsed by AA's General Service Conference as satisfying all necessary confidentiality requirements.

Another argument that is often raised is that by having a confirmation system we are doing more than just co-operating with offender managers and other organisations. It is important to be clear that neither AA nor any AA member reports any client's attendance at AA to anyone in offender manager services or elsewhere. We simply give the client a means by which they can report on themselves to their supervising officer.

Some members will argue that "undesirable elements" will be "sent" to AA meetings against their will and therefore may be disruptive. It is important when discussing co-operation with offender managers that they are made aware of the voluntary nature of AA attendance. However, this is unlikely to be an issue since, although courts and offender managers may direct persons on probation to seek help with alcohol problems, neither have the powers to compel a client *specifically* to attend AA. Attendance by a client will therefore be by choice and with his or her agreement. It is also worth remembering that a prospective member from *any* background can walk into any AA meeting without anyone knowing any of their personal circumstances.

On occasion, probationers wishing to attend AA meetings have found that the timing of the meetings clashed with curfew requirements placed on them. When this has happened an approach to the relevant offender manager has led to variations to the curfew restrictions being agreed for specific meetings.

There is some reason to believe that, as the offender management services become more involved with prisoners being released early from custody, or released on licence, there could be circumstances where the offender management services thought it advisable from a public safety aspect to encourage some of its clients to attend open AA meetings in its own buildings. In keeping with the work of AA holding meetings in prisons, it would be acceptable to run AA meetings in property rented from offender management services, subject to adhering to the Traditions.

You may find it useful to have a copy of The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, Chapter 9 to hand when discussing the system with others, as it contains clear suggestions and guidance for the Fellowship

Probation/CJSWS Liaison and Chapter 9 of The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain

The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, Chapter 9 is the one which sets out the guidance for our area of service.

Chapter 9 talks first about the AA Group and its role in liaison activities, and then has an introduction to the role of Liaison Officers which covers some of the resources available to them; the need for co-operation across AA boundaries, and budgets and expenses.

It outlines the confirmation of attendance (or 'chit') system, stressing that the self-reporting of attendance by AA members to outside bodies was agreed by Conference (1987) to be within the Traditions. Some members, concerned lest it break anonymity, sometimes raise questions about whether it is 'right' for people to come into AA because they need to show their offender manager that they are attending meetings. The Chapter has a useful comment on this situation:

In our pamphlet "How AA Members Co-operate" the following appears:

"We cannot discriminate against any prospective AA members, even if he or she comes to us under pressure from a court, an employer, or any other agency.

Although the strength of our programme lies in the voluntary nature of membership in AA, many of us first attend meetings because we were forced to, either by someone else or by our inner discomfort. But continual exposure to AA educated us to the true nature of our illness. Who made the referral to AA is not what AA is interested in. It is the problem drinker who is our concern. We cannot predict who will recover, nor have we the authority to decide how recovery should be sought by any other alcoholic."

The election, possible activities, and the responsibilities of Intergroup and of Regional Liaison Officers are detailed and then there is a description of the General Service Board's Probation/CJSWS Sub-Committee and its duties.

The role of the Liaison Officer was officially widened following General Service Conference 2003 to add to the task of attempting to forge links with the Probation/CJSW Services locally. Committee No 6 recommended "that the title Probation/Social Services Liaison Officer remains unchanged. (But) We recommend that their remit includes all non-prison judicial organisations." This was clarified to include Police and the Courts, as well as the Probation Service.

Probation/CJSWS Liaison at Intergroup level

Some of the main basic tasks of the Intergroup Liaison Officer are given in Chapter 9 of *The AA Service Handbook*. They include:

- Bringing AA to the notice of the Probation/CJSW Service, Courts and Police in their Intergroup area.
- Encouraging Groups to operate the 'chit' system which enables people who ask for it to get some form of confirmation that they have attended an AA meeting.
- Keeping Groups informed of progress through reports to Intergroup.
- Representing the Intergroup at Regional level through reports to the Regional Probation/CJSW Services Liaison Officer and by attending Regional events such as Workshops, (and also keeping Intergroup informed of relevant Regional matters).

Often, the service involves close contacts with neighbouring Intergroups, because the offender manager services are generally organised on a county or regional basis and so don't usually 'fit' Intergroup/Region boundaries. It can also require the Liaison Officer to work closely with the Intergroup Public Information team, and the Prison Liaison Officer if there is one. (If there isn't a Prison Liaison Officer, sometimes a Probation/CJSWS LO will hold a watching brief over this area of service.)

Increasingly, the Health services are also becoming involved in aspects of the Criminal Justice System as various professionals co-operate to try to develop policies based on all aspects of substance abuse in their communities, so Liaison Officers may well also find it useful to keep in touch with their Health Liaison colleagues.

Quite often there are opportunities to organise Probation/CJSWS Liaison events as part of a Convention, to which, if it has 'open' sessions, offender managers and others might be invited.

A lot of service work consists of getting information about AA to the external bodies (Probation/CJSWS, Police, Courts, Bail Hostels, lawyers). This is often first done by taking round AA posters and contact cards for display in offender management offices, public areas, courts, cells and bail hostels. At the end of this Pack there is a standard letter which can be used in making contact with offender manager offices, and an information sheet which could be enclosed. Getting to meet and talk to the officers of the organisations is important. Sometimes these meetings are informal, involving a chat and establishing communication. Sometimes they are more formal, with members of AA co-operating with presentations, team meetings, training events and so on.

