

Spring 2024

AA Service News

From the General Service Office of Great Britain



Service keeps us sober

12 Traditions Checklist

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



1. Honestly now, do I do all I can to help AA (my group, my service structure, my GSO) remain self supporting? Could I put a little more into the basket on behalf of the new person who can't afford it yet? How generous was I when drunk in a bar?
2. Do I understand self-supporting to include not just my group but the AA service structure and GSO?
3. Do I understand why it is important for GSO to refuse finance from government or other sources when it is short of funds?
4. Do I accept that groups should not receive any subsidies from hospitals or prisons to run groups for patients or inmates?
5. Is it more important to get a big AA collection from a few people, or a smaller collection in which more members participate?
6. Is a group treasurer's report unimportant AA? How does the treasurer feel about it?
7. How important in my recovery is the feeling of self-respect, rather than the feeling of always being under obligation for charity received?

AA Service News

Welcome to the Spring Edition of AA Service News.

We are really pleased to remind you that **AA Service News is now available in print.** Please find space for it on your AA literature table, and please hand out copies to group members and newcomers. You can find the Calendar of Events on the AAGB website.

Share Your Service Experience!

Contributions on your service experience in the Fellowship are welcomed from all areas – individuals, groups, intergroups, regions, sub-committees, GSB. Please send in your articles, **AA Service News is about YOUR SERVICE!**

AA Service News is published in early March, June, September and December each year with deadline dates of the last Friday of January, April, July and October. The General Service Conference report is published each year in the summer issue and Questions and Topics for the following year's Conference in the winter edition.

Please send your service-related articles to:
editor.aasn@aamail.org

We look forward to hearing from you!



AA Service News,
GSO, PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

Email: editor.aasn@aamail.org

GSO Website: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

AA Service News

In this Spring 2024 issue...

Traditions Checklist 7.....	2
Tech Talk 7 AAGB Website update.....	4
Chits Away on the 'Chit System'.....	4
Proposed Armed Services Pamphlet.....	7
Armed Services & AA - My Journey.....	7
NICE Work!.....	10
Combined Board Bullets Nov-Jan 2023/24....	16
Serving the Fellowship as a GSB Trustee.....	19
Dear Fellowship.....	24
AA at the Scottish Parliament.....	25
A New Family Look for AA Publications.....	26
Make AA service News Yours.....	29
Southern National Convention.....	30
Change of Dates.....	31
Addendum.....	31
Scottish National Convention.....	32
Gratitude Letter.....	33
General Service Board Vacancies	34
Tradition 7.....	45
In Memoriam.....	47
AA Service News Order Form	48

What's Happening in Your intergroup and region? Don't forget to send in your region and intergroup Minutes and Agendas to:

aainformation@gsogb.org.uk

Picture credits, thanks to:
Tim B

Any pictures of people contained within this edition are stock images. They are not of alcoholics. No one's anonymity has been broken.

Tech Talk 7

AAGB Website Update

We are in the final stages of Alpha testing the functionality of the new AAGB website and are making preparations for Beta testing.

Some format issues with regional helpline telephone numbers for each group are being resolved in the new GSO database.

Content and images which have been transferred from the existing site are being reviewed and finalised.

The backend processing of the new online shop is being tested to make sure integration with the GSO accounting system is complete.

Further preparations will continue to confirm navigation through the website, and check compliance of the site to the original specification.

The website can then be signed off ready for Beta Testing.

Tim B and Tom Fox
PI & E Comms Trustees

Chits Away - the AA 'Chit System'

There have been many requests for more information on the AAGB 'confirmation of attendance', or 'chit system'.

The 'chit system,' is simply a scheme to let a member have a document to show that they have attended a particular meeting. That person can then share the confirmation information with offender managers, social services, an employer, or any other body they wish to.

There are areas within the Fellowship where the chit system is well established, borne from the great service work done by liaison officers. Figures from our website (December 2023) show that 603 AAGB groups listed as offering the 'chit system'. This has risen from 515 (December 2022). Although the chit system is growing, this only represent approximately 10 % of AAGB groups. Hopefully more groups will pick up this tool to help further our primary purpose.

The reporting of attendance is not part of AA procedure, but members can 'self-report' as having attended an AA meeting. Chits do not guarantee sobriety, they just confirm attendance at an AA meeting. The chit system was endorsed by Conference in 1987, and has been in use in various forms since. The now centrally available chit from the General Service Office (GSO) preserves anonymity, whilst still giving an individual the opportunity to be accountable.

Members have said that using the chit system gave them a sense of doing the right thing, doing what they said they would and sticking with it, getting a sense of accomplishment. The chit system therefore works towards supporting our primary purpose. Professionals often use the term 'continuity of care,' and the chit system can help 'continuity of recovery', simply by being a tool that any group can offer without forcing anyone to do anything or breaking anonymity.

Recently a member of the Fellowship reported using the chit system which they found out about whilst at Court. They started attending AA, and now have one year of continuous sobriety and a sponsor who is guiding them through the 12 Step Recovery Program.

We know many of us have had dealings with the judicial system, and most, once finding their way in Alcoholics Anonymous, have not re-engaged in offending behaviour, which helps us further co-operation with our professional friends! Indeed, who are we to judge fellow alcoholics, and lessen their opportunity to get well in AA?

Our national AA website has the envelope sign next to all groups listed as having the chit system. The blank confirmation of attendance certificates are available free of charge from GSO. They can be requested by any group, intergroup or regional officer, who has a registered AA email address / contact detail. They are printed with anti-counterfeit ink and use the group's unique identifying number (see pink form) as a 'signature' to ensure the anonymity of the member filling them out. For groups who have been requested to provide a chit for attendance at an online meeting, it is suggested that the group secretary fills in the chit as they previously did for face-to-face meetings, and posts it off to the member who has asked for proof of attendance. The member will need to give their postal address to the group secretary via private chat or message etc. It is not recommended that electronic versions of chits or emails are used as these can be easily forged.

Setting up the 'Chit' System for your MEETING (amended from City of London Intergroup Liaison Officer)

Agree via group conscience. Decide which officer will ensure proof of attendance chits are available (e.g. Sec), where they will be securely kept between meetings and how you wish to inform members that you operate the chit system.

Email GSO York to notify: aalinformation@gsogb.org.uk Please copy in your local Intergroup Liaison Officer and Secretary

1. Order a small number of attendance chits from GSO (standardised and printed with anti-counterfeit ink)
2. Give Group UID number when ordering chits (also needed when issuing a chit). Please update Pink Form as soon as possible (tick - chit system available): [https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/AA-Meetings/Submit-Your-Meeting-Information-\(Pink-Form\)](https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/AA-Meetings/Submit-Your-Meeting-Information-(Pink-Form)) or paper copy.
3. 'AA Great Britain Find a Meeting' web-page will then show an envelope icon against the meeting listing, to denote attendance chits are available. <https://www.alcoholics->

anonymous.org.uk/aa-meetings/find-a-meeting

Note – Please direct anyone wanting to find chit issuing meetings to the main 'AA Great Britain Find a Meeting' page, as this is the only way of ensuring information is as up to date as possible.

4. Group officer to fill in chit at end of meeting. They use the group's UID as a 'signature' to ensure that the group members anonymity is maintained.
5. Keep your GSR / Intergroup LO informed of use of the chit system, whilst preserving anonymity.

The chit system is a tool which every group can have ... we never know when it will be needed. It is, of course, entirely up to each group and intergroup whether / how they choose to introduce the confirmation system (The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain 2023 p87).

Hamish McS
GSB Trustee
Probation / Criminal Justice Service



Proposed Armed Services Pamphlet

The Armed Services Sub Committee is actively seeking the experience of AAGB members who are or have served in the armed forces for a future pamphlet. This can include members experience of service within AA if they wish.

A representative sample of submissions (guide lengths 800 to 1,000 words) will be selected for the proposed publication. One of the contributions for the pamphlet is in this edition of Service News as an example of the sort of account of experience, strength, hope and service which we are looking for.

The deadline for submissions is 26th May 2024.

Do you have a story to tell that can help others?

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Please reply John C, Trustee for Armed Services
trustee.northeastregion@gsogb.org.uk

Armed Services and AA - My journey

Hi, I'm Geoff and I'm an alcoholic.

My sobriety date is 1st June 1986. When I came into the fellowship then, the only technology available was the humble landline telephone. That was the way that the message was carried to me.

When I rang AA then the lady who answered the phone said to me, "This is the most important phone call of your life".

How true that was because I'd lost everything. As I saw it then, these were my options; take up a former military friends offer to become a mercenary - which I probably wouldn't survive, commit suicide - for real this time, or as a last resort, give AA a go.

I'd been to one meeting a month previously, and immediately identified but I still had ambitions of digging myself out of the hole that I'd dug.

I'd preplanned to go out on a high. I had a big party which caused chaos for my family and neighbours, then on the Monday morning I left the house as if to go to work. My wife and three

children were unaware that I had stashed what I needed for living rough just down the road. A quick change, and I was on my way to the rendezvous point to sign up to fight alongside the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

At the rendezvous the police had either been tipped off, or several single blokes arriving in one place with rucksacks had aroused suspicion, and we were told to go our separate ways.

By this time reality had begun to dawn, suicide became my least favourite option, so, just maybe AA could help. I had a “shining light” experience while roughing it, and I haven’t had a drink from that moment to this.

Obviously, over such a long time, I’ve had enough experiences to write a book never mind an article for AA Service News so I’ll try to keep this to the topic of service.

