Service Across All Disciplines
Contributions regarding service in the Fellowship are welcomed from all areas - individuals, groups, intergroups, regions, subcommittees, GSB.

AA Service News is published in early March, June, September and December each year with deadline dates of the last Friday of January, the last Friday of April, the last Friday of July and the last Friday of October each year. 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 note that the opinions expressed in AA Service News may not necessarily represent the view of the General Service Board.

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

Service with a Smile

When I came into AA, frightened, ashamed and defeated, it was the friendship and welcome of the Fellowship and people I met who kept me sober, especially in those early days. Scared to share, I would ask questions, and eventually after a year my sponsor said it was time I started doing some meaningful service, so I became secretary of my Group. As I was by then eligible, I signed up for the telephone help-line and was able to help newcomers like I had been, some tearful, all fearful, and all in despair. I was lucky enough to get calls from people I later met at meetings. I will never forget the thrill when someone came up to me and said 'I spoke to you on the help line. Thank you for helping me get sober'.

I can’t quite remember how I found out about the On-Line Help Line. Probably because I am always pottering about on my computer, or because I can type fast, or because I could do more for AA, but I was put in touch with Barry and trained as an on-line helpline responder (squirrels as we are affectionately known), and started on one of the most enjoyable and rewarding types of service it has been my privilege to experience in AA.

I had often thought at our meetings that e-mail was a good way of keeping in touch with newcomers, as it gave them the option of whether or not to respond, and when. So finding we had an on-line version of the phone service interested me. I found the same satisfaction in helping newcomers, but with the on-line service it is possible to have more than that first brief encounter. People come back with questions, sometimes days later. They are often as tongue-tied in their first e-mail as the phone contact newcomer is, but can digest the response. We can attach information to our e-mails, such as the ‘Who Me?’ leaflet, ask for details so we can put them in touch with their local area, and attach lists of meetings nearby. Not only that but when they have been to their first meeting or even some months later, they often e-mail us back to let us know how they are getting on.

The online team picks up each e-mail as it comes in, so that once you have finished your ‘shift’ the next person can see the thread of the conversation and carry on where you left off. The newcomer begins to feel comfortable. The messages can then be left in your own ‘inbox’ on the website, so you can check on their progress when you next log on, and send an encouraging message, which helps them feel welcome and part of the Fellowship. You don’t need to be a computer whiz, just be able to log on to the website and answer e-mails, and you don’t
have to type fast, as there is no time pressure. Nor are you ‘tied’ to your computer for your shift, as the e-mails don’t hang-up! There is a library of information you can attach as well. That is something you cannot do on the phone lines.

I am so pleased that there is no time restriction on this wonderful piece of service – I don’t want to stop. I find it so helpful to my own sobriety. On a regular basis I am writing to people about how I got sober, remembering why I got sober, and feeling the joy of helping someone else, desperate, lonely and afraid, come to realise that there is a wonderful fellowship prepared to help them. It keeps me grounded and humble in my own sobriety. This really is service with a very big smile.

If you want to be part of this, contact Jim at ortadmin@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Carole P
(Fenland/Eastern Region)

Sponsorship Into Service

My name is Carol and I am an alcoholic.

Service in the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous has been a cornerstone of my sobriety.

It started when I was nine months sober and my sponsor suggested I should take on the literature position in my home group. To begin with I re-organised the entire literature table and filled in what I thought were gaps with fresh leaflets that I decided the group should have. I was very enthusiastic and some of the leaflets that I ordered are probably still at the bottom of the literature box to this day. But it did encourage me to buy and read the books and this way I learned about our history and our service structure. It was a very instructive year for me.

Since then I have always been in service in one way or another and as my sponsor encouraged me so I have encouraged my sponsees to seek out ways of helping our Fellowship, and so it goes on, keeping the door open for those to come.

It seems to me that word of mouth, speaking directly to a prospective candidate for service sometimes works better than just a general appeal. General appeals are easy to ignore. Often members don’t realize what they have to offer or are hesitant about coming forward, but in my experience a personal approach, sponsorship in other words, is sometimes more effective.

Service has given me so much more than I have put into it. Initially it gave me the impetus to attend the meeting, because if I wasn’t there my service would be missed. I did think I was irreplaceable. But I was new and didn’t know anything about anything. Now I see how it
has enriched my AA life and I cannot imagine not having something to do – sponsorship and service has become interwoven in my everyday living.

Before I became a GSB Trustee I was the Archivist for my Region, London South, and the archives have proved to me time and again that without the past members of this wonderful Fellowship putting in the work we might gradually atrophy and die. This is my life; I can’t afford to let that happen.

Thank you so much for inviting me to this wonderful Conference; I am delighted to be here.

Carol H (GSB Trustee, AA GB)

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Polish Speaking Helpine

020 7278 4159

Saturday and Sunday 5 – 9 pm

The idea of creating a helpline in Polish language came to life at one of the first meetings of the Polish-speaking Intergroup, over 5 years ago. As a new Intergroup, we firstly needed to look into the ways it would work. We needed to build structures, budget and to get people who we knew would be committed to do service. We had to also take note that we are no longer in Poland and we can’t just copy the way in which it is working there. The experience from Poland and from England taken together gave us the idea on how to do the service in the best way we can – but we still learn and improve.

