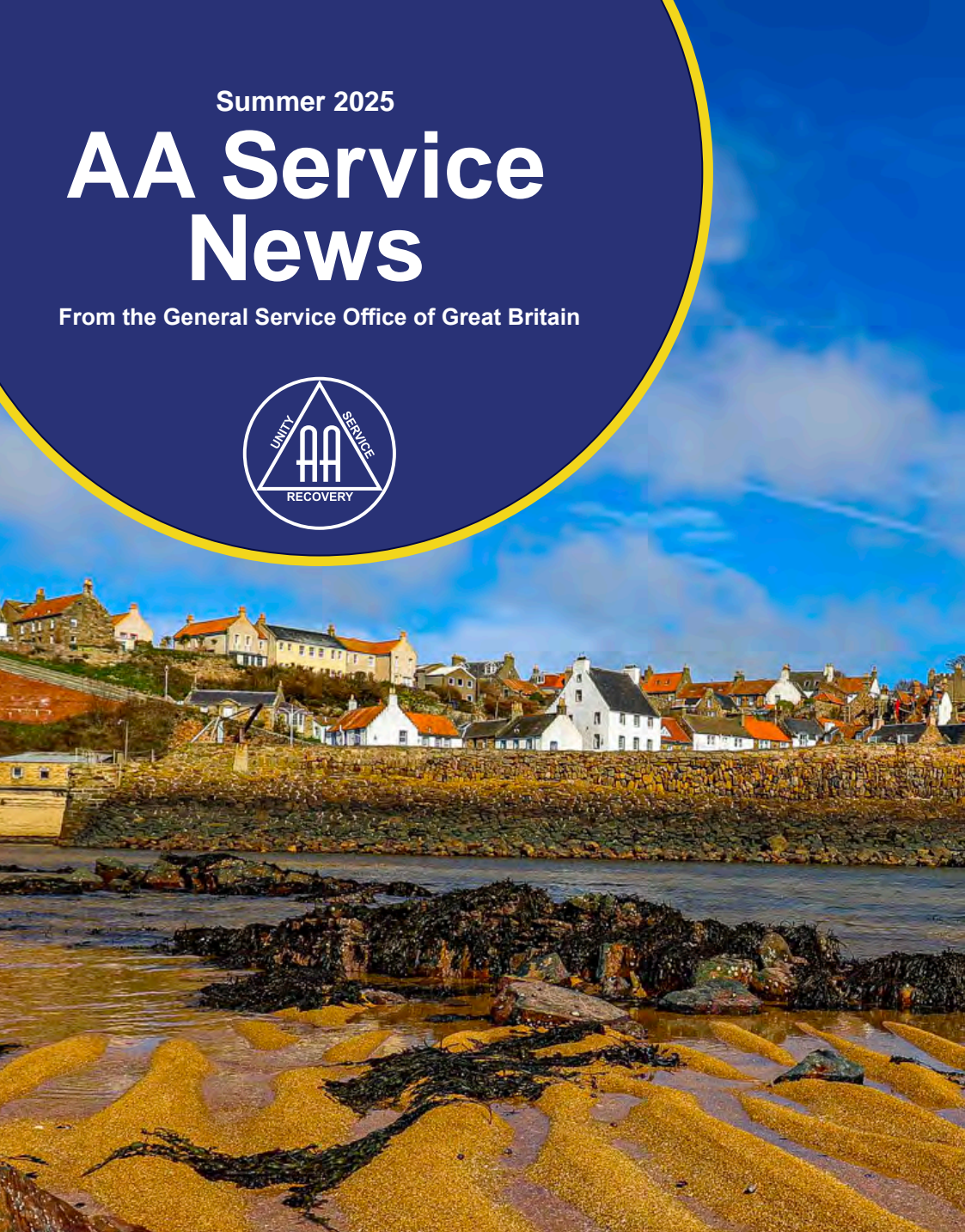


Summer 2025

AA Service News

From the General Service Office of Great Britain



Conference Recommendations

12 Traditions Checklist

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



1. Why is it a good idea for me to place the common welfare of all AA members before individual welfare? What would happen to me if AA as a whole disappeared?
2. When I do not trust AA's current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?
3. In my opinion of and remarks about other AAs am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stay sober?
4. Do I ever try to get a certain AA group to conform to my standards, not its own?
5. Have I a personal responsibility in helping an AA group fulfil its primary purpose? What is my part?
6. Does my personal behaviour reflect Tradition 6 - or misrepresent it?
7. Do I do all I can to support AA financially? When is the last time I anonymously gave away a Share or Roundabout subscription?
8. Do I complain about certain AA's behaviour especially if they are paid to work for AA? Who made me so smart?
9. Do I fulfill all AA responsibilities in such a way as to please privately my own conscience? Really?
10. Do my utterances always reflect the Tenth Tradition, or do I give AA critics real ammunition?
11. Should I keep my AA membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of AA so attractive that other drunks want it?
12. What is the real importance of me among 2,000,000 AA members?

..... From AAGB "Traditions Checklist"

AA Service News

Welcome to the Summer Edition of AA Service News.

We are really pleased to remind you that **AA Service News is now available in print and digitally**. 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!**



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AA Service News

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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

Front cover picture credit: AAGB Image Bank

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

A NAT's first time at the General Service Conference (and how did I get here?)

I received a job notification; it popped up out of the blue on my phone. It was promoting a Non-Alcoholic Trustee (NAT) role with AA. I was intrigued and read on. I learnt that from time-to-time AA needed trustees to work on various issues, often in the public domain and usually having to go on the record. Whilst members of the Fellowship must observe the tradition of anonymity, NAT's do not have such a requirement and are therefore ideally positioned to provide these services. My new role as a NAT would be confirmed at Conference on the Sunday morning so yes, I was invested.

This was my first Conference with AA, and in the weeks leading up to it I had been told to expect to experience 'the magic of Conference'. So, I was expectant and looking forward to finding the magic. I was also told that "I would be a different person when I left Conference than when I arrived". Accordingly, my expectations of Conference were high. However, truth be told, I was also just a bit sceptical of such claims. In my corporate career I have attended numerous such events, spoken at many, and most had been disappointing - including my presentations – with the conferences often failing to deliver on their objectives.

The first 'light bulb' moment came early on Friday morning. I quickly identified that the feeling in the hotel – even before Conference had started - was very different from my past corporate experiences. In York there was a caring and a warmth, a genuine welcome and interest from old friends and new; but I also experienced an openness and honesty from delegates. I spoke with people who a few minutes earlier were strangers about all things and anything - the merits of various rugby players, the space station, and everything in between. And in the dining room I was never allowed to eat alone - the talk was animated, earnest, sometimes humorous but always respectful.

In the afternoon and into the evening, the breakout committee sessions dealt with some pretty meaty issues, where delegates often held strong opposing views. The views expressed had been garnered from the Fellowship in the delegates' regions and they had come to Conference determined to represent those views. All were heard, all views were valued and respected, and through discussion a rounded Fellowship position was agreed both in committee and subsequently on Sunday morning, on the conference floor. I was humbled by those who bravely offered their contribution - often nervous, always heart felt, with a willingness to share deeply personal information if that's what it took to best explain their own and their fellows' views.

In my past corporate experience that just didn't happen. Too many egos in the room, the loud drowning out the quietly spoken, no one willing to change or adapt their views for fear of looking weak, people pursuing a personal often career-led agenda rather than seeking the best for their organisation. What happened in York was different: this was new, this was so much better.

So, did I find the magic?

No, I don't think I did. However, I found something much more tangible, more valuable, more enduring. I witnessed true fellowship in action, the result of caring, committed and passionate people, many of whom were back in the regions, nowhere near the conference or committee rooms, but who had fed into the various debates via answering questions or attending briefings to prepare their delegates for the discussions. The General Service Conference succeeds because of the work undertaken – yes, by delegates and administrators - but also by all who are dedicated and passionate; who prioritise service, who every day live the AA values, who commit their time to the Fellowship to support all who wish to stop drinking.

Did I leave the conference a different person to when I arrived?

Well, I reflect that to my surprise and great pleasure that yes, I did. I had been privileged to meet, talk and be around so many brave and strong people who had successfully changed their lives and subsequently made enormous commitments to help others do the same. That feeds the human spirit, renews optimism, and yes, this slightly cynical man was inspired and looking forward to being of service to the Fellowship.

And my appointment as a Non-Alcoholic Trustee was confirmed. It was an all-round good day.

Mike Newton , Non-Alcoholic Trustee, General Service Board





REGIONAL TREASURERS' MEETING UPDATE :

Figuring out your Fellowship's finances

You're probably aware that the Regional Treasurers from all of AA GB and Continental Europe meet in York every January. This is to receive information from the Honorary Treasurer about the current financial position and what has happened in the last year, as well as to share our treasury experience, strength and hope from around the country. One of the things we also work hard on is sharing ideas as to how to communicate information to the whole Fellowship. Our experience is that often treasury is something that people don't want to talk about, as the common perception is that money and spirituality don't mix, yet they absolutely do - we even have a leaflet about it! ('The Pot - Where AA money and spirituality mix')

You may have noticed some recent articles in AA Service News from treasurers; this is one of the things we've started doing to increase treasury transparency. We also decided to share some of the topics we discussed at our meeting this year - hence this article.

Honorary Treasurer's Report

The Honorary Treasurer presented the audited figures for the Charity, and these were published in advance of Conference. The key takeaways are as follows:

- In the last year GSO income has increased by £60,517 - the increase has mainly been from publications
- Our costs have increased (partly due to the cost-of-living crisis and partly as a result of doing more PI work since Covid) by £191,854.
- Several Conference approved projects have also taken place in the last year resulting in increased costs
- This means that we are currently eating into our W2 (GSO's prudent reserve)
- GSO currently has a W2 shortfall of £346,615.

WARRANTY 2 (W2): *the charity's prudent reserve*

In order to meet the Charity Commission's requirements and Warranty 2 in Concept 12, GSO has a reserve to meet future costs. This is 1.25 times the previous year's expenses. Another reason for the importance of W2 is that, although the charity can budget for some costs such as rent and salaries, the work that we - the Fellowship - ask the General Service Board to do is unknown until Conference each year.

Ideally, Tradition 7 contributions will need to increase for the General Service Board to be able to continue to do the work which we, the Fellowship, (through Conference) ask it to do.

The more we do to carry the message, the more we need to contribute as a Fellowship.



PRUDENT RESERVES: *how much is too much?*

One of the messages which we continue to work to get out is the importance of the flow of money through the structure. Many meetings and intergroups hold onto funds above the suggested prudent reserves. The suggested amounts are:

At group level - 1 months running expenses

At intergroup level - 3 months running expenses

At region level - 3 months running expenses (although each region varies)

Whilst every group is autonomous and may have different financial commitments, there is a difference between spending money at local level on important primary purpose projects and money sitting in the bank 'in case' a project turns up. One of our treasurers made a great statement on this matter: 'Money in the bank cannot carry the message'.

Questions you might consider at any level of service:

Does our prudent reserve realistically reflect our group's running expenses? Has it been inherited? Is it worth adjusting?

Do we have a few different prudent reserves? If you do, what purpose do they serve?

At intergroup level, might it be helpful to have a budget to calculate a more realistic prudent reserve?