I’d grasped the concept of staying sober and helping other alcoholics achieve sobriety, so I happily embarked on a fabulous service journey through intergroup and region. As my first contact had been through the telephone, I was happy to give service - first as a responder, then as intergroup Telephone Liaison Officer. Since then, my journey in service has led me to being Armed Services Liaison Officer (ASLO), as a Region Rep, as a Conference Delegate, and on the Conference Steering Committee (CSC). I was privileged to be on the CSC for the first ever online Conference due to Covid. Currently I’m RASLO for Eastern Region, and also a member of the Armed Services Sub Committee.

I’m not listing these positions to say, “I’m the big I AM,” but to show that there’s lots of ways to give service to AA as a whole.

The aspect that armed services and alcohol tends to focus on is active service and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I have suffered from this, undiagnosed, because it wasn’t recognised or talked about. However, there’s many more subtle ways that service life can affect someone, and become a justification for relying on alcohol.

I was in the RAF, and so I was never in the trenches with lead wasps buzzing round my head but my roles were extremely varied and certainly not part of most civilian’s lives. We were a self-contained squadron relying on our own security, so there was some soldiering. We had extra duties and skills which could be called upon at any time. There’s a lot more to maintaining a nuclear deterrent than polishing a red button, and there were also many detachments around the globe doing tasks that were definitely not the ‘touristy’ thing. We could be getting ready to go off duty or on leave when a siren would go and it would be action stations, back to work for however long and wherever in the world.

As in many walks of life, we had our own language. We got paid every month and we were fed and housed to varying degrees of comfort.

That was for ten years. Then, just the very next day, all I had to do was go to work, come home, go to work, come home, go to work, come home. Boooooooooooooiiiiing!!!

Drinking had been a way of life in the forces so I swapped the NAAFI for the local pubs, and with my brain addled by alcohol, I proceeded to make my own entertainment, regardless of the fact that I had a wife and three children at home. Not all of my ventures were legal but I took pride in the

fact that my “special skills” enabled me to evade the plain clothes policemen who were taking an interest. It didn’t occur to me that they were going home after work and putting their feet up with their families. They weren’t going home wondering if they were going to get their door kicked in, like me.

So, I did come to that jumping off point. I had to have alcohol or I would die but I couldn’t stop drinking and alcohol was killing me.

It was hearing in an AA meeting “Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety” that finally saved my life.

My belief is, that regardless of the uniform, once it is donned then the mind changes and it is other service personnel who can identify with that mindset, and we are uniquely equipped to carry the message to those who still suffer.

Having said that, the obsession which grips alcoholics regardless of whichever life’s path we have taken is the same, so it is by no means essential to be in or a veteran of the armed services to be able to give service to the Armed Services disciplines in AA.

These days, the armed services are much more open to the problems that alcohol can cause, and often hold events such as health fairs in order to help inform their personnel of their choices, and AA is often invited to attend such events.

Also, many veterans are left feeling lost or isolated. Not necessarily because of the trauma of war but simply that they have lost their ‘family’.

This is where the fellowship of AA can help tremendously.

Geoff C



NICE Work!

AA 12-Step facilitation (AA/12SF) programmes strongly recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

Kieran Moriarty CBE, MA, MD, FRCP, FRCPI
Non-Alcoholic Trustee for Alcoholics Anonymous 2022 - Current
Government Alcohol Adviser 2000-2020
British Society of Gastroenterology Alcohol Lead 2009-2019
Consultant Gastroenterologist and Liver Specialist Royal Bolton Hospital 1990-2018

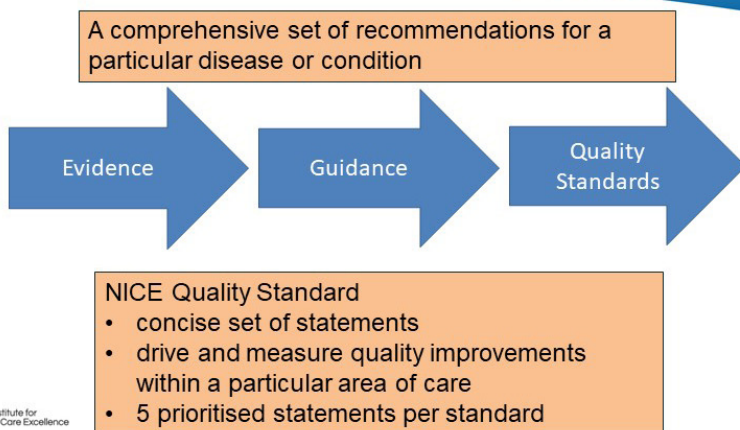
Introduction

We have had fantastic news for AA as a whole!

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Quality standard 11 '**Alcohol-use disorders: diagnosis and management**' provides 'best practice' recommendations to national policy makers in England and Wales. These include but is not limited to health and social care practitioners, service providers, commissioners, and most importantly, adults seeking help for an alcohol-use disorder (AUD).

NICE quality standards describe key areas for quality improvement in health, public health and social care. Each quality standard contains a set of quality statements with related measures. Quality statements are derived from evidence-based guidance. They are developed independently by NICE, in collaboration with health, public health and social care practitioners, their partners and people using services (see diagram below).

What are NICE quality standards?



Alcohol-use disorders: diagnosis and management

NICE Quality standard 11 was updated July 2023. It was commissioned by (NHS) England. It covers identifying and supporting adults and young people (aged 10 and over) who may have an alcohol problem, and caring for people with alcohol-related health problems, as well as support for their families and carers.

Out of the 5 Quality Statements (Qs). recommended in QS11, **Quality Statement 2**, (the one relevant to AA), states:

'Adults seeking help for an alcohol-use disorder are given information on, and support to access, community support networks and self-help groups.'

For further information on the NICE Quality standard 11 be found at <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs11>.

The NICE reason for QS2, is that community support networks and self-help groups, both commissioned and peer-led networks, such AA and SMART Recovery, can be of benefit to adults with an AUD in their care. Such groups can provide support at any point, either face-to face or online. A person may not be aware of community support networks / self-help groups that they can access locally or how they can help people with an alcohol-use disorder. See link above for further information.

The implications for service providers, health and social care practitioners, commissioners and adults seeking help for an AUD are also highlighted in QS11 found in the link above.

Consultation summary report: alcohol-use disorders: diagnosis and management

I am delighted with this report.

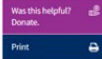
The Consultation summary report can be viewed in the link above. Relevant to AA is Appendix 1, pages 19-42. It contains a wealth of information about AA, especially highlighting both the Cochrane Evidence Review and the AA 2020 survey data, which includes members' views on spirituality (see pages 19-20). AA was 1 of 17 of around 350 potential stakeholders to comment, and 1 of only 3 key stakeholders to submit comments to the Consultation summary report.

The AA responses to key questions posed by NICE and published in the Consultation summary report are summarised in the following 6 sections:

1. Evidence for the effectiveness of Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12-Step Programmes

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) submitted the 2020 Cochrane Review research evidence for AA interventions and peer support (see overleaf).

New Cochrane Review finds Alcoholics Anonymous and 12-Step Facilitation programs help people to recover from alcohol problems



Newly updated evidence published in the Cochrane Library today compares Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and clinically-related Twelve-Step Facilitation (TSF) programs with other treatments, such as cognitive behavioural therapy, to see if they help people who suffer from alcohol use disorders achieve sobriety or reduce the amount of alcohol that they consume.



Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is a prevalent, world-wide problem, and in some countries it is accelerating. 'Alcoholics Anonymous' (or AA for short) has been a popular treatment for alcohol use disorder for decades, but much debate has persisted on whether AA - and related 12-step clinical treatments designed to increase AA participation are effective.

This Review compared the efficacy and costs of treatment that facilitated use of AA, versus treatment using other methods such as cognitive behaviour therapy and motivational enhancement therapy.

There were 27 studies that included 10,565 persons which showed:

- that AA and facilitating the use of AA/12SF, produced similar benefits to other treatments on all drinking-related outcomes except for continuous abstinence and remission, **where AA/12SF was superior**
- that use of AA/12SF also tended to reduce healthcare costs since AA support from members is free

Kelly JF, Humphreys K, Ferri M. Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12-step programs for alcohol use disorder. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2020, Issue 3. Art. No.: CD012880. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD012880.pub2. https://www.cochrane.org/CD012880/ADDICTN_alcoholics-anonymous-aa-and-other-12-step-programs-alcohol-use-disorder

2. Alcoholics Anonymous 2020 Membership Survey and “Spirituality”

NICE also highlighted the 2020 AA Membership survey of Great Britain and the English-Speaking Continental European Region (CER). This showed that when members were asked about spirituality and their notion of a ‘Higher Power’, 65% of respondents reported that these were based on a secular foundation, compared with only 35% whose views had an overtly religious basis. This addresses the widely-held misconception that AA is a religious organisation, which has historically led to a reticence about accessing AA services. AA has members of all religions, of no religion and of different cultures. See <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/2020-Survey>

On December 7 2022, BBC2 televised ‘I’m an Alcoholic: Inside Recovery’. It is the first in-depth look at the work of AA and used Deep Fake Technology to change people’s facial profile to maintain anonymity. It was widely praised, exploding myths about AA. Traffic to the AA website subsequently increased by 53%.

3. Equality impact assessment

AA and NICE recognised the stigma in healthcare settings and with the lay public associated with people who misuse alcohol. AA and members self-define as 'alcoholic', which is fundamental. The World Health Organisation also uses the term 'alcoholic'. Many healthcare professionals prefer the less stigmatising 'alcohol-related', as in Alcohol-Related Liver Disease. Other terms include alcohol-dependent or misuser, problem drinker or person with lived experience. AUDs, however, are still often perceived as a 'self-inflicted lifestyle choice' rather than a disease.

