

# Interlink

*The newsletter for Southdown intergroup*

*In this newsletter you  
can expect*

**Updates from our  
Intergroup  
Committee & the  
LOC**

**We hear about  
"Help Available"**

**Annabel takes the  
Q&A**

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inbox every quarter!*

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## Editor's Message

Dear readers of the Southdown fellowship,

Excited, albeit a little daunted, I am aware that I am stepping into the very capable shoes of Lucy S in her performance as Editor of Interlink for the last three years. I thank Lucy for her support and patience whilst handing over the reigns.

Our Chair reflects upon the progress at Intergroup level and her appreciation of fellows that have stepped up into service positions. Just one hugely rewarding position of 12 Step Coordinator is still available,

In the Q&A this month, Annabel describes her involvement with the recent creation of the Ladies and LGBTQIA+ group in Portsmouth.

The Liaison Officer Committee have been busy in the past few months, having made great progress in all areas to reach those still suffering alcoholics. A major leap forward with the Young Persons service, the exciting increase in numbers in service on IOW prisons, and the continued success of the telephone and health services. Please read on to hear what the individual members have been up to.

If there are any group celebrations taking place, we'd like to hear about it for the next issue.

Thank you all for keeping me sober today.

Yours in fellowship,

Jayne, Interlink Editor  
[interlink.southdown@aamail.org](mailto:interlink.southdown@aamail.org)



# OUR CHAIR CHECKS IN...

Greetings Fellows,

Well, here we are over halfway through the year already! The past few months have been challenging at times but with each new challenge I have learnt more, grown more and believe my sobriety is stronger for it. Recovery is a journey, not a destination.

I am really pleased that we have so many new GSRs and people willing to take on service at all levels. At the time of writing, we still require someone to come forward for the role of 12 Step Coordinator, but I am hopeful that someone will 'step up'. Anyone who knows me knows how passionate I am about Service, and I would highly recommend that you attend the Regional Service Fair being held on Sunday 29th September to find out about the numerous ways you can get involved!

Steve has made a great start as ECLO, especially given the challenges presented by the new GSO website. I invite you all to visit the Southdown website and feedback to myself or Steve any suggestions.

Although the main premise of AA is 'One Day at a Time' and the revelation of 'Just for Today' which is what finally enabled me to get sober, I do love to have a plan and know what I'm doing when! In that respect, I am extremely grateful to H and her immense organisational skills which means that we now have the dates and the hall secured for Intergroup Assemblies for the next three years. Please ensure you take note of them as it is essential that we have good representation at assembly.

As always, if anyone has anything they would like to raise with regards to Southdown Intergroup, please do not hesitate to email me on [chair.southdown@aamail.org](mailto:chair.southdown@aamail.org)

Yours in Fellowship

Ellie, Chair Southdown Intergroup

[chair.southdown@aamail.org](mailto:chair.southdown@aamail.org)

## Q&A WITH ANNABEL

**What is your role and how long have you been in it?**

I'm Secretary at Portsmouth's brand new Women & LGBTQIA+ group, which held our first meeting on Sunday 21st July. My role with this group has been two-fold; helping co-found it, and now as part of the regular service group.

**"NEW"  
WOMEN &  
LGBTQIA+ GROUP**

# Liaison Officer Committee

## Liaison Officer Coordinator Report

I have continued to work in the background to shape the role of the Liaison Officer Coordinator given that this is a new role and at the moment there is not a guidebook. Nonetheless it's rewarding to witness firsthand the commitment to service from a fantastic group of Liaison Officers who have stepped up to help others. The service delivered in Health, Young Persons and Criminal Justice over the past few months by committed members is incredible - from regular prison visits on the Isle of Wight, to Young Persons monthly breakfast meets and to Hospital and Rehab centre visits. We are making a difference.

Having engaged with the Intergroup Committee it is proposed that we will continue to have designated Liaison Officer leads in the key areas as defined by the AA Service Book, but we will continue to encourage all members to assist and be involved. This will continue to be managed through the Liaison Officer Committee.

During the past couple of months, we have reached out to members requesting their support with service in our Intergroup area and have received a great deal of interest. In the coming months we will be communicating further with those members and will start to put in motion our Service Plan for the remainder of the year. This will include contacting employers, healthcare providers, local authorities and attending external meetings and events to raise awareness.

A Service Plan has been developed and will be presented to the August 2024 Assembly for ratification - This is something completely new, but I am privileged and excited to be able to develop this role and put some structure in to how we collectively, as an intergroup, deliver Liaison Officer service and carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

There is still much work to be done but with 'Good Orderly Direction' with our new Service Plan I know we will deliver and help others. If any members wish to get involved with Intergroup service in areas such as Health, Employment, Armed Forces, Young Persons, Public Information and Criminal Justice then please do get in touch by emailing me at [cood.southdown@aamail.org](mailto:cood.southdown@aamail.org).