Now in England there are three Polish-speaking Intergroups in London, Midlands and one in Scotland. There are more and more meetings in the Polish language, 16 in London, 21 in the rest of England, and 9 in Scotland. We are quite well organized, with regular meetings, service positions, and Polish language literature available from the Intergroup.

The idea of a telephone line with Polish speaking responders came in spring 2012. The people were ready, we had money to pay for the phone line, the question was only to find a place.

Here we received a great help from the London Telephone Service, based in the Southern Service Office (SSO) and Miranda (the Office Administrator). SSO let us install the line and offered a table which we can use on weekend afternoons. Also Mike K TLO for London Region North, friend from fellowship came to our first phone training, shared his experience and explained what it meant to be a responder, what to do and not to do over the phone. A few of us decided to attend the regular training session for responders and 12 Steppers at SSO in English, it gave us preparation to do phone service.

We started in June 2012. Every
Saturday and Sunday from 5 till 9 pm there are 2 responders on the phone. On the rest of the week all calls are recorded onto an answering machine, which is checked daily and if the person leaves a number we call them back.

In the first three months there were a high number of calls from suffering alcoholics but also from companies. Now there are around 12 – 16 calls per week. From these 2 - 5 are from alcoholics or family. Most of them come to a meeting or get a contact with some group and if they have no group close to them then the closest which is possible. The people call from the whole of Great Britain.

Information about the number is given to all Polish-speaking AA groups in Great Britain. Some of them put the information in leaflets or small posters in churches, shops with Polish food, local police station or the Polish medical centres. There is also information in the Polish newspaper called “Polish Express”.

On 16 February 2014, we will have had our 3rd training in the Polish language.

Maggie
Polish Intergroup

European Service Meeting 2013

It was my privilege to represent our Fellowship in Great Britain at the European Service Meeting on 18/19/20 October 2013 as a first-term delegate, along with Penny A as the second-term delegate. The meeting took place at Frankfurt am Main, Germany. I was unexpectedly, but very gratefully, met at the airport by David A who resides in Frankfurt and is a member of the English-speaking Continental European Region. David very kindly showed me around the city.

The theme of the meeting was ‘Carry our Message through Service’. A total of 24 countries were represented by 39 delegates. The Chair, Kristin L, is a member of the Fellowship in Oslo. Also present were Phyllis H, General Manager of AA World Services, and Rick W of the International Desk at AA World Services.

The meeting began on the Friday evening with general introductions, opening addresses, and short summary presentations by the delegates on their respective service structures. What was so striking and poignant was the very wide variation in the numbers of meetings in the countries represented. I felt the enthusiasm and commitment of the countries that had the lowest number of groups, which were mainly those in Eastern Europe, some having less than 100 meetings a week and
often separated by large distances. At least one of these Fellowships doesn’t have a physical General Service Office as yet, but relies upon communication technology to coordinate their service structure and activity. But they are making progress and their gratitude is palpable.

All of Saturday and the first part of Sunday morning were spent in the committees and workshops to which we were allocated, along with the associated plenary presentations. The three committees were entitled ‘Agenda/Policy/Admissions/Finance’, ‘Literature/Publishing and Media Communication’, and ‘Working with other countries’. The workshops had the following themes: ‘Working with young people’, ‘How to attract and retain young people within AA’, and ‘Utilising the service structure, a way to carry the message within AA’.

It was within the committee and workshop sharing, and also in the plenary sessions, that I learnt so much about the Fellowship and service structure in other countries. There was of course a great deal of commonality, but it was also interesting to see different ways of doing things, and different ways of using the structure, which have come about as structures have developed in response to local factors. One interesting point is that in German-speaking Switzerland, when giving talks to school children AA members always attend with a member of Al-Anon. They do this because it has been discovered that there is a higher chance of the children’s parents having a drinking problem than the children have at that time of their lives.

The lingua franca of the ESM is English, which obviously makes it easier for delegates from GB. This gave me much admiration for the other delegates whose first language in most cases was not English. But in any case we talk about the language of the heart in AA!

On the Saturday evening there was sharing with a service theme by two delegates. This set the scene very well for the open sharing that followed. Once again the language of the heart was felt along with the usual AA honesty and openness that is found at all AA meetings.

By the time that the closing session arrived there was a real sense of togetherness, of knowing each other, and of course plenty of contact details for subsequent networking. I was elected Chair of the ‘Working with other countries’ committee for ESM 2015, and I am delighted to say that Penny was elected Chair of ESM 2015.

The organisation of the event was faultless, and this was totally due to the efforts of the staff of our GSO who service the ESM: Roger
B, Angela Varley, Sophie Perring and Jenny Pryke, who were assisted by Wieslaw L of Poland. I offer my profound thanks to all of them. By majority vote it was decided that the venue for the ESM be moved to York as from 2015. This will reduce considerably the cost to the secretariat.

