



PI Service News

*"Easy does it.....
but do it!"*

Shared Service Experience



February 2021

Please pass on this PISN newsletter to your friends in the Fellowship, either by forwarding via email or by printing copies to take to your local meetings. Anyone may be on the mailing list by sending us their email address. Please help us share experiences, by sending in items for inclusion in the next PISN. We welcome information from throughout Great Britain and Continental European Region. **Contact** aainformation@gsogb.org.uk

House of Commons – Parliamentary Event for Professionals 11 May 2021 10am ONLINE

EXAMPLE INVITE TO PROFESSIONALS

eventbrite

Alcoholics Anonymous free event for professionals including real-life experiences and guidance on how to signpost people to AA.

Do you know how to signpost an alcoholic to get support?

More people than ever are reaching out to AA for help with their drinking. During the coronavirus pandemic, calls to the AA helpline increased by 28% .

AA is running a free information session to help you gain the knowledge you need to support the wellbeing of your team or service users.

This is your chance to learn more about alcoholism and the service that AA provides.

Agenda

- Welcome from Caroline Ansell MP, Member of Parliament for Eastbourne
- Alcoholics in recovery share their real-life experience

Professional speakers in the field of alcoholism:

- Alison Keating, Head of Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco, Public Health England
- Dr Eric Carlin, Non-Alcoholic Trustee of Alcoholics Anonymous and Director of Scottish Health Action on Alcohol Problems (SHAAP)
- Guidance on how to signpost alcoholics to get help

Date: Tuesday 11 May 2021. **Time:** 10:00 - 12:00. Tickets are free. Spaces are limited therefore registration is required. Please feel free to forward this invite to your colleagues.

Please help us publicise this event among professionals in your area & compile a list of invitees. Pls send professional's name, job title and organisation, email address to: sophie.perring@gsogb.org.uk
Invites will be sent out via Eventbrite e-mail early January 2021 and follow-ups as info received
Many thanks for your help. **House of Commons Event Committee** Sec - Louise F pi5.sc@aamail.org



BBC Radio 4 – The Listening Project

John D of Durham & Cleveland IG chatted with Hussain on BBC Radio 4 on 27th Dec Sunday at 1.30pm. It's the first conversation up. Organised by Faye Hatcher, Producer for Radio 4's The Listening Project (Presenter at BBC Radio Gloucestershire)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000qlpt>

AA on BBC Radio 4's Listening Project.

Hi ! I'm John. My sobriety date is 28 December 1991, and my home group is Wolsingham AA Sunday in Co. Durham. Next year I shall have been sober for thirty years. I am still an enthusiastic member and hope I always will be.

I first came across the Listening Project last year. I was immediately struck by the fact that it featured ordinary people talking about the ordinary things of life and not slick broadcasters or reporters. It then occurred to me that it had an audience of thousands if not millions, and this might be a very good vehicle to get the message out that there is a solution to someone who might otherwise turn their face to the wall and die.

So, I sent Fi Glover, the programme's organiser and presenter, an email offering to do a conversation on what it was like, what happened, and what it was like now, with my friend Buster, also a member of my home group. I honestly never thought I'd hear any more about it.

To my intense surprise, I got an email about two weeks later from Faye Hatcher, one of the programme's producers taking up my offer. I was delighted to have got over the first hurdle, but she did say that she wanted to find someone other than another alcoholic for me to speak to.

After a long gap she emailed me again to say she had found a gambler called Hussain willing to take part with me, and a date was fixed for the recording. The link the BBC sent me failed to work, so there was a further delay whilst the BBC cleared some copyright issues with Zoom.

We finally recorded about 80 minutes of conversation, during which I was at pains to emphasise the as far as I was concerned, I'd had tremendous support from AA and its members all the way through, and that for me it had worked. I was careful to protect my anonymity right from the word go. Hussain spent most of the conversation ranting against the evils of betting and boasting about how many famous people he knew. I thought that would put the tin lid on it once and for all, and we'd never get aired.