The following is taken from a recent AA Service News article regarding prudent reserves: -

"Holding money in a bank account or a cash box 'just in case' it might come in handy or because 'that has always been the amount', or 'that's what it was when I took over' is perhaps not the best use of members' contributions. Whilst a big bank balance is what we may personally strive for, holding money stops the flow needed for all our services to continue to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

The next time you put money in 'The Pot' perhaps ask yourself if part of it is flowing through the service structure and helping to carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic or is it sitting in a bank account? doing nothing? Perhaps ask your treasurer at your next group conscience?"

TRADITION 7 CONTRIBUTIONS

Choices we make around our Tradition 7 contributions are always incredibly personal, as our financial situations often change throughout our time in the Fellowship - sometimes increasing and sometimes decreasing.

Here are a couple of questions that some of us have asked ourselves recently about our Tradition 7 contributions:

“How many years of my sobriety have I kept putting the same amount in the pot, whilst inflation has been going up and while my financial situation may have been improving? “

“As AA has given me back my life, the chances are I’m going to a few less meetings per week. When was the last time I reviewed my contribution per meeting so that my overall weekly contribution isn’t dropping? “

LEGACIES

Due to a recent increase, AA members can now leave a legacy to AA of up to £20,000.

FINANCIAL REPORTING AND TRANSPARENCY

You may notice a new format in the Quarter 1 report. Some regional treasurers have been working with the Honorary Treasurer on this in order to bring more clarity to the reporting.

We also discussed the timeliness of reports from the GSB. Quarter 1 reports will always be slightly delayed as they are dependent (as with any reporting system) on the final audit of the previous year. GSO are working to put processes in place to keep the wait for financial reports to a minimum, whilst maintaining accuracy.

CONFERENCE FEES

There has not been an increase in the contributions regions are asked to make toward Conference costs since before Covid. The contribution is worked out as the cost of 2 nights’ accommodation with full board. Whilst GSO pays the majority of Conference costs, the amount paid by regions for their delegates will need to increase annually, in line with rising accommodation and food costs, starting with Conference 2026.

BANK CHARGES

We discussed bank charges and the fact that it looks like most banks are beginning to charge for accounts which have dual signatories. In order to safeguard AA money, dual signatory accounts are still suggested as best practice: a monthly cost is worth it to safeguard Fellowship funds. The suggestion is also that there is always a third authorised signatory so that if anything happens to one of the other two signatories, AA’s money will still be accessible.



GIFT AID CONTRIBUTIONS

We discussed the pros and cons of gift-aiding contributions.

There is a disadvantage with direct (Gift Aid) contributions to GSO, which is that the money doesn't go through the service structure.

The advantage is that if someone is a UK taxpayer then their contribution can be gift aided - *adding an extra 25% to their contribution.*

If you're able to - how about making a gift aided contribution directly to GSO on your anniversary? Maybe you could pay your gratitude week contribution directly to GSO?

If you were to send a completed Gift Aid form to GSO, any contributions you make directly in the future will be gift-aided and therefore increased by 25%.

INTERGROUP TALKS

Consider inviting your regional treasurer to your next intergroup meeting. Regional treasurers are happy to attend intergroups to discuss financial matters and treasury. This gives groups and GSRs the opportunity to ask questions about, and gain a better understanding of, Fellowship treasury.

We hope this has been helpful and remember: If you have a question about Treasury - ask a Treasurer!!

Yours in fellowship,

**John G (Treasurer South West Region) &
Gillian R (Treasurer London Region North)**



Did you know?

Following a recommendation by Conference 2021 (*Committee 5, Question 3*) regarding the transfer of archive material to the Borthwick Institute Archives, the Alcoholics Anonymous Archives Catalogue is now the 4th most requested catalogue on the Borthwick Institute's website.

Archive information and how to request access can be found on the website:

<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/about-aa/aa-borthwick-archives/>

Please continue to send **your** archive material to the GSO Archive to be added to the collection.

See Chapter Eleven: Archives of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain for more information.



Conference 2025 Committee Recommendations

All recommendations were passed with a two-thirds plus majority, with the exception of Committee 2 Question 3 which was passed with a simple majority

Committee No. 1

1. On behalf of our Online AA meeting, we are writing to request a definition of 'Cross Sharing' to be read out at meetings. The reason for this is that it has become a popular phrase in meetings in our region, yet there is not clear understanding of what this means. This has led to some people thinking that they cannot relate to a concept or theme that another person has shared in the meeting. When we have discussed this as a group, members offer up many different interpretations. We do not want a misinterpretation to inhibit member's connections and shares in meetings. Yet we are sensitive to people in meetings telling others what to do or commenting on the quality of that other person's recovery.

As such, we contacted the AA head office (AAInformation@gsogb.org.uk) to request any literature that may exist on cross-sharing. This was the response to our question:

"Cross Sharing"

The phrase 'cross sharing' seems to be coming into common parlance in AA however, it is not contained in any AA literature nor does GSO have any interpretation of its meaning or any knowledge of the origin of the phrase. I believe it would be useful if the Fellowship could come to some conclusion on this and similar issues which of course could only happen at AA's Conference. I would like to suggest that your Intergroup draft a question for Conference on this issue to be received at GSO before the end of August 2024, unfortunately, it is too late for the 2024 Conference. It is up to the conscience of each group how it handles matters such as these.

We believe that groups, as a whole, would benefit from having this definition at hand so that the quality of sharing is in the spirit of recovery and fellowship.

This Committee recommends that the following definition of cross-sharing be included in the Structure Handbook at (p105) in the Chapter titled 'The Group' in the section titled 'Participation'.

In line with Tradition 4, groups may wish to provide some guidance on how we share our experience, strength and hope at meetings:

"All members should feel safe to share their experience, strength and hope. Interruption, unsolicited advice or direct comment are often referred to as 'Cross-Sharing', and this is to be avoided".

As it says in the Big Book:

'A man may criticise or laugh at himself, and it will affect others favourably, but criticism or ridicule coming from another often produces the contrary effect.'

Big Book pg.125

Vote: Unanimous

2. What guidance can Conference provide to ensure the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous are truly open to all those who have a desire to stop drinking - regardless of problems other than alcohol?

Many people come to the Fellowship with other problems especially addictions. Some groups are concerned that we may be creating barriers to recovery for multi-addicted sufferers. They feel we may not be sufficiently welcoming to them as a solution to their problems, if we have an overly restrictive interpretation of the Third Tradition.

Other groups find that when some members identify only as an addict it is very concerning and confusing for a new member coming in with only a drink problem, particularly at closed meetings.

Some Fellowship experience suggests that newcomers with multiple issues are being put off our Fellowship as they are not hearing that the desire to stop drinking regardless of your other issues and afflictions is what unites members. They are hearing 'you are not welcome here unless your problem is solely with alcohol.'

The recommendation of this committee is that the existing literature and our Traditions provide sufficient guidance on this matter. Tradition 3 [long form] ensures that the doors of AA remain open to all with the desire to stop drinking:

'Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought AA membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group, provided that as a group they have no other affiliation.'

This committee suggests that groups make use of the existing literature [e.g. as referenced in the question background], and including but not limited to:

1. The Twelve Traditions - especially T1, T3, T4 & T5
2. The 12 Steps & 12 Traditions pg. 139 (Tradition 3)
3. 'Problems other than alcohol' pamphlet
4. Both sides of the Blue Card for open & closed meetings, statements of purpose
5. Open / closed meetings in the Structure Handbook pg. 102
6. Participation – Structure Handbook pg.105
7. The Non-Alcoholic addict – Service Handbook pg. 18
8. The Language of The Heart - 'Problems other than alcohol' pg. 222

Furthermore, it is essential that newcomers find identification as alcoholics at our meetings, regardless of other issues. Additionally sponsors have an important role in guiding members with our Steps & Traditions.

Individual groups have autonomy over their meeting scripts & format, and the secretary can intervene to ensure that our spiritual principles are observed. If we focus on what unites us rather than what divides us, our Fellowship will survive to be there for all alcoholics who are yet to come.

Vote: Unanimous

Minority opinion from the floor was the essence of the question has been lost. People feel they're not welcome with other addictions when they come to our fellowship, that literature already exists, which is not being read, so to repeat they need to read the literature is not answering the question.

3. Review new Service Positions Executive Summary for the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain.

Introduction

Service at all levels within the Fellowship is an important part of our recovery, as well as vital to AA's existence.

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.

ALL 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.

Survey

AA conducts a survey of the Fellowship every five years [TYP0 remove 'since']

After Share and Roundabout sections add a line:

In Continental European Region there is also the publication Arena News

Also Propose to make the following changes:

Further Amendments

To Probation Criminal Justice Service wording (as approved and submitted by PCJS Subcommittee):

Alcoholics Anonymous relationship with Probation/Community Justice Systems (CJS) is vital in providing a link for those involved with Police, Courts, Prison - on Release, Probation and Social Services.

We work across all areas and levels from using the chit system in groups to cooperating with CJS workers. This offers hope to alcoholics involved with the Probation/CJ systems looking for a way out of the merry-go-round of alcoholism.

Include compulsory DBS/Disclosure & PVG check requirement in First Response Online Sub Committee & Chat-Now (as run by the Charity).

Minority Opinion

Patrick (London North) disagrees with compulsory DBS as it discourages 12 Step Work

Vote: 17 For, 1 Against

Minority opinion from the floor that if the Charity choose to carry out DBS checks on their own employees, that's fine, but is shouldn't be imposed on the Fellowship.

4. Review revised Chapter 10 of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain – Telephone Services.

Q4 Report Amendments to Literature Question Telephone Service

10.2 Our traditions of autonomy and self-support apply to all helplines **in line with Tradition 4 and**

Tradition 7

Change word monies to money

Emergency services

Call.... on 999 (UK ONLY), 112 (EUROPE)

Insert correct link for telephone service (link does not work)

Final paragraph

Contact your local telephone liaison officer

Vote: Passed with 2 Abstentions

Committee No. 2

1. Can the Fellowship consider inclusivity and add clarity as it relates to special interest groups within the AA structure, so we remain within our traditions?

The committee has understood that this question is asking us to add clarity on Inclusivity as it relates to special interest groups.

This committee understands inclusivity to mean including all and everyone.

Being truly inclusive involves being genuinely curious about other ways of thinking and being, allowing those variations to exist and thrive in the same space. Being part of a group doesn't only look one way – people bring a diverse set of lived experiences to the group that we can all benefit from (Autumn 24 Service News reference).

The 12 Traditions should always underpin all aspects, including inclusivity, safeguarding and special interests of AA groups and meetings.

The AA guidelines state on the AA GB website –

AA GB Website - Members/Meetings/Starting a new group:

"It's important to know what your group can't be if it's to be part of the AA Fellowship.

AA meetings are non-restrictive; groups that are not open to ALL alcoholics cannot be registered and listed with the AA's General Service Office (for example a "women-only group" will not be registered). This was in response to Conference 2007 C1 Q2.

