

## Summary of Topics/Questions not accepted for Conference 2014

1. **Should AA GB keep the same national help line number - 0845 769 755 - or not? - due to the changes in Ofcom telephone charges.**

Terms of Reference No. 5 Currently under discussion by Conference as a whole and awaiting Ofcom final report before decision

2. **Suggested Additional Information to be included in the 'Where to Find'**  
Occasionally when a telephone responder contacts a member from the 'Where to Find', they are met with the response: 'I only put my name in the 'Where to Find' as a group contact'. This obviously causes a lot of frustration for the responder as a lot of AA members are still unaware of their responsibilities regarding having their name and number in the 'Where to Find'.  
Although Note 2 in the 'Where to Find' thanks members for accepting Twelfth Step Calls, there is no explanation of what the responsibility of entering contact details in the 'Where to Find' entails.  
Would the Fellowship consider inserting the following paragraph from 'Guideline One' into the 'Where to Find' *'Members whose names appear in the 'Where to Find' should be prepared to take full responsibility as contacts and delegate where necessary. This implies that such a telephone number will be freely available within the Fellowship and that the contact is prepared at any time to:*
  - *Accept a call for help*
  - *Give information to a professional e.g. a GSO number*
  - *Guide a family member to the right source for help e.g. to Al-Anon*
  - *Speak to members of the Fellowship enquiring about meetings'*Inserting this paragraph from 'Guideline One' would help to raise awareness within the Fellowship of a member's responsibility when putting their contact details in the 'Where to Find'.

Terms of Reference No. 7 Referred to the Literature Sub Committee

3. **Would Conference discuss whether, as a Fellowship, A.A Great Britain is getting too involved in organising its own organisation and have forgotten both our primary purpose and Dr. Bobs last message to lets not louse this thing up, Keep It Simple!**  
**The Reason for the Question**  
The world has changed since our two Founder Members got together and agreed to help each other to stop drinking and lead a better life, and that is still the only aim that we have today.  
Over the years other people have tried, and failed, to solve the problems of the alcoholic, and, I, personally, would like there to be an easier, softer, way, but it has not materialised yet, although it still might.  
The only solution that has worked for me is going to meetings, clearing my alcoholic head, following the guidance of the Steps as they were originally written, and then becoming a part of the Fellowship.  
To the newcomer now it must seem more important that they follow a procedure first and contemplate putting down the drink, second.  
With all the various readings, now deemed essential, and the talk of formalities, suggestions, guidelines, mini, (and maxi), conferences, workshops, groups, intergroups, regions, service positions, sponsors, vacancies, web sites, etc., etc., etc., a lot of them must think I only came here to stop drinking, this is all too complicated for me, not what I was looking for at all, and anyway I don't want to get that involved! The message keep coming back does not seem very inviting!  
And this is a pity because that is the only way, in my opinion, that recovery is possible.  
Is there any way that we can get back to the basics and, remember, for the sake of Bill W. and Dr Bob, that our primary purpose is to stay sober and offer help to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Terms of Reference No. 7 Personal opinion and therefore not eligible

4. **Would Conference consider amending the statement of a Delegate's duties to include specific emphasis on carrying the message to and encouraging individual AA members, groups, intergroups and their Region to submit Conference questions before the annual 31<sup>st</sup> of August deadline?**  
The Delegate's job is really a four-phase one: (1) pre-conference collecting of input from far and wide in Region from individual members, GSRs, Intergroup Reps to Region, and other Region Delegates and Officers, (2) effectively summarizing and succinctly communicating Region-wide input at Conference, (3) reporting back to all in Region, particularly those who provided input, the specific results of Conference, and (4) encouraging all members, groups, intergroups and their Region to submit Questions for the following year's Conference before the 31<sup>st</sup> of August deadline, thus planting seeds of interest in next year's Conference Questions.

Section 10.6 "Delegates" of The AA Service Handbook for Great Britain and Guideline No. 5 "Regions" of the Guidelines for AA in Great Britain provide adequate descriptions of the first three responsibilities above, but say nothing about generating interest in the Conference Questions by encouraging all AA members to consider submitting them.

2013 Conference Question No. 1 for Committee No. 4 addressed only collecting responses to Conference Questions:

Would members share their experience on how they pass on or collect experiences and views on the Conference questions? What methods are the most successful in collecting responses from members of the Fellowship? This two-part question, a good one, did not address how to encourage interest in next year's questions by communicating with individual AA members, groups, and intergroups on a timely basis that anyone can submit questions.

It is my experience that greater interest in the Conference Questions is developed when more AA members are encouraged to submit questions. This builds wider ownership of the Questions. The Delegates are in the best position to work with GSRs and Region Reps to reach AA members in their regions throughout Great Britain and Continental Europe in June, July and August with this message from the document "How to Submit a Topic or Question for Conference":

"Anyone can submit a topic/question: individuals, Groups, Intergroups, Regions or Board Members."

It would be an excellent reminder that we are all responsible for AA's ability to continue to reach alcoholics today and in the future.

Consequently, would Conference consider amending this part of Section 10.6 "Delegates" as follows?

"d) Reporting Back

1) Delegates shall, on their return, report the conclusions of the Conference to the Region which elected them.

2) Delegate shall also take steps to make available reports on the main conclusions of the Conference to the Intergroups and Groups in their area.

3) Delegates shall remain active in pursuing the aims of the Conferences they have attended during the periods between Conferences and in *encouraging all individuals, groups, intergroups and Region to submit Questions for the following year's Conference before the 31<sup>st</sup> of August deadline, reminding us all that we are all responsible for AA's present and future ability to reach the still-suffering alcoholic.*"

Would Conference consider amending this paragraph in Guideline No. 5 "Regions" as follows?

"A Conference delegate's duties do not finish with the end of Conference. In fact, this is only the beginning. He or she should be available and willing to report back fully to the Region, *encouraging all individuals, groups, intergroups and Region to submit Questions for the following year's Conference before the 31<sup>st</sup> of August deadline, reminding us all that we are all responsible for AA's present and future ability to reach the still-suffering alcoholic*, and also be willing to travel to Intergroup and Group meetings if invited to do so."

A simple question by GSRs, Regions Reps, and/or Delegates at group, intergroup, and Region business meetings for the purpose of developing possible Questions for Conference before the 31<sup>st</sup> of August deadline would be "Is there anything you would like to see AA doing that it is not now doing to reach the still-suffering alcoholic?"