Geoff H
First-term delegate ESM

On Saturday we had hoped to visit the Polish General Service Office and meet some of the people who worked there. This was not to be so. Pavel drove us to join the mini-bus and delegates/observers from other countries. The journey to Sielpia took about three and a half hours! After being shown to our accommodation, we had a meal, registered, met with our translators and were again more formally introduced to the other foreign Delegates. We also met Alunia, who had attended the ESM meeting recently and is also attending the World Service Meeting. Witek, a rotating Trustee and Tadech, an ex trustee who is now responsible for compiling a Polish Structure Handbook - I understood he and Carol had met prior to the Conference to discuss this - and Piotr who is a Trustee and was our main translator.

As there were visitors as well as Delegates, voting cards were distributed.

Conference opened officially at 3pm when the rotating Chair Person presented his report.

There are thirteen Regions and the Chair Person had visited them all to talk about the different roles within the Fellowship. Another member is writing a history of Alcoholics Anonymous in Poland. He detailed some of the achievements since 2010; volume 1 of this work was on sale on the literature table. He said ‘we are hidden from the outside’ and

On Friday, 8th November, 2013 I arrived in Warsaw airport to be met by Andrew and Pavel who were holding a sign saying ‘Friends of Bill W’. A very welcome sight I have to say; I had travelled from Cardiff, via Amsterdam, to Warsaw. Carol, who had arrived on an earlier flight from Heathrow, was with them.

We were taken to the Polonia Palace Hotel – very grand place - and told we would be collected at 09.15 the following day, Saturday. It was very overcast and raining so we did not explore the city at all. We ate in our rooms as we were both tired after our journey.

'Sponsorship, the strength of the AA Fellowship'.

42nd General Service Conference of AA, 9th – 11th November, 2013, Sielpia, Poland.
stressed the need to encourage newcomers within the Traditions and he also stressed the need for these Traditions to be explained.

He highlighted the fact that professionals, in particular the clergy – say that Polish AA should ‘go out’ to them. He told Conference that Intergroups and Regions meet for workshops; Regions take the responsibility for PI when such responsibility should come from the Groups. The last Conference in 2011 was about ‘Unity’.

There is a lack of communication between Intergroups, Regions and Groups.

The Fellowship in Poland must work towards Unity if personal recovery is not to be endangered. Groups are very important and sponsoring within the Groups is the foundation of this recovery. Sponsoring is to be based upon the Steps, Traditions and the Concepts – together. There is now a Polish translation of the Concepts.

This Conference in 2013 was about Sponsorship – reaching the ‘spiritual realm through the practise of the Steps’. Great Britain was complimented on good Step sponsorship. There can be no real recovery if there is no service; service was suggested as a possible theme for the conference to be held in 2014.

Regions in Poland have their own magazines, similar to ‘Grapevine’. Regional bulletins are distributed. The way the ‘profits’ are used is similar to the process for ‘Share’.

He, the Chair Person, requested help for the World Service Meeting which is to be held in Warsaw 2014.

There were reports from the Chair of the Agenda Committee, Finance and PI. It was suggested that the majority of PI should be done by Groups. PI is good in prisons but there is no liaison – unity.

There were reports regarding Literature and from the Editor of the Conference Booklet.

After a break at 5.15pm we returned to the business of the Conference. Flyers for a Prison workshop were shared/discussed. Various seminars are planned: it is proposed that a magazine be produced for professionals with AA contributions, possibly in an electronic format.

The importance of contact with the outside world was stressed and the possibility of inviting professionals to the next Conference.

Electronic communications – Information Technology and the Telephone Services are possible seminars planned. Workshops are also planned for Literature and Sponsorship.
Prison contact is good. In 2013 there are 218 groups in prisons. In 155 of the 164 prisons these groups are well received. In 9 prisons there is no AA presence. On a positive note, prison officials request AA to 'go to them'. We were informed that prisoners – 9,000 - who had been imprisoned for being ‘drunk in charge of a bicycle’ are now being released into the ‘charge’ of AA.

There is to be a Prison Service workshop.

We heard reports from all European Regions present – I believe there were 13. Also reports from Delegates to other Conferences in London. We heard how well the ‘chit system’ is working.

The 40th anniversary of Polish AA will be held in 2014. The theme is to be ‘It works’. Invitations are to be sent everywhere. There was much discussion regarding the practicalities of arranging such an event.

Sunday, 10th November, 2013:

We did not attend the first ‘session’ as it was mostly Polish AA business.

At 10am there were presentations regarding the theme of the Conference – 'Sponsorship – the strength of the AA Fellowship'. I spoke first, then Carol. Other European Delegates followed us. Seven countries were represented – Ukraine, Belarus, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Rumania and of course, GB.

Most felt there was a need for co-operation between Groups and the need for movement toward forming Intergroups and then Regions

Altogether there were approximately sixty or seventy delegates plus observers – possibly around one hundred AA members attended. There is some contact with the ‘split’ Russian Fellowship.

Tadek reported on the progress being made compiling a Service Structure Handbook for Poland. He highlighted the importance of Intergroup participation. Carol was asked to explain the Delegates roles in Great Britain. As stated previously, she had already met with him in London to discuss this.