However, Faye must have done an amazing editing job to compress down 80 minutes to 10, because I got an email shortly before Christmas to say that 'my' piece was going out on the Sunday after Christmas. Perfect timing for all those Christmas drunks coming to again, I thought.

When finally, I heard myself on air, I imploded. When things move me deeply I well up. Anything to do with AA in public causes me to do that, and this was no exception. Then I thought 'I have such an impossibly precious sounding, cut glass accent it'll put people off listening straight away !' However, that's the committee in my head for you, busy as ever. I've just learned over the years not to listen. Most people who heard it and recognised me commended me for my sincerity and honesty.

I absolutely recommend having a go at doing a PI chat with any radio or TV station. I'd be happy to help anyone thinking of doing this.

It did me a lot of good. I just hope what I said did for somebody else too.

John D – Durham & Cleveland 07733 267 664

London West End January 2021

PI Service Report
January 2021
WEIG
Cait S pi.in@aamail.org,

Safer Spotlight Podcast

I recorded a podcast in December for The Connexional Team of the Methodist Church. The description of the episode is below. Once the podcast is released I can share a link to it.

In this episode of the Safer Spotlight Podcast we interview Kate from Alcoholics Anonymous who shares parts of her experience with alcoholism, the work that Alcoholics Anonymous does and how we as churches can help support people who are affected by alcoholism.

Mobile Banner Campaign

London Region North PI is running the 2nd mobile banner campaign in January 2021 to 1m mobile devices with the message 'Am I an alcoholic? Click here to find out how AA can help'. The cost of the campaign is £10k including VAT.

Proposal

I propose to use the £4k surplus at West End Intergroup to run a social media campaign.

Conference 2019 asked: Would Conference consider how the Fellowship's social media presence can be improved to enhance AA's ability to carry the message?

The conclusion was:

The Board's decision is that there is a serious risk of anonymity being compromised and we would be irresponsible if we allowed that or encouraged that and we recommend no presence on social media.

[Full details here \(page 30/31\)](#)

However, social media advertising is different to having a social media account. It is much like the banner ads, it would provide a link for people to click through and does not store people's data or break their anonymity. The Board's main concerns were regarding moderation of Facebook sites and users' interaction with content- neither of which are an issue with social media advertising.

The advantages would be:

- Targeted advertising on platforms used by a huge section of society
- Pay per click so we can set any amount of money and only pay when people click through and can have a set daily amount so that the advert runs over a period of time
- First tentative step onto social media platforms without breaching the decision of Conference in 2019

I propose to use £4k across 2 campaigns targeted to BAME and general audiences. We would set the location to the West End Intergroup Area. Facebook and Instagram adverts cost approximately £1 per click.

Birmingham, January 2021

Update from Public Information – Caroline

Caroline reported that the digitised posters campaign went ahead over the Christmas period. It is hoped that this was a worthwhile piece of outreach and that it will have attracted anybody looking for a solution to their drinking problem.

AA has been approached by several agencies and three PI events are booked, so far, for January and February:

PHE (Public Health England) Drug and Alcohol Masterclass

FDAC (Family Drug and Alcohol Court)

Change Grow Live: 168 Group – so that clients can be referred to AA after they've completed their 12-week course

We plan to continue to do outreach cooperatively with Al-Anon Family Groups.

Having checked with the 3 train stations managers, they've all replied that they'd like to keep our banners a little longer.

Caroline gave a report from Sarah J, Young People's Liaison Officer that she has been working by phone and 1:1 with young people, getting around live meetings where possible, and making her phone number available to young members and newcomers. The Chair asked if the YPLOs could attend online Intergroup meetings so we can see if they need any support.

Update from Roxy

Roxy confirmed that City Hospital now has a tablet for patients who are interested in AA to attend online meetings, this was paid for by Birmingham Intergroup. They have ordered a headset, single-use protectors and a protective case which will arrive by 20th January, so patients can attend online lunchtime meetings once everything has arrived. Catherine received a thank you email from Arlene, who is Nurse Consultant at Sandwell and West Birmingham Alcohol Care Team.