Terms of Reference No. 7 There is a slightly broader question already accepted for the agenda which covers this question

5. As far as we know, we are the only online AA group at this time that contributes 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition and votes in an AA service structure. We contribute 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition directly to the Continental European Region (CER) and vote in that Region directly through our GSR.
- First164yp was started four and a half years ago in early 2009 as a Monday night meeting on Skype by the Continental European Region Young People's contact at the time. He asked me to substitute for him a month later when commitments took him out of Europe, I publicized the meeting on three websites, we attracted new members, elected officers, formed a group, and expanded to five meetings a week:
- From: <http://www.aa-europe.net/meetings.php?Where=AA+On+Line+Meetings>  
First164yp group meetings Mon-Fri (CEST=GMT+2):  
Mon 20:00 Skype (voice),  
Tues 20:00 WebEx (voice with optional video),  
Wed & Thurs 20:00 Skype (voice),  
& Fri 21:00 WebEx (voice with optional video).  
(See also:  
Online Intergroup [http://www.aa-intergroup.org/directory\\_venue.php?code=av](http://www.aa-intergroup.org/directory_venue.php?code=av)  
The e-AA Group of Alcoholics Anonymous <http://www.e-aa.org/links/links.php?ID=7>)  
Our group conscience voted to affiliate directly with CER rather than through a geographically based intergroup because our basic membership comes from throughout Europe. (If you go to <http://www.aa-europe.net/meetings.php> you will see that we are listed under AA Online Meetings at the top left-hand corner before any of the countries who list their face-to-face meetings on the CER website.) We do attract participants

from most time zones except the Far East, but most of our participants are in Europe, including Great Britain and Ireland.

My question: Would it be possible to list us at the bottom of the Continental European Intergroups page (page 63 A and B of the current Directory) in the Directory of Intergroup and Regional Officers? Please note that I am only asking the question at this time and not making a request to be listed until a first164yp group conscience can be taken. It would be more efficient to know if there is a possibility before a group conscience decision is taken to submit our information for listing.

I can tell you that many, many participants in our meetings who do not have access to an English language face-to-face meeting for one reason or another (distance, physical handicap, etc.) say we are a 'godsend' for their sobriety. Our meetings are filling such a growing need, that we have started to hit the maximum of 25 participants on free Skype in the Monday meeting. Our other four meetings are increasing in attendance as well.

Terms of Reference No. 7 Issue to raise with the Continental Intergroup in the first instance.

6. **Would Conference discuss whether Intergroups have the authority to refuse groups recognised by GSO the right to participate in the Service Structure of the Fellowship with specific regard to Traditions One and Three? Would they also give recommendations as to how Groups who are persistently refused their right of participation (Concept 4) can actively practice Tradition Five, and what support the General Service Board and General Service Office should give to Groups who are actively discriminated against at local level?**

**Background**

Over the past 7 years one group, registered with GSO, have been refused their request to participate in their local Intergroup and after several years of this discrimination two other local surrounding Intergroups also refused them entry without any regard to the Guidelines, Traditions or Concepts.

In an attempt to give their members the right to active service they have tried to involve the support of the GSB and GSO but have been told that this is a local problem and should be resolved at local level but unfortunately the discrimination continues.

Terms of Reference No. 6/7 Under Tradition 4 Conference cannot intervene in a matter of autonomy for an Intergroup, any more than it could for a group.

7. **Discuss and make recommendations on how the Fellowship should prepare in case the NHS accepts the recommendation to include 12 step facilitation in the treatment of alcoholics.**

**Background**

1. Presentation by Mark Gilman Head of NTA given at AA.s health forum in York earlier this year.
2. Research by Professor Keith Humphreys showing the effectiveness of 12 step facilitation in the treatment of alcoholics.

Terms of Reference No. 6 This question had insufficient background material, however a similar question has been accepted for the agenda which covers this.

9. **For the benefit of the newcomer, and the very nearly new, would Conference suggest a "recommended format" for an AA meeting the same or similar to:**

1. Welcome.
2. Essential housekeeping. (Mobiles, Smoking, Toilets).
3. Preamble.
4. Silence.
5. Reading (or speaker's choice).
6. Speaker.
7. General sharing.
8. Promises.
9. AA announcements or business.
10. Pot.
11. Close.

(Group Conscience or any other "non-recovery" points to be done after the closing of the meeting itself).

**The background for the suggestion is as follows:**

I am getting very concerned about the amount of emphasis now being placed at meetings regarding what I would call incidentals and "the running of the fellowship". Essential as they may be for our future, to those in their early or very early stages, it must sound like an awful lot has to be done to get "it", and you must do a lot more than just "keep coming back".

The idea of this suggestion is to bring back to the top of the meeting the most important subject, our "Primary Purpose", re-emphasize why we are here and what we want to achieve, and, although they are necessary, move

“the other bits” and “organizing ourselves” down to the bottom of the list. If we do not get recovery first, we will have nothing to worry about or organise later.

Dr Bob’s last words with Bill W included “lets not louse this thing up, let us keep it simple” Can we try that please?

Terms of Reference No. 7                      Already covered in AA literature and Traditions. Needs to be discussed at group conscience and perhaps Intergroup.

11. **Would Conference approve of a group banning a person who is repeatedly violent in meetings?**

**Background**

1. I was recently head-butted at one of my local meetings by a person who has been coming to AA for a number of years but has been repeatedly violent towards people. At that same meeting a few years ago this person had another violent outburst where they threw a cup at the Secretary and hit someone with a chair. The person who was Secretary at the time has not returned to AA. Having discussed what happened to me with members of the fellowship I have discovered that this person has punched people in meetings, chased someone to their car and started banging on the car windshield while the person was in it and a number of other assaults have occurred over the years.

In order for evil to succeed it takes good people to do nothing. If the group of the meeting where I was head-butted had taken action for this person's past transgressions then perhaps I would not have been head-butted there recently. I put it to Conference, does a group have the right to ban a person who is repeatedly violent? I know that this is a very controversial question and I have my concerns about going down the road of banning people from AA. Where would it end? However Tradition 3 states that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. But what if there is someone in your local area who's only desire is to bully and hit people who are trying to practice a spiritual way of life? The group's common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends upon AA unity and my personal recovery was gravely affected by the violent act which happened to me in a meeting which, after five years of sobriety, I thought was a safe place.