When a member of the Fellowship who has come up against the Criminal Justice System at some point in their drinking then shares about his or her new life in sobriety it often has a very great impact on those who are at risk. It is also something which carries a strong message to offender managers. Try to find such members and involve them in presentations if they are willing.

The Intergroup LO should make sure that a local confirmation of attendance or 'chit' system is set up and is operating satisfactorily. The chit system is one where a person attending an AA meeting can ask the Group for confirmation that he or she has been to it. The system was approved by Conference. Some parts of the UK have got the 'chit' system in place, and others have not yet gone along that road: it's a matter for each Group's conscience. At the end of this pack there is more information about the system and some samples of associated literature.

Often, people approaching AA with the encouragement of offender managers and other external organisations will be 12-Stepped into the Rooms in the normal way. Some Intergroups have set up (with the assistance of their Probation/CJSWS and Prison Liaison Officers) lists of 12-Steppers and Telephone Responders with a particular

interest in getting the message across to those in difficulties with the legal systems, and others prefer not to go along that route. It is again a matter for the Intergroup's conscience.

Intergroup LOs might try to get approval for the setting up of a budget to cover their expenses in getting literature into offender management and other offices, buying the 'Probation Directory', travelling to give presentations, attending Region Workshops and so on. Two national Intergroup LO Seminars have so far been held in York, and it is hoped that there will be more of them in future, so including an element to cover attendance at these might be prudent.

Some Intergroups have set up small committees giving support to the Intergroup LO. This has several significant advantages. It provides support in the Fellowship for the LO, as it's a service role which can leave people feeling a little 'isolated', and it involves more members in service, with a wide range of degrees of commitment according to their personal circumstances.

A small team makes it easier to respond to local requests from Probation/CJSWS. This is especially the case where the Intergroup covers a big geographical area or includes a large number of individual offender management offices. Having a small team involved can also be of great value in securing continuity of service, as it's quite likely that one of the team will consider taking on the post of Liaison Officer when it becomes vacant.

Making regular reports to Intergroup on your liaison activities ensures that other Liaison Officers are aware of what's going on. (This is particularly important with Prisons, Telephones and Public Information.) It also tells Groups (through their GSRs) what's happening, and they can be asked to help your service work. Some Intergroups have set up committees to bring together liaison officers dealing with the public, and if yours has one do try to become a member. You might also try to have a slot in your local Convention programme.

Attending Region events can be very useful, as you will be able to share your experience with other Liaison Officers and exchange information about the service work. This is also helped by your reports to the Region Probation/CJSWS Liaison Officer, with whom you should work closely. (Usually these reports are those you submit to Intergroup. with suitable additions and deletions.)

If you are sent a circular about the national Seminar for Probation/CJSWS Liaison Officers do try to arrange to attend it, as you will meet colleagues from across the country and share your experiences with them. The intention is to run this Seminar every two years. It will provide you with the most recent information about what's going on in the field, both within the Fellowship and in external areas, and allow you to make useful contacts with other LOs across the country.

Probation/CJSWS Liaison at Regional level

The main duties are given in *The AA Service Handbook*, Chapter 9. The Regional Liaison Officer's first job is to keep in touch with and to provide help and encouragement for the Intergroup LOs and then to make a report on Intergroups' activity to each meeting of your Regional Assembly. As well as working through telephone contact, it's been found useful to set up email 'group lists' of the LOs to make it easier to exchange news and information.

Each report to Region usually covers what is happening in each Intergroup, and also covers anything else which the Regional LO has come across which might be of interest to Region and to its Intergroups (for example, new AA literature useful for this part of service, feedback from the Annual Regional LO meeting etc). A copy of each report to Region should also be sent to the Probation/CJSWS Sub-Committee and to AA's General Service Office for the Trustee looking after Probation matters..

Some Regions hold Workshop sessions, and it's a good idea to encourage this, and to make sure that they include a Probation/CJSWS Workshop. This can give an opportunity for Intergroup LOs to meet and exchange experiences. The RLO usually takes the chair. The format varies, but often LOs describe what they've found to work well in their service and share approaches to dealing with any problems. Often, Workshops are also attended by AA members who are looking at possible areas of service, and they can be used to generate interest in working with Probation/CJSWS, either as an AA liaison officer or by helping out from time to time with shares to offenders and distributing AA literature to local Offender Management offices.

Another task is to try to get Intergroups where Probation/CJSWS Liaison is slight or non-existent to discuss how to attract people into service in their area. Sometimes this also means asking Intergroups to try very hard to fill vacant LO posts. When a new person is appointed to a Liaison Officer post when there has been a break in the continuity of service, the RLO will provide help and encouragement, and also suggest how to contact other Intergroups' LOs with greater experience.

Some things that Regional Liaison Officers might consider are:

- producing a list of the Intergroup P/CJSWS LOs and their contact details, for AA and external use, and perhaps a map of the Region and Intergroup boundaries to help offender managers identify nearby meetings.
- encouraging Intergroups, through their Liaison Officers, to set up their own chit system
- helping Intergroup LOs obtain the confidential Group Registration Numbers, if used for chits. These Group Registration Numbers can be obtained from GSO York.
- encouraging the LOs of the various Intergroups covering a single Probation/CJSWS Area to liaise with each other and helping to make contact with its senior offender managers.
- co-ordinating the production of lists of AA meetings by offender management (rather than AA) area
- considering finding RLO 'alternates', one based in each County/Probation/CJSWS Area to provide local interaction with the offender management services.
- setting up links with the RLOs of surrounding Regions especially where an offender management area lies across two (or more) AA Regional boundaries.

- ensuring that Probation/CJSWS Liaison is represented at Conventions and other external events, including regional 'launches' of national alcohol policies etc.

