

"God as we understand Him" replaces the power alcohol had on their lives. Some members have religious beliefs; many never had any. Members find the AA programme works whether they are agnostic or atheist.

AA began in the USA and the founding members recognised that not every alcoholic would necessarily identify with, or even wish to associate with, a Christian belief system, hence the phrase "Higher Power". Today AA's membership includes people of all religious beliefs, atheists and agnostics.

How to find out more about AA

Going to an open AA meeting is possibly the best way to find out how AA works. There are many of these types of meetings every day and night of the week in all areas throughout the UK where the non-alcoholic is welcome to attend, and observe how AA works. If you should have any questions someone would be glad to answer them before or after the meeting.

We would welcome the opportunity to present Public Information meetings that would better describe the AA programme of recovery to anyone in your organisation who may be in need of our help to stop drinking, at the same time as co-operating with anyone you may designate in order to work out ways in which AA can be of assistance.

There are AA meetings every day and night of the week in all areas of the UK. Information about these and more details on other facilities available including visiting speakers and availability of AA literature can be obtained by telephoning one of the Service Offices mentioned below who will put you in touch with the relevant local Liaison Officer.

You can call the General Service Office in York on **01904 644026**, the Northern Service Office in Glasgow on **0141 226 2214** or the Southern Service Office in London on **020 7833 0022**.



This service pamphlet is available from GSO
PO BOX 1
10 Toft Green York YO1 7NJ
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

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Registered Charity No: 226745

AA as a Resource for Employers

National Helpline Number: 0845 769 7555
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Our aim

This pamphlet aims to provide information about Alcoholics Anonymous and presents AA as a resource which employers can utilise in helping members of staff with alcohol problems.

What is AA?

Alcoholics Anonymous is a Fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they

may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

How AA views alcoholism

AA members view alcoholism as a progressive illness with a combination of spiritual, emotional (or mental) and physical components. We see our problem as being a physical addiction to, and a mental obsession with, alcohol. The alcoholics we know have lost the power to control their drinking.

The rate of growth of AA shows that an increasing number of alcoholics are recovering from this disease. There are over 97,000 AA groups in more than 150 countries with a worldwide membership of more than 2,000,000. Women today constitute half of the Fellowship and young people (30 years and under) about 10 per cent. Three-quarters of members are under the age of 45. AA members sober more than a year have a very high likelihood of continuing their successful process of recovery.

Co-operation with others

AA in Great Britain has 60 years of experience involving tens of thousands of alcoholics. This mass of intensive firsthand experience with all kinds of problem

drinkers in all phases of active alcoholism and recovery is available free.

Many members have come to AA as a result of contact with a well informed non-alcoholic. We seek to co-operate with employers and others in our attempts to reach those with our problem.

Many of us have witnessed the difficulties that problem drinkers create for their employers – declining standards of work, lower output, absenteeism and high levels of sick leave, strained relationships and, of course, the health and safety risks they pose for themselves and others.

The problem often lies in trying to identify the person with a drink problem, especially as the alcoholic is usually the last person to admit that alcohol is causing them problems. The alcoholic's resistance to help can be frustrating. Alcoholics tend to be evasive when questioned about their drinking. They may resist any suggestion that alcoholism is involved and be equally resistant to the suggestion of AA.

Nationally, the General Service Office in York, the Northern Service Office in Glasgow or the Southern Service Office in London will be able to provide details of open meetings or put you in touch with the relevant local

Liaison Officer who can give you more details on other facilities available in the area, e.g. visiting speakers or availability of AA literature.

AA Service and Structure

The subjective experience of alcoholism is something only an alcoholic can share with another alcoholic. This is why our service is totally confidential and our membership remains anonymous. Traditionally, this reminds us always to place principles before personalities. Members of AA have found that trying to help other alcoholics in their unique but often effective way is good for them, whether or not the alcoholic they are trying to help chooses to use what is on offer.

AA groups attempt to concentrate on an informal person-to-person approach with anyone for whom alcohol is causing problems.

The organisational structure of AA is quite different from other agencies. Members themselves, without payment, with the exception of a few paid staff in the three administrative offices, perform all the services voluntarily. There are no rules, no regulations, and no official procedures or official governing

authority. Instead, AA is a fellowship of peers, relying on tradition, suggestion and example.

The principal operating unit of AA is the local group. Each group is autonomous, with leadership roles being rotated.

Members accept responsibility for jobs that need to be carried out to make the meetings friendly and run as smoothly as possible. Each AA group is a self-supporting entity and AA's only income is derived by members making voluntary contributions and by small profits made from the sale of AA publications. AA does not accept contributions from any outside sources.

After the cost of running meetings and AA's three service offices, surplus money is used to inform the public about AA and to carry our message to the active alcoholic directly and indirectly through people and organisations such as you.

Is AA a religious organisation?

AA is not allied with any religious group, formal or otherwise, nor does it tell its members what to believe, what is right or wrong or claim to know any religious "truth". The 12 Steps of recovery suggest belief in a "Higher Power", something more than the individual. The form that this Higher Power takes is entirely up to the individual concerned.