**2. References**

AA Service News Summer 2001, Draft guidelines on personal conduct in AA meetings and our common welfare pages 7-10; Guidelines for AA in Great Britain, Guideline 16 - Violence; Guidelines for AA in Great Britain, Guideline 17 - Personal Conduct Matters; Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions; Alcoholics Anonymous, page 97; The AA Group; AA Tradition - How it developed; Twelve Traditions Illustrated; This is AA

Terms of Reference No. 7                      Covered by existing literature, guidelines and Traditions.

12. **I think we should delete the words "open" and "closed" on all our literature and online info.**

Terms of Reference No. 5                      Discussed at Conference within the last 3 years

15. **Would Conference consider the inclusion of either:**

- a) National Convention Committee members (two per Region) or
- b) "The Executive" of the National Convention Committees to be included in the "Directory of Regional & Intergroup Officers GB"

**Background**

Committee members are elected, and have voting rights, by the Regional Assembly and are expected to report back as with any other regional position.

There are only 3 national conventions.

For each Convention there are 2 representatives from each sponsoring Region.

*The "Terms of Reference" approved by the GSB in 2001 state:*

*These Committees are accountable to the sponsoring Intergroups & Regions, which exercise their responsibility for the convention by the provision of elected delegates for the committee and through the regular reporting back of these assemblies.*

*All meetings should be reported and copies of minutes sent to the secretaries of the sponsoring bodies and to GSO.*

Easy access to appropriate addresses to maintain communications within the Fellowship.

Distribution of minutes to Regional and Intergroup secretaries.

The distribution of "Flyers" is dependent upon access to up to date contact details.

Invitations to Treasurers and Chairs of Regions to attend the AGM.

Terms of Reference No. 7                      Should be raised and discussed at Regional level

16. **Would the Fellowship discuss, share experience and make recommendations on whether the selling price of AA literature should be reduced?**

**Background**

- Guideline 12

- Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ended 30 September 2012
- Tradition 7
- Concept XII

Guideline 12 suggests GSO hold 'a prudent reserve equivalent to the budget expenditure for the forthcoming year', this aim being underlined by the Reserves Policy in the Report of the Trustees. However, at 30 September 2012 reserves totalled over £1.9 million while annual expenditure was £1.2 million. In the year to 30 September 2012 the General Service Board reported a surplus in excess of £250,000, further increasing its reserves from a figure already over the Guideline's recommended position and the Trustees' aim.

Tradition 7 long form states that '...we view with much concern those A.A. treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated A.A. purpose.'

Additionally, Concept XII warns against becoming '...the seat of perilous wealth...'

In the year to 30 September 2012 literature sales were £512,000 while costs were £178,000. Literature is therefore being sold at almost three times cost.

Reducing the selling price of literature would bring many benefits, such as:

- decreasing the Board's annual surplus and reducing reserves to bring them into line with Guideline and Trustees' aims to hold one year's running costs as a prudent reserve.
- helping groups and members to carry the message more widely at a lower cost.
- allowing AA groups to sell literature at a lower price than online bookstores, making this part of the fundamental attraction of meetings.

My intention behind asking this question is to address two significant issues revealed by the latest accounts—those being that literature is being sold at a large profit, significantly hindering its vital role in carrying the message more widely, and the unnecessary and ever growing level of reserves which are in danger of compromising our primary spiritual aim.

Terms of Reference No. 6/7

Background information incorrect and is the responsibility of GSB.

17. Would the Fellowship discuss, share experience and make recommendations on whether, given recent negative publicity surrounding corporate tax avoidance and the use of tax havens, allowing the Board's investment managers to place A.A. reserves in various funds listed in Luxembourg risks the Fellowship being drawn into public controversy?

*Background*

- Tradition 10
- Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ended 30 September 2012

The short form of Tradition 10 suggests that '...the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy'.

The Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ended 30 September 2012 discloses, at note 14, the following investments valued at over 5% of the total invested:

Global Select SICAV-Sol Glob EQL(A) (market value £108,398), and Global Select - Corporate Bond XXVIII (market value £101,300)..Global Select Total Return Bond XLI (market value £42,600), and Bluebay Investment Grade Bond Fund Lux Listing (market value £51,024)

These funds are listed in Luxembourg, a low tax regime.

My intention behind asking this question is to address what I see as a very real threat to AA's non-controversial stance. I strongly believe our reserves should be held in UK listed investments, in a mix of risk-free Government bonds and ethical investments. With public opinion as it currently stands, investing in Luxembourg assets is unwise.

Terms of Reference No. 7

Responsibility of General Service Board

18. Would the Fellowship consider the following statements and share their experience.  
*The question of God and the notion of a Higher Power often present difficulties for newcomers to the Fellowship and may even put some off completely.*  
*The Serenity Prayer card used in meetings is styled in a Gothic script evoking church and religion.*  
*Many members of the Fellowship attend meetings and find sobriety by way of just two of our legacies: Recovery (the programme) and Unity (the Fellowship). Only a minority get involved in our third legacy, Service.*  
 Would the Fellowship consider whether the set of table cards (designed for display in Group meeting rooms) would help to address these issues? The cards, intended to be available as a set of four, comprise: Yellow card, Serenity Prayer, God...as we understood him and Service.

Terms of Reference No. 7

Be sent to Literature Committee in first instance

19. Would conference consider selling literature at cost to bring it into line with tradition seven, nine and concept seven.

**Background**

Tradition seven states that every AA group ought to be fully self supporting and this principle applies to all levels of the service structure. People and agencies outside the fellowship are buying our literature and resources meaning that GSO is partially funded by outside agencies. To remove this outside funding issue literature and resources could be sold at cost. Recent years financial reports suggest that with minimal restructuring this is achievable.

Why does this matter? Accountability. In concept seven Bill refers to the 'power of the purse'. This works two ways. Firstly we confer that power to the conference structure through concept seven but it also gives the membership ultimate power to bring the conference structure to account should we/they get off track and act against the conscience of the fellowship or violate the traditions or concepts.

*'And finally, in any great extremity, it would rest upon the undoubted ability of the Delegates to deny the General Service Board the monies with which to operate—viz., the voluntary contributions of the A.A. groups themselves.'*  
*A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts P29.*

Having a GSO that is at least partially self-funding reduces the accountability to those they serve (tradition nine). If we as a fellowship found a conference decision unacceptable we could stop sending money (the power of the purse (Concept 7)) which would force GSO into line. Having an even partially self funded GSO would mean that GSO could continue to operate in some form without the contributions of the membership.