As trusted servants, those involved in this Liaison will often find that they are working across AA structural boundaries, and they may need to agree how to share responsibilities between AA's service areas and organisational structures.

Each year, usually in June, the Annual Meeting of Regional Probation/CJSWS Liaison Officers is held in the General Service Office, York, from 5pm on a Friday to lunchtime on the Saturday. Part of an RLO's duties is to attend this annual meeting or to arrange for an alternate to go. They should also attend the Probation/CJSWS Seminars held (hopefully) every two years, also in June. Those of us who have taken part in these meetings have found them to be a really important part of our service. They are tremendously useful for sharing experiences, both bad and good, and for helping us to feel part of a national group, in what can be quite an 'isolating' area of service.

The General Service Board has set up a Probation/CJSWS Sub-Committee and each member of it is given the responsibility of providing help and support to a group of Regions. The member allocated your Region is the person to whom reports should be sent (see below) and to whom you are invited to turn for support and assistance as and when you might need it.

In addition to copying their Region reports to the Sub-Committee, RLOs should also send it an *annual* report from their Region in time for it to be presented to the Annual Meeting in June. This doesn't have to be lengthy but should cover the year's activities and should mention new developments and also any problems which have surfaced. It is helpful if the annual report includes the number of Intergroup Liaison Officer posts filled and vacant. RLOs will get the Minutes of the Annual Meeting from GSO and should submit a report on any relevant items back to their Region and hence to its Intergroups. The same reporting back should also apply to the information sheet and update sent to Regions by the Sub-Committee after each of its meetings.

It's very useful to have a Liaison budget allocated by Region. This might cover the expenses of the RLO's attendance at Region meetings and any other events such as the Annual RLO Meeting in York. It might also cover the purchase of literature for Region, both AA material and expenses for the RLO to visit Intergroups to encourage Probation/CJSWS service, and to other Regions to discuss shared work. National events may be run by bodies like the Justice Directorate (Scotland) or Ministry of Justice (England & Wales)

Some national events make a charge for attendance. Participation in these events will therefore be subject to each Region's funds and conscience.

Probation/CJSWS Liaison at national level

The AA Board's Probation/CJSWS Sub-Committee

The AA Board set up a Probation/CJSWS Sub-Committee in 2009. It is chaired by the Trustee for Probation/CJSWS and has four other members with experience of Probation/CJSWS Liaison service.

The aim of the Subcommittee is to raise awareness of the work of the Probation/Criminal Justice Social Work Services in Great Britain throughout the Fellowship.

Its objectives include:

- developing and maintaining resources for liaison officers
- disseminating information on Probation/CJSWS throughout the Fellowship
- developing and maintaining the Probation/CJSWS areas on the AA(GB) website, including the possibility of a user forum for members in this discipline
- supporting the development and sharing of good practice
- supporting Regional Liaison Officers
- organising the annual Regional Liaison Officers meeting held in York
- organising periodic seminars for Regional and Intergroup Liaison Officers
- developing links with Prison Service Liaison Officers

Each member has been asked to work closely with a particular group of Regions, and contact details are sent out to Regions. Regional LOs are welcome to contact members of the Sub-Committee for suggestions, advice, support and guidance, and Intergroups in Regions without an RLO should not hesitate to make direct contact with members.

RLOs are asked to send to the member of the Sub-Committee charged with supporting their Region copies of each of their reports to their Region and the Region's yearly report to the Annual Meeting of Regional Probation/CJSWS Liaison Officers.

For details of the current membership of the Sub-Committee see the latest version of the Confidential Directory. Send an email to Chris.North@gsogb.org.uk from your aamail.org email address and she will send you the URL to download the current version and text you the password to open the document.

The Sub-Committee has an email address which delivers mail to the Sub-Committee secretary, who will either reply straight away, or ask another member to do so, depending on the topic. The email address is: infoprobation.sc@aamail.org

Other activities.

One Trustee member of AA's General Board has a particular responsibility of looking after matters to do with Probation/CJSWS Liaison and acts as Chair of the Sub-Committee. As well as attending national events concerning alcohol policies and community sentencing, AA presentations to Ministers and Governments etc, the Board Trustee also represents AA in meetings currently held about every three months with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service for England and Wales.

The AA Web site and what it offers you

<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk>

The Home Page of the new website for Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain consists of the following main areas:

- **Home**
- **About AA**
- **AA Meetings**
- **Shop**
- **Members**
- **Professionals**
- **Media**
- **Contact**

Members' area for Probation/CJSWS Liaison

In the 'Members' area follow the links 'Service' then 'Disciplines' (click on Find out More) and you will see a link to 'Probation/Criminal Justice Services' – click on Find out More.

There are currently four sections for Probation/Criminal Justice Services Liaison:

- **Purpose**
- **Resources**
- **Latest News**
- **Stories**

Purpose tells you a little about Liaison work, the differences between the UK's legal systems, and about the Probation/CJSWS Sub-Committee (with an email address for the Sub-Committee).

The **Resources** part has links to this Pack and other items kept in the Web site's Documents Library.

Latest News keeps you abreast of what's going on in our service area.

Stories have been submitted by AA members who have had experience of criminal justice systems and who have found a different life without alcohol and more stories would be welcome.

Professionals' area

This part of the site is aimed at professionals in areas with which our liaison services bring us into contact. If you want to see what can be read by offender managers and others, find the link there to 'Social Sectors' and then go on to 'Legal and Criminal Justice' and then to 'Probation/Criminal Justice Services'.

