

Conference 2025

A suggested addition to the Service Handbook.

This Service Discipline Executive Summary is intended to be placed at the beginning of future Service Handbooks. Its aim is to encourage readers into service, giving the reader an initial taste of the range of service disciplines our Fellowship offers, and how easy it is to become involved.

Service Disciplines Executive Summary

Introduction

Service at all levels within the Fellowship is an important part of our recovery and there are a wide range of service positions that need to be filled at group, intergroup and region. Some are individual positions and some are part of a team.

Many of these service positions require a good knowledge of our Steps and Traditions or a willingness to become familiar with them, and for each there is a suggested length of sobriety. All service disciplines are supported by a relevant sub committee who will share their experience.

These opportunities are for our Primary Purpose, to 'Carry our Message...' and help to develop our personal spiritual health and recovery.

The information below is a brief insight into the various service disciplines.

Archives

Our archives are the memories of our fellowship from the first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) in Great Britain (GB) until the present time. They tell us what it used to be like and what it is like now.

The role of the archivist is to collect and preserve our history and ensure members anonymity in perpetuity. By these actions we will not lose the history of how we carry the message of recovery, and our memories will remain accessible for generations to come. If you are interested in the history of AA and would like to contribute to the archival collection, a service position in Archives is ideal.

Armed Services

By working with the still suffering alcoholic who is or was a serving member of our Armed Forces, we try to ensure that there are telephone responders with lived experience. As Armed Services and civilian life and languages differ, in a crisis we sometimes need to talk to each other from the same place and in the same language. There are also opportunities to raise awareness by working with serving personnel and veterans.

Electronic Communications

Electronic communications enable and support collaboration between service disciplines at all levels of the service structure to effectively disseminate information about the AA programme to the general public and professionals.

Modern technology provides tools and opportunities to make the message of recovery even more accessible. Nowadays, the free-for-life support available to the still suffering alcoholic is often just a click of a mouse away or appears with just the simple swipe of a finger on a screen.

The PI & EComms Sub Committee supports the service structure in identifying and utilising traditional and new communication channels to get the message out to where it is needed. The message stays the same even as the many ways we can carry it increase.

Employment

Employers are increasingly responsible for the provision of a practical policy and strategy for the health, welfare and safety of employees. AA can offer a significant contribution to this requirement by the Employment Liaison Officers of intergroups and regions, working together with them. All members can play a part in this service by contributing to the distribution of leaflets and posters.

First Response Online (FROSC)

We have two online services for the still suffering alcoholic who is reaching out for help. The Online Response Service (ORS) is an email service which is available by emailing help@aamail.org and Chat Now is a live chat service accessible on the AAGB website. If you would like to be the hand of AA for the still suffering alcoholic and become a responder for either of these vital services, please email secretary.fro.sc@aamail.org for a job description and application form.

The First Response Online Sub-Committee (FROSC) is responsible for the administration of the Online Response Service and Chat Now.

Health

Service in Health has always played a major part in AA's history starting with Bill and Bob, and 'the man in the bed'. Within our intergroups and regions, members of the Fellowship are always thinking of innovative ways to inform and attract professionals and patients to AA. The growth of 'open meeting workshops' has enabled us to reach the future generations of healthcare professionals giving them an understanding of the nature of our disease.

Literature

Since the publication of the Big Book, literature has been crucial in carrying AAs message of recovery. Our books and leaflets are vital tools in our twelfth step work. In our groups there is always a position for literature secretary – introducing newcomers to literature and helping others stay in touch with our growing library. We

also have a Literature Sub Committee (LSC) which is responsible for drafting new or revising existing AA literature. It's always good to see work approved by Conference and it being published. The LSC regularly collaborates with other service disciplines by offering help with drafting, reviewing and updating literature. If you are interested in seeing how AA literature can transform lives, then start by becoming your group literature secretary.

Parliamentary Events

The aim of these events is to help professionals and Parliamentarians get a better understanding of AA. While AA does not affiliate with any outside organisation, we cooperate with health and social care professionals who work with people whose alcoholism is part of the problem.

We encourage the wider fellowship to help us to invite professionals and peers who would be interested in hearing more about what we do. This is a usually a two-hour event, sponsored by a Parliamentarian and includes shares from two recovering alcoholics and two professionals who have experience of working with us.