Our committee recommends:

- a. Make these guidelines clear on the Pink Form when opening a new Meeting/Group
- b. Make these guidelines clear in the info pack sent to new meetings
- c. Make it clear in the Meeting Finder that Special Interest Meetings are open to all (subject to Open/Closed criteria).
- d. Make it clear in Public Information talks etc
- e. The guidelines should be changed to: "AA meetings are non-restrictive; groups that are not open to ALL alcoholics cannot be registered and listed with the AA's General Service Office (for example a "women-only group" will not be registered but a **"women's group" would be).**"

The committee recommends that each special interest group should agree what happens if someone outside the normal membership attends.

Vote: Yes 18 / No 0 / Abstention: 1
No minority opinion

A minority opinion from the floor that the last sentence was a bit ambiguous when it talks about normal membership, there is only one requirement for membership for AA meetings.

2. Would the fellowship and conference please advise if they believe that the terms Open and Closed should be changed?

If yes, what should they be changed to?

Would the fellowship consider if meeting finders should be updated with notes defining what Open and Closed or the new terms mean?

This Committee had an exhaustive and in depth discussion about the terms Open and Closed and agreed these should stay as they are. We explore potential issues related to these terms, particularly for newcomers and professionals, and developed these recommendations:

a. The committee has found different definitions across the website and literature for the terms Open and Closed. We suggest that these should be consistent and recommend these definitions of Open and Closed as stated in the AA GB Structure Handbook (page 102 Group Meetings).

The Closed Meeting is intended for alcoholics and for those with an alcohol problem who have a desire to stop drinking.

The Open Meeting is intended for alcoholics and non-alcoholics e.g. family, friends and anyone interested in AA.

b. Could GSB ensure that the definitions of Open and Closed are displayed prominently in appropriate places on the AAGB website such as Find a Meeting page, on the results page of the Meeting Finder; on the actual meeting details page; at the top of the Intergroup Meetings List that's automatically produced on the Intergroup microsites homepage; in the "Download PDF Meeting List".

c. The website has checkbox options for adding Open and Closed to the filters on the search page.

Voting - Yes: 17 / No: 1 / Abstain: 1

Minority Opinion:

1. The term closed should be removed as it has for many years been a confusing term to newcomers/those yet to find the rooms. Fellowship was suggested as a replacement term for Closed.

2. One region decided to remove the term Closed from its meeting finder due to the possible confusion

One delegate felt that both terms Open and Closed are confusing and should be removed.

3. Review revised Introduction, Point 3 – What professionals have said about Alcoholics Anonymous, AA Service Handbook for Great Britain.

Our committee voted and passed with a majority vote with recommendation of the following change: Cochrane Evidence Review and Authors' Soundbites - AA/12-Step Facilitation (AA/TSF) Works.

Voted: Yes: 15 / No: 2 / Abstention 2

Minority opinion:

A delegate expressed the quotes from Sir Isaac Newton and Tom Hanks were felt to be inappropriate and should be excluded. The quote from Henry Kissinger was also considered inappropriate.

4. Review AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, Chapter 6 (Health), Point 6.13 - Alcoholics Anonymous/12-Step Facilitation (AA/TSF) NICE Recommendation and Cochrane Evidence Review

The NICE Quality Standard (QS11) '**Alcohol-use disorders: diagnosis and management**', commissioned by NHS England, published July 2023, provides 'best practice' recommendations in England and Wales. The Quality standard is the new Gold Standard for Alcohol-use disorders (AUDs).

HLOs can mention this information when they talk to professionals and adults seeking help for an alcohol-use disorder, noting that it does not come from AA, and being mindful of Traditions 6, 10 and 11.

QS11 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 set out in QS11, **Quality Statement 2** states:

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

This is relevant to the 12-step programme offered by AA.

Further information on the NICE QS11 can be found at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs11>
Cochrane Evidence Review

The Cochrane Review of 27 relevant scientific studies showed that AA/TSF produced similar benefits to cognitive behaviour therapy and motivational enhancement therapy on all drinking-related outcomes, except for continuous abstinence and remission, where AA/TSF was superior. This is achieved largely through the long-term use of TSF and enduring AA participation. AA/TSF 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.)

The Cochrane Review can be found at:

https://www.cochrane.org/CD012880/ADDICTN_alcoholics-anonymous-aa-and-other-12-step-programs-alcohol-use-disorder

In this AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, Introduction, Section 3, 'What professionals have said about Alcoholics Anonymous', there are quotations from and the link to a YouTube interview about the Cochrane Review with co-authors, John Kelly and Keith Humphreys.

YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgMjTlwh_LA

RESPONSE:

This document was agreed as read above.

Voted: Yes: 17 / No: None / Abstain: 2 / No minority views

Committee No. 3

1. Would Conference recommend creating a new leaflet explaining the use of the language in the Big Book and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and the historical period it was written.

The Plain Language Big Book was frequently mentioned as already addressing this need although it should be noted that the timing of the question coincided with the Plain Language Big Book becoming available in AAGB.

This committee has considered the question carefully and concluded that a new leaflet is not necessary.

Majority view

The Plain Language Book is now available and this addresses many of these issues.

Sponsorship : Many regions felt explaining the language and historical context is a sponsor's role.

Resource Allocation: Concerns about using time and money that could be directed to other work e.g Plain Language 12 and 12.

Consistency Issues: Difficulty in deciding which words to explain and potential for diluting the message.

Limited Effectiveness: Comments that leaflets are often not read or available

Minority view

Sponsorship is not uniform. In this context, a leaflet could provide support.

There was acknowledgment that language barriers do exist, particularly for members with diverse needs and for those for whom English is not their first language.

Discussion points

Digital Solutions: Website features like hover-over explanations or online resources. On the AAGB website landing page consider inserting a one line sentence saying eg, we would like to draw awareness to the fact that the language of the BB is of its time and concentrate on the message.

Minimal Additions: Bookmarks, brief inserts, or prefaces in future editions. These could offer flexibility in reaching all those who need AA. Obviously, costs will be incurred but this should not be the primary consideration.

Promote Existing Resources: Better awareness of the Plain Language Big Book and other available materials

Group Solutions: Having a "dictionary person" in meetings who can explain terminology.

The Twelve and Twelve portion of the question was largely ignored in responses.

Some regions had mixed opinions with no clear consensus.

Vote: unanimous

Minority opinion from the floor was that it is not clear and concise, and it could be very easily misinterpreted.

2. Would Conference consider recommending changing the terms of service for positions within intergroup and region, to attract more members into service by increasing or decreasing the term.

Our Committee does not recommend changing the terms of service either at intergroup or at region. The current terms of service are suggested and are a good balance between length of commitment and building effectiveness in the role. Please refer to Traditions 4 and 9.

It is suggested that service sponsorship focuses on AA's Third Legacy of Service.
Ref. Service Handbook (2024 edition), p13. 1.5

Vote: unanimous

3. Review AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, Introduction, New Point 5 – for the new Appendix – the former Chapter 4.

The committee recommends deleting the words 'considered to be' from the second paragraph so it reads

'Whilst this is not part of AA service...'

Also at the end of paragraph 3 add the words 'and service'.

Vote: unanimous

4. Review AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, Chapter 13, Publications new section 13.6 Literature.

Service Handbook
DRAFT

For inclusion into the PUBLICATION Chapter

13.6 Literature Group

Each **group, being** autonomous, selects the officers its members feel are necessary for the smooth running of the group. Most groups select a Literature Secretary, who has a known period of continuous sobriety of at least one year, and have shown themselves willing and available to give dependable service through regular attendance at meetings.

The duties of the Literature Secretary include but are not limited to ensuring that the group has available its own copy of the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) and **ordering and keeping the group supplied** with Conference approved books and pamphlets published by AA, which **are** available from GSO.

Other duties for a **Literature Secretary** may be:

- Putting together selected packs of literature for newcomers, making sure the stocks are replenished
- Ensuring that literature is on display and available to members at group meetings, encouraging members to buy from the collection
- Purchasing literature from the AAGB online bookshop
- Encouraging individuals/groups to combine orders to reduce postage costs
- Making available the current edition of the AA Service News and Structure Handbooks for Great Britain, especially at business meetings
- Passing any accounts for payment of literature to the Treasurer
- Helping the Secretary to circulate AA Service News, convention flyers, notices from GSO, etc.

Intergroup and Region

There tends to be no literature roles at intergroups and regions. Each service discipline usually sources their own literature. Some intergroups, however, do have specific roles for **literature**.

Literature Sub Committee

Aims

The Literature Sub Committee ensures that our literature remains current in line with AA's Steps, Traditions and Concepts and is always available for AA members to use in their recovery and service. In this way, the message is carried to the still suffering alcoholic in a clear and concise way.

Objectives

Under the guidance of Conference via the GSB, the Literature Sub Committee is responsible for drafting new and reviewing existing literature. It collaborates with other service disciplines by reviewing and updating their literature.

To serve as a member of the **Literature** Sub Committee you would need to:

- Have five **years**' sobriety
- Have an understanding of the **Steps, Traditions and Concepts**
- Be able to commit for a period of four years whilst working collaboratively with others
- Be able to attend meetings up to four times a year - twice in York and twice online
- Be happy to work in smaller teams on projects.

Experience at intergroup and region would be an advantage, and experience at Conference would be useful but is not necessary.

Apart from getting involved and growing within service, members benefit from discovering the joy, satisfaction and excitement gained in creating new literature as directed by Conference. They see the difference this makes to AA's primary purpose.

Working as part of a team, where everyone is listened to and all ideas are considered, members acquire skills such as active listening, flexibility, assertiveness and learning the practical values of AA's Traditions and Concepts.

Vote: unanimous

Committee No. 4

1. Would the Fellowship discuss how to improve our common welfare at all levels of AAGB and encourage groups to seek their own conscience in regard of the safeguarding guidance when an issue arises, e.g.

- a. outside the law**
- b. within the law**
- c. if someone feels they have been falsely accused**

Committee 4 had a full discussion on the safeguarding question and all opinions were considered. There was confusion within the committee in relation to safeguarding which reflects the confusion within the Fellowship. The consensus is that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone in the Fellowship, and any issues should be dealt with at group level with clear guidance from GSB in accordance with the AA Traditions.

It is the conscience of Committee 4, to improve our common welfare, there should be clarification on 'The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous Safeguarding Policy Document' and the 'Safeguarding and Personal Conduct' Chapter 5 in the AA Structure Handbook.

We ask GSB to:

1. Review and amend Chapter 5 in the AA Structure Handbook, specifically paragraph 5.1, to distinguish between:

- a) The Safeguarding Policy which applies to the charitable organisation (AAGB)
- b) Guidance provided by the remainder of this section of the Structure Handbook Section 5 – Section 8.

2. Review The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous Safeguarding Policy Document (specifically the language used)

Vote: Unanimous

Minority opinion from the floor to remove the word safeguarding, because the term safeguarding has legal connotations and can lead professionals we work with to have expectations we may not meet, such as reporting to the 'relevant authorities'.

2a. Can Conference review the use of the phrase “men for men and women for women” in the ‘Sponsorship: Your questions answered’ pamphlet, and make recommendations?

2b. Would Conference recommend producing a card, for groups to read out when a newcomer is attending, giving guidance around seeking help/sponsorship from members within the Fellowship?

2a) A man for a man and a woman for a woman has often been suggested as working best today. However, we recognise that sexual and/or romantic attraction, regardless of sexuality or gender identity, can be problematic and may create safeguarding issues. So we have answered that as Yes and we would like the pamphlet to reflect what is currently in the Structure Handbook.

