

Summer 2024

AA Service News

From the General Service Office of Great Britain



**Conference 2024
Committee Recommendations**

12 Traditions Checklist

‘8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.’



1. Is my own behaviour accurately described by the Traditions? If not, what needs changing?
2. When I worry about any particular Tradition, do I realise how it affects others?
3. Do I sometimes try to get some reward - even if not money – for my personal AA efforts?
4. Do I try and sound in AA like an expert on alcoholism? On recovery? On medicine? On sociology? On AA itself? On psychology? On spiritual matters? Or, heaven help me, even on humility?
5. Do I make an effort to understand what AA employees do? What workers in other alcoholism agencies do? Can I distinguish clearly among them?
6. In my own AA life, have I any experiences which illustrate the wisdom of this Tradition?
7. Have I paid enough attention to the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions? To the pamphlet AA Tradition - How it Developed?

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 **new 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

Picture credits, thanks to:
AAGB Image Bank

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

NEW Website Launched

It is with great pleasure to let you know that the brand-new AAGB website went LIVE 13 May 2024!

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

As a reminder, Conference 2022 requested a revamp of the aging and rather inflexible website which had been in use for some time. A specification was agreed, and a short list of selected web development agencies from across the UK were asked to tender. From those submissions, a York based agency – Castlegate IT were awarded the contract and we got straight down to work. A project ‘Team’ was put together comprising a Designer, Developers, and a Project Manager from Castlegate, with Ranjan B and Gillian Thompson from GSO and Tim B, Tom Fox and John D from the PI & EComms Sub Committee. The team worked closely throughout the project. Our Castlegate partners brought a wealth of industry knowledge and experience, whilst Fellowship members of the ‘Team’ ensured we were guided by and adhered to the Traditions, and drew on the collective experience of many years doing service in the Fellowship.

Much work was put in from the outset to brainstorm and agree a design concept. Using the requirements given to us by Committee 2, at Conference 2022 as our starting point, we identified that our primary audience was the still suffering alcoholic looking for help and support. Keeping this in mind, several weeks were spent in hammering out what the new Meeting Finder should look like, and how to keep the site clean to view and simple to navigate. This approach has been followed throughout the other functions of the website so that, for members of the Fellowship, the Shop is easier to use, searching for information and documents has been improved, and Microsites are much more flexible and feature rich.

As a separate project, a new database has been built which feeds Meeting data to the website. It is still vitally important that your Group and Meeting information is kept up to date and current. To help achieve this, there is a new 'Pink Form' (which really is pink!) to register a new Group and a separate update form if you just need to change some meeting details.

We presented a preview of the new website to Conference 2024 and it was very well received with much positive feedback. We hope that the Fellowship is also pleased with what has been delivered.

There is a link to a feedback form at the bottom of each page on the website, so please do let us know what you think. This new website is responsive and flexible and will be continually evolving based on your feedback. We look forward to hearing from you.

help@aamall.org National Helpline 0800 917 7650

Find a meeting

BASKET ACCOUNT SEARCH

HOME NEW TO AA? MEMBERS PROFESSIONALS SHOP ABOUT AA CONTACT

Meetings

[Home](#) // [Meetings](#)

You are not alone. Together, we find strength and hope. You are one step away.

Simply search your town or postcode to find your nearest AA meeting.

For online only meetings the soonest shows first on the day, and time period, you select, but you can also sort by date and time. To send updates, or to register a new meeting, [please use our Pink Form](#).

IN PERSON **ONLINE ONLY**

Your location, town, or postcode (required)

Please enter your town or postcode

Additional requirements

Wheelchair access Sign language Hearing aid loop
 Chit system

Select days

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

Select times

MORNING 7am–12pm AFTERNOON 12pm–5pm EVENING 5pm–10pm OVERNIGHT 10pm–7am

Find a meeting **Clear filters**

Unless stated otherwise, all meeting times are in the current UK time zone (UTC+1).

Board Bullets

May 2024

Chair

The Chair welcomed everyone to the 253rd Board meeting of AAGB
Board Welcomed Gretchen as the Board's new Hon Treasurer and Tom as the new VC.

Hon Treasurer Report

Warranty 2 (W2) is being eaten into and Q2 is currently £28,461 below our W2 reserve. As reminder, W2 is the Charity's prudent reserve only - there is no spare cash. W2 can be found in Concept XII. The Fellowship therefore is asked to please dig a bit deeper, and send reserves down to GSO.

Elections and Nominations

Sub Committee Interviews – successful applicants

- Andrew C **Prisons – LRN** previous sub-committee member on Prisons
- Jane P **First Response Online - SWR**
- Peter H **Health – LRS**
- Norman T **Roundabout Reader - GRS**
- Nicole M – **Survey – LRS**

Chairs Report

People of Colour, Women in AA and Employment in 'Blue Light' services (e.g. emergency) were approved at Conference. The films are only worthwhile if we use them. They will be found on the media page of the new AAGB website by the end of May. A big thank you to all members who volunteered to take part in the films.

Executive Committee

Annual Board workshop will take place in July

General Secretary's Report

NSO – Open day 15th Mar - 30 attendees incs. a Councillor, Dir Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems (SHAAP), 2 reps Human Resources from Glasgow University. Fellowship Archivist developing archive display.

SSO - Open day 08th Mar – 50 attendees incs. NHS, City Police, HMPPS, Fight 4 Change. New London premises found, target date of 1st Sept 24. Telephone Service running 3 shifts weekly. Office available for service committee meetings. H&S, Fire and office training both in office and via video link. Selected literature and merchandise available for purchase: £1k since Dec
6 staff now trained on In-Design to assist with change to 'family look' for publication

Lucile and Steve are redesigning service pamphlets as and when they are due for reprinting. Graham initiating the new Image Bank. He is running the Data Integrity project - contacting IG Chairs / Secs to request updating Confidential Directory. Emma L re-writing web copy in the new plain English style.

Borthwick – New Archivist Emma Hollis, attended Archivist Network with Gary Brannan and Laura Yeoman her Head of Department and Line Manager respectively.

AA Service News Deadlines

Autumn – Jul 25th

Winter – Oct 25th

Forums 2023:

3 per year GSB/GSO presentation, no more than every 3 years per region

- South-East Region – to be rearranged
- South-West Region 02nd June 2024
- North-East Region 28th July 2024
- Scotia Region 19th October 2024

European Service Meeting (ESM)

ESM – 20-22nd October 2025

Jul 24 - ESM steering committee to be held in York

£28,208 paid to WSM to from ESM fund by the full session

Sub Saharan African Service Meeting (SSASM) – Now self-supporting

Development Fund

£ 25,973.04 paid 2023 - £81k Balance

World Service Meeting (WSM)

\$4,000 paid 2023, £9,127 paid 2022, (£10,000 paid also in 2021)

£50K for WSM for Oct. All monies paid from Development fund + WSM own funds. We are bidding for WSM to come to York in 2026, (which will not incur additional spend).

Parliamentary Events

- English - Tues 14th May: 72 Guests, 93 including staff. The sponsoring MP is Rachel Maskell from York.
- Scottish – ‘Anonymous but not Invisible’ date TBA. The sponsoring MSP will be Jackie Bailey
- Welsh Synedd - no date as yet but likely November. The sponsoring Assembly Member will be Peredur Owen Griffiths

National Conventions

- Welsh May 31st -2nd June
- Southern 20th – 22nd September (expected to be self-supporting)
- Scottish 2025 date TBA
- Northern 2025 date TBA

Service Highlights

- **Armed Services** held a very positive and informative and well-attended seminar in May.
- **Online Response** Service needs responders, please contact Holly A **trustee**. southwestregion@gso.org.uk for further details and requirements for the role, or see AA Service News, or the AAGB website Current Vacancies section <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Service/Vacancies>
- **Inclusivity Committee** We have a new Inclusivity Committee which will continue to work on (a) Race Today, (b) will initiate a LGBTQIA+ working group requested by Conference and (c) also

- look at accessibility for all (Hearing, sight, physical needs, neuro-diversity etc.)
- **Liaison Officers** Please note that it is vital that Sub Committees receive Liaison Officers reports where appropriate, they are read by members of each sub-committee for the information they contain.
 - **National Telephones** The new platform will not interfere in anyway with the autonomy of the 39 Helplines or their individual operating process.
 - **PI and E-Comms** **Our new AAGB website is now live!** A big thank you to the PI E Comms Sub Committee and staff at GSO for all their hard work in delivering this project. There is a **feedback form on the home page on the website.**
 - Conference approved **national poster campaign** (JC Decaux) will appear in selected cities in July 2024 and in the autumn for one week each - and in January 2025 for four weeks. After monitoring contact levels, if deemed a success this could be rolled out more widely and copy used by Regions' PI teams.
 - **Image Bank** of digital pictures is now available for use by the Fellowship. If you would like to send in your pictures to appear in our Fellowship publications, please send your pictures in a JPG format, no smaller than 2MB to imagebank@gso.gb.org.uk

Bequests

The legacy that members may donate to AA upon death has increased from £10,000 to £20,000.