Prisons

Helping facilitate AA meetings within prisons is a rewarding and exciting way of carrying the message. Seeing the way AA is received is amazing, with participants eager for recovery. Giving hope and help breaks the cycle of prison, drinking and despair and helping someone whose first meeting was in prison go on to attend AA on release and live a productive life is hugely rewarding.

Probation

Probation/Criminal Justice System (CJS) relationship with AA is vital in providing a link for those getting released from custody, being at a court's disposal or when on probation or community pay back orders. We work across all levels from using the chit system in groups to cooperating with CJS workers. This offers hope to those alcoholics on probation and offers a way out from re-offending.

Public Information

Public Information (PI) in AA means carrying the message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic by informing the general public about the AA programme. We do this by getting in touch with professionals and any organisation which is in a position to pass on knowledge of what AA can do for the still suffering alcoholic.

In AAGB, members involved in PI carry the message, using various methods such as distributing leaflets to surgeries and pharmacies, dropping them at libraries and posting with Parish Councils. AA literature and pamphlets are available to any agency directly connected with the public. Poster campaigns are run on buses and trams as well as in motorway service stations, so the message reaches those travelling through our towns, cities and the countryside. Presentations, seminars and talks are given to professionals, employers, prisons, Probation and Criminal Justice services and throughout the Armed Forces. Up to date information is available on

request to the media. Every act of service helps to spread the message of hope and recovery that AA offers. The PI & EComms Sub Committee provides a focus to share knowledge and experience of carrying the message whilst maintaining our Traditions across all activities.

Roundabout

The Roundabout Sub Committee is working to produce a sharing and caring monthly magazine for Scottish readers. Along with all of your stories, Roundabout has information pages on conventions and gatherings and on group amendments or new and reopened groups. The magazine is produced every month and subscriptions are increasing. The magazine is varied, using photos, cartoons and AA 'one-liners'.

Written submissions sharing your experience strength and hope are always welcome or by becoming a 'reader' for Roundabout.

Share

The Steps & Traditions, the Preamble, the Pledge, in fact everything you might need to open a meeting is in your copy of Share magazine.

There are members' stories and interviews, a calendar round-up of Fellowship events and even some photos and cartoons to entertain you. No wonder we call Share 'our meeting between meetings'.

For those who have difficulty getting to a meeting, Share can be a lifeline. We always need support from you, whether it's to send an article in or take out a subscription, Share is a great thing to be a part of.

Survey

AA conducts a survey of the Fellowship every five years since. The intention of these surveys is to learn more about the Fellowship in Great Britain and Continental Europe so that AA's message of recovery may be disseminated more effectively to the still suffering alcoholic, thus helping us to fulfil our primary purpose.

Additionally, the survey information informs the Fellowship, Conference and the General Service Board regarding the allocation of resources and information that could be useful in communication with the professional community and the Fellowship.

In preparation for the 2020 Survey the Survey Sub Committee was established. As a result of Covid, the 2020 Survey was delivered online and from what we learned doing that, the decision was taken to continue this going forward. The next Survey will be sent out in 2025.

Telephones

When a suffering alcoholic, or potential alcoholic has reached a point in their lives when they might want to stop drinking, they turn to Alcoholics Anonymous through the 0800 telephone number or through an AA local helpline.

Often the first contact with AA is through telephones with a responder. The responder listens to them and shares their own experience and journey in recovery. This not only gives the still suffering alcoholic, or potential alcoholic hope, it also serves as a reminder to the responder of what it was like before they came to AA. The only requirement to be a responder is 12 months sobriety, and a willingness to be of service.

The telephone service is delivered through intergroup, sometimes region, or nationally in Scotland. The National Telephone Sub Committee is responsible for maintaining the existing 0800 telephone system enabling the suffering alcoholic access to AA through a single national telephone number!

Did any of this catch your interest? Please get in touch with your local TLO officer who can provide you with more information. Full training is provided.

Young People

The aim of the Young People's service discipline is to carry the message of recovery to young people, and to help encourage younger members of the Fellowship into service. Young People's Liaison Officers should ideally have come into recovery at the age of 30 or under.

There is a vibrant and enthusiastic community of younger members of AA who are involved in exciting initiatives to carry the message of recovery to the younger, still suffering alcoholic.