Terms of Reference No. 6/7                      Insufficient background regarding actual costs and revenues, also is the responsibility of the GSB

20. Would Conference consider returning to the original name of General rather than Group Service Representative?

In 2001 Conference decided to change the name from General Service Representative to Group Service Representative . It was voted by a majority of 10 to 7. This is not substantial unanimity (Concept Twelve). The term Group Service Rep may have become colloquially common but is not concurrent with the description of the General Service Representative as outlined in both the Service Manual and Service Handbook.

The word Group implies that the GSRs main working area is the group. This is not so. Aside from sharing information, the GSR has almost no Group level work to do. Their primary role is to act as the link between the Group and AA as a whole (Service Manual P26). When voted into the role of GSR the individual is making themselves available for General Service and so may be voted into further roles in the structure (Service Manual Chapter 2). That is to say that the Chair, Secretary, Archivist, Delegate, Region Reps etc are all General Service Reps too!

In 2001 it was stated that the majority felt that the term Group was appropriate for the UK but there was no explanation why and no literature quoted. This decision seems to have been made without knowledge of our history and literature despite being further ratified.

Terms of Reference No. 7                      Question based on an incorrect premise. The Structure Handbook of AA (GB), which was approved at Conference 2012, refers throughout to the term Group Service Representative

21. Alcoholics Anonymous has now dedicated the whole of November as AA Awareness month would Conference consider having a poster (or similar AA literature) designed with a harder hitting message on the dangers of the effects of alcohol.

This poster does not only have to be for AA awareness month but could be a regular AA literature item.

Our group are aware AA has no opinion on other outside issues such as the NHS smoking causes cancer campaign which does have literature with hard hitting images and messages on them but seems to get a lot of attention and has apparently helped reduce the problem.

We are bringing this issue up as our group has been very active over the last few years in distributing AA literature around hospitals and doctors surgeries but we have noticed the AA literature that's available in our opinion does not carry the message how devastating Alcohol and Alcoholism can have on not only the alcoholic but the family's as well.

There has also been some feedback to AA members from the general public about how one of the posters looks "Just like a nice picture" (Bench Poster).

Our group is aware there is a lot of time, effort and hard work goes into producing AA literature but we would much appreciate it if you could include it as a question for Conference.

Terms of Reference No. 7                      Best referred to the Literature Sub Committee

25. Should the book '*Alcoholics Anonymous*' and the 12 step recovery programme be the primary focus and emphasis of all AA groups?

**Background**

I have attended several meetings since 28/01/2006, my sobriety date, where the emphasis on the Big book & 12 step message was not at all clear. Moreover, some meetings I have attended have spoken against the Big Book and its 12 steps. Is this why the Fellowship was named after the book; and should the Fellowship as a whole reignite the key importance and sole purpose of an AA group, that of the 12 step recovery message, contained in the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*?

Terms of Reference No. 7

Covered by Traditions 2 and 4

26. Is harmony at Intergroup and Regional level more important than listening to the minority view?

**Background**

- Page 82 of As Bill Sees It: Here Bill emphasised the reality and importance of trouble or friction at AA assemblies when he described friction of opposing viewpoints as the very mode of operating upon which we proceed. The minority opinion expressed at Intergroup and Regional assemblies is often the focus of conflicting views and the absence of these frictions can mask our tendency for justifying and rationalising a desire not to listen to minority opinion.
- Concept 5 emphasises the value of protecting the minority opinion as a check and balance against apathetic, angry or hasty majorities. Allowing a minority opinion to be freely expressed without fear of condemnation might be uncomfortable to a majority of an Intergroup or Regional assembly; however, a minority view can often be right and at the very least will force a majority to debate important issues thoroughly while preventing hasty and unwise decisions being made that are not in the best interests of the still suffering alcoholic. The apparent harmony of a quiet and unruffled assembly can mask the fact that minorities are either too fearful to speak out or are actually prevented from participating in service.
- The freedom to participate in service helps to guarantee that the minority opinion will be heard. It's tempting to exclude those people we regard as nuisances for one reason or another and this human tendency will, if allowed to carry on, inevitably erode the democracy and effectiveness of Intergroups and Regions. As a result our future Conference delegates will be unprepared for the opportunities that exist at Conference to speak up when in a minority, as their conscience sees fit when acting in the interests of AA as a whole.

Terms of Reference No. 5

Covered by Committee 5 at Conference 2013

27. Could AA do more to respond effectively to increasing media coverage on alcohol issues such as women's health, rising hospital admissions, fixed pricing, government policies and National Treatment Agency interest?

Terms of Reference No. 7 Question of a similar nature covering this has been accepted for the agenda

29. How does AA avoid outside influences resulting in its message being watered down?

How does AA avoid being misrepresented at a high public level?

**Background**

Conference Health Report 2013 reported on National Treatment Agency goals of 12-step "facilitation" but how does this align to our AA Tradition of non-affiliation and fact that AA shouldn't be influenced by outside agencies? There are many agencies working in the field of alcohol treatment. Some use "mutations" of the 12 Step programme but are not bound by our Traditions. There is a need to be very clear on how AA is distinct from these other services.

Tradition 6 in the long form 'While an AA group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought never to go so far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied. An AA group can bind itself to no one.'

Concept 12 Warranty 5 "...we shall need to maintain a continuous education of public communications channels of all kinds concerning the nature and purpose of our Traditions."

Terms of Reference No. 7

Covered in Traditions and recently approved Service Handbook

30. As a fellowship do we know the difference between attraction and promotion?

**Background**

As PI officer for my local Intergroup I have heard a lot of different opinions on this subject.

A while ago now, I heard that an Intergroup had put up Alcoholics Anonymous information on billboards. I thought this may be promotion and asked other members if they thought this was so. Some said it was and some said it wasn't. On another occasion it was suggested to me to put AA information on a big screen that we have in our city centre. So I took this to my Intergroup and asked if it would be okay to do so, and again some were for it and some said it was promotion.

This question is not a criticism to anyone at all. I have looked through the literature and asked experienced members their views on the subject of what is promotion and what is attraction and nobody agrees on what it is. I think this disunity really stunts us from growing as quick as we could and ultimately stops us from being of maximum use to the still suffering alcoholic.

Terms of Reference 6/7      Insufficient background material on this question but a question of a similar nature covering this has been accepted for the agenda

**31. Could the 'View details' section of 'Find a Meeting' on the Alcoholics Anonymous GB website give more information?**

***Background***

There is little information apart from the start time. If more details could be included the newcomer would be better informed when deciding which meeting to attend.