Between 11am and 2pm workshops were held. Carol and I were allocated to the ‘Workshop v Foreign panel - Sponsoring’. We all spoke of our experiences of sponsoring. It was interesting to note that because of the lack of sponsors, one lady in particular, has thirty-three sponsees! She had found visiting AA members from the USA extremely helpful and encouraging. Some of these Delegates spoke of their lost identity, dignity and self-respect. It became clear that sponsors are difficult to find. There are many ‘old timers who just don’t drink’ – they believe that recovery comes
through Group service rather than sponsorship.

They all highlighted that recovery be shown rather than told, i.e. recovery backed up with evidence and growing up through service.

During the evening session Carol and I were invited to comment/review a document they had produced – not the content – the wording, in order to clarify it. An email had been sent to GSO regarding this; unfortunately neither of us had received it. I believe Angela and possibly Roger were away when it arrived. This really made little difference to our contribution to the discussion.

Monday, 11th November, 2013:

Region reports were presented – I think. Each report was ‘approved by the Conference’. Those members who chose to abstain were asked to explain their reasons, as did those who decided to vote against the reports. There was an opportunity for any questions after each report and there was a great deal of discussion regarding precise wording. The Election of the Chair of the Board of Trustees took place. There were three candidates for next year’s Conference Chair. A lady called Maria was elected.

There was much discussion about women’s meetings. It was noticeable how few women were present – about ten I think. There is certainly a lack of female sponsors, as noted previously one woman was sponsoring many people.

During this Monday morning session the theme for the next Conference was chosen by ‘picking from the hat’. Carol was asked to do this – the theme for next year is to be ‘Service – the Spiritual gift of AA’.

The rotating Conference Delegates were thanked by the Conference Chair and given copies of ‘Pass it on’. They all asked everyone to sign their copies including Carol and myself. Maria, the Chair Person for next year – 2014 – gave a short speech thanking all present, then shook hands with almost everyone.

And so, Conference 2013 in Poland closed until next year.

My thoughts: This was my first encounter with AA in another country, bar Ireland. I found it stimulating and interesting, though often difficult to follow. Body language, however, says a lot. I felt there was an enormous amount of enthusiasm, even excitement, for AA, particularly around sponsoring and service and ‘getting it right’

I do think it would have been useful to have had translations of the questions they were discussing beforehand – this would have helped to solve some of the
‘mystery’ during discussions, however our translators did a remarkable job.

It was a privilege to have been given this opportunity and, in particular, to explore my own ideas of sponsoring on both a personal level and within the area of service in AA.

Judy F  
GSB Trustee  
Wales and Borders Region

A new exciting venture is beginning, aimed at encouraging more people to attend meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous and other Fellowships. Public Health England (PHE), believing that people are more likely to achieve lasting sobriety if they attend meetings of the Twelve Step Fellowships and other mutual aid groups, have based their strategy upon the research evidence, some of which is included in the current Guidance of the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE).

The PHE Strategy is being led by Mark Gilman, who is Strategic Recovery Lead for Substance Misuse, and works within the Health and Wellbeing Directorate. Mark spends much of his time going around the country speaking to various groups of people including commissioners, treatment providers and service users, and I know that many of you will already know him.

The PHE Strategy, which is of course an internal PHE document, in a nutshell exhorts PHE Regional Centres to form relationships with commissioners, treatment providers and, in our specific case, the Liaison Officers of our Intergroups within the PHE Regions. It is within these relationships that treatment providers will be encouraged to enable their service users to access our meetings whilst they are in treatment, and to support them to enable continued involvement. Our part of the arrangement will be to make ourselves available to people who wish to try AA as part of their recovery, and also to be available to treatment staff to help facilitate this relationship. It is very much a two-way process.

This very ambitious project is being piloted within the London area in the Boroughs of Islington and Croydon. The project leader (Michele Kemp) is working with three of our HLOs (Anne M, Gabriel S and Stephen M). To-date one workshop has already taken place and another one is to take place on 28 January 2014. The latter workshop will consist of treatment staff and others from all of the 33 London Boroughs. The aforementioned HLOs will play an active role in this event, which will
effectively launch the strategy in Greater London.

A number of areas in the rest of England are currently in the process of being identified to act as pilot sites before going countrywide.

So what does all this mean for our Fellowship? Well, it means that potentially we will have more people coming to our meetings, something that I am sure that all of us would want. It also provides an opportunity for us to carry the message in different ways. It should also help to dispel some of the myths that are associated with AA in parts of the professional community and others.

This is about the spirit of cooperation. It isn’t endorsement or affiliation, but rather it is about our being willing to carry the message by working with the professional community. The words of our co-founder, Bill W, ‘Let’s be friendly with our friends’, are just as relevant now as they were when he uttered them all those years ago. What a wonderful opportunity we have!

Geoff H
Trustee for Health Liaison

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**Prisons**

My name is Wullie, I am an alcoholic.

I recently was asked as part of my role as a General Service Board Trustee to shadow Del H on his final year as trustee for Prisons. I thought a lunacy commission should be appointed, what did I know about Prisons?