2b) No

Vote: Unanimous

Minority opinion from the floor was that there could have been two votes, one on the first question and one on the second question.

3. Review revised AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, Chapter 3 – AA and Electronic Communications

Committee 4 propose the following changes to Chapter 3 in the AA Service Handbook:

- An additional sentence be added to Section 3.8 Online Responder Service and Chat Now Service

When applying to be a responder, applicants will also need to agree to a basic DBS/Disclosure & PVG check, **as they will be volunteers for the charity.**

Minority view recorded from the Fellowship: Section 3.8 should be removed from the handbook as it is conflicted with Tradition 2 and Concept 4.

Vote: 17 For / 1 Against

Minority opinions from the floor that if the Charity choose to carry out DBS checks on their own employees, that's fine, but is shouldn't be imposed on the Fellowship.

I don't volunteer for the Charity; I volunteer for the Fellowship.

4. Review AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain, The General Service Board page 162, add new paragraph between the part paragraph at the top of page before the first full paragraph.

Yes

Vote: Unanimous

Committee No. 5

1. Would the fellowship consider the creation of a video which is aimed at encouraging Men into AA. This would complement the suite of videos already available for Women, Armed Forces, People of Colour, Bluelight Services and LGBTQIA+.

Committee 5 considered the question and recommends the Board to investigate the creation of a shorter form video aimed at encouraging men into AA, and report back to Conference 2026.

Committee 5 recommends the board consider:

- a. A lower production cost option
- b. Ease of use / visibility within the AA website
- c. Challenging stereotypes

Decision: Vote Unanimous

Minority opinion from the floor that if we create this which is essentially a better resource than what has already been created for other groups of people, we will then have a better resource for men in AA than for all of the other groups.

2. Would the Fellowship discuss and offer experience of the use of the 'Pink Form' and suggest ways for groups to more regularly update their group information.

The committee felt the use of the name 'Pink Form' caused some confusion and instead suggests using the name, 'Group Information – Registration and Update Meeting Form'. It was the committee's experience that best practice was for the GSR to regularly and promptly complete the form with up-to-date information

What is the purpose of the form?

- a. Transmits accurate up-to-date information to newcomers, members, and visitors
- b. Registers a meeting with GSO meeting finder
- c. Potentially provides access to Public Liability Insurance (check via Intergroup/Region)
- d. Can help acquire a group bank account if required
- e. Helps AA archivists chart group history
- f. Provides unique group number
- g. Facilitates access to GSO notifications and information
- h. Keeps telephone and online response information up to date
- k. Supports the CHIT system

Where is it?

- a. Some Intergroups appoint Liaison Officers to help groups register
- b. Some Intergroups give paper instructions to their GSRs
- c. Available online (AAGB website)

When?

It is the committee's experience the Group Information – Registration and Update Meeting Form should be used when:

- a. Registering a new meeting
- b. A meeting closes
- c. Group details change
- d. Or at least on an annual basis

Suggestions and Recommendations:

- a. Changing the name of the form to 'Group Information – Registration and Update Meeting Form'.
- b. The Committee recommends that AA literature (all formats) consistently reflects the name change
- c. GSO creates a QR code to be used in AA literature that directs members to the form
- d. Requests the Board considers ways to automate and streamline the group registration and update process whilst remaining GDPR compliant
- e. The Board considers use of the AA World Services meeting guide technology
- f. The Committee suggests the board creates a 'How To Guide' to complete the form digitally (e.g. drop-down guides)
- g. Pull out copy in centre pages of the AA service news
- h. The Committee recommends the board brings a report to Conference 2026.

The Committee's experience was there is a significant number of groups either not registered or disengaged with the AA service structure, and therefore we suggest this should be addressed as a separate question at a future conference.

Vote 18 for 1 against

Minority opinion: the group secretaries or designated officer should have responsibility for the form as groups may not have a GSR.

3. Review AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, Old Chapter 4 now Appendix X: For AA Members Employed in the Alcoholism Field.

Experience has shown that a member, well-informed about AA, combined with a professional responsibility, can be invaluable to both roles.

AA contributors to this guidance overwhelmingly agreed that it is professional skill and experience, not AA membership, which qualifies one for these positions.

Understanding the Twelve Traditions and how they were developed is encouraged, especially Traditions Six, Eight, Ten and Eleven. If in any doubt, seek guidance from a sponsor.

An individual working in the alcoholism field may well be the only AA member that their colleagues have ever met. It should be made clear from the start that they do not represent AA.

In accordance with Tradition Six, members working within agencies should discourage the use of the AA name in its promotional literature or using language that implies endorsement by AA.

AA does not recommend people for jobs in the alcoholism field. Individuals may recommend another member, but on the clear understanding that the reference is strictly personal.

Anonymity

Whether or not we disclose AA membership is up to the individual, remembering that it is important not to violate Tradition Eleven. Saying publicly or in print, on television or anywhere else "I am an alcoholic" or "a recovering alcoholic" does not break an AA Tradition provided AA membership is not included in that statement. It is vital to remember never to reveal another member's identity.

Helpful Hints:

- a. Personal recovery comes first, recognising the separation between AA and the job;
- b. If possible, speak to other AA members employed in similar fields;
- c. Consider your personal and professional boundaries before:
 - Sponsoring a current client or service user
 - Attending the same meeting as your current clients or service users; remember that they may feel uncomfortable. It would be useful to remind them that you are there as an AA member only.

Common sense should always apply!

(Revised 2025)

Vote: Unanimous

Committee No. 6

1. Would the Fellowship share its experience on how our message of recovery can be carried to online platforms such as:

- YouTube
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Facebook
- Snapchat
- Twitch
- Vimeo

Whilst remaining faithful to our Traditions.

The conscience of Committee 6 is as follows –

The experience of the Fellowship is limited in the use of online platforms; however, members recognise the need to explore these opportunities to carry our message of recovery. We are also aware of the potential challenges of doing so.

As the world continues to shift online, there's a growing conversation about whether and how AA can find a meaningful, respectful space within the digital landscape.

Some of the challenges we have identified are –

1. Misinformation online
2. Protecting Anonymity
3. The AA name being brought into public controversy
4. Fear of violating the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts
5. Concern over a lack of expertise in this area

Some of the potential benefits are –

- a) Reaching a greater number and a more diverse audience of still suffering alcoholics
- b) Carrying the message to a younger generation
- c) Greater visibility and awareness (we are anonymous not invisible)
- d) Cost effective and flexible
- e) Clear signposting and accessibility

Committee 6 recommends that the General Service Board produces and provides guidance for the Fellowship on platform-neutral social media use.

Committee 6 further recommends that the General Service Board explores and implements a secure and non-interactive presence for AAGB on a selection of social media platforms to signpost visitors to the AAGB website, with a view to expanding our social media presence moving forward.

As stated in the summary of the AA and Electronic Communications chapter of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain 2024 (3:10 p.50)

“Electronic Communications are evolving swiftly. New features and services, which are not possible at the time of writing the guidance, will appear. There will be greater advantages to be gained – and greater pitfalls to avoid. We are responsible – not only for making the best use of service and facilities available – but also of ensuring that it is used with integrity and in accordance with our Traditions. If we do this, we will not go far wrong.”

Vote: For 15, Against 0, Abstained 1

2. Review AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, Chapter 1 – Public Information.

Chapter 1 : Public Information

Public Information is **part of the** Third Legacy of Service in action. Along with Recovery and Unity, we have inherited this legacy from the co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous. One of the co-founders, Bill W, had this to say:

“To reach more alcoholics, understanding of AA and public goodwill toward AA must go on growing everywhere. We need to be on still better terms with medicine, religions, employers, government, courts, prisons, mental hospitals and all enterprises in the alcoholism field.”

Concept XI – Twelve Concepts for World Service

AA needs effective communication with the general public and professional communities involved with the alcoholic.

1. Introduction

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. ~~Our first aim of this chapter is to suggest ways in which members can carry out PI work.~~

~~The aim of this chapter is to guide you through the PI process, from the formation of a committee through the functions such a committee can perform. What follows suggests ways members and local PI Committees can do PI work.~~

Those undertaking PI work for the first time, at group, intergroup or at regional level, should be encouraged to read this Handbook. It is important to remember that ~~the Traditions of AA should be observed- all PI work should be carried out within the confines of AA's 12 Traditions.~~ We should remain anonymous at the level of press, radio and TV on a personal basis, but that does not mean that we cannot identify ourselves fully when dealing with professionals. We are not secret; those doing PI service work need to be accessible by name and address to those with whom we wish to conduct our business.

~~Our second aim is to tell the~~ **Our purpose is to inform the** public through as many organisations as possible what AA is, how it works, and where contact can be made. We should make clear that it has worked for us. An important element of this is a willingness to spread the message by ~~making contact with contacting~~ appropriate professionals and services. Sponsorship into service and working with other PIs at committee level provides experience for this type of service.

2. What is PI?

PI work is also referred to as ‘Carrying ~~the our~~ message to the general public’. Experience has shown that intergroups and regions are the bodies that can most usefully discuss PI matters, and from which one or more PI committees can be formed.

Groups are encouraged to undertake local PI working with their intergroup where possible. PI is a co-operative venture; communication across intergroup is essential, and the sharing of service experience is **usual commonplace**. Positive steps should be taken to keep the health, prison, probation/courts and the criminal justice service in Scotland, and all other liaison officers informed of PI developments.

The service structure of AA encourages the appointment of **an Intergroup/Region Regional PI Officer** to help co-ordinate events, information and skills.

3. The PI Committee

For many years local Public Information Committees (PI Committees) have been the way the message has been carried to the professional community and, in many places, this is still the case. A ~~PIG~~ PI Committee at intergroup may be formed of members from the Fellowship, and chaired by the intergroup PI liaison officer.

In deciding what activities the ~~PIG~~ PI Committee initiates in relation to other service disciplines, the following extract may be useful:

"In keeping with our Traditions of placing principles before personalities, who or what committee carries the AA message is not important as long as our message is carried to the still suffering alcoholic." (reference TBI)

Another thought to keep in mind is, 'eEasy does it'. Once you get started with the formation of a committee, it is a good idea to take it easy at first until you are sure just what the needs are, and how many people you have available to get the job done. For some committees the first task is to inform AA members about co-operating with professionals, sometimes to correct misconceptions about whether AAs should be taking the initiative in going out to non-AA members. A few newly formed ~~PIGs~~ PI Committees have reported resistance from members who fear they will be doing 'promotion' by letting professionals know about AA. Whether or not misconceptions exist, it is always a good idea to make sure there are members available and eager to start before setting up ambitious projects.

4. Communication

Communication ~~within AA~~ about PI work is important for ongoing initiatives. Some ~~PIGs~~ PI Committees:

- share with one another via region or by exchanging minutes of their meetings
- share activities and ideas with the General Service Office (GSO) for possible inclusion in AA Service News and other relevant communication channels
- are visible to other AAs through regular attendance and participation at group and other AA business meetings
- share service experience, encouraging sponsorship into service
- let the Online Response Service and intergroups know whom to approach when there is a need for a PI contact

Often, the AA programme works when an active alcoholic wants help, and an AA is on hand to give that help. Professional services such as doctors, alcoholism agencies, treatment facilities, employers, or even a relative may be crucial to getting that alcoholic into recovery because of the message that had been carried to them.