In some areas this would be useful for visitors who may want a meeting with a similar format to their home group.

Tradition 5 - 'Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers'.

Ideally, the website should give as much detail as is required to enable groups to do this.

Information could include the following

- What time the doors open, not just the start time
- The time the meeting ends
- If the group go on to another venue to socialise
- The type of meeting e.g. whether it follows the AA principles, the 12 Steps, Big Book, sponsor
- Whether it is a discussion, topic, speaker or other format meeting

Terms of Reference No. 7      Referred to Electronic Communications Committee

**32. More and more AA groups are being denied their basic right of membership in local Intergroups. This action also denies them participation in Region and Conference. Can Conference please clarify this situation and give advice so that minorities in AA are no longer banished from our Service/Conference structure and that their conscience is heard?**

***Background***

- When these groups have asked the assistance of Conference in the past they have been told "it's a local issue" and up to the "conscience of those concerned". When the Conscience of those concerned deal with it, by forming new local Intergroups GSO & GSB refuse to recognize them, thus making it a National issue.
- Conference 2012, Committee 5, Question 2 says that by being part of the group conscience and valuing the importance of love, tolerance and the right to participate, we can best strengthen the unity of the Fellowship.
- Concept 1 states 'The final responsibility and the ultimate authority for AA world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship'. Clearly not being carried under these circumstances.
- Concept 4 states 'Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation," taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.' There is no vote for a member whose home group is denied participation by his Intergroup. What if a group were to say to a member, you are not allowed to vote because you disagree with us.

Terms of Reference No. 6/7      Important topic to the Fellowship as a whole but these issues must be handled and dealt with at a local level

**33. Would Conference consider reverting back to the system of accepting and publishing Conference questions as they were submitted by the Fellowship, rather than rewording them and turning them into a topic, which can result in the loss of the question's original meaning? i.e. change the 'Terms of Reference'?**

***Background***

- The current terms of reference; particularly item 3 of the 7 criteria for accepting or rejecting questions/topics for Conference.
- This practice can discourage groups from presenting questions in the future if they believe their questions will be constantly changed or rejected.
- The background to submitted questions often include specific material that refines and focuses the question and this detailed focus can be lost or marginalised when submitted questions are consolidated into a topic, even if the spirit of the original question appears to be maintained.

Terms of Reference No. 7      Remit of the Conference Steering Committee who are tasked to deal with these issues



34. As guardian of the Three Legacies in GB, would Conference consider:
- What action should be taken regarding external websites and publications which make personal attacks on AA Groups and individual members by name;
  - Giving guidance to the Fellowship on the involvement of AA members in such websites;
  - Giving guidance to Groups and individuals under attack from such websites.

**Background**

It is known that certain non-AA websites exist which, sadly, are aimed at spreading malicious gossip or, worse still, directly attacking some AA Groups or individual AA's.

Whereas we do not wish to do anything which would raise their profile, websites such as these do affect AA as a whole because new prospects might believe that these websites speak for the majority of AA, when in fact they neither represent AA, nor do they speak for AA. Whilst at first it appears we in AA can do little or nothing to stop these websites operating (Tradition 10 – we ought never be drawn into public controversy), we ask Conference's help on *if* and *when* to act, and *how* to act.

Where such problems continue, the Concepts suggest that Conference may 'need to take certain protective actions' or 'press for the discontinuance of such a practice'. Our question seeks to ask Conference to consider (a) how AA groups ought best to draw such matters to its attention (or the attention of the GSB); (b) how they should act for the best; and (c) when Conference or GSB might find it necessary to intervene.

While Concept 12, Warranty 5 states 'that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy', the text of the essay explains that 'we can inform tradition violators that they are out of order. When they persist we can follow up by using such other resources of persuasion as we may have, and these are often considerable'

This section has much to say on these matters and there is clearly a need for Conference to show leadership in such situations to uphold Tradition 1 and avoid further breaches of Traditions. All are entitled to their opinions about groups and individuals. But when those opinions are publicly voiced, particularly when it is easy to identify those groups and individuals, by people with no identity other than as AA members, then several Traditions are being broken. (1, 3, 4, 10, 11).

Terms of Reference No. 7

Adequately covered by Committee 2, Conference 2011. An internet safety leaflet has been produced and is available to the Fellowship

35. Would Conference consider what help may be given to those considering the formation of a non –Geographical Intergroup or Region open to all and any AA group within the UK?

**Background**

- A non-geographical Intergroup or Region would function like existing Intergroups yet its membership would not be contingent on location.
- A non-geographical Intergroup or Region would increase unity in the UK Fellowship by allowing groups which are currently being excluded from their geographical Intergroup, to participate fully in the Three Legacies of the Fellowship they serve.
- All AA groups should be able to contribute to our National group Conscience. Tradition 2, Concept 12 Warranties 4 & 6
- More and more Intergroups are trying to throw out AA groups that they disagree with.
- The GSB/GSO are refusing to recognize new Intergroups unless the Intergroups who banish groups agree with it.
- It is clearly wrong for Intergroups to have the final say in AA. Concept 1, Concept 4
- AA Guideline on Personal Conduct refers to "Discrimination"
- Continental Europe example

Terms of Reference No. 6

Local issue that depends on relevant circumstances

36. Given the service commitment required to be a Conference delegate, would Conference consider introducing a specific and separate guideline for Conference delegates, which can better help in the selection and preparation of delegates and their alternates?

**Background**

In the 2010 Conference report, the response to the inventory question (question 2) from Committee 5 - on improving the method of Conference reporting back to the membership – did not address the issue of improving the existing communication between Conference and the membership as a whole.

Ideally all delegates would readily understand the implications of each question in terms of the Concepts, Traditions and the Conference Charter. As our trusted servants it is vital that all Conference delegates are fully armed with the facts in order to truly serve the Fellowship.

Our literature has plenty to say but it would be useful to have that gathered in one pamphlet or guideline to ensure that delegates are sufficiently informed about what the position entails.

It could also provide guidance about which literature should be read by an aspiring delegate or alternate. For example:

- • GB Service Manual
- • World Service Manual
- • Conference Charter and warrantees
- • 12 Traditions
- • 12 Concepts
- • AA Comes of Age
- • Recent previous Conference reports

Terms of Reference No. 7

Covered in recently approved Structure Handbook for Great Britain, page 93

37. **Would Conference share its experience on what procedures Regions could put in place for selecting the highest possible quality Conference delegates for the Fellowship?**  
Considering the amount of responsibility and trust placed in delegates, are the existing guidelines and literature sufficient and being adhered to?