My first duty was to attend the Annual Regional Prison Liaison’s meeting in York. What a great bunch of enthusiastic guys and gals. I sat and listened and hopefully learned. They spoke for successes, challenges, failures and frustrations with passion for their chosen service.

At the Prison sub-committee meeting we decided to try to put together a contribution for an article to the AA Service News. But obviously you can’t transmit something you haven’t got, so I get to write the introduction! The rest are extracts from the submissions that the sub-committee members sent me.

My name is Isobel G.

I first got involved with the female Inmates and service in the prison a number of years ago, when I was invited into share with the women. I didn’t know what to expect or what I would experience and I still can’t explain the feeling today, But all I knew was that I was going
back. I asked the then local PLO if it was possible to get involved. And I started going along on a weekly basis. As the women came along each week and got to know us, they started to open up and share back.

I remember the first young girl to get out and made her way to Alcoholics Anonymous through the Where to Find, that we give to all of the women on release. She contacted me through her sponsor when she was 8 months sober. I asked the head of Offender's Outcomes at Greenock prison if she could come back in to see the women, he agreed and when she came in, it was to tell all the other girls how her life had changed so much thanks to AA and her sponsor. And was just starting to go through the program.

A few months back one of the girls asked if I would take her through the program, I contacted staff and asked if it was ok to do so, and have one to ones with her. It was agreeable for me to go in on a Saturday morning.

The difference in this woman is amazing, to the staff, but with us, we see it all the time when people recover through the twelve steps. It’s night and day.

My name is Peter M

Before becoming involved in this area of service I had little idea of the prison way of life never having been ‘inside’. Just another ‘yet’; if I pick up that first drink. My background is such that the thought of visiting a prison never troubled me or even entered my mind. However my recovery brought me into contact with people, ideas and concepts foreign to me and I soon found myself enlisted and joining in! I am amazed at how involved I am and how much I enjoy it.

I understand today how best to help myself, and how to best help myself to be helped. It is never clear how much or how little I help others save for being there; boot up and show up is what we are told. Service helps with consistency, discipline and structure and a sense of belonging. That is my experience, despite thinking I know better.

Working with prison authorities, as well as other recovering alcoholics, is challenging and often exasperating. Challenging, as I often do not want to do it and exasperating because, more often than not, I do not achieve what I set out to do. I am learning to be helpful and working on showing a settled example. Some days it is easier than others and this is where my continuing contact with our Fellowship supports me as we are best supported in recovery. We can, I can’t.

My prison visits will continue and I will soon be able to become a prison postal sponsor where experience, strength and hope can
be shared through writing to inmates. Postal sponsorship is a way of carrying the message ‘within the walls’ and follows a tradition going back to the very beginnings of our Fellowship and more than 50 years at Barlinnie and Wakefield prisons. The system is administered by our General Service Office and I now have first-hand experience of this little known area of service and how it helps others less fortunate than myself.

This will be a challenge for me but I do not need to find reasons for not doing something today that might help others. I have to keep moving forward, and by doing so, I will better cope with my life as it is and not as I want it to be.

Why not consider it yourself?

And finally a contribution from Del H, GSB Trustee

**Prison postal service**

There is a way of getting involved in this area of service if you feel that you can’t actually make physical prison visiting possible, and that is sign up to the Prison Postal Service. This is getting mentioned more often lately, but still needs more people to become involved.

There is information on this in the Document Library, with a Guideline and a basic run down of how it works. Currently there is a database held by Jenny at GSO for England & Wales of 134 people (129 Male & 5 Female). Lorraine at NSO has a similar database for Scotland of 28 (17 Male & 11 Female) making a total of 162.

Jenny or Lorraine would more than happy to hear from you if there is more information you require.

In Service
Wullie I
GSB Trustee Shadow for Prisons

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**Finance**

A lot of people think finance is boring or just about being asked to put their hand in their pocket. During my time as Honorary Treasurer I have found this discipline more and more exciting. It is money that enables us to reach out to the suffering alcoholic. One alcoholic talking to another may cost nothing but how does that alcoholic find us, how do we produce and distribute literature, fund a website, hold PI events, visit prisons.......... and so much more. To me it is not about figures on a spreadsheet but carrying the message.

We are currently in a stable financial position. Our reserves have grown over the past few years due to the increase in value of our investments. Ongoing reviews of expenditure carried out by Board Trustees and Staff keep our running costs down.
Fellowship finances are subject to fluctuations in the economy and the level of contributions coming through the structure. At some point there will be a downturn in the financial market and our reserves will reduce in value. Contributions are currently down compared to last year and have not kept pace with inflation over the past ten years.

Contributions coming into AAGB are all from Fellowship members through the Pot, Monthly Contributions/Gift Aid (forms available on the website or from GSO), Covenants and Gratitude Week.

Literature sales provide income but this is largely offset by costs. The ‘cost of publications’ as shown in the accounts, represents external printing costs and the buying in of books from America. Other costs including internal printing, postage, staff and associated premises overheads are included in the relevant expenditure listings. Public Information leaflets are provided at no cost and literature is sent out free to Groups and members.