AA Meetings area

The meeting finder now indicates which groups participate in the 'chit' system by way of an  icon next to the group details. This helps persons on probation and offender managers to find appropriate meetings.

Where? or When? Accessibility, Chit system

For meetings that are now open (signified by ) after lockdown, please select this option from the accessibility dropdown.

Search 'online' to see all currently registered online meetings (updated daily).

<p>Prudhoe How We Recovered </p> <p>Sunday</p> <p>St Mary Magdalene Parish Hall, Front St</p> <p>Time: 17.00 - duration 1hr Distance: 0 miles Postcode: NE42 5HH</p> <p>Details Directions</p> <p> This physical meeting has opened again</p> <p>  </p>	<p>Prudhoe How We Recovered </p> <p>Tuesday</p> <p>St Mary Magdalene Parish Hall, Front St</p> <p>Time: 19.30 - duration 1hr Distance: 0 miles Postcode: NE42 5HH</p> <p>Details Directions</p> <p> This physical meeting has opened again</p> <p>  </p>	<p>Newcastle General Share </p> <p>Wednesday</p> <p>Hedley's Riverside Coffee Shop (entrance to the rear), Tyne Riverside Country Park, Grange Road, Newburn</p> <p>Time: 18.00 - duration 1hr 15mins Distance: 4 miles Postcode: NE15 8ND</p> <p>Details Directions</p> <p> This physical meeting has opened again</p> <p>  </p>
--	---	---

Shop area

Through the on-line shop you can order literature and other material for presentations, Group meetings etc. People who are not members of the Fellowship can also buy literature here, so offender managers looking for literature supplies should be pointed towards the site.

Region and Intergroup web site links

In the Members area, in the section 'Regional and Local Websites', you will find links to take you to Regions' and Intergroups' web pages. (These are as up to date as the Region or Intergroup makes them.)

Future development of the AA Web site

An enormous amount of work is involved in setting up the new Site and in its development, so the process will be steady. However, more information and documents will be added over time which you can download for your own use.

Amendments to this Pack will be made to the downloadable copy, and information about these changes will be posted in 'Latest News', so that you can keep up to date.

There are links to Region and Intergroup web sites, and this might be useful to you when you try to contact colleagues elsewhere.

As the site continues to improve it will give access to a tremendous amount of very useful information not just about Probation/CJSWS but about all aspects of the Fellowship.

Other sources of information within AA helpful in Probation/CJSWS Liaison

The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain and The AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain

These really are worth obtaining, to guide you in service, inform you about other service areas, and to provide you with information for presentations and discussions.

AA Service News

Each edition of *AA Service News* now has a page of articles on Liaison matters. As with all such AA publications, it is important that those of us doing service write articles for them to share our experiences with others helping with Probation/CJSWS Liaison, and perhaps thus encourage members to think about taking over from us when we rotate out.

AA Literature: a short list

Posters: 'Trapped – There is a Way Out' (English), 'Trapped – There is a Way Out' (Ethnic), 'Do You Have a Drinking Problem?', 'Is Drink Costing You More Than Money?', 'Park Bench', 'Too Young?'

Literature: There is one item specific to our liaison area: 'Co-operation between Alcoholics Anonymous, Probation Services and Criminal Justice Services'. We have also found the leaflet 'A Message for Professionals' to be a very effective introduction to the Fellowship for Offender Managers and other professionals involved in the legal systems.

Also useful: 'A Brief Guide to AA'; Starter Pack; 'A Newcomer Asks'; '44 Questions'; 'Do You Think You're Different?'; 'How It Works'; 'Too Young?'. Contact postcard. Contact Phone Number wallet cards.

AA videos and DVDs

Literature order forms: there are two: a Members Order Form and an Outside Agencies Order Form. Copies are downloadable from the AA Web site.

It's suggested that you keep an eye on the AA Literature catalogues, so that you can find new material which you think might help you in carrying the message to Probation/CJSWS and other organisations. The most recent catalogues will be on the AA Website.

Local and National 'Where to Find' booklets

It's a very good idea to make sure that you have a supply of your local 'Where to Find' pamphlets, and if possible, some for neighbouring Intergroups. Copies can be given to your local offender management offices, (and please remember to get updated versions to these offices as and when they are published), with a supply of the contact cards giving local or national Helpline telephone numbers. Also, it's worth having to hand a copy of the most recent national 'Where to Find', which again can be given to (or bought by) your local offender management office.

Directory of Intergroup and Regional Officers

AA publishes each year its own 'Directory of Intergroup and Regional Officers'. This, as it says, lists every Intergroup and Region in AA Great Britain and gives the contact details of all of their Officers. It also lists AA General Service Board members. Updates are produced during the year. Once you have an AA email account you can ask for the link to the electronic version and the password to access it by emailing the GSO records officer at the following address: Chris.North@gsogb.org.uk

AA Service Offices

The Service Offices are happy to provide material for presentations and lots of other support, and the staff can always give you details of who might be able to help with any problems.