**Background**

There are currently guidelines in the Service Manual for GB which include information about being a Conference delegate and alternate. There is also literature listed which Conference delegates are guided to be familiar with. However Regions around the country sometimes have additional informal procedures for preparing and selecting delegates. Delegates in some Regions meet as a group to discuss Conference questions, answers and background literature and invite alternate delegates to attend so they can gain experience. Some prefer to select their delegates from region assembly members who have had a number of years' experience on the assembly. Some service bodies workshops on the Concepts which can help prepare future delegates. It would be useful if experience on these approaches could be pooled and shared for use by the Fellowship at large, given the vital and influential role delegates play in the future of our Fellowship on the largest scale.

Terms of Reference No. 7 Covered within Structure Handbook for Great Britain and Tradition 4 that allows for the autonomy of each Region

38. **Would Conference discuss if AA UK should use or not use the term "self help group" when referring to AA groups?**

**Background**

On the webpage section "Newcomer to AA - Who We Are" it says:

"Through meetings and talking with other alcoholics we are somehow able to stay sober."

This could give the impression AA is a self help group and that talking to others "somehow" keeps us sober. The Big Book has a chapter called "How it Works". It does not mention going to meetings and then "somehow" staying sober. Instead it talks about taking certain steps and through them building a relationship with God that works.

As much as it is understandable that we cannot explain the whole chapter in one sentence at the web, this description on how it works given now on the page, may cause the impression steps have nothing to do with recovery and that we don't know what got us sober in the first place.

In addition the flyer "To Professionals" actually states we were self help groups. As far as I know that is the only piece in AA literature that does so, especially as this information is wrong. Step 2 states exactly that "we came to believe that only a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity" and hereby refers to God, because we cannot help ourselves

Terms of Reference No. 7

Covered by existing literature, for example our Preamble which states AA is a "Fellowship".

40. **Do the Yellow Card and Anonymity Tent Card contradict our Primary Purpose? Would it help us carry AA's message to have a more accurate table-top reminder of the need to respect personal anonymity?**  
*Intent* While it is vital that we respect the anonymity of the people we see in AA meetings, not everything we hear in AA meetings ought to be kept secret, contrary to the Yellow Card ("What you hear here...let it stay here") and Anonymity Tent Card ("Treat in confidence...what you hear"). These cards may be working against our primary purpose - much of message we should carry to the still-suffering alcoholic derives from what we hear in meetings. We are not a secret society, but the repeated misrepresentation of Traditions 11 and 12, reinforced at virtually every AA meeting by these cards, may be part of the reason we are sometimes perceived as one, and often act like one. Perhaps it would better serve us to have a more accurately worded, Conference approved table-top card on the need to respect personal anonymity.

*Background:* Yellow Card ("Let it stay here"). Anonymity Tent Card. Traditions 5, 11, 12

41. **Would the A.A. Groups of our Fellowship consider to what extent we are living up to our responsibility as those having "Final responsibility and ultimate authority" for AA services?**  
**An ongoing method of determining satisfaction could be achieved by the inclusion of specific 'audits' by three of the six Conference committees:**
- A. Audit of Primary Purpose and reports and work of GSB:**  
*Would Conference review the past year with respect to fulfilment of our primary purpose at the level of the General Service Board?*
- B. Audit of 12<sup>th</sup> step work and reports and work of GSO and GSB:**  
*Would Conference review input from the Fellowship on its perception of how effectively the General Service Office and the General Service Board have aided groups in carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic over the past year?*
- C. Financial audit by membership:**  
*Would Conference review the financial report by the GSB for the previous fiscal year with focus on any large expenditures or commitments and in addition review administrative procedures and decision making processes.*
- Background**
- 1. Concept One**
- 2. Alcoholics Anonymous comes of Age , page 217-218:**  
 On their first day, the delegates inspected our Headquarters, got acquainted with the service staff, and shook hands with the Trustees. In the evening there was a briefing session under the name of "What's on your mind?" We answered questions of every description. The delegates began to feel at home. Seeing their quick understanding and confidence, our spirits rose. We all sensed that something momentous was happening; this was a historic moment.
- One strenuous session followed another. The delegates inspected A.A.'s finances and listened to reports from the Board of Trustees and from all services. There was warm but cordial debate on many questions of A.A. policy. The Trustees submitted several of their own serious problems for the opinion of the Conference. With real dispatch the delegates handled several tough puzzlers about which we at Headquarters were in doubt. Though their advice was sometimes contrary to our own views, we saw they were frequently right. They were proving as never before that A.A.'s Tradition Two was correct. Our group conscience could safely act as the sole authority and sure guide for Alcoholics Anonymous. As the delegates returned home, they carried this deep conviction with them."
- 3. Considering the issues raised in the recent past regarding the content of Conference questions, and a possible lack of interest within the Fellowship at large pertaining to Conference questions, a report by each of three committees to the Fellowship on the activities of the past year could help create a feeling of 'ownership' within the Fellowship.**

Terms of Reference No. 6

Insufficient background material and, further, the Fellowship is provided with reports from the General Service Board that are presented to Conference and Accounts that are audited by independent outside examiners

42. **Is the Conference adhering to the 12 Concepts of the world service manual and to the Traditions, as on the one hand the Conference delegates are restricted in the exercise of their right of decision during Conference where there are non-voting sessions, and on the other hand board members may feel there is no need to answer Conference delegate questions on their board reports if they are raised during Conference rather than by 31 March, and this may affect the board members' right of participation in answering issues of concern to the Fellowship as represented by its trusted servants, the Conference delegates.**

**Background**

2002 vote that the open forum session be non-voting: Conference Steering Committee guidelines that only questions on the board reports submitted by 31 March need be considered; Concept 3 right of decision, Concept 4 right of participation; Tradition 2 trusted servants.

Terms of Reference No. 7

Responsibility of the Conference Steering Committee

43. **Discuss whether the Conference format is compatible with Tradition Two, where in one session Conference Delegates do not vote, and in the sessions where Board Members report, the Board Members need only reply to questions put in writing by 31 March, before Conference Delegates have the benefit of the group conscience at Conference, and make a recommendation if not.**

**Background**

Long form Tradition 2; Conference 2002 on the structure of Conference; Conference Steering guidelines on deadline to put questions to board members on their board reports.