5. Working within the Traditions

~~The role of a doctor or a member of the clergy in relation to an alcoholic is far different from the AA custom of sharing experience. Professionals necessarily work on different assumptions from ours. It is helpful to non-alcoholics — and vital to our health as a Fellowship — that others understand our assumptions.~~

Our guiding principles as a Fellowship are contained in the Twelve Traditions. The responsibility for preserving our Traditions rests with AA's and with us alone. In order to preserve them, we must understand them. We cannot expect non-AA members to comprehend and observe the Traditions unless we are well informed about them ourselves.

Thoughtful reading of AA literature, such as 'Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions' and the pamphlets, 'AA Tradition – How it Developed', and, 'An Introduction to our 12 Traditions', is recommended for anyone who works with non-AA members. In addition, the first few pages of, 'How AA Members Co-operate with Professionals', point out some ways all the Traditions are relevant for PI. ~~and which Traditions that Let us take a look at a few Traditions that on the face of it seem unrelated to PI work. The First Tradition points out that personal recovery depends on unity – something we can all keep in mind when, for example, new members cause controversy within the group. The Second Tradition reminds us that a loving God as expressed in the group conscience is our ultimate authority and is a help when we are tempted to impose the 'right' way of working the programme to seemingly unwilling newcomers.~~

~~The Third Tradition reminds us that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking; and that we cannot judge whether another alcoholic has a desire to stop drinking. And the Fifth Tradition brings us back to the primary purpose of any AA group – to carry the message:~~

~~The Traditions most directly connected with PI are Six (co-operation without affiliation), Seven (self-support), Eight (AAs should always remain non-professional), Ten (no opinion on outside issues), Eleven and Twelve (anonymity); apply most directly:~~

~~Tradition Six: "An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose."~~

~~Many alcoholism programmes run by external agencies co-operate closely with AA and their representatives speak glowingly of the 12 Step programme. To what extent should AA members participate in the programmes of these agencies? Experience has given us a simple guiding principle: we do co-operate, but we do not affiliate. We want to work with other alcoholic organisations, but not be merged with them in the public mind. We should be careful to make it clear that AA is available as a resource for other agencies, but public linking of the AA name can give the impression of affiliation. To avoid this, we should always be careful to make it clear that we are always available purely through co-operation and not affiliation:~~

~~Tradition Seven: "Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." As active alcoholics, many of us were always looking for a handout, and part of personal recovery lies in making ourselves responsible human beings. The same principle applies to the Fellowship; and much of the respect of AA accorded by non-AA members results from this Tradition. Handsome gifts may have strings attached. Our effectiveness as a Fellowship and our usefulness to other organisations that call on us is greatly enhanced by the fact that we are free to do what we do best – share a programme of recovery with no outside obligations:~~

~~Tradition Eight "Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers."~~

~~This Tradition asks AA members to stick to what they know best, personal recovery and Twelfth Step work, not to become authorities on the whole field of alcoholism and recovery. We share only our individual recovery programme, but we are not professionals. We have no official definition of alcoholism. Although we are the victims of the illness, we have no profound knowledge of either its cause or 'cure'. We should also never comment on the practices of other alcohol treatment agencies just because they vary from our own beliefs. Most AAs have had the experience of explaining to a cynical newcomer: 'No, I don't get paid for talking to you. I do it because it helps me stay sober.' Just as professionals can reach people AA might never encounter, we can get through to active alcoholics in a unique way that a professional may not be able to offer. Tradition Ten: "Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy."~~

~~Here again, a Tradition reminds us to do what we know best and not be diverted from our primary purpose. By staying away from public controversy, we strengthen AA's unity within and its reputation in the public eye:~~

Tradition Eleven: "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films."

Tradition Twelve: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities." The anonymity Traditions remind us that our responsibility is to make the AA way of life look attractive to alcoholic and non-alcoholic alike. They alert us, too, to the dangers of pushing AA on professionals rather than providing information for others to use in the most appropriate way. The assurance of anonymity for the newcomer is also crucial, and a professional who refers an alcoholic to AA appreciates being given that assurance. We find it helpful to emphasise that our anonymity Traditions mean we are a Fellowship of peers, and that we learn to help others without expecting credit or reward.

This subject has already been touched upon in the introduction to this document. It is worth repeating, however, that there is an important distinction between person-to-person anonymity and anonymity at the media level. It is strongly suggested that the book, "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions", is read by all those who seek to understand this and of course, the other Traditions:

When a PI COMMITTEE finds itself in trouble, it is usually because its members do not fully understand the Traditions and thus, cannot adequately explain them to non-AA members. The Traditions are our Traditions and the responsibility for preserving them is ours. Many PICs place fundamental importance on informing their working members about these Traditions — what they are and why they came into being. Only with this groundwork can PICs effectively communicate AA principles to the general public and to representatives of the media. We cannot expect others to understand and observe the Traditions if we are too poorly informed of them ourselves. Sadly, we have also found that lack of information can lead to intolerance. For example, if an AA member's anonymity is broken at the media level, it is often quite simply the result of a misunderstanding. Members who jump to the conclusion that the media (or an inefficient PIC) is at fault, and who write indignant letters or make hasty phone calls, would do well to think twice. A courteous note explaining the Traditions, either to the member involved or to the media, is helpful; a snap judgement is not. The same principle applies when other Traditions are broken by AA members or non-AA members. Love and tolerance is the AA way.

6. Contacting professionals

A very important part of PI work is contacting professionals for example to:

- establish formal contact between the organisation and AA
- ask for an appointment with a representative of the organisation
- provide speakers to give talks about AA and share their experience
- provide literature

~~When carrying out PI work, ideally, two members should present.~~ Sponsors may wish to invite sponsees, as this will provide a valuable learning experience. ~~When carrying out PI work, ideally, two members should present.~~ On some occasions it may be convenient to play an AA Conference approved video.

Members can provide AA published literature at a talk, and it is suggested that a telephone number should be provided for attendees to contact AA following the meeting. Most people at a meeting of non-AA members want to know what AA is and what it does, rather than hear a drinking story. Speakers may wish to draw upon the AA Preamble and Twelve Traditions and also provide a short history of AA. PowerPoint slides may also be used. Some presentations and templates are available on the AAGB website. [\[Please insert www. Link here\]](#)

~~It is important that members of AA remember that they are guests and co-operate fully.~~

We should all bear in mind the statement of PI adopted by the Fellowship in 1956:

"In all public relations, AA's sole objective is to help the still suffering alcoholic. Always mindful of the importance of personal anonymity, we believe this can be done by making known to him, and those who may be interested in his problems, our own experience as individuals and as a Fellowship in learning to live without alcohol. We believe that our experience should be made available freely to all who express sincere interest. We further believe that all efforts in this field should always reflect our gratitude for the gift of sobriety and our awareness that many outside of AA are equally concerned with the serious problem of alcoholism."

What your committee decides to do will be dictated by your own needs and experience. The suggestions here are just that – suggestions. It is hoped they will spark your thinking and give you leads on new ways to approach professional people where you are.

7. Personal identification

Conference 1998 decided "In today's society there is an ever-increasing requirement for protecting the identity of members of the Fellowship."

When working with outside agencies for PI work, the host may require individual personal identification, such as a letter from intergroup or region, passport, ID card, driving licence or letter of invitation. It is important that members of Alcoholics Anonymous remember that they are guests and co-operate fully.

Notification of the arrangements made for visits or talks including, where appropriate, the sponsoring PI Officer, should provide the names of members attending to the host organisation. It is important that Alcoholics Anonymous does not become invisible – some loss of anonymity is inherent in PI work.

8. Ways to proceed

The following are some of the ways AA members in your area can tell others about AA, and to keep the friends of AA working with us.

8.1. Public Information meeting for non-AA persons

A public information meeting can do a lot to strengthen relationships with non- alcoholic friends and help make new friends. Such meetings can be set up by the PI committee and sometimes groups hold public meetings (to celebrate the group anniversary, for example). Many groups regularly invite to their open meetings: doctors, ministers, police officers, employers, public service workers and others who deal with active alcoholics.

Many such meetings benefit from being in the day time, as most professionals find this more convenient in their schedule. It is a good idea to send invitations well in advance to professionals before a meeting is planned. Send invitations to friends of AA and to all who are interested in the problem, such as, doctors, judges, alcoholism agencies, clergy/spiritual leaders, HR directors, social workers and the media.

8.2. A suggested meeting format

Short introduction by AA Chair who should try to cover the following:

- welcoming remarks: AA's willingness to help whenever it can
- anonymity: A request that all present respect the anonymity of AA members present
- what AA is and is not
- **AA is not a religious programme but a spiritual way of life**

- AA is inclusive and ~~open to all regardless of age, gender, personal circumstances or ethnicity~~
- AA is available 24/7 ~~and we are self-supporting through our own contributions at the point of entry~~
- ways of contacting AA
- ~~AA's Tradition of self-support~~

As many non-AA members have helped us, a non-AA guest speaker may be invited to discuss AA from their point of view and experience. An AA may speak briefly about their drinking experience, the AA programme and especially their recovery. Some time could be provided for questions from visiting professionals. There could be concluding remarks from the Chair, thanking all those present, reminding them of how AA can help and where it can be found, and asking those attending to encourage other professionals they know to come to future open or public meetings.

It is not always necessary to include non-AA speakers but experience shows that many **PIGs PI Committees** have had larger attendance and support from other professionals when a non-AA speaks well of our Fellowship.

Many **PIGs PI Committees** use the 'public meeting' as an introduction to professionals and other interested parties. Professionals attending such meetings could then be contacted by members offering literature, telephone service numbers and lists of local meetings as well as giving further talks about how AA can co-operate.

8.3. AA Speakers at non-AA meetings

Talks to outside groups are perhaps the most widely used and are a popular method of PI. Detailed suggestions on this means of communication will be found in the pamphlet, 'Speaking at non-AA Meetings'. The pamphlet, 'AA at a Glance', is often used as a give-away item when members speak to non-AA member's groups.

8.4. Participation in non-AA member's events

In observance of Tradition Six (co-operation but not affiliation) many **PIGs PI Committees** participate in events sponsored by non-AA organisations. PI liaison officers are often asked to participate in Health Fairs or voluntary organisation open-days, sponsored by local colleges, public health organisations etc. Members of the local **PIG PI Committee** frequently staff an AA booth to provide any information requested. Some health and social care providers along with intergroups and regions organise Alcohol Awareness days which provide other opportunities for AA to co-operate.

Display units and literature for use in these events can be obtained from GSO. Experience shows that by attending such events, the message is not only carried to those visiting but also to other voluntary or professional organisations attending the sponsored event. This sometimes creates follow-up actions for the **PIG PI Committee**.

8.5. A Public Information workshop for members of the Fellowship

Many **PIG-PI Committees** have found that holding workshops to look at local needs and opportunities, the service structure and the Traditions are a great way of exploring ideas and settling on methods to carry the message. Here is an example:

An all-day workshop was planned. It was opened with the Serenity Prayer, followed by a reading of the short form of the Twelve Concepts. The Fifth Tradition was also read and related to the First Concept. The Tradition says that each group has but one primary purpose – to carry the message; the ultimate responsibility and authority belong to the groups. A brief presentation on PI was given. The bulk of the day was devoted to discussion. Breakout groups were organised to discuss specific topics with a secretary appointed to take notes and report back.