Tom Fox - Vice Chair

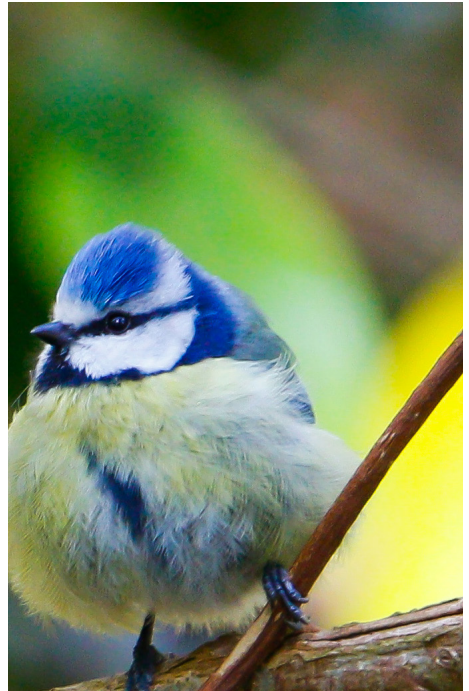
Tom Fox - In Memory

We were shocked to learn of the death of Tom Fox on 15th May. He became a strong advocate for AA many years ago, after seeing its effect on attendees in those Scottish prisons where he worked. He became a non-alcoholic trustee of the GSB in 2020 and devoted himself to helping us present an ever brighter public face.

Tom was elected Vice Chair of the GSB and had been in that role for just 5 weeks since Conference. Our condolences to his wife Kitty (& Blue, their dog).

A fuller obituary will appear in the next issue of AA Service News.

**Justin
Chair**



Conference 2024 Committee Recommendations

Committee No. 1

1. Conference is asked to consider, and make recommendations, for a comprehensive overhaul of the service structure.

Members' availability for service is challenged by unprecedented demands in the workplace - greater job insecurities and pressures on time.

A streamlining of disciplines could reduce persistent vacancies and make carrying the message more effective in changing times.

There are 12 service disciplines at Intergroups and Regions, in addition to the positions of Chair and Secretary. Many vacancies exist also within Board subcommittees.

**Could Employment, Health and Public Information be unified within Public Affairs?
Could Electronic Communications and Telephones become Responding? Is Young People's Liaison essential as a separate discipline?**

Carrying the message with greater effectiveness ought to take priority over the protection of existing individual disciplines.

There are enormous changes in society - AA is part of society, not removed from it.

Whilst this question has generated much helpful debate amongst our fellowship, this committee does not believe a comprehensive overhaul of the service structure is needed.

The main reasons are:

Observing Tradition 4 and Tradition 9

Tradition 4

"each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole."

Tradition 9

“AA as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”

Combining roles makes service less attractive, which increases the workload with a danger of individuals being overwhelmed.

The importance of our third legacy of service. If you reduce the number of service roles it decreases opportunities for service.

The committee observed that there was a second question in combining certain service disciplines.

It was noted that historically, this has already been trialled with chat now, on-line responders, and telephone (at the national level) but this has now been reversed.

Examples were found at group and intergroup level where certain disciplines have merged in accordance with Traditions 4 and 9. Due to vacancies, practicalities, needs at a local level or when disciplines have a natural overlap.

This committee recognises the importance of preserving separate service disciplines. e.g.: Young Persons Liaison Officer and Electronic Communications Liaison Officer.

Vote 19 voted unanimous.

2. **Would Conference investigate the viability in terms of security, cost and anonymity, of opening Conference to on-line observers?**

We did consider whether this was supposed to be a question directed to the Board as conference cannot access the relevant information.

However, the Conference Charter Article 2 would need to be changed by conference. This is with reference to The AA Structure Handbook Great Britain 2023, page 150. This would have to be a new question for Conference.

In addition to the above the conscience of our regions highlighted a lot of positives with concerns and some of these are listed below:

Positives

Transparency

Attraction into service

Demystifying

Inclusivity

Concerns

Anonymity of participants at conference
Security – on-line bombing and safeguarding
Potential costs
Restriction of freedom of speech
Risks undermining the idea of trusted servants. Concept 3

We also felt that:

Some regions already have pre and post conference meetings so members can meet all 6 delegates in person.

General Service Board and GSO are open and are accessible to individual members.

AA Service News have all the reports as well.

Also there is a “General Service Conference” pamphlet already available.

The Final Conference Report is simultaneously distributed to all groups.

Our committee voted against this question unanimously on the grounds that this will not be possible or practically viable via conference to assess the feasibility.

FOR 19 votes – unanimous.

Committee No. 2

1. **Could the conference please give more clarification and detail on situations in which making direct amends is against the spirit of the steps if it is likely to cause harm?**

Context: locally there are various traditions of sponsorship in which sponsees have been told to make these amends e.g. victims of sexual assault have been told to get in touch with their assailants to make amends for harbouring resentment against them (this has included a situation where the sexual assault in question was incestuous); people who have been subject to restraining orders or threatened with restraining orders have been told to make direct contact with those requesting restraining orders to apologise for causing them fear and distress.

The concern is that commands to make these kinds of “amends” bring the Fellowship as a whole and our 12 Step programme into disrepute (particularly in the eyes of other organisations such as Rape Crisis) and has constituted a perceived barrier to being accepted as a member of our Fellowship.

Would Conference consider if the suggestion in step 9 “unless to do so would injure them or others,” applies to the sponsee as well?

We have thoroughly and conscientiously discussed this question in detail and range and feel that to give a proper and just response will require further work. Therefore, it is recommended that a working group is formed.

This is the information that we discussed and are proposing that this is the key input for the working group to take forward.

1. Sponsors should never command sponsees.
2. Sponsees should never be encouraged to break the law.

3. Add to sponsorship pamphlet.
4. Good to seek a second opinion if you are uncomfortable with the suggestion, speak to another member with good experience.
5. A sponsee can say no to a sponsor.
6. Recommendation of giving generic suggestions for situations which limit.
7. Add sponsee to the sponsorship pamphlet.
8. To add to sponsorship pamphlet.
9. Victim does not have a part.
10. If the person working with another alcoholic does not have experience in the issue, seek experience with professionals.
11. Speak about safeguarding at meetings.
13. Clarifying where it would be published.
14. Safeguarding statement to be read out at every meeting.
15. Suggestion of a recommended period of sobriety for sponsorship.
16. Sponsors should go ahead with restraint and prudence.
17. Look for recovery that you want when choosing a sponsor.
Who you choose as a sponsor is very important, try to look for someone that has had similar experiences. A member should refer, when looking for a sponsor to the Structure Handbook, 12 and 12, Big Book and other conference approved literature.
18. Look at the Structure Handbook, Chapter 5.

This Committee abhors and does not condone this behaviour by sponsors.

It is essential to understand that a sponsor's responsibility is to guide not command. We share our experience, strength, and hope. A victim of sexual abuse or assault has not caused a harm.

They may need to deal with resentments which could affect their sobriety and here, a good sponsor can listen and support and give suggestions. A sponsor who does not have experience with an issue presented by a sponsee should refer that sponsee to someone who does have experience with that issue. Of course, the resentment must be dealt with, however no amends would be necessary. To insist or even suggest that a sponsee who has been the victim of abuse or assault must make amends to the perpetrator is potentially damaging to the sponsee. The experience of sexual abuse or assault is extremely traumatic. There is not just risk but high probability of the sponsee experiencing retraumatization, re-victimization, and shame. This is a mental health issue and as the Big Book suggests, should be left to professionals who have the training and experience to address it, not the AA sponsor.

The issue of perpetrators making amends, particularly where there are legal issues such as restraining orders is also potentially damaging. Legal matters, as stated in the Big Book, should be handled by legal professionals not AA sponsors. A person violating legal restrictions such as a restraining order to make amends is potentially causing harm to themselves and their families as well as their victims. The abuse or assault is not an AA issue. A resentment or other threat to sobriety is an AA Issue.