AA is neither sectarian, denominational, political nor controversial. Some AA meetings cater to specific demographics such as age, culture, faith, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and profession, although these do not exclude other alcoholics. The value of Al-Anon Family Groups and Alateen was also highlighted.

AA emphasised that support from members is free. This is an important consideration, especially when patients are discharged from hospital and given the difficulties and variation in accessing community alcohol services. Moreover, AA/12SF is, potentially, a lifelong commitment, rather than a typically time-limited NHS treatment.

Access to AA meetings is variable. Attendance at face-to-face meetings, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, was especially difficult for people who are housebound, have illness, disability including sight, hearing and mobility problems, vulnerable people, parents with children, older and younger people, have work commitments or geographical considerations. AA strives to ensure wheelchair access and global online meeting platforms are available 24/7. Access is variable in prisons, probation and criminal justice services and the armed forces. Engagement with homeless people is particularly difficult until satisfactory accommodation has been arranged. AA in the south of Great Britain is currently meeting the needs of homeless people.

4. Children aged under 10 years' are excluded from the Quality Standards

NICE identified this omission. AA was the only stakeholder to address this issue and to consider safeguarding.

The AA Structure handbook for Great Britain 2023, chapter 5 gives guidance on 'Safeguarding and personal conduct', and in chapter 6, guidance on 'Addressing safeguarding issues Tradition 12'.

Two sections in chapter 6 are particularly relevant:

- **6.6. Safeguarding children and juveniles**
- **6.7. Minors attending AA**

See the AAGB Safeguarding Policy <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Safeguarding>

5. NICE asked ‘Have any potential equality issues been identified during the development of the quality standards? How have they been addressed?’

The Accessible Information Standard is relevant to organisations that provide NHS care or adult social care. Whilst AA is not such an organisation, AA is guided by this Standard. In the 2020 AA membership survey, 81% of the GB respondents reported having no disabilities. This tallies closely to the national profile (82% in the Family Resources Survey 2018-19).

The Standard states that patients (people in the case of AA), service users, carers and parents with a disability, impairment or sensory loss should:

- Be able to contact, and be contacted by, services in accessible ways, for example via email or text message. **AA members provide these ways**
- Receive information and correspondence in formats they can read and understand, for example in audio, braille, easy read or large print. **These are available from the AA General Service Office, website, AA Service News, Share and Roundabout publications. The “Big Book” is available in a braille version**
- Be supported by a communication professional at appointments if this is needed to support conversation, for example a British Sign Language interpreter. **AA sponsors, advocates and members endeavour to provide interpreters. British Sign Language interpreters were present throughout the AAGB 75th Anniversary Convention, and are regularly used in national conventions**
- Get support from health and care staff and organisations to communicate, for example to lip-read or use a hearing aid. **AA has a card circulated to all groups that reminds members of the need to speak up for the hard-of-hearing**

6. Ethnicity

In the 2020 AA membership survey, around 97% of the GB respondents identified as White; 1% as Asian; less than 1% as Black; 1% as Mixed and less than 1% as Other. This differs significantly from the UK Census 2011 figures (88.4% as White; 6.6% as Asian; 2.8% as Black; 1.4% as Mixed and 0.9% as Other) in key indicators, particularly with respect to the participation of individuals from Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities. The stigma of alcohol misuse in some ethnic communities is considerable, with people in denial and sometimes being excluded from places of worship. AA now has a very **active Race2Day Working Group** which is directly addressing this.

AAGB produced a highly-praised video for the 75th Convention, which featured alcoholics from different cultures and walks of life. This is available on the media page of the AA website.

Conclusion

This NICE Quality standard will be the Gold Standard and key evidence-based reference on AUDs for the next 10 years or so. AA will be able to highlight the Cochrane Review, the 2020 survey data and how AA reaches out to marginalised people and addresses stigma.

We can also refer to the NICE QS2 and Consultation summary report in our interactions, especially

with health and social care practitioners.

NICE support for AA will aid both management and also prevention, especially secondary prevention of AUD's and other devastating conditions resulting from the misuse of alcohol.

Expert Quotations relevant to AA, the Cochrane Review and NICE

'The quality of the research evidence supporting the clinical and public health utility of AA has grown substantially in recent years. Evidence now indicates that when patients suffering from serious alcohol problems are clinically referred to AA they have higher rates of continuous remission and have longer stable recoveries than patients linked to other treatments that also address alcohol problems. Evidence also now demonstrates that the way AA is able to confer this long-term benefit is by its ability to mobilize a number of helpful therapeutic factors simultaneously over time, including by boosting relapse prevention coping skills, enhancing and maintaining recovery motivation, reducing craving and impulsivity, and by increasing spirituality, which can help people to reframe and better cope with stress. All in all, given the massive burden of disease, disability, and premature mortality attributable to alcohol problems each year, and the fact that AA is widely available and accessible for free in most communities, this new evidence indicates AA may be the closest thing public health has to a 'free lunch'.

John F. Kelly, Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School and 1st author of the Cochrane Review.

'AA was created by people who knew what they needed to recover: A new outlook, a new community, and new ways of interacting with other people. The scientific evidence demonstrates that the results of their efforts is a free, grassroots organization that helps more people recover than all professional treatments combined. Giving support is as good for our health as getting it. AA gives a sense of worth and service'.

Keith Humphreys, American psychologist, Esther Ting Memorial Professor at Stanford University, Honorary Professor, Institute of Psychiatry, King's College, London, and co-author of the Cochrane Review.

Henry Kissinger American diplomat, politician, United States Secretary of State and National Security Advisor, was quoted:

'America's greatest gift to the world is Alcoholics Anonymous'.

Quite so!

Kieran Moriarty
Non-Alcoholic Trustee



Combined Board Bullets

November 2023 and January 2024

Chair

A special welcome to Carmel (South East) and Tony (London South) who were attending their first Board meeting. Three trustees joined on-line. The Hybrid facility does allow us to be more flexible as a Board.

Hon. Treasurers Report

The 4th Quarter finance report will be sent out to the Regions in November. This will be unaudited ... though our end of year report will be audited.

Our new Auditors are now in place and attended our January 2024 Board meeting. We discussed both their and our financial and risk management expectations for the coming year. It was a good session and we as a Board are comfortable that the relationship will be healthy.

Our Annual Financial Report will be sent out to the Fellowship as a part of the GSB Report to Conference.

Nominations Committee Report

Interviews had been carried out for new Trustees for South East Region, London Region North, Midlands Region and North West Region. Carmel G, Tony S, Max J, and Angela S respectively will be joining the GSB subject to Conference approval.

Sub-Committee appointments:

- Gordon S. (South West Scotland) to Roundabout
- Margaret S. (Scotia) to Roundabout
- Chris O. (Midlands) to Employment Sub-Committee
- Hugh S. (Glasgow) to Probation/ Criminal Justice Sub-Committee
- Alexander F. (North West) to Young Peoples Sub-Committee
- Hugh D. (Wales & Borders) to Prison Sub-Committee

The election for our next Chair of the Board took place and our congratulations go to Jo from Eastern Region. Justin thanked all who stood. Jo will now shadow Justin until Conference 2025.

Barbara, together with the Board, would like to thank all who applied together with the Nominations Committee for their dedication in carrying out all the service required to complete the interviews.

Chairs Report

Justin reported that he has received several letters of concern relating to one of the AAGB Intergroups. It was agreed that Justin will send out a reply highlighting that the GSB is the Charity for the Fellowship. The GSB has no authority over our groups, intergroups or regions. Our duty of care is to offer guidance, and we are more than happy to be involved with forums, seminars and

workshops. The Fellowship makes beneficial use of these. Could we draw your attention to the Section 5, Governance, on page 164 of our Structure Handbook.

Justin presented the Board with our fresh look Structure Handbook which is now available for the Fellowship. All agreed it was an excellent piece of work and our thanks go to all involved. The new look Service Handbook is also available. Please be advised that no wording has been changed, only the layout.

Filming for our Diversity and Blue light outreach work will be taking place during February and March 2024, in response to a recommendation from Conference 2021.

The Board has been actively looking for additional Non-Alcoholic Trustees (NATS); should any region wish to make a recommendation please contact your Trustee.

Exec Report

- Tom Reported that the work on our new website continues and our Project plan will see continual development over the next few years
- The roles of our new Trustees were announced: Carmel will be joining Health and the Probation/ Criminal Justice Sub Committees
- Tony will be joining our Nominations and Employment Sub Committees, our Inclusivity Committee, and our Westminster Parliament group

Parliamentary Events

- Westminster event is scheduled for 21st May with a new sponsor
- Scottish Parliamentary event - Hamish reported that the event was highly successful, and the support offered by the Minister for Public Health in Scotland much appreciated. Andrina will be Trustee for this year's Scottish Parliamentary event.... date to be agreed.
- Welsh Assembly - Zelma reported that all went well with great support from the Committee, and this year's event should take place during November

General Secretary Report

The new Borthwick archivist attended archivist network.

Seminars and Forums 2023

Forums: 3 per year with GSB/GSO presentations, and not more than once every 5 years per region

South-East Region	Cancelled
South-West Region	2nd June 2024
North-East Region	28th July 2024
Scotia Region	19th Oct. 2024

Seminars: 4 per year, no more than once every 3 years.

