

What sort of questions does a caller usually ask?

There is no set pattern, however, most callers are surprised to be talking to an actual alcoholic.

Most alcoholics are interested in hearing how you stopped drinking, how long you have been sober, and how AA has worked for you. Some are desperate to talk to anyone who listen.

Not all calls come from potential members. Worried family and friends often call asking for help with problem drinkers, we normally direct them to Al-Anon for further support, or occasionally, to find out where and when meetings are taking place. Official bodies or media organisations are always directed to contact our general service office.

Telephone responders are encouraged not to be on the helpline for too long with any one caller, as others could be waiting. The average call length is 8 minutes.

We have found that when we have made a connection with another alcoholic who reaches out for help, that this is very rewarding and often moving.

Can I get help if I cannot cope with a call?

Yes, you can. Advice and support are available any time from the Telephone Liaison Officers

What geographical area does it cover?

The area covered is normally North Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. However, as a result of increasing mobile calls, we can receive calls from anywhere in the UK, and occasional calls from abroad. Most Calls come from the from the free national telephone helpline, 0800 9177 650.

We have a local helpline number which is 01438 747475,

Do existing responders find it a rewarding type of service?

Yes. Most people volunteer because:

Helps keep them sober by reminding them of where they come from.

Gives them a chance to give back what they were given by AA.

Gives a chance to help another alcoholic in an extremely rewarding way.

**The local TLOs are
Michael 07941 767719
and Loraine 07577 497328**



Telephone Service

I am responsible...

When anyone, anywhere,

reaches out for help,

“If your first contact with AA was by telephone, then it was the telephone service that made sure there was someone there to take your call.”



What is the telephone service? A helpline for alcoholics who want to stop drinking. Most calls come to the Freephone number and are diverted to you automatically.

What is a Responder? Any member of AA who volunteers on a regular basis to answer calls made to the helpline.

What is a responder expected to say to caller

The role of a responder is briefly:

- Listen to and help callers who want to stop drinking.
- Support the caller through empathy, and their own experience.
- Gather details from the caller to pass on to a another member or tell the caller where a local meeting is held.
- To stay protect other members anonymity.

Who can be a Responder? You can! As long as you have one year's sobriety.

Will I get training? Yes. Initial one-to-one training can be given and responder packs are provided. In addition, our Telephone Liaison Officers (TLOs) are always happy to help. We have a WhatsApp Group and regular emails to keep you up to date.

Can I use a mobile? Yes, you can. We do ask that you turn off your voicemail while on shift.

How long do I have to be a Responder?

There is no set time period. It is entirely up to your personal circumstances. You can do a set shift each week or every fortnight. We also need reserves to cover when responders need time off.

What do I say to a caller? Listen and then carry the message. Tell them how you got sober and arrange for them to get to a meeting. This will involve 12 step help and support. Experience and your own higher power will inform you the rest.

Where can I get more information?

Contact a Telephone Liaison Officer (TLO). We are here to help new members to our telephone service, and they are always welcome.

How does it work? A volunteer takes on an agreed shift and answers any calls that come through the helpline during their shift. The telephone system will automatically route calls via the helpline to the responder's mobile or landline, whichever they choose to use. The responders communicate with each other between shifts.

How many calls am I likely to get? This can vary enormously on average over a year one one call per shift.

Will it cost me anything? Any costs incurred outside your normal pay plans can be claimed.



If your first contact with AA was by telephone, then it was the telephone service that made sure there was someone there to take your call."