General Service Office

PO BOX 1,
10 Toft Green,
York YO1 7NJ
Tel: 01904 644026
(Mon to Thu 9am to 5pm - Fri 9am to 4.30pm)
Email: aainformation@gsogb.org.uk

Southern Service Office

1 Raven Wharf,
14 Lafone St,
London SE1 2LR.
Tel: 0207 407 0700
(Mon to Fri 9am to 5pm)
Email: sso@gsogb.org.uk

Northern Service Office

Room 101, Baltic Chambers,
50 Wellington St, 4th Floor,
Glasgow G2 6HJ
Tel: 0141 226 2214
(Mon to Fri 9am to 5pm)

Some external web sites with useful information

For those of you who have internet access, there are a number of useful and interesting websites which help you access information and keep in touch with current developments. A few of the relevant websites (in use in November 2021) are: -

Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service>

Probation guide for offenders

<https://www.gov.uk/guide-to-probation>

Prisons section of the MoJ site

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/hmps>

The National Association of Probation Officers

www.napo.org.uk

The Probation Institute

<http://probation-institute.org>

The Home Office

www.homeoffice.gov.uk

The Independent National Approved Premises Association CIC [NAPA]

www.napacic.org/

National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders

www.nacro.org.uk

UK Health Security Agency

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-health-security-agency>

Office for Health Improvement and Disparities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-health-improvement-and-disparities>

When you look at these sites it can be worth following the various links on them to other sections, if you need more detailed information.

Various other sites, e.g., Wikipedia, can provide you with general and specific information about legal systems, community sentences etc. It's a good idea to search for something like 'Scotland legal system' and browse your search engine's findings.

APPENDIX I – Confirmation of Attendance Chits

Some examples of different formats of 'chit' which can be used

1: Paper chit supplied to Groups separately or as a booklet.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS XXXXXXXX INTERGROUP

To be issued by the Secretary/GSR at the conclusion of the meeting at the request of the AA member

Name/address of meeting.....

Date of meeting..... Time of meeting.....

Signed/initialled.....
.....

Position.....

2: Basic chit using Group Registration Number on a slip of paper in a sealed envelope, the flap of the envelope being signed (or initialled) and dated by one of its officers.

GROUP 1057

3: Informal chit used at the discretion of the Group/officer.

I certify thatattended the whole of the AA Group meeting held in The United Reform Church, Baskerville starting at 7.30pm on Wednesday2022.

.....Secretary

Sample letter to Group GSRs to explain 'chits'.

Dear GSR,

NOTES ON THE CHIT SYSTEM, FOR GSRs IN THE XXXXX INTERGROUP.

The AA confirmation of attendance or 'chit' system was approved by Conference as a way of satisfying the needs of people who, for some reason, need to prove that they have attended an AA meeting. Mainly, it is used by people on community sentences who have to show their offender manager that they are going to meetings. It was designed to show that a person attended a specific meeting on a specific date. It was also approved as a way of issuing 'chits' on request, whilst preserving AA members' anonymity. In Xxxxxx Intergroup, almost all Groups have agreed to participate.

AA's policy is that, when someone on probation is advised to seek help from AA, it is down to this individual to make contact with AA through a phone call, leading to a 12-Step visit in the usual way. It is up to the probationers to share as much or as little as they see fit about their reason for going to meetings. AA officers will not enter into individual case discussions with offender management services.

The 'chit' itself can be a sealed envelope in which there is the Group's number. It might be another item which indicates the time and date of the meeting. Some Intergroups have produced pre-printed blank chits.

When a Group officer is asked to give someone a 'chit', one of the envelopes is taken from the Meeting Book or wherever it is stored by the Group, and the date and time of the meeting (**not its name or location**) is written over the sealed flap of the envelope. The officer, according to conscience, may also initial or sign over the flap as well. The person asking for the 'chit' will then hand it over to whichever authority has asked for confirmation of attendance at meetings.

The offender management service in each area of the country has - or should have - an up-to-date list of AA Group meetings in their geographical area. This list shows the place and time of each meeting, and also its confidential Group Reference (or 'chit') Number. An offender manager opening an envelope which the probationer claims has been issued by, say, the Warmington Wednesday meeting can look at the number which was sealed in the envelope, and check the list to make sure that it is indeed a Warmington Wednesday 'chit'. If the 'chit' number does **not** back up what the probationer told the officer, that's a matter for them to sort out and not a matter for us.

However, the offender management service should tell its AA Intergroup Liaison Officer when this sort of thing happens, in case someone is gaining unauthorised access to 'chit' envelopes or asking for them and then passing them on to friends.

Some people who came into AA through their probation needs and who became members of the Fellowship are now several years into sobriety and are holding service posts in AA.

If Groups have no chit envelopes, they can get their Group number from me, and make up a small supply of envelopes. It's been found best to keep these in a plastic wallet clipped into the Group Meeting Book, and to mention occasionally that they exist, especially when new Group Officers rotate into service. The Group Registration Number is confidential to the Group (with GSO and trusted servants), and to the offender manager holders of lists of our meetings, who are asked to keep the numbers secret.

Many thanks for your help
Signature, post held, and date.

APPENDIX II – Example Presentations

Suggested material for a PowerPoint or other presentation

Some people seem quite unconcerned about standing up and talking to a group of professionals whether they are doctors, human resource managers or offender managers. Others of us, however, can find it a daunting task at first. Be serene: after the first one it does get easier. We have found it helps greatly to be well prepared and there are numerous AA leaflets that are helpful in preparing the basis of a brief talk.

The following AA literature has been particularly helpful to us:

- Co-operation between AA and Probation/CJSWS
- A Message for Professionals
- The AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain
- The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain particularly Chapter 1:Public Information
- How AA Members Cooperate with Professionals
- Speaking at Non-AA Meetings
- Understanding Anonymity
- 44 Questions

Your Public Information team are almost certain to have expertise and materials to share with you, and it might be worth going along to one of their presentations on behalf of AA to see what they do and say.

Those of you familiar with using computers may feel confident enough to give a PowerPoint presentation. If you are going to do this, do remember to make sure that the place you're going to is equipped with what you will need! An example of such a presentation is included below. The first slides are a brief introduction to AA and to liaison. The remaining slides can be combined to give a longer presentation if required. Feel free to change and adapt the material to suit your own needs and your local offender management structures.

