

Conference 2025
AA SERVICE HANDBOOK

DRAFT

Chapter TBA - Telephone Services

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- 3. Telephone Service**

Alcoholics Anonymous' National Telephone Service operates the number **0800 917 7650** nationally and internationally **+44 800 917 7650**.

This number links the still suffering alcoholic with a telephone responder from one of the local helplines across Great Britain. Telephone responders collate the caller's information and pass it to a 12th Stepper in the caller's area.

The local helplines also have their own **Direct-Dial Helpline number** which is published locally and on the national website. An A-to-Z Directory of towns listing the corresponding Direct-Dial Helpline number is supplied to responders by the National Telephone Sub-Committee (NTSC).

Please check with your local intergroup/region telephone liaison officer (TLO) as to how the telephone service operates in your area.

10:1 Structure:

Responsibility for telephone services rests with the intergroup TLO. However, in some areas it is devolved to region or a telephone helpline committee. The local helplines are also responsible for purchasing, managing and curating the data of the telephone system they choose for their Direct-Dial Helpline number.

The national number is managed and data curated by the NTSC. Comprehensive data analysis is supplied quarterly/annually by the NTSC and distributed to all TLOs.

10.2 Finance:

Our traditions of autonomy and self-support apply to all helplines.

The national telephone account is managed and payment is met by AA's General Service Office, York, through monies collected by Tradition Seven.

Individual helplines manage their own Direct-Dial Number account and payment is met by the intergroup, region or telephone service committee depending on the local structure.

Expenses incurred by members participating in telephone service may be claimed from intergroup, region or in Scotland from the Scottish Telephone Committee.

10.3 Telephone Service:

The main purpose of our telephone services is to put the still-suffering alcoholic in touch with an individual contact or AA group. Telephone services require support and participation by local groups and members.

Telephone responders/operators (Scotland)/volunteers (London), should be chosen with care and endorsed through local groups and procedures, have at least 12 months' continuous sobriety, and have undergone the required training.

The NTSC has prepared comprehensive *Training and Safeguarding Guidelines for Telephone Responders*, which are available on the AA website.
<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/members/service/disciplines/telephones>.

There are three basic types of call:

1. From the still-suffering alcoholic.
2. From family and friends of the alcoholic. We never discuss another person's drinking with a third party, even if they say they are a spouse, family or friend.
3. General enquiries:
 - out-of-area calls need to be passed to the problem drinker's local helplines.
 - calls received from employers, probation, NHS, social workers and requests for speakers (schools and colleges, universities) etc., should be passed to the relevant intergroup/region
 - calls from press, radio or television, etc. should be referred to the General Service Office, 10 Toft Green, York, YO1 7NJ, 01904 644 026, aainformation@gsogb.org.uk so that a coordinated response can be made

Northern Ireland:

Callers from Northern Ireland should be referred to the Northern Ireland Service Office, Belfast, on 0289 035 1222.

<http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie/>

Emergency Services:

If you consider a caller to be in personal danger or suicidal, call the emergency services. Please remember that the telephone service exists to receive calls from suffering alcoholics and outside agencies. It is not intended to provide immediate rescue in the same way as the police, fire or ambulance services. It is not a counselling service.

Twelfth Step Work:

The 12th Step work is the cornerstone of the telephone helpline service and requires the full participation and support of local groups and members. Information gathered by helpline responders is passed to them and they make direct contact with the problem drinker to discuss what AA can offer and to arrange for them to attend a meeting or to meet with them.

At least 12 months' continuous sobriety is a prerequisite for 12th Step service.

12th Steppers should have read and understood the comprehensive *Safeguarding Guidelines for 12th Step Work* which are available to download from the AA website. <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/members/service/disciplines/telephones>

Intergroup TLOs are responsible for curating the directory of 12th Steppers for their area and making sure that an accurate list is available to responders for their helpline rota.

If you are interested in becoming a Telephone Responder/Volunteer/ 12 Stepper, please contact your local helpline for more information on how to apply.

(Revised 2024)