Armed Services - 17th February 2024

European Service Meeting (ESM)

ESM – was held on 20-22nd October 2023 and was an excellent event. ESM - agreed to send 28K to WSM.

Sub Saharan African Service Meeting (SSASM) 2024 - TBC

Development Fund - £ 19404.16 paid.

World Service Meeting (WSM)

£9127.00 contributed to fund.

The next WSM will be held in Oct 2024. Holly will be our first term delegate and Justin will attend for his 2nd term.

Southern Service Office

Our current lease will run out in October 2024, and we are actively looking for new premises.

Open days at our Service Offices

London will be 8th March, and Glasgow will be 15th March

Service Highlights

Armed Services

Hamish will be joining as an additional Trustee. There will be a liaison officers meeting on the 16th and 17th Feb.2024. We hope that the regions will support this.

Young Peoples Sub Committee

There will be a Young Persons workshop to be held in Glasgow during 2024. Location and date to be advised.

Telephones Sub-Committee

Following the work the Telephone Sub Committee undertook with GSO to establish the best option with cost and quality being the drivers from the various companies, the Telephones Sub Committee and GSO will be proceeding with a recommendation to use Gamma as a supplier for our new services This will require sign off by firstly the Finance Committee and then the Board.

Prisons

The Prisons Sub Committee will be holding a regional workshop at Perth on 9th March.

Race Today Working Group

There will be a workshop at the Northern National Convention on 14th to 17th March 2024. There has also been a development at Glasgow Region with the opening of a new meeting. Glasgow South Asian Open meeting which started on Friday 17th Nov.

Many thanks

Stevie S Vice Chair

Tom Fox Non-Alcoholic Trustee



Serving the Fellowship as a General Service Board Trustee

It has been my pleasure to have the honour and privilege of serving you on the General Service Board (GSB) since my confirmation as a trustee at Conference 2018.

I would like to share my experience with you, in the hope that it may inspire some among you to consider this form of service in the future. I applied for the role of eastern region trustee in August 2017. I was interviewed for the role by the GSB Nominations Sub Committee in November 2017. It was recommended at that time, that each region nominate 2 candidates for the trustee role, so that there was a choice between them. I felt that my interview went well, though I prepared myself to be unsuccessful, as I thought that the other candidate had more experience and would be chosen. I was, therefore, shocked yet delighted to receive the letter confirming that I was successful.

I was invited to attend the January 2018 board meeting as an observer. On the Friday morning, prior to the start of the meeting, I was also given an induction to the role of trustee, along with 3 other new trustees elect. At this induction, we were given:

- Copies of the Memorandum and Articles of Association for the Charity (The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain) Limited)
- 'The Good Trustee Guide' published by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)
- The service disciplines that we would take responsibility for. I was given responsibility for Archives and the Fellowship Survey.

That first board meeting was a real eye opener. It confirmed what I had been told and read about it being a different type of service. I began to learn about the

board as the Charity, with the Fellowship as affiliated Autonomous Groups having no independent Constitution. I learned that the board's role is to serve the Fellowship, indeed it is the 'chief service arm of Conference'. The board is also the custodian of the AA Traditions in Great Britain and English-speaking Continental European Region. This carries with it a huge weight of responsibility and commitment to serve the Fellowship as best as one can in this role. It also requires any potential candidate to have demonstrated their commitment to others by their own experience of service through the AA structure, from group, to intergroup to region, and through Conference as a delegate, and possibly, membership of a board sub-committee.

I attended the next Archives Sub Committee meeting in February 2018 as an observer. The outgoing trustee for archives, who was also the outgoing honorary treasurer, took me under his wing for that meeting and was so helpful. I'll be forever grateful for his guidance and confidence in me as I did feel rather daunted by it all. As time went on, however, I started to feel more comfortable, and I started to enjoy the role. I remember writing my first board report during the Blackpool Convention weekend that year.

Conference 2018 followed soon after and that is where I, along with 9 other new trustees, were ratified or confirmed in our roles. We were also joined by a new board Chair and Honorary Treasurer. We also said goodbye to our predecessors who were rotating out. My work as a trustee really began in earnest from that point onwards.

Conference 2017 had decided that the board set up a Standing Sub Committee for the Fellowship survey. The previous surveys had been coordinated by an ad hoc working group, and Conference felt that this important task would be better carried out by a dedicated sub-committee. This would be chaired by a Non-Alcoholic Trustee (NAT) with me in a supporting role. We were joined at our first meeting in July 2018 by 2 members of the Fellowship. Another member was added later that year, and work began on preparing for the 2020 Survey.

Conference 2016 decided that the Fellowship Archive ought to be made more accessible to the membership. A feasibility study was carried out by the Borthwick Institute of the University of York, who had already begun storing some of the AA archives at its state-of-the-art facility. There began a 3-year project to catalogue all the archives held at the General Service Office (GSO), along with those already in the Borthwick. This involved moving the whole archive to the Borthwick where it is now stored in professional archival conditions. I'm forever grateful to the Borthwick archivist and the archives sub-committee for their hard work and support during this time of great upheaval and change.

Part of my role as a trustee was also to chair a 'working group' which would coordinate the production of a special publication to mark the 75th anniversary of AA in Great Britain. This 'book club' as it became affectionately known, was made up of a member of each of the following sub-committees, Archives, the 75th, Share and Roundabout along with myself. When I was first given this role, I had no idea how this publication would come about. We set about inviting the Fellowship to get involved by sending us their regional histories. All 16 regions of AAGB including English speaking continental European region, sent in their contributions. We also had contributions from service disciplines, NATS and others. It was a real 'labour of love' and I'm proud and grateful for what was achieved. I'll be eternally grateful to everyone in the Fellowship who sent in their contributions, along with my fellow trustees. I'll also be eternally grateful to the working group for their unwavering diligence, support, and encouragement.

Another role I had was being a member of the GSB Safeguarding Working Group, following Conference 2019. The board was tasked with providing safeguarding guidance to the Fellowship. This guidance was accepted at Conference 2022. I believe the Fellowship now has a framework in which to provide a safe place to offer the hand of friendship to all who seek our help.

At the May 2019 board meeting, I was asked by the honorary treasurer if I would consider putting my name forward for this role which would become vacant at Conference 2021. My first thought was, 'Are you having a laugh!' I thought (and prayed) about it and decided to for it. I suddenly remembered what I was told when I was new, that other people can see the change and growth in us before we can. I realised that the treasurer could perhaps see potential in me to do a good job! After an election at the November 2019 board meeting, I was chosen to be the next honorary treasurer from Conference 2021. I was to shadow the then current treasurer for a year. This was a real learning curve for me.

My journeys to York (along with everyone else) suddenly stopped in March 2020 due to the pandemic, and the ensuing Government imposed lockdowns on the whole of society. This was the beginning of truly uncertain times for me personally, as I'm self employed as a London taxi driver. I'm also the only immediate next of kin to my elderly Mum who as her only carer, carried on seeing her during this horrible and unsettling time. I didn't have the 'luxury' of working from home and continued to 'grind it out' in the cab, and take whatever work I could get.

The online executive committee and board meetings were a God send along with online AA meetings. The executive met fortnightly (the honorary treasurer being a function of the executive committee) to keep in touch with the ever-changing developments and challenges that these lockdowns and restrictions to our freedom of movement threw at us. I attended the executive meetings as an observer and learned a great deal about the day-to-day work of the board. I also attended the online archives and survey sub-committee meetings along with the 'book club' and the 75th anniversary sub-committee meetings. This was indeed the busiest year of my trusteeship, but it was immensely rewarding.

It was decided in early 2020 that the survey would be held online due to the pandemic. By that time (March/April 2020) the survey sub-committee consisted of 5 or 6 members plus the trustees. The survey questionnaires were agreed, and the survey was rolled out later that year. I'm forever grateful to the survey sub-committee members, past and present, for their hard work in the most difficult of circumstances.

I was confirmed in my new role as honorary treasurer at the online Conference of 2021. We also welcomed a new GSB Chair at that Conference. I began to give the quarterly financial reports to the Fellowship along with the annual reports to the board, the January regional treasurers meetings and Conference. It was decided to hold an additional regional treasurer's meeting online in July 2021. This meeting tackled issues which had cropped up since the January meeting and we decided to continue it during 2022. We also held a Finance Seminar in June 2023.

This period as your honorary treasurer has been a steep learning curve. I have received many emails asking finance related questions. Most of these have been straightforward to answer, however there have been some more complex ones to address. I'm so grateful to the finance team for helping me to deal with these questions as I'm happy to admit that I don't have all the answers myself.

I have had many occasions during my tenure as a trustee to examine my conscience to ensure, as with any service role, that I'm doing it for the right motives. Most of the emails I've received have been cordial, supportive and loving. It is sad to acknowledge though that I, along with other trusted servants, have also received some correspondence which can at best be described as criticising and at worse, just plain nasty, and abusive.

I think that as a trusted servant, it's healthy to examine my conscience from time to time to ensure that I carry out my duties in the spirit of Love and Service and with due diligence. If I'm being honest with myself, then I (in particular, my ego) must decrease, whilst my Higher Power must increase, Thank Goodness! I'm but one small part of this wonderful organisation. Our 2nd Tradition sums it up in a nutshell for me.

One of the highlights of my term as a trustee was being involved with the 75th anniversary convention which was held in Leeds in June 2022. I know that the 75th sub-committee went out of their way to put on a weekend that would celebrate our history in such a beautiful and fitting way. It was truly wonderful to see friends who I hadn't seen for ages. It was also amazing to see 3000+ members come together in person once again after the restrictions were lifted at long last!

