**Notes from the Joint Prison, Probation/Criminal Justice Services (CJS) Seminar – 9:30 am Saturday 1st July 2023 Venue: Park Inn, York**

Attendees were welcomed to the seminar by Tom Fox Non-Alcoholic Trustee (NAT) on the General Service Board (GSB) GB. Hamish McS Probation/CJS Trustee and Zelma K Prison Trustee read out the AA preamble and Traditions 3,5 and 12.

**Zelma K Prison Trustee**

Zelma presented our new public information video on our work with alcoholics in prisons (available on the AA website) and spoke about the work of the prison subcommittee and prisons liaison officers at intergroup and region.

**Prison Postal Service**

Steve Hexter General Service Office (GSO) Prison Postal Service (PPS) co-ordinator gave a presentation on the Prison Postal Service. This a completely anonymous service with prisoners writing to a central PO Box and then Steve posts on the letters to the member’s home addresses. An A4 information flyer is included in the delegate packs for anyone who wants to become a prison postal sponsor. For more information please contact Steve at: [aainformation@gsogb.org.uk](mailto:aainformation@gsogb.org.uk)

**Tom Fox Non-Alcoholic Trustee (NAT)**

Tom gave thanks to all members who do service to help alcoholics in prison and described the many ways that AA has helped prisoners achieve and maintain sobriety.

**Wendy Sinclair-Gieben, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Scotland**

Wendy gave a presentation on Alcohol, Justice and the HM Inspection of Prisons for Scotland (HMIPS). Prison inspection is based on the Human rights approach to the welfare of prisoners, for example access to health services should be available to all prisoners but is often lacking. Statistically 63% of those in prison have had an alcohol use disorder and 31% are alcohol dependant. Alcohol dependence is treated by detox but that is the end of it, the only ongoing therapeutic treatment for alcoholism is given by AA. Re-offending is reduced by the help and support of charitable organisations and other organisations such as AA.

**Sarah Hancock, Approvals and Compliance Team Manager, HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS)**

Sarah’s team deals with the approvals and vetting process. This enables members to go into prisons and chair AA meetings. In the last 12 months there have been at total of 53,131 vetting applications considered, for many different organisations. Security checks include Police National Computer (PNC) checks, and a common myth is that members with previous convictions will not obtain security clearance. This is not necessarily the case although they may have to go through the Standard Plus vetting process if knocked back by the standard vetting process. Some governors are more receptive to accepting risk than others, and they ultimately have the final say on who can visit their prison. Of the 122 prisons in England and Wales 102 have people going in who have been through the Standard Plus vetting process.

**Hamish GSB Trustee with responsibility for Probation / CJS GB**

Hamish gave a presentation on the Probation/Criminal Justice Service discipline in AA. Confirmation of attendance “chits” have been approved for use in AA since conference 1987. Groups can use their own chits, but blank chits are now available to order from GSO free of charge but will only be sent out to Group officers who have registered their home address through the “pink form”. There is also a tick box on the form for groups to indicate that they use the chit system, and this is flagged on the meeting details on the AA website meeting finder. Hamish went through the resources – literature and videos - which can help Liaison Officers, including new re-usable stencils that are being used by the City of London Police to spray paint AA contact details on police cell walls. Hamish gave out email contact with the Probation Sub Committee at [infoprobabtion.sc@aamail.org](mailto:infoprobabtion.sc@aamail.org)

**Steve Johnson-Proctor, Regional Probation Director, East of England, National Lead for Offender Health HMPPS**

Steve gave a presentation on Alcohol related crime. Alcohol has been identified as a contributing factor to domestic abuse. Alcohol is a factor in 40% of all violent crimes in England. There is currently no HMPPS Alcohol Strategy, but a new updated Substance Misuse Strategy is being developed to include alcohol not just in Prison but across custody and community. Treatment interventions and controls include community sentence treatment requirements, alcohol abstinence monitoring tags, and the commission and co-commission of local services including referrals to charities. HMPPS also recognises the power of peer support and lived experience and is keen to develop relationships with AA.

**Geri Bryne-Thompson, Area Manager and Project lead for Recovery focussed Approved Premises, HMPPS.**

Geri gave a presentation on the new approved premises (APs) recovery focused approach. AP’s used to be called bail hostels and are there mostly for people who have been release from prison on licence supervision which may include abstinence from alcohol as condition of their licence. Recovery focused APs (RFAPs) aim to break the cycle of substance misuse: use - > offending -> prison - > release-> relapse. There is currently a proof-of-concept trial ongoing at 3 RFAPs across England and Wales with each RFAP establishing itself in the local recovery community and developing relationships with local support groups such as AA. The long-term plan is to roll this out to over 100 APs in England and Wales.

**Glasgow Alcohol Court Presentation**

David McW shared his experience, strength and hope including experience of his service work with the Glasgow Alcohol Court. Every Monday AA members attend and give out information to people in court for alcohol related crime. It has been a success with many new members being 12th stepped in the waiting room after attending the court but it can be difficult at times to get AA members to volunteer to do this.

**The seminar closed with the Responsibility Statement and Serenity Prayer at 4pm**