Discussion topics were assigned to each breakout group. Suggested topics could include:

- what is the best way to form a **PIG PI Committee**?
- how do we form a working plan for the committee?
- what is the best way to reach and engage with professionals?
- how can we sponsor members of the Fellowship into service?
- how can we support doctors, clergy, and police?
- how can we bridge the gap between professionals and AA?
- what types of presentations are appropriate for professionals?
- what is AA's attitude towards professionals?

Each breakout group then presented a summary of their discussion to the full workshop.

8.6. A public information newsletter

One **PIG PI Committee** chair started a PI newsletter, sharing news of what was going on in the area, urging members to get involved and to help find others who wanted to participate. One newsletter suggested the use of literature as a training tool for new committee members and as handouts to professionals where appropriate. The chair included lists of literature appropriate for these purposes, and offered to work with local committees. The use of Conference approved literature for all PI work was recommended.

The newsletter was circulated to all Group Service Representatives, suggesting that attendance at intergroup and participation in **PIG PI Committee** meetings would be a great way to get involved in carrying the message.

9. Suggested professional contacts and helping organisations

Some suggested organisations that you can provide information and help to are:

- Alcohol Treatment Units, NHS Alcohol Support, community-based alcohol services
- Agencies involved with delivering work related assessments to health benefit claimants
- Age UK
- Approved Premises
- Armed Services
- Carers e.g. Carers UK
- Chambers of Commerce
- Charities
- Citizens Advice – a source of a wide range of organisations
- Civil Service – www.gov.uk, follow 'contact' links
- Deafness – e.g. Deafness Support Network. (The Big Book is available in BSL on DVD)
- Dentists
- Ethnic Community Groups
- GPs – also Practice Nurses and Practice Managers within the surgery
- Health and Safety organisations
- Health Service e.g. District Nurses, Community Psychiatric Nurses, Health Visitors, Nursing Tutors, Health Education Services, to name a few
- Hospitals e.g. Accident and Emergency, Medical and Surgical wards, substance misuse
- Homeless hostels
- Housing Aid and Advice Centres
- Housing Department of Local Authority
- JobCentre Plus – e.g. Personal Advisors, Employment Engagement Team, Disability Employment Advisor, all of whom may welcome greater awareness
- Libraries – may be willing to display posters, literature, videos etc.
- Magistrates – The Clerk to the Court can be very helpful e.g. by displaying posters and passing on literature to the magistrates
- Mediation services – divorce and separation specialists

- Pharmacies
- Police e.g. Police Community Support Officers, Community Liaison Officers and Domestic Violence Units
- Prisons
- Probation Services – besides dealing with offenders, they can provide help and support with severe family problems. May also use the chit system
- Public Health and Health Planning departments
- Rotary Club
- Samaritans
- Schools and colleges
- Spiritual leaders
- Trades Unions
- Vision support (Literature is available in Braille and spoken word Big Book on CD. There is also a soundtrack on the Big Book BSL DVD)
- Welfare Rights
- Youth and community services

Regular contact with organisations is important as staff may change frequently. Check the local press to ensure that the AA telephone number and website details are listed in the Helpline Services. Make posters and contact cards available to doctors' surgeries, pharmacies, police stations, Citizens Advice, churches etc. Also make available AA contact details to charities and other organisations.

10. Suggested Literature at events

Please find following some suggested literature that may be appropriate for distribution at events (available from GSO):

- An Introduction to our 12 Traditions [Please provide link to PI Document Store on [www.](#)]
- Speaking at non-AA Meetings
- A Message for Professionals
- How AA Members Co-operate with Professionals
- A Member's Eye View of Alcoholics Anonymous
- Problems other than Alcoholism
- Understanding Anonymity
- Is AA for you?
- A Brief Guide to AA
- The AA Member, Medication and other Drugs
- The God Word

(Revised 2024)

Vote: 16 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions

All recommendations were passed with a two-thirds plus majority, with the exception of Committee 2 Question 3 which was passed with a simple majority



***Bruce B reflects on AA's role in prisons,
and editing AA's 'Beyond the Bars' prison
newsletter***

The first edition of 'Beyond the Bars' was produced and published in March 2018, and was the product of a discussion by the Prisons sub committee as a way of informing the Fellowship - specifically those who do prison service - of any developments, changes and personal stories of recovery from alcoholism whilst in prison. The editor at that time was Adam D who held this position until he rotated off the sub committee. There was a gap of a year or two until October 2023 when I volunteered to take over the editorship, a challenge that I took on with great enthusiasm, and one that I still enjoy today. The first article published was by Davy from Glasgow, entitled 'The Greatest Liberation'. The second was a short piece on the history of AA in prisons, which mentions HMP Barlinnie. At the time, HMP Barlinnie was about to celebrate 58 years of continuous service and this year it celebrates 65 years of service from Alcoholics Anonymous.

The first prison meeting was formed in Wakefield prison on 27th December 1957, when the Leeds group of Alcoholics Anonymous responded to a prisoner who had learned of AA while in prison in America. As this meeting was treated as an experiment, for a period of 5 years no other prison groups were formed in England and Wales until 1963. After this time, as prisoners were moved round the country they would make contact to request help in getting a group started in the prisons and AA groups began to flourish. A meeting was formed in Scotland in Barlinnie Prison in 1960.

The editor of the Scottish Daily Express had learned of AA's experience in American prisons and was keen to see if AA could be introduced to Scottish prisons.

He made contact with AA and found the members willing to help. A few weeks later, a meeting was set up in the prison. As in England and Wales, when prisoners were moved around the prison system in Scotland, they made requests for meetings to be held in other prisons, and soon meetings were held in Peterhead, Edinburgh, Perth and Gourrock prison. As Alcoholics Anonymous holds no record of its members, it is difficult to establish how many of its current members first made contact with AA in prison, but evidence suggests that many of those who attended prison meetings continued to attend AA on release and go on to lead sober and worthwhile lives. AA has transformed the lives of many inmates.

It was my privilege to take over as Editor of 'Beyond the Bars' in October 2023 when I joined the sub committee for a second term. I find the work involved to be extremely rewarding, casting a net far and wide in search of contributions for inclusion.

We have published stories of recovery from Andro Z, Regional PLO in Sofia, Bulgaria; Pav, Intergroup PLO for Polish Speakers in London; Nancy K, prison meeting facilitator in California, USA; Mark B, Prison Sponsor; Velicko T, Bulgaria. We have also had stories of gratitude from the ladies of HMP Styal and Alan, a lifer of 16 years sobriety in HMP Barlinnie, Glasgow. We have also published articles from most of the members of the Prisons sub committee.

In the later editions we have included lyrics of songs pertaining to incarceration and poetry from a young Polish girl orphaned by alcoholism. This is all available to download in the Document library on the AA GB website <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/members/document-library/>

As noted above, this year HMP Barlinnie is marking 65 years of continuous service of Alcoholics Anonymous, so it's an ideal time to celebrate this remarkable achievement. It is thought that this is the oldest AA prison meeting in Europe, although I am still seeking verification of this fact.

There will be a celebratory meeting to held within the prison on 10th June 2025, which will be attended by members of the HMP Barlinnie group, invited guests and there will be 5 speakers, all of whom met AA in prison and have remained sober since.

The next edition of Beyond the Bars will be dedicated to this momentous occasion, and those that made this event possible.

Special thanks go to Glasgow Region, and the staff of the Northern Service Office in Glasgow for putting in the hard yards to make this event possible.

Bruce B, Editor, 'Beyond the Bars'



Do you have a question for Conference 2026?

All submissions received by August 31st will be reviewed fully by the Conference Steering Committee (CSC). In assessing their suitability for Conference, the CSC will be guided by the criteria set out in the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain - "a major subject or subjects of topical importance affecting the Fellowship in the widest possible way..." - together with criteria established through Conference recommendations.

Submit your question by 31st August 2025 to:

sharon.smyth@gsogb.org.uk

It is suggested that submissions be formulated using the following template:

1. Submit a clear and concisely worded motion, topic or question.
2. What issue does this proposal item address?
3. Has this proposal been discussed within the AA GB structure? i.e. Intergroup / Regions / Board and or their Sub-Committees. If so, is there anything you would like to mention?
4. Provide background information that describes and supports the reasoning for the proposal. List background material(s) included with the proposal.
5. How will the alcoholic who still suffers benefit or the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous improve its ability to carry the message of recovery from this proposal?
6. Do you consider there to be any costs associated with implementing this proposal? If so, would it require the Board to appraise its viability?
7. Please, provide a primary contact for the submission.
8. Final comments.

Your Fellowship Calendar needs YOU!



The Calendar & Diary Editor is looking for photographs for publication in the 2026 Fellowship Calendar.

Please take a moment to look through the photographs which you have taken with your mobile phone, to see if there are any which you would like to see published as part of this project.

These should be:

- Landscape format
- Minimum file size of 2mB, but larger files preferred (sufficient resolution for an A4 print)
- No recognisable faces or advertising

Of course, it doesn't have to be a mobile phone photo.

Digital cameras are good as well. I am sure that everyone has at least one photograph of which they are proud, and think others would like to see and appreciate as well. If you have more than one photo that you think is good, send them all.

Please submit all files to: AAShare.Roundabout@gsogb.org.uk. If you are sending a lot of photos and need to use a file transfer service, please send the link to:

sharecal.diaryeditor.sc@aamail.org

Kick-off at the ...

Leeds Employment Fair

On March 21st, I and a fellow member of AA attended the Leeds career fair in Elland Road football stadium.

We attended the event as there was predicted to be around 45-50 exhibitors and between 2500-3000 tickets purchased, and our aim was mainly to speak with employers with regards to any employees that may be suffering with alcoholism. We were there between 10am and 2pm, were approached by an array of people, and answered many queries during this time.

Having only been set up for around ten minutes, an exhibitor came over to the stand to say how grateful he was for Alcoholics Anonymous, as his stepdaughter had struggled with alcoholism for years until she found the Fellowship, and she had recently collected her 1-year chip.

We had many people come and ask if they could take flyers and information for relatives and friends, and one exhibitor actually opened up about his own struggles with alcohol. Whilst my fellow looked after the stand, I ventured out to the employers' stands to ask how they dealt with potential alcoholics and was pleased to hear that many do have AA signposted on their internal wellbeing pages.

A member of a local college asked if we could attend the fresher's week to give guidance and share awareness on the subject, so we exchanged contact details and hope to have this in place in the coming weeks.

Another company - a fairly large Leeds based business - also asked if we could attend the workplace to advise managerial level staff on how best to direct employees possibly struggling with alcohol.

It was amazing to see how many people approached our stand and openly talked about their own concerns with alcohol, and we were only mistaken as the AA vehicle breakdown service once!

Tina, West Riding Intergroup Employment Liaison Officer



GSB Vacancies

GSB Vacancies - Service on a Sub Committee

Rotation creates the opportunity for new members to join a General Service Board (GSB) Sub Committee (SC). The primary purpose of a SC is to deliver Conference recommendations.

If you have experience at intergroup and region and are 5 years+ sober, then we would welcome your application.