The Development Fund – Eight per cent of the sale of hard copies of ‘The Big Book’, ‘The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions’ and ‘As Bill Sees It’ bought from GSO goes into The Development Fund. After Bill W’s visit to Great Britain in 1950, a number of Big Books were shipped here. In a letter dated 22 April 1952 to the Chairman of the Pre-Foundation Committee, Bill said that he had “been glad to forego his own royalties”. He went on to say “My principal motive was that a Foundation be established in London and that it be placed in funds through book monies”. (The Foundation was to become GSO and GSB). Bill W waived his right to royalties but stipulated that the money should be segregated and used at the discretion of the Board for the special purpose of the development of AA.

The name of the fund was changed from the Royalties fund to the Development Fund in 1994 but the principle established by Bill W continues. The funds are now used to support the development of AA in other countries and recent contributions include a project with Poland to support the growth of AA in Eastern Europe, support for the development of AA in Sub Sahara Africa and contributions to the World Literature Fund to aid the translation of literature into other languages.

Finance now has a presence on the website where you can find further information: Members/Service/Disciplines/Finance.

Annual Reports and the most recent Conference presentation are in the Document Library. Quarterly financial reports and contribution sheets are sent out to Intergroup Treasurers and full accounts are sent quarterly to
Regional Treasurers. The Annual Report goes out to Groups, Intergroups and Regions.

A copy of the new Group Treasurer’s Cashbook approved at Conference 2013 has been sent out to all registered Groups and copies can be ordered from GSO.

Thank you for your service and your contributions.

Penny A
Honorary Treasurer

My experience in AA Employment Service

When I ended my four year term at Conference, I wondered which area I should do service in next. This time instead of joining one I really wanted to I went for one that was less popular and could do with a bit more support.

Perhaps 18 years of program has begun to put a dent in my selfishness! I can see no good reason why the Employment discipline seems to attract less people especially when it has a whole chapter devoted to it in our Big Book.

I have been Regional Employment Liaison Officer for nearly 3 years now and a great deal has changed since I first started in the role.

When I went to my first Employment AGM at GSO York I was slightly disheartened at the small number attending, the service was really struggling to get new recruits. I know this is a common difficulty, but Employment seemed to be suffering more than most. During the discussions and reports the mood gradually began to lift as some good ideas were put forward and our Chair had some positive input. I left hoping I could encourage a few more to join the service and generally raise the profile of Employment.

When I reported to region I expressed how important getting back on my feet and finding work had been to me. Employers need the sound advice and experience AA can offer.

The first action I took in my new role was to visit the management of the local Job Centre and give them some literature and an invitation to a public/open meeting being held at my home group during AA awareness week. I also invited several other local employers and encouraged home group members to do the same.

We were extremely surprised and delighted when 13 professionals turned up and listened to our presentation followed by a question and answer session. Literature packs were made available at the end and they all said how glad they were they had
attended. We have made this public meeting an annual event and over the years we have welcomed amongst others police, doctors, nurses, probation, church officers and street angels.

The next Regional ELO AGM I went to was much better attended with several more liaison officers present. I heard much more about the service done that year and several interesting propositions were made. It was stated that we were the only discipline that didn’t have a sub-committee and the meeting thought it was about time we changed that. It was also proposed and agreed that we have a seminar the following year incorporating the AGM. We had taken two important steps to raise the profile of the Employment service.

Both of these proposals were accomplished last year when we held a very successful and well attended seminar and later on when our first sub-committee was formed. It was during this period I finally welcomed the addition of a new liaison officer to my area and enjoyed my first meeting with him.

I was fortunate to be elected to serve on the sub-committee and attend its first meeting. At our recent second meeting we published our terms of reference, confirmed our meeting dates for the year and confirmed the reinstatement of the publication Hello ELO. We really need some more articles for this, they can be of any length and broadly speaking anything related to employment, whether it be experience in service or as an employer or anecdotes which applied to certain jobs etc. These can be in any format and sent to GSO for the attention of David A who is our incoming board member.

I am grateful to Winnie C, the board member who has skillfully steered us for the past few years and also my sponsor who has encouraged and supported me in this exciting and rewarding role.

Maxine W
Regional ELO and Employment Sub-Committee

Service Workshop
Coventry & Warwickshire Intergroup

There were 30 members present, with a significant number of these at their first workshop. There were 7 areas of service covered, with some time for questions and responses.

We started with a presentation on sponsoring, with the presenter sharing about the important role her late sponsor had in her recovery. She mentioned about being guided into developing her understanding of the programme of recovery and the importance of service in AA. She considered sponsorship as one alcoholic
sharing their experience with another alcoholic to support them in staying sober and guiding them in recovery. She also mentioned what a sponsor is not, i.e. a counsellor, marriage guidance or otherwise, etc.

This was followed by a presentation on sponsoring into service, with the presenter stating that he would not sponsor someone into service without being around to support them. He placed an emphasis on the need for those involved in service (particularly at Intergroup/Region) to develop an independence of thinking and knowledge of the Twelve Traditions. The importance of putting the whole of AA before any of its constituent parts was emphasised.