This committee is firmly of the opinion that the suggestion in Step 9 "to injure them or others" does include the sponsee.

Voting
For 15

Against 2
Abstention 2

Minority opinions:

Not suitable for questions for Conference, addressed the context, not answered the question.

We cannot legislate or micromanage. The ways sponsors guide sponsees not a question for conference, it is out of the remit of conference. There is guidance in the 12 x 12, Big Book and the pamphlet. Concept 12, Warranty 6 "Conference shall never put forward an act of governance in the Fellowship". The question might have breached the Terms of Reference of the Conference Steering Committee. The difficulty inherent in issuing edicts is it opens us up to other edicts being instituted. (Reference pg. 237 As Bill Sees It).

2. Would Conference share experience on how AA members may communicate with each other on matters affecting AA as a whole, as well as their specific roles?

Good communication between members should be encouraged without promoting specific platforms.

For delineation of official AA business we strongly suggest that you use the official communication structures that are already in place (refer to The AA Structure and Service Handbooks for Great Britain 2023), however we do understand that other platforms are being used and would ask people when using these platforms to use safeguarding measures to protect the individual and the group.

We emphasise not losing the importance of meeting people face to face. From our experience many groups, intergroups and regions use a messaging platform as means of communication at all levels of the AA structure.

Group

1. Encourage the use of announcements in AA meetings as a method of disseminating information. Good service sponsorship is vital for people to comprehend their role.
2. For each group to hold regular group conscience/business meetings.
3. Each group having a Group Service Representative (GSR) and referring them to the pamphlet of "Now that I'm a GSR" and the AA Structure and Service Handbooks for Great Britain 2023.
4. Encourage GSRs to present information from Intergroup meetings both verbally and in writing.

Intergroup

1. Encourage Intergroup officers to use the official AA email address and the Confidential Directory for continuity.
2. Encouraging Intergroup officers to communicate with groups that do not have representation, where possible, to attend Intergroup and have a GSR take up this role.
3. Using intergroup micro-sites as a method of communication.

Regions

1. Some regions reported that their experience of using online workshops helped with communication.

GSO

1. We recommend that GSB look into the possibility of having a forum for people that have an AA email address.

Voting

For 11

Against 3

Abstention 3

3. **Review amended Introduction in the Structure Handbook for Great Britain.**

The Committee agreed in general with the changes that have been proposed with a few recommendations as set out below and the changes from us are highlighted in yellow.

Voting Unanimous.

Structure Handbook

Introduction 2. A brief history of AA in Great Britain

Guide to alterations:

~~Red ink is text deleted~~

Blue ink is text added

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when the Fellowship was established in Great Britain. During 1945 and 1946 a few individuals tried to achieve sobriety through correspondence with the Alcoholic Foundation in New York. There was also a lady AA contact living in London who gave her name and address to New York as a contact with her heart in the work. She certainly answered many letters of enquiry sent to her during the year she was in London, but they do not appear to have borne much fruit.

In March 1947, an American lady member, Grace O., who was visiting this country with her husband, wrote to the five members who were in contact with the Foundation and arranged a meeting which took place in her room at the Dorchester Hotel, London, on 31 March of that year. A Canadian member, Canadian Bob, whom she had met in a London restaurant on the previous Saturday and another lady member of the Hollywood Group, whom she met on the boat coming over, also attended. There were eight present at this meeting in the Dorchester, and it was probably the earliest AA meeting to take place in Great Britain.

From then on there were meetings, which were held in a variety of places: cinemas, cafes, restaurants and homes. After a time, the members decided to advertise the existence of the Fellowship and an advert was produced which read 'Alcoholism – a small body of anonymous ex-sufferers place themselves at the disposal of any requiring help; the offer is quite gratuitous.' Fifteen national newspapers either temporised or rejected the advertisement. One enquired how requests for help would be dealt with. The explanation resulted in a decision that the advertisement could not be accepted. Only one newspaper, the Financial Times, finally agreed to run the advertisement and 'the few' braced themselves for the expected deluge of letters. To their bitter disappointment there were only two letters, one post-marked 'Skegness' and the other 'North Wales'. However meetings continued to take place more or less regularly in the homes of members and well-wishers and in other places.

In the autumn of 1948, the first London Group was formed and began meeting in a room at 11 Chandos Street, Cavendish Square. There were only about a dozen members but in January 1949 they produced the first monthly Newsletter – 25 stencilled copies. This included a notice about an open meeting to be held in February, together with articles on Twelfth Step work and Sponsors, and it concluded: 'Let's stay sober. Just a reminder that we are alcoholics and that we should never be fooled by the thought that we can have just one for today.' Contact had by now been made with two or three loners outside London, and in December 1948 the first provincial group of about five members met in Manchester.

If the message was to be spread and new groups established, a bare minimum of organisation was required and so an Advisory Committee consisting of four members was formed early in 1948. This Committee's terms of reference required it to maintain liaison between members and new groups, and to provide all possible assistance and experience to the new group leaders. It also gave guidance on matters of publicity, distributed literature and directed enquiries from potential members to the appropriate groups. In October 1949 it was recognised that the title 'Advisory Committee' was inappropriate, and the Committee became known as the 'Central Committee' with the same members serving.

The early days of the Fellowship in Scotland were somewhat similar to those in England. A lone member from Glasgow had registered with the Foundation in New York in 1946.

In 1947, however, a gentleman farmer living in Campbeltown in the West of Scotland with a history of problem drinking went to a Christian Association Conference in the United States in the hope of finding a solution to his problem. At this Conference he met a lady who introduced him to AA and he attended a meeting. He was so deeply impressed that on his return he devoted all the time he could spare to carrying the message, visiting prisons and hospitals to seek out alcoholics who wanted help. A few of those he contacted started meetings in their homes in Glasgow and Edinburgh. However, these few knew little about the Fellowship and how it worked and were having difficulties when early in 1949 they had a visit from an American member. Between his experience and the undaunted enthusiasm of the farmer from Campbeltown, the first two groups in Scotland were established and registered in May 1949. These were Glasgow Central, meeting in the St Enoch's Hotel, Glasgow, and First Edinburgh, meeting in Mackie's Restaurant, Princes Street, Edinburgh.

Then, as in England, the message spread and groups were established at Perth, Ayr, Dundee and Larbert, Stirlingshire, leading in time to the formation of the Scottish Intergroup Committee.

The first known meeting of a group in Wales took place on 13 April 1951 in a room in Cathedral Road, Cardiff. Present were four alcoholics from South Wales and a member from Ireland. At this meeting it was decided to register with London and New York. At about the same time there were one or two alcoholics in North Wales struggling to achieve sobriety through correspondence. They were referred by London to the newly-formed Liverpool Group and, despite the difficulties of traveling; they managed to get to some of the meetings in Liverpool. By 1954, there was the nucleus of a group in North Wales with meetings in members' houses at Corwen, Bangor and Llandudno. The original Cardiff Group did not last, but a new group was established in 1960. This was closely followed by the formation of a group at Caerleon.

In the summer of 1950, our Co-Founder Bill W. and his wife Lois came over from New York to

visit groups in England and Scotland, and talked at several group meetings. At a specially-convened meeting of group representatives, Bill presented 1500 copies of the Big Book from the American Alcoholic Foundation, the sale of which was to assist in the growth of the Fellowship in Great Britain promote the carrying of the message in Europe. To manage the distribution and income from the sale of these books, a separate Pre-Foundation Committee was formed, consisting of five of the very early members. By 1952, this Committee included well-established members from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Eire.

In 1953, this Committee was incorporated as the Publishing Company, and duly registered. It took over responsibility for the distribution, sale, and, subsequently, the printing of AA literature in Great Britain.

The steady growth of the Fellowship had been such that early in 1951 it was felt that the time had come to consider drawing up a constitution to provide for regular meetings of group representatives to deal with the various activities of the Fellowship.

At a meeting of group representatives held on 16 March 1951, the first Group representative Committee was formed to be responsible for all matters relating to the growth, welfare and activities of the Fellowship in England and Wales. A Central Committee of five members with at least one year's sobriety was made responsible for safeguarding the Traditions and, so far as was in their power, the functioning of the London Service Office and liaison between the groups and the Foundation. The Central Committee was also required to take whatever steps it considered necessary for the welfare and development of the Fellowship both in Great Britain and overseas, as advised by the Group Representative Committee.