All sub committee members go through an application and interview process. Current vacancies are listed quarterly here in AA Service News, together with a deadline for submission for application, and the criteria which you will need to meet as part of your application.

General requirements

- Understand the relationship between the GSB and a SC
- 5 years+ continuous sobriety
- Good knowledge and application of the 12 Steps / 12 Traditions
- An understanding of the AA structure
- Ability to 'carry the message' to audiences outside of AA
- Work with outside organisations
- Create and encourage open communication channels at intergroup and regional levels
- Work collectively as a team
- Ability to assist in delivering relevant Conference recommendations

Additional requirements

- Have worked in a complimentary discipline to the one being applied for
- Understanding / application of the 12 Concepts for service
- A degree of confidence in establishing relationships to local, regional or national bodies outside of the Fellowship
- Conference experience

Successful candidates would be expected to attend four meetings a year; usually two in York and two online. The term of service is usually 4 years.

How to apply

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.

Your application must be endorsed with a covering letter from a currently serving officer of your intergroup or region. Your application and covering letter will need to be sent to Jenny Pryke at GSO by the application deadline.

Applicants will be interviewed online by two GSB members of the Nominations Committee. The next deadline for applications to join a sub committee is **8th August 2025**.

For any application, we would suggest you contact the Trustee responsible for the SC you are interested in working for. All vacancies are listed below together with relevant Trustee contact details.

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Current Sub Committee Vacancies

- **Archives**
Email John C on: trustee.northeastregion@gsogb.org.uk
- **Armed Services**
Email John C on: trustee.northeastregion@gsogb.org.uk
- **Employment**
Email Tony S on: trustee.lrs@gsogb.org.uk
- **First Response Online**
Email Holly A on: trustee.southwestregion@gsogb.org.uk
- **Health**
Email Carmel G on: trustee.southeastregion@gsogb.org.uk
- **Literature**
Email Max J on: trustee.midlandsregion@gsogb.org.uk
- **Public Information & EComms**
Email Tim B on: trustee.southmidlandsregion@gsogb.org.uk
- **Probation/Community Justice**
Email Hamish McS on: trustee.eastscotlandregion@gsogb.org.uk
- **Roundabout - vacancy for Assistant Editor**
Email Cath, the Editor of Roundabout, on: roundabout@aamail.org
- **Share - vacancy for a Liaison Officers' Coordinator**
Email Charon B on: trustee.lrn@gsogb.org.uk
- **Survey**
Email Max J on: trustee.midlandsregion@gsogb.org.uk
- **Telephones**
Email Levey P on: trustee.cer@gsogb.org.uk
- **Young People**
Email Holly A on: trustee.southwestregion@gsogb.org.uk

Dear Fellowship...

How Alcoholics Anonymous GB Came of Age

Five years ago, as the sun was shining outside, we huddled indoors, terror stalking our streets and spirits, and the Fellowship sprang into action: reaching out online, with screenfuls of new faces talking recovery, being of service, demonstrating unity. Our gift of desperation turned the base metal of fear and isolation into a golden global Fellowship. A Higher Power, the tingle when the magic of identification sparked that pulse of electricity and made the hour...zoom by.

Members of the Fellowship rapidly shared their know-how, cascading knowledge of existing technologies throughout our structure so that one alcoholic could connect with other suffering alcoholics and stay sober; our collective in the telephone box, that moment when a group of drunks decided to have a meeting with like-minded folks and stay safe at home. And within a week or two, thousands of groups transformed into a digital Fellowship, our Third Legacy in the Third Age.

At GSO, staff updated 5,000 new meeting details on our website, with strands of best practices pulled together from all over the world to create a central point of information and guidance, and a map to navigate the new digital world. Working in solo shifts, other GSO staff packed and posted the literature now flying out in ones and twos to thousands of homes, rather than to hundreds of groups, as the Big Book became as vital for sobriety as in the early days of the Fellowship.

That somersault helped the Fellowship survive and thrive, become more accessible to previously underrepresented ethnic minorities, women, people with a range of accessibility issues and young people. Silently, anonymous as Zphone 1935, a new member could test and taste the waters of recovery several times a day before taking a plunge into the Fellowship. Alcoholics in the US and the UK, Ukraine and Zimbabwe, Australia, Japan, India and Mexico connected, talking the language of the heart. We were united in recovery and service, platforming - if not rocketing - via waiting rooms into a new dimension.

In Great Britain, lockdown demonstrated the real life-saving value of decades of dedicated liaison service with professionals. Public Health England ensured that AA was given a vital exemption from the strict lockdown, by writing a specific legal exemption that allowed a sponsor and sponsee to physically meet and, therefore, not drink. It was AAGB's equivalent of the Lasker Award moment: recognition of our contribution to public health. AAGB had 'Come of Age' as an integral part of society, and there are people who are alive today because of that exemption. It is a most powerful reminder of the singular value of the roles of liaison officers in carrying our message into society and showing that the alcoholic in recovery is a person of worth.

Now, straddling digital and physical platforms, our Fellowship continues to grow and thrive through unity and the service of sharing our recovery with the still suffering alcoholic. We take popping online for a meeting for granted, allowing us to connect 24/7 - whether to relieve us from craving, resentment, isolation or to repay our debt of gratitude. And our liaison officers can, with a swipe, access hundreds of professionals at online workshops, ensuring continued awareness of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous and its value to society.

This we owe to AA's future: Our Third Legacy in Action: The Fellow is Anonymous; the Fellowship is not

Ranjan B, General Secretary

Race2Day Working Group

Welcome স্বাগতম स्वागत है स्वागत है **Karibu**
Bem-vindo मद्दागत है வருக خوش آمدید



“The only requirement is a desire to stop drinking”

“We are people who would not normally mix”

Page 17 Alcoholics Anonymous Fourth edition

New pamphlet forthcoming - we need your stories!

The Race2Day working group is excited to announce that we are going to create a pamphlet to reflect stories from People of Colour (PoC), as well as those from white ethnic minorities, dual heritage and the travelling community in the UK.

We are keen to share your voice, experience, strength and hope in finding and sustaining sobriety in AA. so, please get writing, in no more than 250 words and send them to Pragnya at [chair.
\[race2day.wg@aamail.org\]\(mailto:race2day.wg@aamail.org\)](mailto:race2day.wg@aamail.org).

Thank-you, we look forward to hearing from you

2025 MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Every five years the Fellowship of AA in GB and the English Speaking Continental Europe Region (CER) undertakes a membership-wide Survey. Driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Survey was the first to be undertaken online, the 2025 Survey will be using the same method.

The overarching aim of the Survey is to capture current trends and learn more about the Fellowship in GB and CER so that AA's message of recovery can be disseminated effectively to the still suffering alcoholic. Additionally, the survey will inform the Fellowship, Conference and the GSB how AA resources can best be allocated and communicated to the professional community and the Fellowship.

The Survey is carried out over two phases: the Group Survey, due to launch in May 2025, followed by the Members Survey in June. To participate your group simply needs to be registered with GSO and have an AA group email address to be contacted on. If you are not registered, please contact groupinformation@gsogb.org.uk. If you are not able to undertake the survey online but would still like to participate, paper copies are available on request from emma.wilson@gsogb.org.uk



Scan the QR code or use the link below to see the main findings of the 2020 Membership Survey.

<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/2025/01/15/survey-2025/>



Chiltern & Thames Intergroup AA Awareness Event for Professionals

Over 60 professionals from the fields of health, dentistry, social work, criminal justice, housing, young people, employment and education attended the Awareness Event hosted by Chiltern and Thames Intergroup on the morning of 24th September 2024. Some invitees were existing contacts already known from Intergroup liaison work, but many were not. They were joined by three speakers: Dame Carol Black, Dr. Samantha Duggan and Matthew Barber (Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley). We had Al Anon representation and several members of AA gladly pitched up to do some service. Our basic aim in organising the morning was to help professionals gain a better understanding of Alcoholics Anonymous and, in turn, be able to signpost those they work with in their professional capacity who have issues with alcohol dependency.

Before the day itself, which was the brainchild of our then Chair, Louise, there was much for the planning team to organise: securing the venue, sourcing speakers, sending out invites for attendees to register and writing the materials, as well as enlisting helpers for the morning itself. It was my first time of 'rolling up sleeves' in helping to organise such an outward-facing event for AA since becoming

involved in our Intergroup as an Officer almost three years ago. In a 'previous life', my default would have been to either stall at first post or steamroll ahead single-handedly but, being in the Fellowship has shown the fruits of 'working with' - taking the lead from those with more experience in the planning of such events, while steering on delegated tasks but being 'one of many' and working in unison within the parameters of AA's Traditions and guidelines.

The relevancy of this, from the AA Service Handbook rings loud:

"In most of these activities the responsibility will be shared, creating a deeper bond between groups of members all trying to carry AA's message. Those members who do this work in isolation do not receive the same benefits as those who carry out tasks with one another. Sharing in every activity is the way the Fellowship of AA works best."

(AA Service Handbook for Great Britain 2024, Section 1.7: 'Service within the Intergroup')

We asked questions when people registered for the event and ascertained that:

- 78% were coming to their first AA event
- 67% were not confident in explaining AA to someone else
- 71% had not been to an AA meeting (and for several who had, it had been some time ago)

The evaluations that were then completed after the event demonstrated, across the board, a greater awareness of AA following the presentations, and everyone who came stayed on after the speakers and attended the AA 'demo' meeting! Being able to witness a live, unscripted meeting was very well received but there was also unanimous affirmation (both on the evaluation forms and verbally on the day and in dispatches) of the value of the whole morning. The only criticism was that the event was too short!

The event flyer

One of the aspects of the morning that was a great success was the inclusion of a 'myth section' on the handout. This was very deliberate and provided a resource to be taken away and read subsequently. As an officer in liaison work, I have been surprised by some of the misconceptions held about Alcoholics Anonymous, some of which can be barriers. However, I write that without judgement because I held some of those beliefs myself before coming into the Fellowship. We felt that in tackling some of the misunderstandings, it would lead to a greater understanding of AA so professionals could expound what we can offer with more confidence.

So, we offered the following to read on the flyer for the morning:

Six Common 'Myths' about Alcoholics Anonymous

1. "You have to be religious." *False!*

Many people get well in AA and the transformation from active alcoholism to sobriety is miraculous! However, AA is not a religion.

The word God is in our Twelve Steps and literature originating from AA's founding in 1935, but the 12 Step Programme of recovery is spiritual rather than religious. This affords freedom to find a 'higher power' of our own choosing. For some this 'power' or spiritual aspect comes through prayer and meditation, for others it is found in the love and support received - for many it is from both. We might also say that GOD stands for 'good orderly direction'.

2. "You have to be abstinent when you come to AA." *False!*

You don't have to have stopped drinking to 'walk through the doors' of AA: the Fellowship is open – and free - to anyone with a desire to stop drinking. We all take our sobriety 'one day at a time', no matter how long it has been since we last had a drink. Our saying 'keep coming back' encourages all of us to go to meetings regularly so that we can get support – first, to stop drinking - and then to stay sober.

3. "You have to keep AA a secret." *False!*

AA is not a secret sect. We are free to tell others about our own personal experience in AA if we choose to and members may be involved in public recovery activity. We respect other members' anonymity though, so that all feel safe to share openly and honestly in meetings. Our Traditions state that we do not talk about being in AA in the media so that the fellowship remains protected. Trust is fundamental to the Fellowship.