Try to work out what you really need to get over to your audience, and also try to assess what they want and need to know. Is the history of AA needed in this particular case? Will including the Twelve Steps and Traditions help you get your message over, or should you just pick some out? Can you refer them to AA literature on a nearby stall for detailed information about the Fellowship? So keep it simple :-)

One thing that always goes down well is when a presentation is completed within the time allocated to it. This is especially true when ours is only one part of a meeting or event. And it's useful to make sure that you and the event organisers agree on the amount of time for the presentation and the time allocated for questions afterwards. So, whilst preparing your talk a bit of time spent on a run-through to check how long you will need will be time well spent. When a member of the Fellowship has fallen foul of the Criminal Justice System at some point in their drinking and now shares about his or her new life in sobriety it carries a strong message to offender managers. Try to find such members and involve them in presentations, if they are willing

Suggested Format

AA's PREAMBLE (Quote it)

AA IN TWENTY MINUTES

- AA HISTORY
- AA BASICS
- WHAT AA ISN'T
- WHAT AA IS
- WHAT EXPERTS SAY
- AA TODAY

HISTORY OF AA

- FOUNDED IN USA IN MID 1930s
- GRADUALLY SPREAD WORLDWIDE
- OVER 2 MILLION MEMBERS WORLDWIDE
- 172 COUNTRIES & 104,000 MEETINGS WORLDWIDE
- UK IN 1947 – FIRST MEETING AT THE DORCHESTER HOTEL, LONDON
- 4000 MEETINGS EVERY WEEK IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND WALES

AA BASICS

- SELF-HELP ORGANISATION
- ABSTINENCE
- FREE OF CHARGE
- 12-STEP PROGRAMME
- AA UNDERSTANDS THAT...
ALCOHOLISM IS A PROGRESSIVE CONDITION, CHARACTERISED BY AN IRREVERSIBLE LOSS OF CONTROL OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION
- ALCOHOLISM v ALCOHOL DEPENDENCY

WHAT AA ISN'T

- IT'S NOT A SECRET ORGANISATION
- IT'S NOT A RELIGIOUS ORGANISATION
- IT'S NOT ABLE TO ACCEPT EXTERNAL FUNDS
- IT'S NOT WILLING TO ENDORSE OR GET DRAWN INTO NON-AA AREAS
- IT'S NOT A DIAGNOSER OF ALCOHOLISM
- IT'S NOT THE EXCLUSIVE RECOVERY SOLUTION

WHAT AA IS

- EFFECTIVE SOLUTION FOR DEPENDENT DRINKERS
- AVAILABLE 7 DAYS A WEEK 24 HOURS A DAY WITHOUT WAITING LISTS
- OPEN TO YOUNG, OLD, BLACK, WHITE, MALE, FEMALE
- A MUTUAL AID ORGANISATION THAT SIMPLY FOCUSES ON WHAT WE DO BEST – HELPING ALCOHOLICS STOP DRINKING AND GET BETTER
- CO-OPERATES WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

WHAT EXPERTS SAY

- UK & USA RESEARCH CONSENSUS: "REGULAR ATTENDANCE AT AA MEETINGS LEADS TO ABSTINENCE" – MAUDSLEY HOSPITAL, VAILLANT PROJECT MATCH ETC
- DR GEORGE VAILLANT: "ALCOHOLISM IS A DISORDER OF GREAT DESTRUCTIVE POWER. THE DAMAGE IT CAUSES FALLS NOT ONLY ON THE ALCOHOLICS THEMSELVES BUT ON THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS AS WELL."
- MARTIN SHEEN: "THE BEST TWO THINGS TO COME OUT OF AMERICA IN THE 20TH CENTURY – JAZZ AND ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS"

AA TODAY - 1

- PRO RATA WITH USA - WE SHOULD HAVE 300,000 RECOVERING AA MEMBERS
- FIGURE PROBABLY 35,000 TO 40,000
- SINCE LATE 1990s MAJOR FOCUS ON RAISING AWARENESS OF AA & EXPLAINING HOW WE CAN HELP & WORK BETTER WITH OTHERS
- TV ADVERTISING, PUBLIC RELATIONS, CLEARER COMMUNICATION MATERIALS
- PROGRAMME OF INITIATIVES WITH NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS & GOVERNMENT
- ALCOHOL STRATEGY – FULLY PARTICIPATING

AA TODAY – 2

- PART OF NATIONAL SOLUTION
- RAISE OUR PROFILE AND LEVELS OF CO-OPERATION
- WORK EFFECTIVELY WITHIN THE FRAME OF ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION STRATEGY
- WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH ALL OTHER SECTORS – PRISONS, PROBATION, PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

- IT WORKS FOR PROBLEM DRINKERS WHO WANT TO STOP
- ITS FREE
- ITS AN EFFECTIVE 'AFTER CARE' RESOURCE
- IT'S BEEN DEMONSTRATED TO WORK IN CO-OPERATION WITH THE PROBATION SERVICE
- NATIONAL HELPLINE 0800 9177650
- www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

AA MEETINGS

- TWO MOST COMMON TYPES OF AA MEETINGS ARE
 - CLOSED MEETINGS – LIMITED TO ALCOHOLICS
 - OPEN MEETINGS – OPEN TO ALCOHOLICS, FAMILIES & ANYONE INTERESTED
- ANONYMITY OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD
- NOT A SECRET SOCIETY