Another task which I've been involved with since becoming honorary treasurer is Mutual Aid. The Mutual Aid Reference Group meets bimonthly online. These meetings are informative, and AA can cooperate with other recovery organisations to facilitate Mutual Aid. The meetings are organised and chaired by the Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (formerly Public Health England). I'm currently mentoring my successor who will take on this role from Conference 2024, less than 6 months away (at the time of writing)...

Based on my experience of the trustee role, I would say that the following skills are indispensable (this list is not exhaustive):

- ability to work on own initiative
- good teamworking skills
- good leadership skills
- willingness to learn and be teachable
- good interpersonal skills
- ability to listen
- good knowledge of the Traditions and Concepts for World Service
- good understanding of the need for confidentiality
- possession of a friendly and helpful disposition at all times
- willingness to ask for help and ability to admit to mistakes

My time as trustee and as your honorary treasurer has pushed me out of my comfort zone many times over these past 6 years. I've given financial presentations to Conference, our wonderful regional treasurers, and the board. I've met with our solicitors, auditors and worked as part of our amazing finance team, in addition to chairing various sub-committee meetings, along with the Annual Archives Network meetings and the finance seminar in June (the first to be held for several years). All the above-mentioned tasks have been a privilege to carry out.

I would like to thank the finance committee, all the sub-committees I've worked with (archives, survey, 75th, the book club, safeguarding working group), my fellow trustees, past and present, for your encouragement, support, and love.

I'd also like to thank our wonderful staff at GSO and our satellite offices, Northern Service Office in Glasgow and the Southern Service Office in London for their unwavering support, encouragement, friendship, and love. Our staff are among the richest resources that our Charity (The General Service Board of AA (GB) Ltd) and Fellowship has. I will miss seeing them when I rotate out at our April 2024 Conference. I'll also miss the great camaraderie and friendship among my fellow trustees. I'll miss meeting so many truly amazing, selfless, and loving Conference delegates and sub-committee members.

I would also like to thank my region (eastern) for nurturing and encouraging me along this path of service when I was one of your Conference delegates. I look forward to being involved in your service in some capacity in the future. In the meantime, I will see out the remaining time as your honorary treasurer before I take the suggested years sabbatical from the service structure.

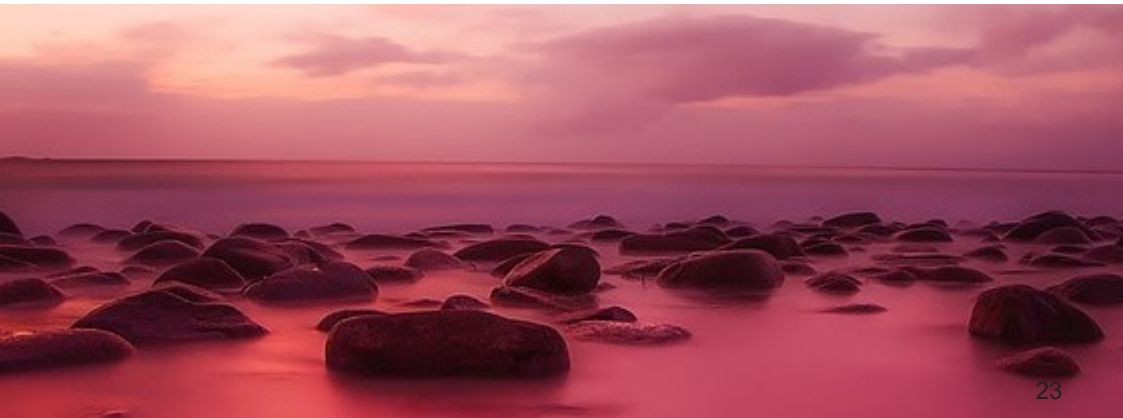
I would encourage anyone who is thinking about becoming a trustee to go for it. I can promise you that you will be in for 'the ride of your life'! If you possess any of the above-mentioned skills/qualities, have 10 or more years of continuous sobriety and can commit yourself to the role, then you will be most welcome to apply.

This has truly been one of the highlights of my whole recovery and life. I believe that through my recovery, I've become the person that God always intended me to be, through 'clearing away the wreckage of my past'. I fondly remember my childhood where my parents and school encouraged and nurtured me with the ethos of becoming a 'person for others'.

Finally, I would like to thank you, the Fellowship for giving me this opportunity to be of service and for your encouragement, support and love.

With Love in Fellowship and Service

Clive K
Outgoing GSB Honorary Treasurer



Dear Fellowship...

I wish you a happy new year beyond our wildest dreams. Dreams are our imaginations' lifeblood but we all need a safety net for dreams to take flight, and a harness for practice before that leap of faith.

Safeguarding is central to how we hold out the hand of AA, to keep us all coming back, and help us to live a life beyond our wildest! So, it's heartening to see more and more intergroups are filling safeguarding positions following the Fellowship's enthusiastic endorsements at Conference 2021 and 2022.

Whilst some feel safeguarding as an unwanted intrusion into our glorious anarchy, safeguarding rather creates, if not 'safeguards', our 2nd tradition by seeking to restrict the rule of the loud, the bleeding deacon and the clique. We are not a glum lot, but no one needs to be the butt of the joke, or excluded from in-group laughter.

And by reaching out for greater inclusivity, we can be inspired by, aspire to, and learn from the recoveries of that greater diversity of alcoholics within the rooms. This helps us dream beyond our wildest but limited imaginations.

The more the rooms of AA are representative of the population, the broader the field of experience we share and the stronger our recovery. Monocultures are easy to maintain in the short term but lack resilience to grow, change and flourish.

Workshops coming to local and national conventions will help breakdown myths and

misconceptions around Race and Diversity, illustrating that AA fulfils its traditions through actively reaching out and making an eager welcome to listen and learn from anyone of any colour or creed, and so helping strengthen all our recoveries.

Dreaming is real.

Ranjan B
General Secretary



Alcoholics Anonymous at the Scottish Parliament

Through the efforts of the Scottish Parliament Event Committee, the 14th Alcoholics Anonymous Awareness Event was hosted in the Fleming room, Holyrood, Edinburgh on the 4th of October 2023.

It was the first event following covid. The aim of the event was to raise awareness of Alcoholics Anonymous among parliamentarians and professionals, and how AA can work in the lives of those with alcoholism in Scotland. Our sponsoring MSP was Mr Fergus Ewing MSP SNP for Inverness and Nairn. Invited guests received copies of Roundabout and AA Service News.

Fergus Ewing opened the event, which was followed by a brief introduction to AA from myself, leaving plenty time for our four AA speakers Mark R, Cherise D, David McW, and Anne T. The speakers shared their experience, strength, and hope, giving wonderful examples of how AA has transformed their lives.

Our professional guests heard first-hand how they found sobriety and their experiences of positive social impact in their lives and the lives of those around them. Their talks gave insight into the reality of the programme of recovery available in Scotland to all who suffer from alcoholism. Our guests were moved and enthused by this. Leading onto an enthusiastic question-and-answer session. Leaving one Scottish minister asking, 'What can we do to

help?' We are hopeful that the minister will be attending the Scottish National Convention in April, as our guest.

Feedback forms were completed at the event, and the response was overwhelmingly positive, our speakers were praised for their honesty and willingness to share their stories of recovery. In addition, we are now looking into the possibility of an exhibition event.

The committee worked extremely hard to source professional guests, as well as MSP's and four Government ministers in attendance. We really had an excellent turnout.

We are still looking for three Scottish Regions to put forward suitable members to fill their two service positions. The committee has benefited from a more structured approach in its operation and administration. Whilst there were some difficulties, we hope that we can build on the success of this event in 2024. The Northern Service Office provided administrative support, and we are grateful for their contribution.

This is a General Service Board event, showcasing Alcoholics Anonymous at an influential level in Scotland. Our aim is to get as many 'warm' professional invitees as possible from AA's which reflect our disciplines at every level of the structure.

Please submit suggested 'warm' invitees through intergroup, regional committee members or directly to the committee for our 2024 event. We now also have a dedicated AA email address, which invitee suggestions can be made through scot.parl@aamail.org

I am rotating off this role, and would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for letting me be of service.

Hamish McS
Trustee
Scottish Parliament Event

A new family look for AA publications

At Conference 2019, Committee 2, were asked:

“Would the Fellowship review our current “public image” as portrayed by our literature, with respect to our primary purpose, and identify any areas for improvement and make recommendations.”

The response to this was the recommendation:

“that professional advice is sought to bring our literature and other communications materials in line with the following objectives:

- a) clear, cohesive, and attractive visual identity
- ii) to enhance the positive image and benefits of Alcoholics Anonymous as a free resource (mutual help and recovery)

Conference 2019 asked the Board to develop a fresh look for AA publications to give a common look and feel to the material we are providing to support the still suffering alcoholic as well as clearly identify our communications with the professional communities we engage with.

The first stage in this process was the development of “brand guidelines” to show the optimum ways in which to reproduce the AA logo. These can be found on the AA website in the document Library



These guidelines also include a palette of colours to be used within publications as well as providing guidance on how the general visual identity of AA should be represented. The purpose of all of this was to help achieve the consistent look that was requested by conference. As a next step we applied the guidelines to some of our key publications.