In February 1952, the London Service Office was opened at 11 Redcliffe Gardens, London SW10, having previously been run from the office of one of the early members at the London Fruit Exchange, London E1.

In 1953, a loner in Dumfries wanted to establish a group there, and at his request a number of Midlands and Manchester members decided to hold a meeting in the town. Invitations were sent out in the form of a challenge to the various groups in Scotland – the English were once more invading Scotland! The Scots rallied to the old Border war cry “Blue Bonnets over the Border!” and an amazing weekend of sharing took place, which has continued to be held each year ever since. The Blue Bonnets Gathering was the forerunner of the English and Scottish Conventions.

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain and Ireland) Limited had its inaugural meeting on 29 June 1957 and was incorporated in accordance with the Companies Act (1948) on 16 July 1957.

The Fellowship continued to grow and later in 1957 the first intergroup in England, the North-West, was formed. About the same time the Glasgow Central Group had to stop meeting in the St Enoch's Hotel, because of alterations taking place within the hotel. It was felt that the Fellowship in Glasgow should have its own premises, and in due course premises were obtained at 114 West Nile Street leading to the establishment of the Glasgow and District Intergroup. In a very short time the rooms were used every night of the week for group meetings and they also became the AA Central Office for Glasgow.

By the late 1950s there were about 100 groups in England and Wales and about 30 in

Scotland. Intergroups like those in Manchester and Glasgow were being formed in other parts of the country. In England and Wales the group Representative Committee was extended to become the Area and Group Representative Committee, and the first meeting of this new Committee took place in London in June 1958. This Committee met three times a year, once in London, and usually once each in Birmingham and Manchester. One of the sub-committees of the Area and Group Representative Committee, called the General Purposes Committee, was given responsibility for the Central Service Office at 1 Redcliffe Gardens and its services.

The following sentence is a recommendation to be added as follows: [In 1951, Roundabout Magazine appeared in print, the primary purpose of Roundabout, the fellowship Scottish Magazine, is to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous in print.](#) As early as 1952, Scottish Intergroup was formed in the realisation that there was a need for an adaptation of the service structure in Scotland because of the marked differences from England and Wales in culture, education, law and government systems. By 1972, the Scottish Intergroup had evolved into the Scottish Service Committee. With regionalisation in 1977 the Scottish Service Committee continued to serve the Fellowship in Great Britain and helped establish the regions in Scotland. The committee was disbanded in 1999 when it was felt that there was no longer a requirement.

The growth continued. New groups continued to be formed and by 1964 there were nearly 200 in England and Wales. The General Service Board considered that the Fellowship had, by then, grown to a size which justified the convening of a General Service Conference. In May 1964 a suggestion to move towards the information of such a Conference was put to the Area and Group Representative Committee by the Board. At the end of October 1965 an exploratory Conference took place in Manchester to consider the formation of a General Service Conference Great Britain. In January 1966 the decision was taken to proceed and Conference was born.

The first Conference was held in Manchester in October 1966. Over 100 delegates from throughout Britain attended this first Conference, the theme of which was 'Working with Others'. It was held to be most successful – to such an extent that it has become an annual event and indeed the Fellowship in Great Britain celebrated its 40th Annual Conference in 2005.

In 1969 the Fellowship's first World Service Meeting was held in New York and two delegates from AA Great Britain attended. Three years later in 1972 AA's monthly magazine 'Newsletter', which had been going for twenty-five years, changed its name to ~~SHARE~~ Share, and this in turn has continued [as a monthly](#) publication ever since. At that time the monthly circulation was about 2500 copies. [In 1982, Share celebrated its 10th anniversary by which time its monthly circulation had risen to over 5000 copies.](#) [In 2007, Share celebrated its Diamond Jubilee with an Anniversary Journal.](#)

In 1974 the Fellowship in Great Britain was awarded the privilege of hosting, in London, the first AA World Service Meeting to be held outside of the United States.

[The first AA handbook 'The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain' was published in 1974, and was reviewed annually until 1998. It was then superseded by the 'Group Handbook', renamed 'The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain' which was in use until 2012. This was then divided it into two books 'The AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain', approved 2012,](#)

and 'The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain', approved 2013. These are used today and are updated annually.

AA's growth in Great Britain continued rapidly and in 1977 the 1000th group was registered. This was followed in the next year by the establishment of the European Information Centre at the General Service Office in Redcliffe Gardens, London in response to the increasing demand for information from English-speaking members in mainland Europe.

In 1980 it became apparent that some change in the structure of the Fellowship in Great Britain was required and to this end the format of regionalisation was adopted. Ireland had formed its own service structure and Board of Trustees in 1978. In 1981 the registration of the 1,500th group in Great Britain was recorded and this growth was mirrored by the ongoing development of English-speaking AA in Europe culminating in the first European Service Meeting (ESM) held in Frankfurt in October 1981 and the second ESM held early in 1983.

~~In 1982 SHARE celebrated its 10th anniversary by which time its monthly circulation had risen to over 5,000 copies.~~

In order to keep abreast of modern methods of communication and to assist in passing the message of sobriety through AA, the annual Conference in 1983 recommended that an AA video be produced. This was filmed early in 1984 and approved by Conference 1984. The video was entitled 'One Day at a Time' and to date well over 2000 copies* have been sold.

In 1985 AA worldwide celebrated the 50th anniversary of the historic meeting of Bill W. and Dr Bob in Akron, Ohio, and many special meetings and conventions were held throughout the UK.

It was now becoming increasingly clear that the continued siting of the General Service Office (GSO) in London was not feasible – a massive proposed rent increase being perhaps the major reason - and in 1986, GSO moved to new premises in Stonebow House in the centre of York. [It was then subsequently moved to Toft Green in 2007.](#) Also at this time, a problem arose when AA in Great Britain, in accordance with our tradition of self-support, had to refuse a substantial legacy. In order for AA to so refuse and yet to continue in its status as a registered charity, [and for this reason Parliament passed the Alcoholics Anonymous \(Dispositions\) Act 1986.](#)

In 1987 AA in Great Britain celebrated its 40th anniversary with regions and intergroups holding special meetings or conventions. Also in this year, a computer was installed at GSO.

In 1988 Bill W's widow, Lois, died and thus was lost the last remaining link with the past, although the memory of Lois is continually recalled in the continuing growth [of AA and Alanon](#) in Great Britain and elsewhere. [of Al-Anon.](#) [This was the year that Conference recommended the adoption of 'Gratitude Week' by all groups.](#)

Following on from the success of the video 'One Day at a Time' and in response to the increasing number of younger AA members, Conference 1990 recommended that a video for young people be made. This was done and the resulting 'Message to Young People' became available at the end of 1991. To date, over 500 copies of this video have been sold*.

In an effort to rationalise the expansion of the Fellowship in Great Britain, the Twenty Fifth

Conference in 1990 recommended the introduction, where feasible, of multi-meeting groups. In 1992 the Twenty Seventh Conference introduced for a trial period, a further tier between intergroups and region, to assist London Region with handling over 450 groups through 18 intergroups. The number of group meetings had by this time reached 3000.

As the result of a recommendation at the 29th Annual Conference in 1994 a pilot scheme for a single AA telephone contact number was instituted in the South-East Region in October 1994, and in two regions in Scotland in August 1995. It was known as '0345 scheme' and ran for four years, with reports being given to Conference every year. This was then later changed to an 0845 number in 1998, and by 2022, it was in use by all regions. In 2015 the number changed again to an 0800 free phone number.

In 1994 the Fellowship was made aware of changes in the Charities Act and the Companies Act in Great Britain which, in order that AA in Great Britain could remain within their respective provisions, required the adoption of a Conference Charter and Twelve Concepts for Service in Great Britain (This was done by adapting the relevant sections in the then current The AA Service Manual).

Fifty years of Fellowship in Great Britain were celebrated at Blackpool in 1997, when approximately 8,000 members of AA, Al-Anon and their families gathered at the Winter Gardens and Boating Lake. This was also the year that the GSB took responsibility for the Northern and Southern Service Offices to comply with legal requirements.

1998 saw the creation of the AA website, and by the year 2000, it was receiving more than 45,000 hits per month.

In 2001, the 4th edition of the British version of the Big Book was published. In 2003, the first advert for AA appeared on British television. In 2004, the 'Blue Bonnet' Convention received a 50-year recognition plaque from Dumfries and Borders Council.

In 2005, the first AA parliamentary event was held at Westminster followed quickly by events at the Scottish and Welsh parliaments. 'Traditions Week' became an annual event in AA.