ORGANISATION

- GROUPS ARE AUTONOMOUS AND SELF-SUPPORTING
- RUN AND ORGANISED BY THE MEMBERS
- EACH GROUP ADOPTS FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF AA AND ITS RECOVERY PROGRAMME
- AA IS NOT AFFILIATED TO ANY OTHER ORGANISATION
- NO MEMBERSHIP RECORDS NOR FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES
- CONTACT AND MEMBERSHIP DEPEND ON SELF MOTIVATION

FINANCE & STAFF

- EACH GROUP IS SELF FINANCING
- RECEIVE NO FINANCIAL BACKING FROM AA General Service Office (GSO)
- GROUPS CONTRIBUTE TO THE RUNNING OF GSO & TELEPHONE SERVICES
- MEMBERS CONTRIBUTE WHAT THEY CAN
- EACH GROUP RUN LOCALLY BY MEMBERS
- ROTATION IS STIPULATED
- SERVICE OFFICES IN YORK, LONDON & SCOTLAND RUN BY PAID STAFF

MEMBERS

- THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR MEMBERSHIP IS A DESIRE TO STOP DRINKING
- MEN & WOMEN FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE BENEFIT FROM AA
- PEOPLE WELCOMED WHO ARE STILL DRINKING BUT WHO EXPRESS A DESIRE TO STOP
- ALL AGE GROUPS REPRESENTED BUT MANY MORE YOUNG PEOPLE LOOKING FOR HELP
- TELEPHONE SERVICE DIRECTS ENQUIRIES TO INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

MEMBERS VIEWS

- STRONG SENSE OF HOPE, STRENGTH, ACHIEVEMENT & HAPPINESS AMONGST GROUP MEMBERS
- MEMBERS ENCOURAGED BY EXAMPLE OF OTHERS
- OVERCOME PROBLEMS BY LEARNING MORE OF THEMSELVES
- SELF ACCEPTANCE
- OVERCOMING FEAR AND LACK OF SELF ESTEEM
- ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF COPING
- "BRIDGE TO NORMAL LIVING"

RECOVERY FROM ALCOHOLISM

- NON DRINKING ALCOHOLIC HAS EXCEPTIONAL FACULTY
- RECOVERED ALCOHOLIC PASSES ON THEIR STORY
- AA'S 12 STEPS DESCRIBES EARLY MEMBERS EXPERIENCES
- NEWCOMERS NOT ASKED TO FOLLOW STEPS IF UNWILLING OR UNABLE
- KEEP OPEN MIND
- ATTEND MEETINGS
- READ AA LITERATURE
- NO-ONE DIAGNOSES ANOTHER ALCOHOLIC
- PROGRESSIVE ILLNESS, NEVER CURED BUT ARRESTED

AA AND ALCOHOLISM

- AA IS CONCERNED ONLY WITH PERSONAL RECOVERY & CONTINUED SOBRIETY
- DOES NOT ENGAGE IN RESEARCH, MEDICAL OR PSYCHIATRIC TREATMENT, EDUCATION OR PROPAGANDA
- CO-OPERATION NOT AFFILIATION

SOME STATISTICS

- 1 IN 5 OFFENDERS BLAME ALCOHOL
- OFFENDERS WITH ALCOHOL PROBLEMS ACCOUNT FOR THREE QUARTERS OF THE AVERAGE OFFENDER MANAGER'S CASELOAD
- TWO THIRDS OF PRISONERS ARE HAZARDOUS DRINKERS
- ANNUAL COST OF ALCOHOL RELATED CRIME IN ENGLAND ALONE IS £11 BILLION (PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND 2014)

APPENDIX III – Sample letters/emails

Sample of a letter from a Probation/CJSWS LO to GSRs, used when an Intergroup is starting or re-launching a chit system

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS



xxxxxx INTERGROUP
PROBATION LIAISON OFFICER

To All GSRs and Group Secretaries

Date

Dear GSR/Secretary

Re: Probation Chit re-launch

For some years this Intergroup has liaised with the local offender management service to bring the message to suffering alcoholics who come to their attention. This has led to an agreed protocol whereby offender managers can agree that their probationers should attend AA meetings as part of their supervised programme. The persons on probation are required to obtain a chit at each meeting they attend which they can then produce to their offender manager as proof of their compliance with this agreement.

It is a matter for each AA group to decide if they are willing to participate in this programme and issue chits. The majority of groups in this area do so. We are now re-launching the chit scheme and I attach a supply of new chits. These are to be issued at the member's request by the Secretary or the GSR at the end of the meeting. Please ensure that all new\incoming Secretaries and GSRs are made aware of this system when briefed in their tasks and responsibilities.

If for any reason your group does not wish to participate in this scheme please let me know as it is unfair on prospective members who need a chit to attend meetings where they will be unable to get one.

If you need further supplies of these chits or have any further queries, please let me know. My contact details are below.

Yours sincerely

Standard letter of introduction sent by a P/CJSWS LO to offender managers

Dear

You will be fully aware of the prevalence of serious alcohol dependency problems amongst the offender population. You will also have seen many of these individuals returning time and time again for alcohol related offences. Offenders often come to the notice of the offender management services at a time of crisis, and it is at this point that we may be able to help. If this alcohol-fuelled circle of offending can be broken there is every possibility that an offender can embark on a process of recovery and rehabilitation.

You may already have heard of Alcoholics Anonymous, better known as AA. However, you may not be aware that AA can offer a whole range of materials and services available to the offender management services. These include literature, videos, speakers, and volunteers willing to introduce offenders to AA and explain how it works.