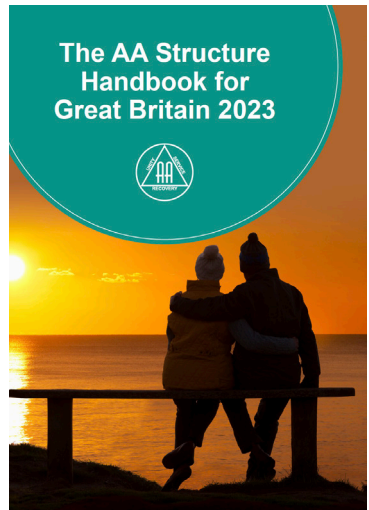
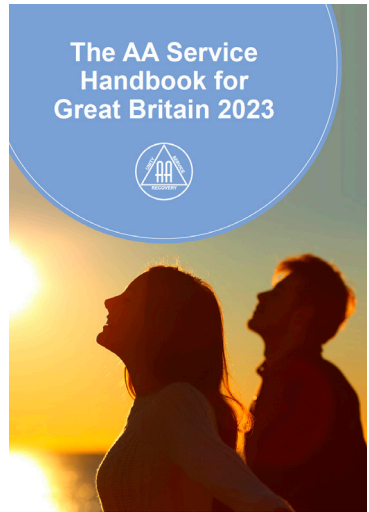


For these publications, we developed a series of templates to make the production of the publications more straightforward. Share and Roundabout are produced by a committee of service volunteers, so it was important to produce templates that could be used by non-specialists.

In addition to the templates, we also provided a series of training resources, including videos to support newcomers rotating into these service roles to be enabled to use these templates. The “new look” for these publications has been rolled out over the last year or so, and while each of the publications has preserved its own unique identity, they all share the family look of AA.

Conference also asked that the family look be applied to all our publications, and it was suggested to Conference 2022 that we do this with all new publications, and we also apply the same look to publications that were being reprinted. The reason for this was to avoid having to scrap existing stocks of leaflets at considerable cost to the Fellowship.

Of course, new publications require Conference approval, but we have been able to republish some existing material in the new format such as the “Sponsorship into Service” and “Younger People in AA” leaflets, as well as applying the fresh look to the Service and Structure Handbooks.



Any new publications approved by Conference will be produced in the family look, so through time, all our material will have a distinct AA look and feel. Of course, we will not be able to extend this look beyond our own publications. So, material coming from the World Service Office etc. will not be affected.

We hope you like the new look, and agree that it helps to enhance the publications we are producing.

Tom Fox
Non-Alcoholic Trustee

Make AA Service News Yours...!

All of the service articles in AA Service News are written by members of the Fellowship. Your experience is welcome, please do share it with others...

All you need to do is email the editor with your articles at:

editor.aasn@aamail.org

Send in your pictures for future editions of AA Service News...

We would need 2MB in size for printing. QUIRKY is good, and pictures that will grab the attention of an alcoholic!

Please send them to the editor at:

editor.aasn@aamail.org

Thank you!

For updating existing meeting details and registering new groups, you can find the registration or 'Pink Form' available from **www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk** Once completed and submitted, you will automatically receive a printed copy of AA Service News.

Please note that the opinions expressed in AA Service News may not necessarily represent the views of the General Service Board

The Editor, AA Service News, GSO, PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ. Website: **www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk**

A NEW BEGINNING



AA Southern National 2024 Convention with Al-Anon Participation

20 - 22 SEPTEMBER 2024

Sand Bay Holiday Village
Weston-Super-Mare
Somerset • BS22 9UR

Registration from 2pm
Friday 20 September

Weekend Registration Fee

£25 3-Day Weekend Registration

£10 per Day Registration

Limited Day Tickets are available on the door on the weekend - Card/Cash accepted

There is a discount for paying your Weekend Convention Registration Fee with your accommodation booking

Organised by **AA Southern National**
Convention Committee
with **Al-Anon Participation**

For more details... see the website

www.AA-SNC.org.uk

Contact Details

Convenor

convenor.southernnc@aamail.org

Highlights

- Low Cost Deposit just £20
- Chalet Accommodation
- Breakfast & Dinner included
- Sunday Buffet Lunch
- Welcome Bag, Goodies and Convention Lanyard
- Unlimited Tea & Coffee during Sessions
- Half Price Pump Soft Drinks 7 - 11pm each evening
- A wide range of Shares
- AA Service Workshops
- Meetings with Shares from "far & wide"
- Alateen Area
- AA Literature available
- Sunday Spiritual Meeting with Coffee & Farewell
- Afternoon & Evening Meetings on Sunday

AA Southern National

2024

Change of date Change of date Change of date Change of date

The **Westminster Parliamentary event will be held on 21st May 2024**, not the 14th May as previously advertised. For further information about this event please contact sophie.perring@gsogb.org.uk

Addendum

Dear Regions and Tradition 7 Contributors,

Mistakes for the Tradition 7 contributions for eastern region and south east region were pointed out to me (editor) by a regional treasurer. The table below sets out the revised figures for quarter 4, 1st July to 30th September 2023. I apologise for the mistake to those regions affected, and thank the Treasurer for taking the time to raise this with me.

Editor

Tradition 7 Contributions from 1st JULY - 30th SEPT 2023	Revised Figures £	Original Figures £
Some contributions come from regional assemblies, whilst others may come from individual members or groups		
Eastern Region	21,505	31,505
South East Region	11,612	1,612





67th Scottish National Convention

“A New Beginning”
26th - 28th April 2024

Queens Hall, 9 Argyll St, DUNOON,
PA23 7HH

(Travel by road or ferry)

Registration £15

To Register and find out more information about
the Weekend Programme, Hotels & Ferries
visit:

www.scottishnationalconvention.co.uk

Any questions, email:
convention.snc@aamail.org

Full AI-Anon Programme throughout
the Weekend

Sponsored by all 5 Scottish Regions
Alcoholics Anonymous GB

Gratitude Week-June 2024

Dear Friends

I hope this finds you all well.

The 10th of June 2024 marks the 89th anniversary of the founding of our Fellowship.

Gratitude or Sobriety Week as it was first known, had its origins in Chiltern and Thames Intergroup in the early to mid 1980s. The idea was to hold a separate collection in Groups on or around the week of 10th June. This extra collection would be for those members, who could afford to, to contribute what they thought was a days drinking would cost in today's prices. The monies collected would be forwarded by the Groups to their Intergroup Treasurer, who would in turn, send the total collection from their Intergroup directly to GSO.

Following the successes of this initiative, Conference 1988 made the following recommendations:

“That the fellowship contrives to recognise our anniversary on 10th of June by holding annually a Gratitude/Sobriety Week”.

This collection has become an annual event ever since and the General Service Board are infinitely for your continued generosity. As stated in previous letters:

“These arrangements will ensure the correct allocation of funds and help keep to a minimum, administration costs and bank charges and maximise the prudent spending of those funds to fulfil our primary purpose”.

It is important to reiterate that any amount will be gratefully received, and only those who can afford to, are asked to contribute if they can. All Gratitude Week monies should be forwarded to GSO by the 30th September 2024, which is the last day of the current Financial Year.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need more information.

Thank you again so much for your generosity and service to our wonderful Fellowship.

With Love in Fellowship

Yours sincerely

Clive K

Hon. Treasurer GSB

GSB Vacancies

What is a Sub Committee and what does it do?

A sub-committee is made up of alcoholics with usually five years sobriety and service experience down the AA structure. It is a committee that delivers Conference recommendations, and is chaired by a Trustee of the General Service Board

All sub-committee members go through an application and interview process. There are usually vacancies listed quarterly in AASN, together with a deadline for submission for application and criteria which you will need to meet as part of your application.

It's a rewarding job being on a sub-committee, by both carrying the message and the conscience of the Fellowship.

Interested? Please read on...



Your Application

When applying for **any** of the sub-committee vacancies below, please obtain an up-to-date application form from either Jenny Pryke at GSO, PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ: 01904 644026; jennypryke@gsogb.org.uk or from the Document Library (select 'Forms') at the AAGB website www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

The chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer or a currently serving liaison officer of the sponsoring region or intergroup must endorse the application by way of a covering letter. GSO will need to receive this covering letter by the application deadline. **If there is no covering letter by the specified deadline, then you will not be eligible for interview.**

For any of the vacancies, you will need:

- Five years continuous sobriety
- A good understanding and use of the Steps and Traditions, the AA Service and Structure Handbooks for Great Britain, and other Conference approved AA literature
- Good experience in carrying out service at different levels of the AA service structure
- An understanding and appreciation of the relationship between the General Service Board (GSB) and sub-committees

Sub-committee applicants will be interviewed by two GSB members of the Nominations Committee in a single interview through an online platform, at a time agreed by the applicants.

Successful candidates will be expected to attend four meetings a year; two of these will normally be in York, but the other two may be held via an online platform. The term of service is usually 4 years.

It is advisable to talk to the relevant Trustee before you apply or upon submitting your application. If you have any questions about specific responsibilities of service on a sub-committee, then please contact the relevant Trustee by using the details found below each vacancy notice.

For up-to-date vacancies, please turn overleaf

Archives

There are vacancies on the Archives Sub Committee of the General Service Board (GSB). The Archives Sub Committee advises the GSB on issues concerning the care and management of AAGB's Archives and reports to the Board through the Trustee responsible for Archives.

The Archives Sub Committee works with archivists at the Borthwick Institute to develop and enhance AA archive, while managing access to it for the purpose of research. Other AA archives are held by regions and intergroups, and are looked after by local archivists. The Archives Sub Committee liaises with these archivists through the Archive Network of regional and intergroup archivists.