Between 2005 and 2009, the GSB formed four new Sub Committees - Electronic in 2005, Health in 2006, Armed Services in 2008, and Probation 2009.

In 2010 to mark 60 years of co-operation of AA with Barlinnie Prison, a celebration event was held.

The end of 2012 saw the launch of Alcoholics Anonymous Awareness Month. Its intention was to raise AA's profile, and to increase public understanding of alcoholism.

In 2016, the 'Chat Now' function went on the AA website, opening up an entirely new access point in reaching out to the still suffering alcoholic, and attracting newcomers to the Fellowship.

In 2017, Great Britain's first AA museum exhibition, 'Darkness into Light', was hosted for four months at Kelvingrove, one of Scotland's leading museums. It was opened by Sir Philip Dundas's (credited with bringing AA to Scotland) daughter and granddaughter. The exhibition was a world first co-operation between AA and a National Body and has been visited by over

350,000 people.

The Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain Archive Cataloging Project began at the Borthwick Institute for Archives at the University of York in 2018. Also in this year, there was an event in Winchester Cathedral celebrating the 100-year anniversary of Bill's visit to the graveyard, and his subsequent passage in his story regarding the Hampshire Grenadier.

In 2020, the COVID19 pandemic arrived, and the world changed. It meant the temporary closure of physical meetings. The Fellowship responded by changing their existing meetings to on-line, and in some cases, by the following week. The AA Conference was postponed and merged with the Conference held on-line in 2021.

In 2022, The Fellowship celebrated 75 years in Great Britain with a 75th Anniversary Convention in Leeds.

Televised in early 2023, the BBC 2 documentary 'I'm an Alcoholic Inside Recovery', a look inside Alcoholics Anonymous was the BBC's first ever access to an AA meeting using deep fake technology. There was an upsurge of inquiries to GSO by members of the public after this documentary.

* This is historical information as neither video is produced now.

Committee No. 3

- 1. Would Conference consider how on-line meetings are best represented and sharing information with each other? Would it be prudent to have an On-line Intergroup for each region or nationally where on-line meetings talk to each regarding on-line matters and carrying the message on-line.**

This committee makes no distinction between on-line and face-to-face meetings and recognises the importance of Traditions 1 and 4 in responding to this question. The guidance is already present in the current handbooks in The Group section and the AAGB website for all groups.

The following link may be useful:

<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/AA-meetings/online-&-telephone-meetings>

Representation of all our meetings is possible within the existing and evolving service structure.

The committee agreed that it was prudent to respect that each group is autonomous and may join whichever intergroup its conscience decides on the condition that the intergroup accepts them. Groups can also form a new intergroup if they wish.

Vote: unanimous.

A minority opinion was recorded that if an on-line group, non-geographical, joins an intergroup which belongs to a region. Does it mean that somebody from outside of GB and Continental Europe can vote on something that affects only us in GB because it's outside influences should not be coming in.

2. Would Conference share its experience on the importance of rotation at all levels of service within the AA structure? (The impact of having vacant positions and why members should not repeatedly occupy the same service position).

After much discussion, we referenced information from the 2023 Structure Handbook (p168), which reflects the committee's responses.

"At both intergroup and regional level, use should be made of service committees, which should contain a blend of members of varying degrees of experience and newcomers to service, whilst being careful not to deny the newcomer service opportunities".

We also identified three parts to this question. Our responses include but are not limited to:

i) Importance of rotation

Rotation is essential, healthy and improves communication within the service structure and with each other. It generates new ideas, strengthens recovery and diminishes ego. Service helps keep you sober.

ii) Impact of vacancies

Our experiences show that following the guidelines in the handbooks help groups to fill vacancies via informed group conscience. Our experience recognises the positive benefits of continuing to sponsor people into service, making one-to-one contact and holding service workshops.

iii) Members not occupying the same roles repeatedly

This is important in order to discourage territorial and complacent behaviour. This encourages all members to get involved in service.

To summarise, the conscience of this committee is reflected in the following extract on p168 of the 2023 Structure Handbook.

"For the road of AA service is one that has no end. One day at a time, the future will unfold in a way that today we cannot imagine. Let us therefore be ready at all times, as we have been each day during our period of sobriety, to remain a trusted servant, in whatever capacity is asked of us".

Vote: unanimous.

3. Review Service Handbook page 90, Section 9.4 The General Service Board's Probation/CJSWS Sub Committee, first paragraph. Please replace 'up to four other members' with 'up to seven other members' as approved by the General Service Board.

Would conference approve the following revision of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain?

Chapter Nine: Probation/Criminal Justice Social Work Services (CJSWS) p90 section 9.4, second sentence, to now read:

‘The main purpose of the Probation / CJSWS subcommittee is to assist the GSB in supporting the fellowships structure in its service work. This includes raising awareness of Alcoholics Anonymous and its services through cooperation with Probation/ CJSWS agencies at a national level.’

In place of the text which currently reads:

‘The aim of the Sub-Committee is to raise awareness of the work of the Probation/ Criminal Justice Social Work Services in Great Britain throughout the Fellowship.’

Last revised 2015

The committee is in favour of replacing the text from 4 to 7 and make necessary revisions of the AA Service Handbook for GB. The committee agrees to the addendum, which clarifies the service work of the sub-committee.

Vote: unanimous.

Committee No. 4

Would the Fellowship consider the following questions concerning Chapter 4 of the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain, “For AA Members Employed in the Alcoholism Field” and make recommendations to Conference.

a. Is the chapter about AA service?

If not, then

b. Should it be removed from the handbook?

If so, then

c. Should the material be presented in a different format, such as a pamphlet?

a. Is the chapter about AA service? - No

b. Should it be removed from the handbook? - No

c. Should the material be presented in a different format, such as a pamphlet? -Yes

Committee 4 asks GSB to withdraw Chapter 4 and add a further section, point 5, to the Introduction in The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain which will reference an appendix. The content in the appendix will be based on Chapter 4, following a review with particular reference to sections 4.2 and 4.6.

The committee further recommend the production of a pamphlet summarising the content of the appendix.

Voted unanimous.

Will Conference review “LGBT Voices’ pamphlet with reference to Tradition 1. Our

common welfare should come first: Personal recovery depends on AA unity.

- (a) Consider a complete and more permanent title change for a constantly evolving community.**
- (b) Consider an Update to the Stories to include a wider and more up to date range of experience (LGBTQIA+)**
- (c) Consider removal or change the paragraph in the Title heading which reads “As a gay man in a very heterosexual AA it’s a bit like being an alcoholic in a sober world” this is not inclusive to all in the fellowship only Gay men.**

- a. Yes unanimous
- b. Yes unanimous
- c. Yes unanimous

Committee 4 recommends that the Board set up a working group to action the answers to questions a, b and c, in collaboration with the Inclusivity Working Group.

This group should include representatives from the relevant communities to review the title and content of the pamphlet, and consider the information in the opening paragraph of LGBTQ Alcoholics in AA US pamphlet, to be included.

Using the vehicles available including AA Service News, Share, Arena, Roundabout and AA website to obtain new stories and participants. Updated pamphlet to be available for approval no later than Conference 2026.

Voted unanimous

Committee No. 5

- 1. Could Conference discuss how the Fellowship’s understanding of the principles of anonymity may guide those Groups requiring AA members and visitors to put their names in a signing-in book/attendance book at meetings.**

Following discussion, the committee recognises the conscience of the Fellowship is that anonymity is the spiritual foundation and bedrock of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The feedback from the Fellowship indicates groups rarely require signing in unless it is a policy of specific venues. Each group has the autonomy to apply the principles of anonymity as it sees fit via the group conscience.

Vote: unanimous

- 2. Would Conference discuss and consider the viability of creating an additional version of the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) incorporating stories from AAGB (including CER).**

The committee discussed the question and recommends creating an **additional** version of the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) incorporating stories from Great Britain and English Speaking Continental Europe. This will retain the ‘Pioneers of AA’ stories from the current edition and additional stories will

then be included from members of the Fellowship from Great Britain and English Speaking Continental Europe.

For the avoidance of doubt the Preface, the Forewords, The Doctor's Opinion, the first 164 pages and the Appendices will also be retained.