Roxy reported that there will be a paper written on effects of alcoholism and Covid-19, as there has been an increase in alcoholic liver disease deaths.

Increases in 2020 of numbers of people reaching out to AA

Telephone and Chat now & Online responder service (ORS)statistics

Calls to the AA Helpline	2019	2020	
	88,750	114,112	+ 28.5 %
Contacts through Chat Now	15,460	18,809.	+ 18%
ORS Online Responder Service	11,916	20,743	+ 74 %

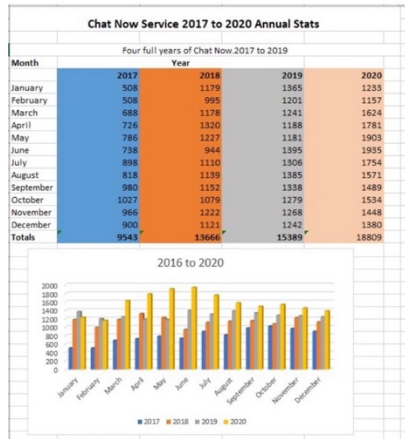
(ORS – e mails to help@aamail.org

of which approx. 50% are request for help with alcoholism)

Chat Now operates 7am -midnight, 7 days/week

Launched Oct 1st 2016 and has answered 59,308 enquiries since its launch.

Four full calendar years of Chat Now with a small and dedicated team.



Belper, Derbyshire 'Publicity Campaign and results . Ray C of the Belper Sunday Evening meeting sent us this update:

Between Aug & Dec 2020, Belper Sunday meeting conducted a planned, and costed publicity campaign, in order to raise the profile of the meeting and to increase membership. Their findings were that the local magazine generated no enquiries, but that posters, their local AA web site, & the AA Helpline worked best.

Young Person new posters – NOW avail from GSO

Female version product number 5034 & Male version product number 5035. A 4 size only



YP poster female 5034



YP poster male 5035

EMPLOYMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

Alcohol Awareness Sessions for a Major Insurer

SHARING OUR EXPERIENCES

Mike P:

My name is Mike Power, and I am an alcoholic and I have the privilege of being the Trustee for London Region North, I am also the Chair of the Employment Sub-Committee.

I came into Alcoholics Anonymous a beaten and broken man, but today, thanks to a twelve-step programme and the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous, I am a sober man.

My commitment as a Board Trustee has been to report back to the Board of Trustees what the Sub Committee reports to me, they in turn report to me what the Intergroup and Regions have reported to them. I also attend Board Meetings and chair various other sub-committees.

The recent presentations, (there were two which were one week apart for a major insurance company) was a real success, and the feedback from the people present by a poll that was made via "Zoom" evidenced this. The Q & A session at the end was a great way to see that the people were engaged.

I would like to thank the Sub-Committee for their professional attitude and the way the technology was handled by the Committee, including a Power Point presentation.

Due to these presentations, I think there are now a few more people who now know what Alcoholics Anonymous is (and is not), and they are going to be able signpost any employee who needs AA. Again, I would like to thank the Sub-Committee for all their hard work.

Mike Power

Employment Sub-Committee Chairperson & Trustee

Roger E:

After some sterling work by Andrew, James, Jim, and Rob in setting up this presentation with assistance from the rest of the Sub-Committee, we have now completed two presentations to managers of the Major Insurance Company, and these are my observations on how successful I believe they were.

Looking at the faces of the managers as they listened to the presentations was a very good insight into the effect it was having on them as "Zoom" is a very good tool to see this I believe. The introduction, slides, and Rob's experience strength and hope were very powerful, and this could be seen by the expressions on the managers' faces, especially during Rob's share.

The question-and-answer session, I feel, was very helpful, and by the quality of the questions we know that we had held their attention throughout. Also, in my humble opinion, the Evaluation Poll we held at the end of the session proved that "Zoom" presentations work, are a really powerful tool, and an inexpensive way to move forward for AA as a whole.

Further, I would like to inform anyone reading this that might feel that they could never play a part by joining a Sub-Committee or doing similar service at this level, please do not tell yourself this, as you will be missing out on a very positive piece of Twelve Step work as well as a special Spiritual Experience.