Yours in Fellowship

Colin.

## Q&A WITH ANNABEL (cont.)

### 2. What are the highlights of doing this role?

I have previously helped co-found two women's meetings; one in Costa Rica and the current one in Havant. These experiences have allowed me to witness first-hand the significant benefits of providing 'satellite' safe spaces for alcoholics as an additional offering to our core mixed meetings. It has been my experience that these additional groups which cater to particular communities (but exclude none) can act as incubators for especially vulnerable newcomers who are sometimes too fearful, too raw, and feel too intimidated in their very early days to be comfortable attending mixed meetings. It is absolutely one of the highlights, if not THE highlight of my Secretary

role, to see people gain trust, learn to accept help, and build an initial support network around them; which often gives them the confidence they need to then 'spread their wings' and engage with the fellowship at mixed meetings.

The collective decision in creating this new meeting to support the LGBTQIA+ community in Portsmouth too has also been a highlight. Pre-Covid there was a Queer meeting in the city but, like so many meetings, wasn't reinstated when the world returned to 'normal'. It has been, and is, an honour to be of service to this community as well.



# Liaison Officer Committee

**"We have taken 588 calls in Qtr 1 with 25% of those resulting in 12 step intervention"**

## Telephones

Hi all,

Marianne and I would like to thank each and every one of our Telephone Responders for their continued service.

In Qtr. 1, 2024 we took 588 calls, with 25% of those resulting in 12 step intervention. Of total calls, 46% are from out of our Intergroup area but as always this type of call is important to get the caller connected with someone within the fellowship. Also; there has been a recent increase in calls where no action is needed but the caller want to talks or get information about AA.

We are always looking for people to be added as reserve responders and have some permanent shifts available. If anyone is interested please contact Marianne or myself. Many thanks

Marianne + Ed, Telephone Liaison Officers  
telephones.southdown@aamail.org



## Q&A WITH ANNABEL (cont.)

**3. What impact do you feel this role has had on your recovery?**

I have served as Secretary previously so it has been my role in co-founding this new group which has been particularly impactful for me at this stage in my recovery. The new learning I needed to do, the advice sought from GSO and active members of the South Downs Intergroup, and the implementation of updated safeguarding guidance provided by recent AA literature has added a depth of understanding to the Traditions, principles and values of AA I hadn't experienced before.

Additionally, it has given me opportunities to better my ability to listen to the needs of others; practice patience, tolerance and loving-kindness (at times!); and

to have faith in our abilities to 'do the next right thing' as a group.

It has also shown me how contemporary AA is supporting and providing guidance toward standing challenges within the fellowship, for which I am incredibly grateful.

# Liaison Officer Committee

## ARCHIVES

### SOUTHDOWN LEGACY

The fifth edition of the Southdown Legacy is nearly ready for publishing. GSRs are requested to pre-order for their groups in multiples of 5 copies for £10. No deposit is required. Just email your pre order to: [archives.southdown@aamail.org](mailto:archives.southdown@aamail.org). Please try to email your order by August 15th, alternatively speak to Lucy, Rob or Nick at the Southdown Assembly. For those who have never seen the archive newsletter, the first edition can be viewed on line at: [Alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/intergroups/southdown-intergroup/the-southdown-legacy](http://Alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/intergroups/southdown-intergroup/the-southdown-legacy)

### ARCHIVING

Many thanks to the members who have been working on the Southdown Collection, to update it's inventory.

### SERVICE FAIR

For members who may be interested in becoming archivists, you are welcome to come and chat to the archivists at the forthcoming Service Fair, which is being held on Sunday 29th of September 2024 at The Lodge Hill Centre, Watersfield, Near Pulborough RH20 1LZ.

### DONATIONS

If you have any memorabilia or interesting archive material that can be added to the archives. Please feel free to bring it to The Southdown Assembly at Petersfield.

Nick, Archives Liaison Officer  
[archives.southdown@aamail.org](mailto:archives.southdown@aamail.org)



## YOUNG PERSONS

I travelled to Glasgow to attend the 2024 annual Young Persons Roadshow back in May. I found it so inspiring hearing from others who joined the fellowship in their 20s or teens, especially those who have stayed sober for 40+ years. They emphasised the movement Bill W started in the USA, to carry the message of recovery to younger people. I met members of the GSO Young Person Sub-committee who have started a podcast called 'they stopped in time - being young and sober in Alcoholics Anonymous' which is accessible on Spotify. Some of the YPLOs and Subcommittee members provided some great suggestions on how to start carrying the message to young people within education and health settings and shared their successes with setting up Young Persons meetings in cities. I have since provided the University of Portsmouth's wellbeing service with Young Person specific leaflets and posters, amongst more general ones. We will attempt to build a relationship with the university to offer further service.