In reaching this recommendation we have considered the following:

1. How we best carry the message
2. No significant additional cost
3. Inclusivity
4. Importance of the Big Book and its stories
5. Individual Choice
6. Examples from other countries
7. Opportunity to include stories from across the breadth of Great Britain and English Speaking Continental Europe
8. The work and effort required to achieve this
9. Any impact on Arena, Share or Roundabout magazines
10. Separate publication of Great Britain and English Speaking Continental Europe stories (deemed outside the scope of the question)

Vote: Unanimous

There was a minority opinion that it would have been preferable to have seen the stories before voting on the book.

Committee No. 6

1. **Would Conference share experience on how an AAGB App would help carry the message in addition to the AAGB website and existing apps?**

Committee 6 recognises the potential for the development of an official AA GB App in the future, to complement the existing website. Matters of content, financial implications and ongoing App maintenance and support would need to be considered before a design was addressed. There are also requirements from the on-line App stores in relation to content and security which would need to be considered. We acknowledge that technological developments will introduce additional challenges in ways which are unforeseeable.

There was some informed general discussion, based on the Conference Website Presentation which was delivered on the evening of 12th April. There is considerable membership experience with existing Apps and most who had used them found them useful. Given that the new website will be launched shortly and is mobile device friendly, feedback from users and website metrics will be useful in the scoping of any future AA GB App.

Committee 6 therefore recommends that consideration be given to the development of an App as part of the general strategy for the IT needs and requirements of the Fellowship.

This decision was supported by a unanimous vote.

2. Would Conference discuss the merits of creating a user friendly information pack about how to be involved in the service structure, with each discipline running an on-line workshop, at the 3 yearly seminar, on how to get involved?

We struggled with the clarity of this question because it posed two queries. One addressed an information pack, and the other addressed involvement in the Service Structure of the Fellowship, specifically in relation to on-line workshops as part of three year seminars.

There was a great deal of discussion about Service, and sponsorship into service. Fellowship comments were generally positive. Opinion on the provision of a new information pack was divided. Service workshops were discussed and whilst the Committee generally supported these, we did not feel our remit extended to a discussion of seminar content.

Information pack recommendations:

1. On-line digital packs or videos, informed by Service Handbook information on various subjects, should be provided.
2. The literature needed to support Service is already in place, especially now that hard copies of AA Service News are once again available.
3. Original and creative signposting of our service material such as the creation of 15 second reels and/or podcasts should be considered.
4. Any new materials or revised existing materials would need to be attractive and engaging.

Workshop recommendations:

The Committee recognised that enthusiasm plays a big part in attracting and engaging participants and the filling of Service positions.

- a) Appropriate local workshops should be presented by people inspired by their experience of the particular area of service being addressed.
- b) Time needs to be spent both on optimising the use of existing resources and developing innovative and novel approaches to carry the legacy of Service to the Fellowship.

The vote in favour was unanimous.

Review new chapter on AA Publications for the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain.

A new chapter for the Service Handbook is already in draft form and relates to publications such as “Share”, “Roundabout” and “AA Service News”, and the role of the Literature sub-committee in their oversight and production. Nothing about the publications would change as a result of a vote on this matter, except that a comprehensive list of AA publications should appear on the website and at least somewhere in these publications. All that is being asked is whether or not they should be described and commented on in a new chapter of the handbook, and that background for the Committee questions should be readily available and updated annually. This might increase members’ awareness of these helpful and positive publications. Some discussion took place about duplication between the publications.

A vote took place. It was agreed unanimously that this chapter should be included in the Service Handbook, subject to the deletion of Section 12.4 from “Files can be sent to

GSO.....” down to “.....arrangements have been agreed” inclusive, and Section 12.6 in its entirety.

The reasons we've asked for those particular exclusions is that the literature in Section 12.6, the literature section, we felt was just like an advertisement rather than a section like the other sections in the Service Handbook. But we did feel that the Literature Sub Committee ought to have its own section in the handbook, maybe revised this year and put to Conference for next year. So that's why we've asked for that to come out. And the others were alluding to copyright. Because we're actually working on what you'd call the image bank and also release forms for photographs, we're not sure yet how that's going to change. So, if we leave out anything to do with copyright, that will be in all the publications. Obviously, month by month that can be changed rather than put it in the Service Handbook.

All recommendations were passed with a two-thirds majority with the exception of Committee 2 Question 1 which was passed with a simple majority and Question 3 which was unanimous.

New Short Films Now Available to the Fellowship

Conference has approved three new short films to help the still suffering alcoholic.

Two of these, Women in AA, and People of Colour in AA, were commissioned following Conference Committee 6's recommendations in 2021 and the development of our Inclusivity work. Shooting these films was put on hold pending transport strikes last year, but members with relevant experience, strength and hope were recently videoed at GSO, in February and March. We'd planned to show them to Conference 2025, but we realised that we could actually present them this year, which means we can start using them to help people sooner rather than later.

We saved money by shooting a film for the Employment discipline at the same time: Blue Light Employees and AA. The audience for this is slightly different. It aims to encourage employers in Fire, Police, Ambulance and similar services to signpost AA as a resource for those with alcohol issues, and to support staff if they come to AA. This film was also approved by Conference this year.

All three films have been shown to members who come from these groups and their response has been massively encouraging, as you will see from the quotes below.

NB Title still and a pic from each film will be subtitled with the 'reviews'

BLUE LIGHT: a very useful video / To me it has everything. Good Job/ attractive, clear and informative

PEOPLE OF COLOUR: It is absolutely fantastic/ OMG how good is this film

WOMEN: FAN bloody TASTIC/ wonderful and uplifting / compelling

These films are only worthwhile if they are shown throughout the Fellowship to help carry the message. They're all available via the Media tab on the alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk website. Please share them with your group, your friends and even better, someone who needs the Fellowship.

The Cockney Convention 40 Years On

This year - 2024, marks the fortieth anniversary of the annual Cockney Convention, but before we get into that, here is a bit of housekeeping.

In 1947 the first A.A. meeting in the U.K was held at the Dorchester Hotel, room 202. Who was the host I hear you ask? Well, that would be a visiting American called Grace O. In room 202 were seven other members, which included Canadian Bob. Bob got sober in Bermuda and lived in Kew, he helped grow the Fellowship in this country, so, a doff of the cap to the members who carried the tea urn before we did.

On the 5th December 1950 new members from the Romford area began meetings in their home up until 1957, they then moved to the friends meeting house in the Romford area. The did move to a few more venues over the years. It wasn't until 1958 when East London got its very own Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, held at St Annes church in Limehouse up until 1962 when its members, Mike and Geoff helped move it to The Tabernacle in Mile End. The meeting sadly closed in 1963.

Then nothing in East London until 1965 when 'Dartmoor' Bill and Robert U contacted Toynbee Hall in Aldgate to open a meeting in the area. This was the beginning of a long-standing relationship between the Fellowship and this venue. It was home to many members of the East End who started their recovery journey. At one stage, the Wednesday night meeting at Toynbee Hall was the longest-running meeting in East London, but sadly it became no more in 2016, as Toynbee Hall was closed for

refurbishment. Toynbee Hall was the mainstay for many years holding P.I. events, and their yearly celebrations which helped greet many newcomers to the new way of life.

However, the people of East London wanted more, and you know what, they got it, in the form of a yearly convention. It began in 1984 at The Langdon Park Community Centre in Poplar, tickets were £2.50 and kids could get in for £1.50. The evening of the 26th February 1984 there was a rave going on until 11 pm. This was the start of the 'COCKNEY CONVENTION' and the sober rave...maybe not the first. The contact for the first one was a certain man named Fred.

On 9th November 1985 was not only a celebration of 50 years of A.A. with the theme **I am responsible** but it was the second Cockney Convention held at the Poplar Civic Theatre, Bow Road, E3. If you needed to go you would've had to contact Mike, Joan, Bill, Dolly, and Sue. Also, the meal and dance cost £3. The cockneys wanted more, so each year this shindig grew, with different themes, like, '**We are Responsible**'. At one stage the convention was held at East Ham Town Hall, and the people putting this on were Brian, Sean, Yvonne and Bill. Other themes were, '**Just for Today**', or '**We are not a glum lot**', to name a few.

The Cockneys love a geographical, meaning the convention has moved around more times than an alcoholic looking for free beer! There have been a few different venues over the near forty years, like Kingsley Hall in Bow,

where Gandhi stayed briefly not, but for the convention he was there before. Yet, The Cockneys got it and had another jamboree put on by Dave, Bill and Roger. There was a light meal at 6:30 pm. The committee was growing and featured members like Joe, Eddie, Sam, Tommy and John, along with Jacqueline, Ken and Mike, there weren't enough chefs that evening...or were there?