We then had a presentation on Electronic Communications, which included information on the new AAGB Website and ‘Hints & Suggestions on Internet Safety’. The need to ensure that our Traditions are observed in our use of modern communications was emphasised.

One member spoke about her early involvement in service in the time honoured way, setting up, washing up and welcoming newcomers). She mentioned the importance of the AA literature and when in doubt the need to ask questions of members more experienced in service, rather than ‘going it alone’. She valued her sponsor’s ‘encouragement’ and support in service.

The Prison Liaison Officer spoke about the weekly meetings at HMP Onley and HMP Rye Hill. At HMP Onley the prisoners run the meetings, with a member going in once a fortnight to offer support. At HMP Rye Hill the PLO attends every week taking another member with him.

We had two presentations on PI, one from our Intergroup PI covering local activity and another from our Regional PI. At a local level weekly ‘Introductory Talks’ are being held at Warwick Hospital and it is hoped to get a similar arrangement set up at Coventry University Hospital. Other talks are also taking place.

The Regional PI mentioned AA Awareness Month with its focus on carrying the message to professionals and members of the public. He spoke about the initiative of an open letter being sent out by the four Non-Alcoholic Trustees to the editor of all national newspapers in Great Britain; every Sunday newspaper and some specialist weekly magazines. Included in the aims of this letter is the need to give the public accurate information about what we are and what we are not. The need for PI to be carried out in a co-ordinated way was stressed.

The TLO spoke about the importance of the commitment required from responders. At present our service is available 7
days a week 10.30am – 10.30pm, with 3 x 4 hour shifts. With the current ‘buddy’ scheme responders are on duty once a fortnight. This allows pairs to make their own arrangements to cover shifts. A mix of landline and mobile phones are in use by responders. A minimum of 2 years continuous sobriety is required for responders.

The importance of service to the chair of the workshop and to all the presenters was obvious, as was their enthusiasm for it.

Kevin M

The 8th AA Awareness event at the Scottish Parliament, hosted by David Stewart MSP for the Highlands & Islands (Labour Party) was held on the 2nd October 2013.

The speakers included Dr. Martin Weegman (NAT), Geoff H, Trustee and Christine H from Bellshill, Glasgow. Joe H, Trustee for PI was the chair.

There was a mixture of objective information about AA, its history in Scotland, and the more traditional subjective experience, strength and hope in the sharing by AA speaker Christine H.

There was a very clear explanation from Joe in his opening, about the preamble (introduction to AA) and what we do, and offer, and how we can cooperate with other agencies.

There were a number of questions ranging from why AA can’t help drinkers who have not reached their own personal rock bottom, AA is too anonymous and should be more open and available. This developed into a lively session and there was plenty of interaction amongst the invited professionals including three newly appointed Justices of the Peace.

The event was well attended and received positive feedback.

Sebastian Z
PI Sub-Committee
MAY 10

FLEMISH AA 54TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
Theme: ‘Unity, Service, Recovery’.
Europahal, 7 Generaal Maczekplein, 8700 Tielt, Belgium. 10.00 – 17.00. Al-Anon and Al-Ateen participation. No entrance fee.

JUNE 6-8

SPLIT, CROATIA INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH SPEAKING CONVENTION
Theme: ‘One Day At A Time’. Hotel Medena, Hrvatskih Zrtava bb. HR-21218, Seget Donji, Croatia. Tel: +385 21 880588 or +385 21 555949. Hotel contact: Danijela Stivic email: sales@hotelmedena.com. Convention website: www.aahrvatska.hr Contacts: Robert B +385 91 2864877; email: aacroatia.split@net.hr; James P +385 91 7265942; email: aazagreb@yahoo.com

JUNE 20-29

LITHUANIAN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS INTERNATIONAL AA SUMMER CAMP
Theme: ‘9 days 9 nights’. Sventoji, Lithuania. Open and closed AA, Al-Anon and other meetings. Sport and cultural activities. For more information email: ausra.marcinkus@gmail.com or tel: +07950746177 (mob).

Vacancies for Board Sub-committees

Probation/Criminal Justice Services Sub-Committee Vacancy
Due to rotation, nominations are being sought from members to join this Sub-committee. To this end applications are invited from the Fellowship for two of the posts, one of which would liaise with the five Scottish Regions.

A minimum of five years continuous sobriety is required at the point of application, as is experience at Intergroup or Region in the discipline of Probation or Scottish Criminal Justice Services Liaison. Good organisational and communications skills are desirable, as is the ability to produce verbal and written reports.

These posts will be filled by selection through the Nominations Committee and will be for a period of three years.

The main aims of the Sub-committee are to produce information handbooks for liaison officers in this discipline in Intergroups and Regions throughout Great Britain, production of a periodic newsletter, supporting Regional Liaison Officers, and developing the Probation/Criminal Justice
Services pages in the Members’ area of the AA (GB) website. Applicants will receive an information sheet which includes the Terms of Reference and outlines the work of the Sub-committee.

Applications would need to be supported by a letter of endorsement from a serving officer of the relevant Intergroup or Region.

Applications can be obtained by contacting Sophie Perring at General Service Office, 10 Toft Green, York, YO1 7NJ Tel. 01904 644026 or email: sophieperring@gsogb.org.uk.