The Young Persons monthly Breakfast with Bill is going well. We are hoping to spread the word and expand this via a new flyer which is available electronically and we plan to circulate printed copies in the near future. The idea of this is to encourage connection among members who joined AA under the age of 35 from newcomers through to those with long term sobriety. We hope this regular meet up will make fellowship accessible to young people who may feel unsure about attending meetings or feel uncomfortable attending alone.

These are exciting times for Young Persons Liaison - for any members and Young Persons wishing to connect and/or assist in this service area, please do reach out to me by emailing [youngpersons.southdown@aamail.org](mailto:youngpersons.southdown@aamail.org)

Yours in Fellowship  
Dani

# Liaison Officer Committee

## HEALTH

Health Liaison continues to go from strength to strength in carrying our message. Service in the health sector has grown into new areas whilst continuing at the Queen Alexander Hospital in the Portsmouth area on a weekly basis.

Another member of our team, Frankie, has agreed to take over from me with finding volunteers to do service at Queen Alexander Hospital. Fellows have become more eager to do it when I've likened it to telephone service! So, if you see or speak to Frankie, please do ask her how you can help! Whilst we may not always get big numbers joining us during these hospital sessions, we continue to be committed and always available. From the feedback we get from Hospital staff, we absolutely know these visits and our attendance makes a huge difference and does help our fellow members.

The Dame Carol Detox Unit service is running smoothly. The staff have given good feedback, so it seems the patients get a lot out of it - we will continue to deliver service here.

In addition, during this quarter, we attended and delivered four sessions at Bognor Memorial Hospital giving presentations and shares to healthcare staff. Subsequent to these sessions, the Nurses expressed their gratitude and really appreciated our support. I have no doubt that we will be attending here again in the future.

I have also met with two members of the Social Prescribing Team who welcomed our literature to help with signposting to us.

Our plans are to reach out further in the Healthcare settings with General Practices and other health facilities so please do get in touch with me if you wish to assist in this extremely rewarding service area by emailing [health.southdown@aamail.org](mailto:health.southdown@aamail.org).

Yours in Fellowship  
Nicky



## CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Both prisons on the Isle of Wight continue to hold a meeting on the last Tuesday of the month, alternating between Parkhurst and Albany.

It's been an exciting time for the service with three members having now passed the vetting process in the last quarter. This now means that there are six volunteers on the rota to assist with prison visits and shares. Once the three new members have done a meeting in both prisons, we can look at holding a meeting once a month in both prisons which is massive progress! Thanks to the members who have volunteered to do this service resulting in a steady progress from no meetings at all in prisons to where we are now. . The goal is to have ten members on the rota with a meeting weekly.

Furthermore we intend to expand our service delivery in the criminal justice system and will be exploring new opportunities in the year ahead.

We are still looking for volunteers for this service. For prison service members will however require, two years sobriety minimum and have a sponsor. Please pass this on to your groups and send me the name and number of any members interested in this service by emailing me at [criminaljustice.southdown@aamail.org](mailto:criminaljustice.southdown@aamail.org)

Yours in Fellowship  
Angie

# interlink spotlight



## **“HELP AVAILABLE” PASSING THE MESSAGE**

The SOUTH EAST REGION held its introductory “Help Available” meeting on June 9th, which was attended by H and Lorraine.

The PROJECT is designed for Intergroups within the SE Region to address the need and assist in passing the message within our local communities.

TWO BANNERS will be given to each participating Intergroup, who will each in turn have their own representative. Lorraine is our Southdown Representative. Those present at the introductory meeting viewed and discussed the original designs, and suggestions were made. The new banners now include more of our primary purpose. Each Intergroup will be able to display their banners at exhibitions and presentations of their choice. They may wish to supplement the two banners with their own (at their own cost), to incorporate their local contacts.

The DARKNESS INTO LIGHT WEBSITE is being retained for 2025 and updated to incorporate local Intergroup contacts and events.

MEETINGS are planned to be held quarterly on Zoom. The next date being September 1st , at which Intergroup representatives will report their Intergroup activities, share experiences, ask advice and plan for the future.

INTERGROUPS ARE CURRENTLY JOINING the project with banner availability expected to be September 2024.