I came in to my first meeting on 2nd January 1989 at the Seaman's Mission in London's Docklands ~ a Dyslexic Plumber from the East-End of London who believed his life to be over! If you told me then that I would be playing a part 31 years later in a presentation to managers of a large Insurance Company on the Internet (which didn't exist at that time), I would have blasphemed, that is for sure, but the power of service pushes the boundaries slowly, slowly, like taking baby steps, and you move on through service positions with the help of a sponsor and others on the way, it truly is a powerful programme! Also my disability (Dyslexia) has proven to be an asset as I tend to look at things from a different perspective to my fellows.

Finally, I will always remember being the Tea Maker in my early days at a Friday night meeting, and on my way there, I walked past a famous seafood stall in Aldgate, London, and there having a bowl of eels was a boyhood friend and drinking partner of mine whom I hadn't seen for a few years. He was pleased to see me and invited me to go for a drink with friends of ours, and as much as I wanted to go (as it set that Phenomenon of Craving off once again), I was able to say "No thanks!" as I was on my way to meet some other friends. I didn't say who or that the reason that I had the tea, sugar and milk in my hand was for an AA meeting, but I didn't want to let you down, and that piece of service saved my life, so I think I will keep coming back ~ it works!

Roger E

Employment Sub-Committee

Rob D:

I have been part of the Employment Sub-Committee (ESC) for just over 2 years.

My background to this was that I had worked in the Civil Service for 44 years, in the course of which I met employers of all types and sizes, and thus built up an understanding of how they 'tick' and what their prime motivators are.

My 30 years of heavy drinking which became alcoholic, brought me to AA.

Once I was established in AA and doing service, I had always been interested in becoming an Employment Liaison Officer (ELO) but whenever vacancies arose, either at Intergroup or Region, I was always in another post, so the opportunity didn't arise.

In 2018, our Region didn't have a Regional ELO, and as I was Regional Secretary, I attended the annual Regional ELO meeting in York. Talking to the ESC members, I learned it was NOT a requirement (for membership of the ESC) to have had a position at Intergroup or Region ELO. I applied for the ESC vacancy and was accepted onto it in October 2018.

Around three months ago, the vice-chair of the ESC asked me to give a main share at a major presentation to managers of a national organisation. I was delighted to be offered this opportunity to serve and gladly accepted.

As time grew nearer to the presentation, I was a bit nervous and unsure of precisely what I should say. This would be the first time I had addressed any employers as a member of AA. Obviously, my experience as an alcoholic manager would be part of it, but I wasn't certain of what else to include – or, just as importantly, what to leave out. I prayed about it and made some 'bullet points' to guide me during my share and having put them into semblance of a reasonable order, I waited for the big day!

I was thankful to have become used to Zoom meetings (this was a Zoom presentation) and I found that, once I started sharing, the words just came naturally. I thank my Higher Power for guiding me through!

The feedback after the meeting clearly showed my share had been well received: most importantly, this and of course the main presentation opened the managers' eyes to what AA was all about and gave them suggestions and encouragement to point anyone with potential or actual alcohol issues to us.

So, to sum up, I felt really grateful that I had been used to carry our message, which of course is part of Step 12: especially in the current Covid lockdown, when so much outward-facing service seems impossible. But it's not!! Opportunities may be difficult to find, but they ARE out there.

Rob D

Employment Sub-Committee

Andrew Wetherell:

My name is Andrew Wetherell, and I'm a Non-Alcoholic Trustee on the General Service Board and a member on the Employment Sub-Committee (ESC). I have also recently joined the Literature Sub-Committee where I have been warmly welcomed.

The ESC recently received a request for some "Alcohol Awareness Sessions", and my colleagues & I developed a package which we have successfully delivered to around 30 Team Managers at a Major Insurer in December.

The two "Zoom" sessions were very well received and the post-session feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The company concerned are already speaking with us in respect of further sessions in 2021 where we would be looking to deliver them to their broader staff group across Great Britain.