4. "I can't be an alcoholic because my drinking is not that bad." *False!*

The "alcoholic" word originates from AA's inception in 1935 and sometimes people come to AA fearful of the stigma attached to the word, or thinking that their drinking is 'not that bad'. However, through identifying with others' experiences, they may come to realise that AA offers them a solution - regardless of how much they drink or the severity of consequences that have been caused by their drinking.

5. “AA is not organised and haphazard.”

False!

While AA is not a professional organisation, it is a Fellowship with a clear structure and is grounded in common principles and agreed routines. Individual meetings might differ in terms of format, length, readings chosen - as decided by each AA group. They start and finish on time and use the 12 Traditions to help guide them for the “common welfare” of all those who attend.

6. “AA is hierarchical and intimidating.”

False!

While it takes courage to first walk through the doors of AA, once in the Fellowship, the meetings are a safe place for everyone to listen, share and contribute. There are opportunities to do service in every group; from greeting, being secretary, treasurer, doing the washing up or finding speakers. No one is told what to do: our 12 Step Programme is based on ‘suggestions’, although these have been ‘tried and tested’!

It was great to receive comments on the evaluations like “This was one of the most powerful events I have ever attended”. In a follow-up meeting with the same NHS professional who was keen to take up AA's support further, I asked her to explain why she had used the word powerful, and she described how she found the AA meeting “authentic”. She said that professionals hear about AA, but it is in abstract or not fully understood but the event, and considering the myths, taught someone who was already an advocate even more about how AA works, its appeal and benefits.

Sitting in on an AA meeting gave insights that went far beyond what could be read in a pamphlet or explained second-hand. The testimonies of members who shared during the ‘demo’ meeting testified to AA's lifelong support for those who embrace what is on offer. A similar message about recovery's possibilities came across from the 30% attendees who offered feedback on the morning. They commented on the “openness of the process”, the “reaffirmation that the illness can affect anybody from all walks of life” and about finding “depth in (listening to) personal stories”.

Event Highlights

The morning highlighted the importance of and benefits in doing service in AA in so many ways. The live AA meeting gave insight into how the Fellowship works, but the unity of Alcoholics Anonymous was also evident in the smooth running of the morning - practicalities of car parking, friendly greetings, the refreshments, putting out the seats, the scrolls, the literature and what went on behind the scenes too. Members ‘rocked up’ to do their bit, listened to the speakers, to each other and chatted. Not just pulling the strings or standing on the sidelines, we were present and ‘topping up’ on fellowship.

From the professionals’ point of view, what we showed were the mechanics of a meeting with an order of events including the reading of The Preamble and participation when closing with The Serenity Prayer, the safe environment, the respectful listening to each other and the sharing back and identification, typically spontaneous. In this, was authenticity.

Reflections of the event

From a personal point of view, the 'demo' meeting was a real meeting. Hearing a main share I had not heard before and the sharing back from others I had not met previously did not matter one bit. As in any meeting of AA, on-line or in-person, familiar or new, I was a welcome member at a meeting of AA. There were things said by other alcoholics that I could identify with and share back on. There was a connection that was potent at the time and thought-provoking to ponder further. In this, was authenticity.

I am so glad to have been part of this service connecting me firmly to the Fellowship. It was a successful win-win event. "Service is not only beneficial to others, but also to yourself. It can help you stay sober, develop gratitude, humility, and self-esteem, and connect with a Fellowship of peers." (Alcoholics Anonymous GB website, Service Section).

The whole experience confirmed the importance of AA members 'carrying the message' - on this occasion specifically to professionals who may not be AA members but, having attended the morning, can and will hopefully endorse the 12 Step Recovery Programme of AA and pass it on with clearer knowledge. In a nutshell, without practising service, AA would simply cease to exist.

And finally, the experience resonated with:

"There is an ever-increasing feeling of security within the Fellowship and the sense of belonging is deepened and broadened. We enjoy the fellowship of members from faraway places, whom we might not otherwise meet if we denied ourselves the privilege of service. All of this should improve the quality of our sobriety."

AA Service Handbook for Great Britain 2024, Section 1.8: 'Still more ways to serve'



Closing thoughts

The Fitzwilliam Centre in Beaconsfield may not be a million miles away from where I live, nor the people I did service with that morning come from 'faraway places', but the event on 24th September did give me the opportunity to meet some new fellows, along with an uplifting experience in one of many open 'rooms' of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I was proud to be a part of the Awareness Event and truly appreciated the honesty, trust and unity I have become familiar with - and am grateful for - in my own sobriety.

Andria H, Region Rep for Chiltern & Thames Intergroup

Board Bullet Points May 2025

- The Quarter 2, 2024 –25 Finance Report will be sent out to regional treasurers in early June
- Please consider submitting service-related articles for **AA Service News** to:

editor.aasn@gsogb.org.uk

AA Service News Deadlines

- Autumn –25 July 2025
- Winter – 25 October 2025
- Spring – 25 January 2026

Regional Forums 2025:

- South West Scotland Region 29 June 2025
- Wales & Borders Region 07 September 2025
- South East Region 23 November 2025

Seminars: Health Seminar 27 September 2025

European Service meeting: 13-20 October 2025

The following people will be joining GSB sub committees:

- Anthony B, Eastern Region - Armed Services
- Lee M, North East Region - Survey
- Polly W, South Midlands Region - Prisons
- Kim S, North West Region - Health
- Margaret H, Wales and Borders Region - First Response Online
- Lee C, Eastern Region – First Response Online

The **Share Magazine Sub Committee** has a vacancy for a share liaison coordinator. Anyone interested email *Trustee.LRN@gsogb.org.uk*

PLEASE NOTE: The next deadline for getting sub committee applications to GSO is **8 August 2025**. Sub Committee application forms can be found here: <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/document/sub-committee-application-form/> Please use those forms and not any older documents you may be holding from past applications.

Is your trustee rotating out in April 2026?

Please consider nominating two or more applicants for the role of trustee to your region.

Conference Matrix Updates

- The amendments to the **LGBTQIA+ film** requested by Conference have been made. Participants in the film will see the finished product and following that, the film will be available on the website as a PI tool.
- In response to the request from **Committee 6, Question 1**, the Board is going to put together a communications strategy to help spread the message about AA on a national level, tying in with the Conference request for guidance on social media.
- The **PI and EComms sub committee** have modified the Pink Form as requested and will liaise with AA Service news to announce the changes.
- The concept for the Men's video will go to provisional tender. The condition for this request was around current financial feasibility.
- The requested revision of the **Safeguarding section in the Structure Handbook** to clarify the recommendation has been made and approved by the Board and will be online and in the next printing of the AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain. It references the Safeguarding and Personal Conduct Document which can be accessed via the AAGB website, [Safeguarding-and-Personal-Conduct-Version-3.pdf](#) or by contacting the General Service Office (GSO) to obtain a copy.

Plain Language Big Book

AAGB now has the license to print the Plain Language Big Book, and the next shipment has arrived.

A reminder that **regional and intergroup conventions** must cover the expenses of any sub committee member they ask to attend to do service. The next printing of the AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain will be amended to reflect this and include what should be covered in relation to expenses.

Upcoming Workshops

- First Response Online Sub Committee online workshop 7 June 2025
- Young People's Roadshow, Birmingham 21 June 2025
- Prisons online workshop 30 September 2025
- Employment online workshop 18 October 2025

PI News is back! Regions and intergroups - please send stories and information about what you are doing in PI to Steve at aainformation@gsogb.org.uk to be included in PI News.

The **British Big Book** working group needs more stories. Please ask members to submit stories to trustee.midlandsregion@gsogb.org.uk before the deadline of 1 July 2025. For more information, see the Spring issue of AA Service News.

The **Probation & Community Justice Sub Committee** is looking for people with experience of using the Chit System to write about it and share their experience of the system. Please email: trustee.southeastregion@gsogb.org.uk

The **LGBTQIA+ Working Group** is working on a rewrite of the LGBT Voices publication. If you think you could offer some experience, strength and hope to this project, see here for some guidelines for submissions. <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/members/service/lgbt-voices-working-group-request/>

There will be an **AA Archives** exhibition at the Mitchell Library in Glasgow, from 1 August 2025, running in conjunction with **EURYPAA**.

Northern Service Office, Room 101, Baltic Chambers, 50 Wellington Street, Glasgow, G2 6HJ, Tel. 0141 226 2214 (Monday to Friday 9.30am to 5pm) email: northernserviceoffice@gsogb.org.uk. uk is available for scheduled service meetings, access facilitated by a keyholder system. We can accommodate space for 14 people.

This year's **NSO open day** will be held on Friday 8 August. People in service positions are encouraged to come along and bring a plus one who may be interested in service.

The new **Southern Service Office**, Unit B, 15 Bell Yard Mews, London SE1 3TY, tel. 020 7407 9217 email: sso@gsogb.org.uk now accommodates the Telephone Service running 3-4 shifts weekly and is available for service committee meetings.

Gretchen S

Vice-Chair, General Service Board



YOUNG PEOPLE'S ROADSHOW



JUNE 21 2025 BIRMINGHAM

Please join us to hear AA speakers involved in young persons service, as well as lunch and refreshments, at The Studio, 7 Cannon Street, Birmingham, B2 5EP on Saturday 21st June 10am – 3pm. To register, [click here](#), scan the QR code below, or email Jenny.Pryke@gsogb.org.uk.

This event is for Regional and Intergroup Young Persons Liaisons as well as anyone interested in:

- Learning more about the Young Peoples Liaison Officer role
- What is going on for Young People in AA
- Meeting others already involved or interested in this exciting work.



Travel & accommodation expenses for serving YPLOs (or those going in their place) will be covered by your Intergroup / Region.



Register





Alcoholics Anonymous GB Employment Liaison Seminar

Saturday 18th October 2025

Zoom ID 895 5381 8109

Password 909773

Open to all members of the AA fellowship interested in the employment liaison officer (ELO) role. Workshop organized by employment subcommittee (ESC).

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 10.00-10.30 | My experience as an employment liaison officer.
Resources for the ELO role. |
| 10.30-11.00 | Anonymity, the ELO & service. ESC. |
| 11.00-11:15 | Break |
| 11.15-11.45 | An employer's experience of working with AA. |
| 11.45-12:00 | Role of the employment subcommittee. |
| 12.00-12.15 | Break. |
| 12.15-13.00 | Open forum. |

For more information or questions email employment.sc@aamail.org



Tradition 7

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

Tradition 7 Regional Contributions January - March 2025	Contributions £
Some of these contributions come from regional assemblies, whilst others may come from individual members or groups	
Eastern Region	3,361
London Region North	11,311
London Region South	8,834
Midlands Region	16,267
North East Region	30,641
North West Region	12,067
South East Region	26,331
South Midlands Region	18,987
South West Region	1,700
Wales & Borders Region	1,633
East of Scotland Region	2,623
Glasgow Region	17,008
Highlands & Islands Region	450
Scotia Region	26,428
South West Scotland Region	12,842
Continental European	9,039
Sundry- Unidentifiable receipts	6,678
Total	206,200

In Memoriam

January - March 2025

In Memory of Jess F Lymington £60.00



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:

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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