The main AA Archive is now located at the Borthwick Institute for Archives of the University of York.

In addition to the standard requirements, some experience of archival work is desirable - especially experience as an intergroup or regional archivist within AA. Some knowledge of AA history is also advantageous, as are good communication and IT skills.

For more information about the vacancy, please contact John C Trustee for Archives [trustee.northeastregion@gsoqb.org.uk](mailto:northeastregion@gsoqb.org.uk)

Armed Services

The Armed Services Sub Committee is looking for new members to join a committed team who are passionate about finding innovative ways of passing the message of recovery to past and present members of Armed Services.

Experience

Experience in intergroup and/or regional Armed Service Liaison or other relative experience would be advantageous, and good organisation and communication skills are desirable. The ability to produce written and verbal reports would be an advantage, as well as relevant IT skills. Service within the Armed Service is desirable but not essential.

Aim

The principal aim of the Sub Committee is to raise awareness throughout the Fellowship and to Armed Service communities and their supported community groups.

Its objects are to:

- Raise awareness of Alcoholics Anonymous within all areas of the Armed Services community, including serving persons, veterans, and their families
- Establish and maintain good relations with professionals and professional bodies connected with the Tri-services
- Offer support and advice to regional Armed Services Liaison Officers
- Be responsible for the Armed Services 12 Stepper list

- Be responsible for the Armed Services 12 Stepper list
- Assist in the implementation of Conference recommendations

For more information about the vacancy, please contact John C Trustee for Armed Services trustee.northeastregion@gsogb.org.uk

Employment

There are vacancies on the Employment Sub Committee of the General Service Board (GSB) of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Our primary functions are to:

- Create a consistent message externally that differentiates AA from other bodies
- Establish and maintain good relations with professionals and professional bodies at national level
- Establish and maintain good relations with employers and companies at national level
- Increase public and professional knowledge of the AA programme
- Offer support to Regional and Intergroup Liaison Officers
- Create and maintain an accurate system of record keeping for future officers and events
- Communicate effectively with the Fellowship.
- Comply with the principles and guidelines of AA.

For more information about these vacancies, please contact Henry Lowe, GSB Non-Alcoholic Trustee for Employment trustee.nat4@gsogb.org.uk

First Response Online

There are vacancies on the newly formed First Response Online Sub Committee of the General Service Board.

The new sub-committee comprises a group of people organising the initial contact, the first response, to the still suffering alcoholic via email or instant chat channels.

Chat Now:

The main purpose of the Chat Now Help Desk is to answer live, real-time queries from the still suffering alcoholic and to direct them to the telephone helpline and/or to a meeting.

Responders working from their home computers have live 1-on-1 conversations with people who are often just starting their journey or maybe questioning if they should do so. **For more information on the service and an application, please email us at: chatadmin@aamail.org or Holly A at trustee.southwestregion@gsogb.org.uk**

Online Response Service:

The main purpose of the Online Response Service (ORS) is to help the still suffering alcoholic who writes an email to help@aamail.org and is looking for fellowship and answers to their recovery.

For more information on the service please email Holly A trustee.southwestregion@gsofb.org.uk

Please specify whether you are applying for Chat Now or ORS on the application form.

Health

Rotation has created the opportunity for new members to join this dedicated team.

If you have experience at intergroup and / or region preferably as a Health Liaison Officer (HLO) or in a complementary discipline, we would welcome your application. You will need to understand the relationship between the General Service Board (GSB) and the Health Sub Committee.

The primary role of the Health Sub Committee is to:

- Carry the message and increase the awareness of Alcoholics Anonymous and the 12 Step programme at all health-related establishments as appropriate
- Implement health initiatives as directed by the GSB on the recommendation of Conference
- Provide support to Regional and Intergroup HLOs by providing information and advice
- Create and encourage open communication channels with regional and intergroup HLOs
- Establish relationships with health professionals and professional bodies at regional and national levels

For more information about these vacancies, please contact [Kieran Moriarty trustee.nat6@gsofb.org.uk](mailto:Kieran.Moriarty@trustee.nat6@gsofb.org.uk)

Literature

To enable the Literature Sub Committee of the General Service Board (GSB) to fulfil its role of:

- Considering needs for new literature
- Undertaking selective review of the content and appearance of the entire range of the literature published by the Fellowship in Great Britain
- Assessing literature for its suitability for revision or discontinuance
- Work on material as requested by Conference

Its members would have a sound understanding of the Conference process (Conference experience is highly desirable, but an understanding of the process does not need to come solely from having attended Conference).

Essential requirements:

- Have time between committee meetings to work on assigned projects, liaise with other committee members, provide feedback on projects other members are working on, and prepare for committee meetings by reading all relevant materials
- Be familiar with the wide range of AA literature
- Have a sound command of English written grammar and style
- Be familiar with word processing and email programmes, as well as file-sharing
- The ability to work collaboratively as a contributing member of the Sub Committee. Most projects require members to work together in close collaboration, including in pairs or small groups, in the production of multiple drafts, with detailed editing, towards a final version
- The ability to work towards set deadlines

For more information about these vacancies, please contact Jo F trustee.easternregion@gsofb.org.uk

Prison Sub Committee

The Prison Sub Committee is looking for new members to join its committed and vibrant team.

We are looking for a good geographical and gender spread of members who have experience of taking AA into prisons. Preferably with liaison officer experience at either intergroup and region, and attendance at Conference. A good understanding and use of our Traditions is required.

Our principal aim is to assist, appoint and support intergroup and regional liaison officers. We are keeping track of which prisons host AA meetings, and if not, we are encouraging local liaison officers to investigate the possibility of taking AA's involvement into those prisons, providing a coordinated approach to prison service. Other prison sub-committee work would be to:

- help identify successful and problem areas
- assist in the implementation of Conference recommendations
- hold a Regional Prison Liaison Officers meeting annually in York

You would be expected to attend both online and face-to-face meetings in York. We welcome your application to join our friendly and innovative team.

For more information, please contact Zelma K, trustee.w.bregion@gsofb.org.uk, mob: 07817125143

Probation/Criminal Justice Services

We are looking for members who:

- Meet sub-committee criteria and are enthusiastic about probation / criminal justice service, preferably from different geographical areas
- Are willing to serve in the role, raising awareness of AA among professionals and professional bodies connected with the criminal justice systems of Great Britain
- Enjoys passing information on probation / criminal justice services matters throughout the Fellowship
- Can offer advice, support and encouragement to liaison officers by assisting the structure to function effectively, and encourage new appointments to criminal justice liaison posts
- Can assist with developing and maintaining appropriate resources for liaison officers.
- Have good organisational and communication skills along with the ability to produce written and verbal reports
- Have the willingness to work as part of a team who are directly responsible to the General Service Board, and comply with the principles and guidelines of AA.

For more information about these Probation and Criminal Justice vacancies, please contact Hamish McS, trustee.eastscotlandregion@gsogb.org.uk

Public Information and Electronic Communication

Can you help carry our message to the still suffering alcoholic?

The Public Information and Electronic Communications Sub Committee (PI & EComms SC) invites members of our Fellowship to join us in the exciting work of:

- Carrying the message of recovery
- Making the most of electronic communications to help those who need help
- Keeping existing members informed

The primary functions of the sub-committee are to:

- Create a consistent message externally, that differentiates AA from other bodies
- Increase awareness of the AA programme with professionals and professional bodies, members of the media, and journalists at national level
- Offer support and advice to regional PI and ECLO committees and liaison officers
- Provide leadership to the PI and ECLO networks
- Assist region and intergroup ECLOs with microsite set up and maintenance within the AAGB website
- Monitor and maintain the AAGB Filestore area, supporting users, and ensuring access requests are properly validated

- Promote and administer the use of WorkPlace as a communication tool for AA service, ensuring secure access and assisting new users
- Respond to service-related requests and queries submitted to the AAGB Helpdesk
- Monitor the AAGB website, working with the Web Content Manager in keeping it up to date and relevant
- Identify PI and E Comms information in other resources which requires updating
- Contribute to publication of the PI Newsletter
- Communicate effectively with all levels of the Fellowship
- Comply with the Traditions, principles and guidelines of AA

An interest in electronic communications and/or public information, with a desire to do meaningful service in a fascinating area, is more important than anything else in these roles, along with an understanding of how people communicate / the desire to help us improve what we do. Good basic computer literacy is required but our various IT suppliers provide direct technical support where required.

You will be working within PI Sub Committee Terms of Reference. You should be flexible in your time commitments, and be prepared to join us online, as well as attending meetings in York where accommodation is provided and expenses paid.

**GSB Trustees for PI & EComms Tom Fox - trustee.nat5@gsogb.org.uk
Tim B - trustee.southmidlandsregion@gsogb.org.uk**

Roundabout

Roundabout - Could You Be Our New Assistant Editor?

Following our recent article on the role of a proofreader we had an excellent response and look forward to welcoming new members to the Roundabout Sub Committee soon.

For some time now, we have been without an Assistant Editor and this is a role I used to do myself before taking over as Editor, so I think I can give you an honest view of the role and work involved!

The Assistant Editor is there is back up the Editor who logs the incoming articles, arranges editing with the proofreaders and creates the magazine from scratch each month along with various other tasks. In an ideal world, the Assistant would create the magazine one month in every three to give the Editor some room for other work and would take over the administration of articles. This involves logging each submission and sending batches on to proofreaders for editing, and then logging them 'back in' afterwards.

General knowledge of computer use is essential but full training will be provided on the software we use (called Adobe InDesign).