In what has been such a dark, challenging and worrying year, it was a wonderful experience for us to be able to deliver some 12 Step work to a large employer, and I think it gave all of us on the ESC a major and enormously welcome morale boost.

The sessions ran for about an hour, were chaired by Jim L, and took the following format:

- ~ Welcome, introductions, and a look at the format / running order
- ~ PowerPoint presentation by James C & myself. (Alcoholic & Non-Alcoholic working in partnership, as per our AA history)
- ~ Screening of our Employment Video
- ~ Experience, Strength & Hope share by Rob D
- ~ Question & Answer Session (Questions answered by all those mentioned above, plus Mike P [ESC Chair], Sean N, & Roger E)
- ~ Details of further information & support (via PowerPoint)
- ~ Evaluation Session & Close

As mentioned above, both sessions were extremely well received, and the following comment is just one of many which provides the overall flavour:

“This was a really good session. I was really touched by their honesty and bravery. I have spoken very highly of this session to all my peers and Team Managers and encouraged them to attend a session”

I would have to say that the element which had the biggest impact on the audience was Rob D’s personal share, together with the answers provided by my Alcoholic colleagues, and I am sure we were successful in dispelling some myths and at the same time educating people about what AA is and what we can offer to the still suffering alcoholic.

We are all thoroughly looking forward to delivering further sessions for this major employer, and we very much hope to use the model we now have to deliver similar sessions to other employers. Further, we will be looking to share the above experiences and associated presentation / handout materials with colleagues in the Regions.

On a final positive note, during the most recent session, I did a quick calculation of sobriety, and on a modest estimate the cumulative total of my ESC colleagues’ sobriety came out at over 90 years!

Andrew Wetherell
Employment Sub-Committee & Non-Alcoholic Trustee

VACANCIES on the Public Information (PI) Sub Committee of the General Service Board.

Our primary functions are to:

Support the GSB by implementing PI initiatives as directed by the GSB resulting from AA GB Conference. Carry the message of the fellowship & increase awareness of the AA programme among the general public and professionals. Establish and maintain good relations with professionals, professional bodies and the media at a national level. Create a consistent and clear message that differentiates Alcoholics Anonymous from other bodies or organisations. Provide support to Regional and Intergroup PI Liaison Officers, via resources, information and advice. Organise periodic seminars for Regional & Intergroup liaison officers and support the sharing of good PI practice & communicate this effectively.

Basic Role requirements are:

- Sub Committee members serve for a period of four years
- A minimum of five years’ continuous sobriety at the time of applying
- A working knowledge of the AA GB service structure and AA Traditions & Concepts
- Willing to work within the PISC Terms of Reference and as part of a team which is directly responsible to the General Service Board of AA.
- Prepared to attend up to 4 meetings a year in York or in GB.
- Good organisational and communication skills. Relevant IT skills.
- A personal service history at Intergroup or Region in this discipline or other relevant AA Service experience

Desirable requirements:

- The ability to produce written and verbal reports.
- Experience of preparation and delivery of workshops and presentations.
- Some experience in PR, marketing, social media, journalism & communications.

The Committee particularly invites applications from members with digital marketing experience. If you have questions about the specific responsibilities of service on the Public Information Sub Committee, please email Charles R, GSB Trustee for Public Information (trustee.southeastregion@gsogb.org.uk) Thank you!

Application Forms are available from GSO or the AA GB website in the Document Library

<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Document-Library#> under “Forms”

INTERGROUP Secretaries – please pass on this PISN newsletter to your GSR’s (Group Service Representatives)

PISN is mailed to GSB Trustees, IG and Region Chairs and Secretaries, PI, Health and Employment L.O.s of every Region and Intergroup, and any fellowship member who has asked to be on the mailing list. The mailing is as early as possible each month.

ALL - Please help us share experiences, by sending in items for inclusion in the next PISN. We welcome information from throughout Great Britain and Continental European Region. If an article that you have sent hasn't appeared yet, please try again.

Contact ainformation@gsogb.org.uk