AA comes of age, page 217: "We answered questions of every description. The delegates began to feel at home. Seeing their quick understanding and confidence, our spirits rose. We all sensed that something momentous was happening; this was a historic moment.

One strenuous session followed another. The delegates inspected A.A.'s finances and listened to reports from the Board of Trustees and from all services. There was warm but cordial debate on many questions of A.A. policy. The Trustees submitted several of their own serious problems for the opinion of the Conference. With real dispatch the delegates handled several tough puzzlers about which we at Headquarters were in doubt. Though their advice was sometimes contrary to our own views, we saw they were frequently right. They were proving as never before that A.A.'s Tradition Two was correct. Our group conscience could safely act as the sole authority and sure guide for Alcoholics Anonymous. As the delegates returned home, they carried this deep conviction with them."

Terms of Reference No. 7

Responsibility of the Conference Steering Committee

44. In the spirit of Fellowship and Unity would the Conference offer guidance as to when at Conference a Delegate can raise an issue arising at that Conference for proper debate and a vote if called for.

**Background**

Conference 2009, Committee 3, Question 1 Experience & personal responsibility.

Concept 3 Right of decision.

Concept 4 Right of participation.

Tradition 2 Trusted Servants.

Terms of Reference No. 7

Responsibility of the Conference Steering Committee

45. Would the Fellowship share experience of, consider, and offer advice concerning the optimum number of groups which might constitute an Intergroup?

**Background**

There is little guidance in existing literature regarding the most efficient size of an Intergroup from the point of view of the number of groups within it. The Guideline 4 in the old Service Handbook merely talks about the Officers and the Intergroup meetings and page S31 in the US A.A. Service Manual simply states that 'the number of groups per district varies widely, from as few as five in a rural district to 90 or more in a metropolitan district.' Our own Intergroup has seen its constituent groups grow significantly in the last two or three years and envisages a debate about the manageability of the Intergroup if this growth continues. Some views from the Fellowship at large would be very useful in this process.

Terms of Reference No. 7

Tradition 4 allowing autonomy for each Intergroup to decide its composition and guidance can be found within existing literature

46. Does the Fellowship agree that it would help in the annual discussion of Conference questions if the questions were proof-read and edited prior to their publication?

**Background**

Every year in discussions with AA groups and Intergroup, members report that they have been confused by questions which are too long or ambiguous in their meaning. GSRs report to Intergroup that they have had to spend time in the discussions explaining to members what their interpretation of certain questions is. Conference delegates may better understand the questions because they have all the written background or other knowledge to put the question in context. Those of us looking at a question 'cold' do not have this advantage and sometimes just need a more concisely worded question. In any other field (e.g. writing to a newspaper) members of the public have their written contributions edited. It would be easy to find the required skills for this within the Fellowship. The Conference questions are too important for us to continue leaving their meaning open to individual interpretation.

Terms of Reference No. 7

Proofing reading is carried out and the CSC has strived to ensure questions are as easy to understand as possible, within the constraints of their Terms of Reference and overall responsibilities

50. Would Conference pass a recommendation that the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, as guardians of the Twelve Traditions, condemn the actions of Intergroups and Regions, which exclude registered AA groups, and individual AA members from exercising their right of participation in our service structure?

**Background**

- A registered AA group in Bournemouth, South West Region, and its members have for 7 years been excluded from participating in their local Intergroups, despite repeated attempts to join.

This AA group, which is to be found on the National list of AA meetings, has donated thousands of pounds directly to GSO, as local Intergroups have consistently declined its donations. No credible reason has ever been given for these clearly discriminatory actions. Does any service board ever have a credible reason for excluding any group to which it is directly responsible and which it serves? (Tradition 9)

These actions have created disunity locally and diverted attention away from efforts to carry the AA message. Many members have been left feeling very insecure in the Fellowship that saved or could have saved their lives. Some may have left AA all together.

Very willing and competent AA members have been denied the right to serve in the local service structure. This right should never be denied any AA member based on membership of a particular group. Failure by the GSB to express any views on this disgraceful state of affairs, may well have been deemed as approval of their actions by local Intergroups.

In any organisation where discrimination takes place it is the role of the leadership of that organisation to take a clear stand.

Up till now the GSB has shirked on its responsibility and alcoholics could well have died as a result of this inactivity.

Similar actions go on unchallenged in other parts of AA in the UK.

- Tradition 1
- Tradition 3
- Tradition 4
- Concepts 4, 9 and 12.

Terms of Reference No. 7

From the supplied background material this is a local issue

51. **Would the A.A. Groups of our fellowship consider a reorganization of the Conference committee tasks in such a way as to allow a more thorough review of the activities of the General Service Office, the General Service Board and the Fellowship as a whole over the preceding year?**

**Four committees to review the activities of the General Service Office, the General Service Board and the Fellowship as a whole and two committees to discuss topics or questions submitted by the Fellowship:**

- a. One committee to review the activities and work of the GSB with special attention to how effectively the GSB has aided groups in carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic over the past year.**
- b. One committee to review the activities and work of the GSO with special attention to how effectively the GSB has aided groups in carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic over the past year.**
- c. One committee would review activities and work within the Fellowship as whole, with attention to Regional, Intergroup and Group levels with special attention to carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic.**
- d. One committee would review the financial report by the GSB for the previous fiscal year with focus on any large expenditures or commitments and in addition review administrative procedures and decision making processes.**
- e. Two committees would work on Topics or Questions submitted by the fellowship as all six committees now do.**

***Intention:***

The content and relevance of topics and questions is raised regularly, both in topics submitted to Conference and at Group, Intergroup and Region meetings.

It is possible that one issue which contributes to this recurrence is that there are so many Topics & Questions. In addition Groups, Intergroups and Regions often express experiencing distance or disconnection between themselves and Conference, the GSB and even GSO.

Changing the content of the committee work, putting more emphasis on review and discussion of the current affairs and activities of GSB and GSO may lead members at all levels of our Fellowship to better feel their Ownership, and Responsibility for these levels of service.

It is not the intent that this become a vehicle to unfairly criticize or nitpick at either the GSB or GSO. The process should be one of Respect and Consideration with awareness of Tradition Two foremost in our minds.

Furthermore all involved need to be focused on that which is the Very Best for Alcoholics Anonymous rather than on matters of personal prestige or personalities rather than principles.

***Recent discussion of this issue or of similar issues.***

Conference 2013, no. Conference 2012, No . Conference 2011, No.