The Cockneys went 'Extravagant' in 1999. The Convention's theme of, '**You are no longer Alone**', was held at the Great Hall, Queen Mary and Westfield College, Mile End Road. Harry, David, Ken and Audrey were part of this committee. Next year, '**Just for Today**', was going to end at midnight. Pushing it to the next level, it was held at Queen Mary University, The Octagon Room, Peoples Palace, this was a Weekend convention, all for 85 snots (£) for the weekend including Friday, Saturday, and Sunday breakfast. The convention was £8. The committee was Harry, Brian, Marie, and Dave.

The years rolled on, with different venues, rooms changed, the dates, the rotating service committee all provide a safe place for us all to go to. Ray with his committee who included Margaret got the Cockney Convention in the old Stratford Town Hall, a beautiful old building which had chandeliers that Del Boy, Rodney and Grandad would love to have cleaned! A.A. took over with more rooms for come and go meetings, a disco or a rave or whatever the kids use these days, there were workshops, and the odd bit of grub for us to go for, no pie and mash...shocking.

The Convention like all of them, has never been about making bunce, but helping one person realise they can live without alcohol and they're not alone. The Cockney Convention at the Town Hall in Stratford cracked on with this from 2011 until 2018.

What next? Well, it moved to the Bishopsgate Institute near Liverpool Street station. The committee over the years at this venue included members like Elaine, Deanne, Julie, Suky, Phil and Laura with many more providing a service of greeting, registration, making the

tea, setting up rooms, getting speakers, liaising with the building management and finding the right biscuits.

The world almost stopped and like the rest of the planet, the Cockney Convention had to adapt to the COVID issues. The venue required the attendees of the Cockney Convention to wear face masks, and testing at the entrance as requested by the owners of the building. A.A. members came out in force, some moaned, and some came to show we are not alone being there for one and other.

Where will the fortieth Cockney Convention be? What can we expect? What can we eat? Pie mash, fish and chips, walking in the rain... Gawd Blimey Guvnor, is that Mary Poppins? '**We are not a glum lot**', was another convention theme. Well, 2024 the venue will be the Bishopsgate institute once more, and the service members involved will be Steve M, Suky, Chris, Gina, Mike M and Aina. Thank you for keeping it going.

There has been 40 years of service by members of our Fellowship, some are still with us, some have gone to the meeting in the sky. The Fellowship has an abundance of passion to be there for one and other and to carry the message which is freely given.

You don't have to be a Cockney to go to the Cockney Convention. Hopefully we will see you all at the 40th anniversary and the Bishopsgate Institute.

Questions for Conference 2025

Anyone can submit a topic, motion or question to Conference - individuals, groups, intergroups, regions or board members...

- Do you have a topic, motion or question you would like to submit?
- The deadline for submissions is 31st August 2024 - that's in less than 3 months!
- Is it something that you think concerns Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain (AAGB) as a whole?
- The Conference Co-ordinator, who is a member of staff from the General Service Office, will pass your submission to the Conference Steering Committee (CSC) anonymously

If you want to increase the chances of acceptance of your topic, motion or question, please consider:

- Referring to the current CSC terms of reference which lists the reasons for acceptance / non acceptance (annually reviewed)
- Looking through topics and questions discussed by Conference in previous years, and those questions that were not accepted. This information is available on the AAGB website
- Whether the topic, motion or question is something more suitable for discussion at group, intergroup or region.
- Checking if the topic, motion or question is already dealt with somewhere in our literature.
- Making sure you include the supporting information which has led to your request - this might include references to our literature, past conference decisions or board reports.

The CSC will consider all submissions. If your topic, motion or question is not accepted, the CSC will write to you and explain why.

The template (see overleaf) was recommended by CSC 2024 for anyone wishing to make a submission. It aims to provide a guide to help aid clarity, efficiency and effectiveness.

Questions which are accepted together with support material and background information, will be distributed by the end of December to the whole of the Fellowship via the Winter edition of AA Service News and the AAGB website.

They are made and directly available to conference delegates, regional secretaries / chairpersons, intergroup secretaries and board trustees.

All topics/questions should be addressed to:

The Conference Co-ordinator
General Service Office
PO Box 1,
10, Toft Green
York
YO1 7NJ

email: sharon.smyth@gsogb.org.uk
email: aainformation@gsogb.org.uk

Template for Questions for Conference 2025

Submit a clear and concisely worded topic, motion or question

What issue does this proposed item address?

Has this proposal been discussed within AAGB? If so, is there anything you would like to mention?

Provide background information that describes and supports the reasoning for the proposal. List background material/s included with the proposal

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?

Do you consider there to be any costs associated with implementing this proposal? If so, please say what you think they may be.

Please provie a primary contact for the submission.

Final comments:



WHAT HAS YORK EVER DONE FOR US?

REG: All right, but apart from the sanitation, the medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, a fresh water system, and public health, what have the Romans ever done for us?
From Monty Python's THE LIFE OF BRIAN (not AAGB Conference approved)

It may be tempting to think of York as being the focus for all the Fellowship's grievances...

In AA, the term York is often a handy catch-all term for Conference (the Fellowship's conscience) and AAGB (the Charity), encompassing The General Service Board and our three offices - GSO, NSO and SSO. Some may use York as a scapegoat for whatever they dislike, and feel they have no say in what is done on behalf of all members of groups in Great Britain and English-speaking Continental Europe. But if a group has a Group Service Representative, then they are connected to the structure, and through the Conference process, can influence the actions that York prioritises over the coming year.

So, what happens to the Tradition 7 monies forwarded down through the service structure?

In other words, what has York ever done for us?

- National Telephone system (0800 number)
- The national AAGB website, and its revision
- Chat Now
- Online Response Service
- Managing aamail.org email addresses for those in service
- Maintaining our group and service position database
- Creating maintaining the Confidential Directory for those in service
- Sub Committees that support the work of the service disciplines across all regions and intergroups and which deliver Conference recommendations
- Advice and signposting at the end of the phone on all Fellowship matters, from Safeguarding to Insurance liabilities
- Creation, publishing, storage and sale of the Fellowship's literature
- Providing service literature at no cost
- Staging of Conference
- Conducting Membership Surveys every 5 years
- Fulfilling the projects requested by Conference

- Maintaining the Fellowship's archives
- Publishing Share and Roundabout magazines every month
- Producing AA Service News each quarter
- Keeping the Charity's financial resources safe
- Producing written guidance for groups as requested
- Forums, roadshows and seminars for service officers and members across the whole AAGB area
- NATs to present a public face of AA at the level of press, radio, films - and the internet
- Liaison with Government departments across Health, Justice, and Mutual Aid – e.g. succeeding in getting AAs exemption to see their sponsors / sponsees during Covid
- Raising AA's profile nationally as first point of call for those professionals dealing with alcoholism - e.g. NICE guidelines
- Hosting the European Service Meeting
- Contributing to International Literature Fund, World Service Meeting Fund and sponsoring the South Saharan Africa Meeting
- Setting up and running the Fellowship national Archive at the Borthwick Institute

All right, but apart from the Telephone System, Website, Chat Now, Online Response, email addresses, a Confidential Directory, Sub Committees, Advice on the phone, Literature, Conference, Archives, the Survey, Share, Roundabout, AA Service News, looking after our money, producing guidance, Forums, Roadshows, Seminars, PR, Government liaison and helping foster AA fellowships globally, what has York ever done for us?

Of course groups, intergroups and regions conduct life-saving PI work, but please don't forget that York also needs funds to continue to be there and do its work.

Keeping a regular and swift flow of Tradition 7 monies throughout the structure ensures that vital services are not put in jeopardy. Thanks for your contribution!

Justin
(York/Eboracum) Bah Gum



Dear Fellowship...

Dear Fellows,

Hope you're all well and thriving and will be even more so once you receive the full report of our 58th General Service Conference held April 12th-14th. It was as ever an exhilarating exercise in the Group Conscience of AA in Great Britain. The discussions were frank and forthright, insightful, studious and conscientious hearing multiple views. Essential to the conduct of any Conference and its outcome are the General Warranties: Article 12 of the Conference Charter / Concept 12:

'...the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the AA tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself shall always remain democratic in thought and action'. Concept XII, The AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain (2023), page 83

The Fellowship created the General Service Board to deliver the services it required, to fulfil our primary purpose. Conference is where the Fellowship and the Board meet to see how do this in better ways. The outcome is that Conference tasks the Board with services for the coming year, as well as to tally progress from the previous year. It is not management or government of GSB. The Warranties describe our structure, where Conference delegates, and by extension the group's they serve, do not have the legal responsibilities for the General Service Board. Management with its legal and financial liabilities can only be exercised by those with the defined legal responsibilities, which are the staff and trustees. They are the devoted and trusted servants of the Fellowship and can only fulfil their responsibilities if not paralysed by having to account for each and every action they take. They have the Right of Decision. Accountancy cannot get in the way of delivery.