There is much myth and misunderstanding surrounding AA. To dispel some of this we have included our pamphlet "A Message for Professionals" which we hope you will find interesting and informative and our leaflet specifically on our co-operation with offender management services.

If you would like more information on Alcoholics Anonymous, then please do not hesitate to contact me on the telephone number below.

Yours sincerely,

(Signature)

Please treat my personal information as being confidential to you and your staff. It is not for release to your probationers.

INFORMATION SHEET FOR OFFENDER MANAGERS

It is the aim of Alcoholics Anonymous to have access to all or those who have a problem with alcohol. Through our membership, we offer AA's programme or recovery to all problem drinkers who come to the notice of the criminal justice system.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination; politics, organisation, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

Anonymity and non-affiliation are the vital principles of our philosophy which give assurance and comfort to anyone thinking of seeking our help.

All work undertaken by members of Alcoholics Anonymous is entirely voluntary.

Alcoholics Anonymous has been carrying its-message to people with drink problems in Great Britain since 1947, and the co-operation and understanding from offender managers and the courts has helped to extend this work to include offenders.

The following are among the services available to offenders and staff:

- **MEETINGS** - The principal path to AA recovery where direct contact with other alcoholics offers guidance, support and encouragement.
- **VISITS** - A probationer who may be undergoing detoxification for a period and is unable to attend an AA meeting -arrangements can be made to have someone call on him/her during the day.
- **PRIOR TO RELEASE** - A person who has been attending AA meetings within a custodial establishment can be met on release where necessary and arrangements made to take him/her along to an AA meeting -this encourages the former inmate to carry on attending AA on release.
- **PRESENTATIONS** -AA members are freely available to provide information to groups of offenders or staff on all matters relating to AA.
- **SUPPORT FOR OFFENDER MANAGEMENT STAFF** -When requested, AA members will visit to inform staff involved in the criminal justice system on what AA has to offer, answer any questions relating to our programme of recovery, and provide literature.

Example of note explaining the confirmation of attendance or 'chit' system given to offender management offices: it will need to be changed to reflect the type of chit in use

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

THE CONFIRMATION OF ATTENDANCE, OR 'CHIT', SYSTEM

Dear....

Alcoholics Anonymous has agreed that those AA Groups which wished to do so could provide confirmation of attendance, or 'chits', to people who had been asked by offender managers to provide proof of attendance at AA meetings. Most AA Groups have adopted a standard system, which is also available to Social Services and other similar organisations. The 'chit' system works in the following way.

Should someone on probation, having been given a choice of help agencies, choose to attend AA, we suggest that they should be given the Xxxxx Intergroup local AA number which is 1111 22222 2222). On receiving such a call, the probationer's local AA will arrange for a member of the Fellowship to contact the probationer and arrange a meeting between them. This is called a 'Twelve-Step' chat.

The person from AA would normally then take the probationer to his or her first meeting and would usually continue to guide the probationer to meetings for the first week or two. The '12-Step' chat and the accompaniment to the first few meetings would normally be provided by someone of the same sex as the probationer. (Attempts are being made to collect a list of such people with a particular interest in helping those on probation.) However, the probationer may choose not to disclose that they are on probation, and there is certainly no requirement that they should do so.

Many of the Group meetings in Xxxxxxx Intergroup participate in the 'chit system'. A client wanting confirmation of attendance at a meeting should ask the Chair of the meeting, or another post-holder, for it. Although there are variations, most Groups provide the following certification: the client is usually given a sealed envelope, which has been signed, or initialled, or otherwise marked and dated by a Group officer. Inside the envelope is a slip of paper on which is printed or written a number. This number identifies the location and details of the meeting at which the person was present. These numbers are provided on a list of Groups and meetings supplied to the offender management service by the local AA Liaison Officer: they are confidential and should not be passed on to persons on probation or any other third party.

When the offender manager is handed such an envelope, he or she can verify with reasonable certainty that the client attended the Group or meeting, by checking the number against the list of meetings (and their numbers) provided by AA to the office. False claims should also become apparent. It would not be impossible for people to obtain a couple of envelopes from a Group, and to pass them on to friends. It would be very much appreciated if any such false claims could be reported to the AA Liaison Officer as soon as possible.

Name, Post, Date.

Please treat as confidential my personal details and do not pass them on to your probationers.

Example of a covering note to offender management services used as the front page of the list of meetings in a city, county or other appropriate area.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

XXXXXXX INTERGROUP: OFFENDER MANAGEMENT LIAISON

LIST OF AA GROUP MEETINGS IN XXXXXX SHIRE

Prepared in (month/year)

Xxxxx Intergroup is a body which consists of representatives of all AA meetings held in the towns of Xxxxxx, Xxxxxx, XXXXXXXXX, Xxxxxx, XXXXXXXXX, Xxxxxx, and Xxxxxxx.

The Intergroup has an AA Liaison Officer, currently Xxxx X, whose phone number is available in the offender management Service office and is 1111 2222222.

Xxxx X will be happy to chat about any aspect of liaison with AA, to give or to arrange talks, training sessions, presentations to staff or to probationers on courses etc, and to provide AA literature about alcoholism and what AA can and cannot do to help the alcoholic.

Xxxxxx Intergroup is able to work with other Intergroups in Xxxxxshire. These are mainly *(List the County's Intergroups and the main towns and cities covered in each Intergroup)*

Telephone numbers:

National Helpline: 0800 9177650

Intergroup Xxxxx 111111111

Intergroup XXXXXXXXX 22222222

Email addresses:

(and so on)

Please note: the name of the liaison officer and that officer's contact information is confidential to offender management staff members and should not be divulged to their probationers or third parties.