Vacancies on the Share Team

Following rotation there will be vacancies early in 2014 for two Editorial Readers

The Job involves reading all articles and letters received and indicating to the editor on a scale of one to six (one being exceptional and six being unsuitable) their opinion of suitability for publication.

Such response should be made to the editor within a week of receipt of articles and letters from GSO (usually via email).

These positions are by appointment following selection process which includes nomination from Region or Intergroup.

Closing date for Applications is 4 April 2014.

Application forms are available in the Share section of Documents Library on the official web site. Application forms must be returned directly to the address below:

General Service Office, PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ. Tel: 01904 644026 or e-mail: aashare@gsogb.org.uk

Team members should have a minimum of five years sobriety at the time of application, will normally serve for a period of four years, and should be familiar with Conference-approved literature, Alcoholics Anonymous, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, AA Comes of Age, Twelve Concepts and the AA Service Handbook for Great Britain.

Armed Services Sub Committee Vacancies

There are four vacancies on the Armed Services Sub-committee of the General Service Board.

Applicants who are serving members of the Armed Forces, or ex-Service men and women would be an advantage but not essential.

The aim of the sub-committee is to raise awareness of Alcoholics Anonymous within the Armed Services community, serving and
ex serving personnel, including their families.

Main aims are:

- Offer support and advice to Regional Armed Services Liaison Officers. Help promote and encourage the appointment of Liaison Officers.

- Support the development and sharing of good practice and review and update literature, media resources and guidelines as necessary.

- Establish and maintain good relations with professionals and professional bodies connected with the Tri-Services.

It is suggested that applicants would fulfil the following criteria:

- A minimum of five years continuous sobriety at time of application.
- A sound grasp of AA Service Structure, Guidelines and Traditions.
- A personal service history at either intergroup and/or region in this discipline.
- Good organisational and communication skills are desirable. The ability to produce written and verbal reports would be an advantage, as well as relevant IT skills.

Armed Services Sub-Committee members will normally serve for a period of four years.

There is an expectation that Armed Services Sub-Committee members normally attend two meetings a year in York and participate in possible ‘conference call’ meeting(s) as and when required, giving notice to the GSB Trustee if unable to attend/participate.

Sub-committee applicants should be endorsed by the AA structure i.e. a serving officer of their Intergroup or Region. The serving officer’s endorsement should be in the form of a letter attached to the completed nomination form.

Application forms are available from Region Secretary, from GSO (contact Sophie on 01904 644026) and can also be found in the document library at www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Please forward applications to General Service Office of AA, 10 Toft Green, York, YO1 7NJ by 9th April 2014.

Robert M.
GSB Trustee Armed Services
Vacancies for Literature Sub-Committee

The Literature Committee is a sub committee of the General Service Board. Its role is:

- To undertake selective review of the content and appearance of the entire range of literature published by the Fellowship in Great Britain.

- To assess its suitability for revision or discontinuance.

- To consider needs for new literature.

The work of the committee is generated by the requirements of Conference, requests from the Fellowship and a systematic, proactive review of current literature and handbooks.

The committee meets up to four times a year in York, although some of the meetings may take the form of telephone conferencing. Much of the work is done in the interim, generally in partnership with another member of the committee. This is very much a team position working with others to ensure that our literature is of the highest possible standard, and is fit for purpose.

The post is subject to rotation after four years.

It is suggested that applicants would fulfil the following criteria:

- Minimum of five years continuous sobriety.

- A sound grasp of AA structure, Steps, Traditions, and Concepts.

- Accuracy of written grammar and style.

- Experience in copy-editing, design, document drafting or similar work would be very helpful.

- I.T. skills would be an advantage.

- A personal service history at either Intergroup and/or Region.

- Sub Committee applicants should be endorsed by the AA structure i.e. a serving officer of their Intergroup or Region. The serving officer’s endorsement should be in the form of a letter attached to the completed nomination form.

Application forms are available from Region Secretary, or directly from GSO.

The closing date for applications is 31st March 2014.

Carol H
GSB Trustee
Employment Sub-Committee
Vacancy

The newly Employment Sub Committee is looking for a member to join a committed team who are passionate about finding innovative ways of passing the message of recovery to the still suffering alcoholic at a national, Regional and Group level.

Our primary functions are to:

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

The position is rotational after four years and requires a minimum of 5 years sobriety.

A sound knowledge of the structure and Traditions of the Fellowship is necessary.

Application forms are available from GSO and can also be found in the document library at www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Please forward applications to GSO by 9 April 2014

Winnie C
David A
Board Trustees
Employment
Regional Contributions

Extract from Guideline 12:

GUIDELINES for AA in Great Britain from the General Service Office, Finance No. 12

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

GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

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 revision.

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### GSO Gratefully Acknowledges the following Donations:

**In Memory October – December 2013**

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MASZ PROBLEM Z PICIEM?

ANONIMOWI ALKOHOLICY
MOGĄ CI POMÓC

zadzwoń lub napisz:
0207-278-4159

e-mail: pik.aa.london@gmail.com
www.aa-pik-wielkabrytania.org.pl