**Similar or older discussions:**

2010, Committee Four, Topic 2 – regarding the intention behind the Topics or Questions

2010, Committee Three, Topic 2 – regarding how Conference may be made more attractive to the membership as a whole.

2010, Committee Three, Topic 2 – regarding how we may better participate in the process of generating and formulating Topics or Questions for Conference.  
2010, Committee One, Topic 2 – regarding the frequency of Conference, annual or Biannual (every other year).  
2009, Committee Five, Topic 2 – regarding recording and uploading plenary sessions of Conference.  
2009, Committee Two, Topic 1 – regarding Conference taking a regular Inventory of itself

**Background:**

1. Concept One

2. Alcoholics Anonymous comes of Age , page 217-218:

*"On their first day, the delegates inspected our Headquarters, got acquainted with the service staff, and shook hands with the Trustees. In the evening there was a briefing session under the name of "What's on your mind?" We answered questions of every description. The delegates began to feel at home. Seeing their quick understanding and confidence, our spirits rose. We all sensed that something momentous was happening; this was a historic moment.*

*One strenuous session followed another. The delegates inspected A.A.'s finances and listened to reports from the Board of Trustees and from all services. There was warm but cordial debate on many questions of A.A. policy. The Trustees submitted several of their own serious problems for the opinion of the Conference. With real dispatch the delegates handled several tough puzzlers about which we at Headquarters were in doubt. Though their advice was sometimes contrary to our own views, we saw they were frequently right. They were proving as never before that A.A.'s Tradition Two was correct. Our group conscience could safely act as the sole authority and sure guide for Alcoholics Anonymous. As the delegates returned home, they carried this deep conviction with them."*

3. The Fellowship as a whole has "Final responsibility and ultimate authority" for AA services. How can we then determine to what extent we are living up to that responsibility at the various levels of service in terms of the past year?

4. Possible Working Guidelines:

Love and Tolerance of others is our code

Trust God, Clean House, Help Others

Love and Service

*Big Book, page 164: - "Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. "*

*B.B. page 124 - "This painful past may be of infinite value to other families still struggling with their problem. We think each family which has been relieved owes something to those who have not,"*

*Bib book, page 86 : "Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life?"*

5. A recurring theme in Conference inventories at Regional and Conference level, as well as in questions themselves, concerns the perception of Conference, the GSB and GSO by the general membership. There is often dissatisfaction with the content of conference questions and reports as being of little relevance to the individual group or member.

Having the majority of the committees review the work of the past year and make recommendations would result in a clearer perception that The Groups themselves are the 'owners' of AA and that they truly do bear Final responsibility and ultimate authority.

These reviews should not be overly politically correct or polite, but they should also be done in the spirit of Love and Service. There should be a realization that if there are problems at any level of A.A. then it is we, the Groups, who bear the responsibility. There is no Us and Them, only WE. There need be no fear of overly critical or personal attacks as the committees will approach their remit with attention to mutual respect.

Terms of Reference No. 7

The responsibility of the Conference Steering Committee, GSB and the GSB's external auditors

52. **Would Conference discuss and make recommendations: that as a Fellowship, we are failing to continue to raise awareness on an ongoing basis as is required by law, by not paying enough attention or challenging the unacceptable, inappropriate and unlawful sexual conduct by some AA members.**

Awareness of this problem has been brought to the attention of Conference on numerous occasions throughout the years, but the truth is there are still a minority of people who continue to take advantage of the more vulnerable members of the Fellowship in a completely unacceptable manner.

As part of our service to the Fellowship we must protect our members and stay out of public controversy. Recent events within the UK have highlighted the need for all organisations to be dealing with problems such as these on an ongoing and transparent way.

The discussion document of 2000 was highlighted as a starting point only and in these current times it is

essential we are able to demonstrate we have moved from the starting point, and ensure that every member of this Fellowship is reminded, on a regular and ongoing basis, of their individual responsibilities for their personal conduct.

Terms of Reference 6/7      Guidance regarding personal conduct matters can be found in the AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain and further guidance/support can always be sort via GSO/GSB

53.      **Safeguarding Issues for Alcoholics Anonymous**

The current climate of anxiety about the vulnerability of children and adults with special needs has led to a strong emphasis on “Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults”. (1)

In Alcoholics Anonymous we might at first sight dismiss any of the issues emerging from this as none of our business and as something which will not apply to the Fellowship: we are after all protected by the Traditions which give us clear boundaries from the Agencies which have to take Safeguarding considerations into account (i.e. Health, Education etc.) (2)

Increasingly, however, as many in Service roles will know, we are being asked if we have had “CRB Checks” and do we have a “policy” on safeguarding? This can only continue as more and more agencies come under scrutiny: the Catholic Church for example now has to deal with a failure to take account with its safeguarding failures at an earlier stage.

We could say:

1.      We are not an “agency/organisation” for children. Anyone who approaches AA is an adult. Children are not legally entitled to drink until they are 18.
2.      On any visits to school or contact with children, it is the responsibility of the school/agency we are working with to ensure they follow their own safeguarding guidelines. Usually they will ensure no contact between members of the Fellowship and children without a member of staff being present at all times. Name badges (Visitor ID) to be worn at all times etc.
3.      On 12<sup>th</sup> Step calls to adults we will ensure that more than one member of the Fellowship is present and 12<sup>th</sup> stepping is done by the same sex as the person visited. Children under 18 can only be seen with parents present.

The above are common sense approaches which I am sure will be immediately clear to AA members but do we always follow them?

The answer is probably not and sooner or later we may be faced with an allegation or complaint of abuse or failure in a duty of care at some level.

My question to AA is: Do we need to consider the recent rise in Safeguarding Measures and decide whether or not AA should have a policy which protects the Fellowship from risk or scandal?

(1)      “Every Child Matters” 2003: Children Act 2004 Lord Laming Report: 2006 “Working Together”, “Multi-Agency Local Safeguarding Children Boards” (LSCBs)

“...A duty on all agencies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.” 2010: “Working Together to Safeguard Children”.

(2)      The 12 Traditions “Alcoholics Anonymous” The Big Book  
“Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions” (1952).

Terms of Reference No. 7      The Traditions and Concepts and information contained within existing literature, such as the Structure and Service Handbooks for Great Britain provide guidance on keeping our fellowship out of public controversy. There is also a guidance issued by the General Service Board in January 2013 which refers to Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults. This guidance will be published in the next edition of AA Service News.

55.      **A proposed minority report for consideration.**

Terms of Reference No. 7      The questioner has been referred to document "How to submit a topic or question for Conference".