To demand itemisation and a say in each and every decision, transaction and communication of the GSB is try and exercise Power without responsibility, which is the state of intoxication, we as individuals are trying to recover from. Disagreement without being disagreeable finesses our primary purpose. But allowing the Minority Opinion, heedless of the informed Group conscience, tramples our primary purpose, if all it expresses is disagreement and not the serious breach of Traditions it is there for. So let every group in our structure carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers both in an outside of the rooms according to their group conscience.

The Steps, Traditions and Concepts balance the relationships with ourselves, the groups and the service structure. Each is a triangle that forms a 3-sided inverted pyramid with an open base into

which we pour our recovery.

Stay sober and sparkle in the sunlight of the spirit.

Love
Ranjan

Hello there,

I would just like to wholeheartedly thank all of you who have been putting together some fantastic Primary Purpose initiatives at local level, as suggested at Conference 2023. I have heard about, and seen, some truly innovative work.

As this financial year goes into the second quarter, I do, however, have to share with you that the reserves are going down again for the third quarter in a row. Although local work is very important, at this point, I would like to ask that we please remember to send money down the 'inverted triangle'. Without your contributions, GSO cannot continue to carry out your Conference recommendations, primary purpose work and general day-to-day activities

that keeps our Fellowship running smoothly.

Thank you all so much for your support.

**With love and fellowship
Gretchen
Honorary Treasurer
GSB**



It's time for a re-set

After six years, it is now my time to leave the GSB.

I would have been quite happy to leave quietly having experienced six wonderful years in the Service of our Fellowship. As a Fellowship, however, we should sometimes critique the direction of our journey. I always remember reading Bill W's article on how self-righteous indignation harmed the Unity of our Fellowship.

Fortunately, my sponsor was also a great AA member, with a depth of knowledge regarding our structure, and I vividly remember the occasion, following an intergroup meeting, when he suggested that we needed to chat.

As we sat having coffee, I was given another part of my AA education; this was around 40 years ago and yet his message still rings true and carries a message that seems to be being lost.

In AA we share our Experience Strength and Hope ... that is all we have. He advised that if I were intending to share opinions, I had better make sure that they were educated ones, or I would not only be making a fool of myself, I would also be doing our Fellowship a disservice.

Our Alcoholic Board members are selected because of their experience... thus allowing the Fellowship to regard them as Trusted Servants working for the betterment of our Fellowship. Unlike today's society, they are not selected for their opinions.

Throughout our AA history we have always had individuals who like to express their opinion, and we hope that this will continue to be part of our Fellowship's experience; we have always been big enough to embrace this.

Sadly, however, due to modern communications at the General Service Board (GSB) and the General Service Office (GSO), we have experienced a group of individuals, working collectively, who have sought to undermine our Fellowship, our Conference, and our General Service Board by attempting to force feed our Fellowship their opinions. Further to this, our Structure and Service Handbooks are ignored, as is anyone who should disagree with their approach.

We have all witnessed the misuse of our Confidential Directory, a service tool for AAGB members, collectively working in Unity to help carry our message to the still suffering alcoholic. Our GSB having to spend hundreds of hours and a great deal of AA monies defending our Fellowship, whilst giving these individuals confidentiality that they certainly do not merit, is a waste.

Our GSB members deserve to be respected as Trusted Servants for the experience that they freely share. Our GSO staff should be awarded that same respect.

As groups, intergroups and regions let's make sure that we understand that our Experience Strength and Hope will always trump opinions. A failure to do so will lead to the disintegration of the GSB.

So, in closing: for me it's now back to making the tea at my local group if they will let me.... I have previous experience of that.

Many, many thanks for all who have allowed me the privilege to serve to the best of my ability.

Stevie Outgoing Vice-Chair

Why bother with archives?

Find out why we have archives what happens when you donate them, how we look after them, how we use them to carry the message. Join us for a presentation by the new Alcoholics Anonymous Archivist at the Borthwick institute.

The free Archive online workshop is on the evening of Thursday the 12th of September.

To register for the free workshop e-mail John C at trustee.northeastregion@gsogb.org.uk



We need your experience, strength and hope for a New Armed Services Pamphlet

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

A representative sample of submissions (guide lengths 800 to 1,000 words) will go through a selection process for the proposed publication.

The deadline for submission has been extended to 1st September 2024.

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

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

AA Service News Is Yours...!

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

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

editor.aasn@aamail.org

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

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

‘A Photograph is the pause button of life’



What better way to stop and take a breath than to capture a moment in time. If you would like to share your moments with the fellowship, then GSO invites you to submit your photos to our image bank where publications affiliated with AA can browse and select images.

Interested?

**If so, please email
imagebank@gsogb.org.uk
for further details**

GSB Vacancies



What is a Sub Committee and what does it do?

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

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

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

Interested? Please read on...

Your Application

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

The chair, vice chair, secretary, treasurer or a currently serving liaison officer of the sponsoring region or intergroup must endorse the application by way of a covering letter. GSO will need to receive this covering letter by the application deadline.

If there is no covering letter by the specified deadline, then you will not be eligible for interview.

For any of the vacancies, you will need:

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

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

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

The deadline for application is 10th August 2024

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

For up-to-date vacancies, please read on...

Archives

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

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

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

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

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

Armed Services

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

Experience

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

Aim

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

Its objects are to:

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

- Assist in the implementation of Conference recommendations

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

Employment

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

Our primary functions are to:

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

For more information about these vacancies, please contact Tony S, Trustee for Employment trustee.LRS@gso gb.org.uk

First Response Online

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

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

Chat Now:

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

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

Online Response Service:

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

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

Health

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

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

The primary role of the Health Sub Committee is to:

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

For more information about these vacancies, please contact Carmel G,
trustee.southeastregion@gsogb.org.uk

Literature

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

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

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

Essential requirements:

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

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

Prison Sub Committee

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

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

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

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

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

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

Probation/Criminal Justice Services

We are looking for members who:

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

For more information about these Probation and Criminal Justice vacancies, please contact

Hamish McS, trustee.eastscotlandregion@gsogb.org.uk

Public Information and Electronic Communication

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

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

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

The primary functions of the sub-committee are to:

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

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

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

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

GSB Trustee for PI & EComms

Tim B trustee.southmidlandsregion@gsogb.org.uk

Roundabout

Roundabout - Could You Be Our New Assistant Editor?

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

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

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

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

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

but not too onerous.

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

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

Cath Editor

roundabout@aamail.org

Survey

Rare Service Opportunity to Take the Pulse of AA

Summary

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

What is the Pulse of AA Post-Pandemic?

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

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

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

Rare Opportunity

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

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

Apply Now

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

Telephones

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

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

Requirements for the telephones sub-committee are to:

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

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

Young Persons

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

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

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

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

Main aims:

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

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

To establish and maintain good relationships with professionals and professional bodies

Requirements:

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

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

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

The General Service Office (GSO)

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

Taken from AAGB Conference approved pamphlet “The Pot”

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

AA Comes of Age, page 140

The Role of GSO

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

Prudent reserves

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

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

Tradition 7

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

Tradition 7 Contributions January - March 2024	Contributions £
Some of these contributions come from regional assemblies, whilst others may come from individual members or groups	
Eastern Region	16,933
London Region North	3,892
London Region South	18,348
Midlands Region	9,267
North East Region	8,088
North West Region	2,439
South East Region	61,149
South Midlands Region	300
South West Region	4,574
Wales & Borders Region	11,372
East of Scotland Region	2,189
Glasgow Region	9,954
Highlands & Islands Region	150
Scotia Region	26,452
South West Scotland Region	3,705
Continental European	9,362
Sundry- Unidentifiable receipts	3,440
Total	191,616

In Memoriam

1 February 2024 - 30 April 2024

In memory of **Graham B** **Midlands Region IG** **£40.00**



Subscribe to AA Service News

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

Printed AA Service News is mailed in a plain envelope.



SEND TO (BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Group Name/Day:

Group No:*

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Email to:

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

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