All of the magazines follow a template and this, therefore, can make it a simple task of copying and pasting. If this sounds daunting, remember the Editor is always there for help and support, so you are not alone. With Roundabout being a monthly publication, the work needed is regular (weekly) but not too onerous.

There is no pressure for the Assistant Editor to take over as Editor after rotation. This is a four-year service position, and if you do take over as Editor, you can extend the term to six years.

If you think this is something you would like to consider, please get in touch with me by dropping me an email at the address below.

**Cath
Editor**
roundabout@aamail.org

Survey

Rare Service Opportunity to Take the Pulse of AA

Summary

The General Service Board (GSB) Survey Sub Committee (SSC) seeks new members to assist in executing the next membership-wide survey. Strategic planning sessions were launched summer 2022. Minimum 5 years sobriety. Details and application info below.

What is the Pulse of AA Post-Pandemic?

Every five years the GSB, as mandated by Conference, conducts a membership-wide survey to keep abreast of trends in our Fellowship's characteristics. The survey provides factual numbers for the professional community and public as prescribed by our primary purpose, to carry the message to those suffering from alcoholism.

The pandemic and its subsequent restrictions, however, upended 'business as usual'. In particular, a groups' reliance on 'snail mail' to receive important communications.

Consequently, the SSC, responsible for planning, execution and managing the 2020 survey, had to pivot at the 11th hour, and deploy an online-only survey model. Despite reaching only groups with an email contact on record with York, the survey produced critical key insights gathered from over 3000 Groups in Great Britain and the Continental Europe Region (CER).

Rare Opportunity

Valuable lessons were learned by the SSC from its first digital survey undertaking. Lessons it seeks to leverage, ensuring that the next survey measures what is most important to members, the public and the professional community in these fast-changing times.

But currently, the SSC is disadvantaged with too few committee members. The SSC's problem, therefore, offers you a rare opportunity to join its existing core team as they begin strategic planning for the 2025 Survey

Apply Now

Send your application (or questions) to Gretchen S. GSB Trustee for the Survey at trustee.LRS@gsoqb.org.uk

Telephone

The Telephones Sub Committee comprises a group of people organising the initial contact or first response, to the still suffering alcoholic via the telephone.

Experience of the telephone service at regional or intergroup level and a willingness to use and be informed about current communication systems would be an advantage. The role may require frequent contact with members involved in the telephone service at all levels of the Fellowship.

Requirements for the telephones sub-committee are to:

- Maintain the existing telephone system to enable the suffering alcoholic access to a local contact through a single national telephone number, in a manner which is efficient, effective and economic.
- Keep the use and cost of the system under constant review.
- Be involved in all changes to the system and to liaise with the system provider following consultation with regions.
- Investigate any new technology which may be beneficial to the Fellowship's telephone service
- Maintain a constant review of the facilities offered by other service providers.

Please specify you are applying for NTL sub-committee. For additional information please contact the NTL Trustee: Levey Patocs, trustee.cer@gsogb.org.uk

Young Persons

We invite you to join the Young Person's Sub Committee!

Are you ready to make a real difference in AA? Join the Young Person's Sub Committee and be a part of a team that is committed to creating a welcoming, inclusive and supportive environment that meets the unique needs of young people in AA.

By joining our sub-committee, you'll participate in impactful initiatives such as hosting roadshows, circulating helpful resources and supporting the creation of young person's meetings.

As a member of the team, you'll work alongside like-minded individuals who share a passion for developing AA.

Main aims:

To assist in the recruitment and support of YPLO's at Intergroup and Region levels

To support the development of good practice and review/update literature, media resources and guidelines (subject to approval)

To establish and maintain good relationships with professionals and professional bodies

Requirements:

Experience of working as a Young Person's Liaison Officer (YPLO) at either intergroup or region level would be an advantage but is not essential. Good organisational and communication skills will

be required, along with a strong grasp of AA service structure, guidelines and traditions.

If you have any questions contact Holly A (Young People's Sub Committee Trustee) before or upon submitting your application trustee.southwestregion@gsogb.org.uk



Tradition 7

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

Tradition 7 Contributions from 1 st October 2023 - 31 st January 2024	Contributions £
Some of these contributions come from regional assemblies, whilst others may come from individual members or groups	
Eastern Region	11,117
London Region North	11,662
London Region South	1,497
Midlands Region	821
North East Region	11,286
North West Region	2,528
South East Region	891
South Midlands Region	11,199
South West Region	26,835
Wales & Borders Region	3,015
East of Scotland Region	5,500
Glasgow Region	8,885
Highlands & Islands Region	4,335
Scotia Region	6,495
South West Scotland Region	4,020
Continental European	12,279
Sundry- Unidentifiable receipts	1,911
Total	124,275

General Service Office (GSO)

“All groups, intergroups and regions should accept responsibility for the funding of the General Service Office. The financial operations at GSO, the methods of accountability to Conference through the Board, and the broad financial strategies adopted on behalf of the Fellowship, are all subject to continuous review.”

Taken from AAGB Conference approved pamphlet “The Pot”

“Services can require committees, Delegates, Trustees and Conferences. They include small voluntary money contributions so that the group, the area, and AA as a whole can function. They range all the way from the cup of coffee to AA’s General Service Headquarters for national and international action. The sum of all these services is AA’s Third Legacy”

AA Comes of Age, page 140

The Role of GSO

With just under five thousand groups to service, GSO is the vital administrative centre of our Fellowship, supported by Northern and Southern Service Offices. It produces and distributes AA literature and publications, and is responsible for service meetings of Liaison Officers, for Conference and for meetings of the General Service Board (GSB). GSO liaises with and supports European and World Services. It is also responsible for Fellowship Archives. Staff also deal with all telephone calls from members, the media and outside organisations.

Prudent reserves

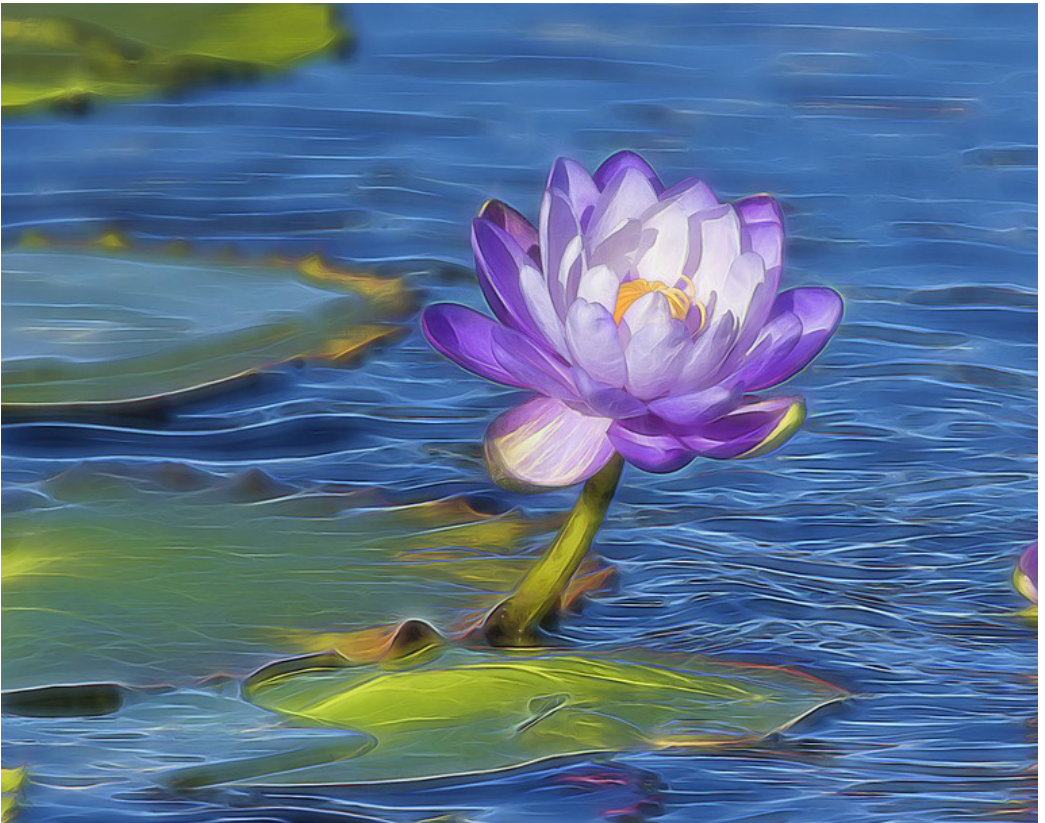
Suggested prudent reserves set out by Regional Treasurers at their Regional Seminar, January 2024

- Groups - 1 months running expenses
- Intergroups - 3 months running expenses
- Regions - 3 months running expenses
- AAGB - 1.25 years running expenses (as per warranty 2 in Concept 12, and the Charities Commission)

In Memoriam

1st October 2023 - 31st January 2024

In memory of Tracey E (Lincoln Sat GRP)	Lincoln Waddington GRP	£51.00
In memory of Harold C	Southport GRP	£145.80
In memory of Joyce H	Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth	£110.00



Subscribe to AA Service News

For your printed copy, update the group 'Pink Form' or contact Sharon at GSO sharon.smyth@gsogb.org.uk Alternatively, complete the below and send to the address provided.

Printed AA Service News is mailed in a plain envelope.



SEND TO (BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Group Name/Day:

Group No:*

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Email to:

AA Service News, GSO, PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

*GSO reference for each AA group - register with GSO by filling in the group registration, or 'pink' form