



PI Service News

*"Easy does it.....
but do it!"*

Shared Service Experience



Sept 2021

Hello,

This is your Public Information Service Newsletter containing news and updates to keep you in touch with your fellow PI Officers and help you in your service.

Feel free to pass on this newsletter to GSRs, your friends in the Fellowship, either by forwarding via email or by printing copies to take to your local meetings. Anyone can join the PISN mailing list by emailing aainformation@qsoqb.org.uk.

INTERGROUP Secretaries – please pass on this PISN newsletter to your GSR's (Group Service Representatives)

We are always looking for articles for this newsletter- please let us know about any PI activity or updates from your area. We welcome information from throughout Great Britain and Continental European Region. Contact aainformation@qsoqb.org.uk

Yours in Fellowship

Steve. **Steve Hexter, Administrator, General Service Office**

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Alcohol Awareness Week 2021: 'Alcohol and Relationships'. 15 to 21 November 2021 (Alcohol Change) & AA Awareness Month November

Alcohol Awareness Week and AA Awareness Month is a great opportunity for all Public Information Officers to carry the message to the suffering alcoholic and raise awareness of AA.

This is the main time in the year that media attention focuses on alcoholism and AA. The Alcohol Change Alcohol Awareness week theme for 2021 is "Alcohol and Relationships". You can share a recovery story on the blogs.

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/alcohol-awareness-week-1>

Regions and Intergroups are encouraged to organize their own initiatives.

Remember to let us know what you have planned so we can share the information with fellow PI Officers across Great Britain. Email pi5.sc@aamail.org

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75th Celebrations – Video

The PI & Comms Committee trustees are arranging filming for a video which will celebrate recovery stories from a wide range of AA members. Thanks to all who volunteered to participate. This video will be available next year as a PI resource.

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Public Health England

Your local PHE drug and alcohol manager can help put you in touch with local alcohol services and are great advocates of AA if you are holding an event for Professionals and looking for professional speakers.

Update from Jason Mahoney, Health and wellbeing programme lead, Public Health England South East

“The work we do to prevent alcohol related harm has continued throughout the COVID response, although clearly affected by it. There has been new investment in services for people who are homeless and drinking alcohol harmfully, hospital-based services and inpatient detox services. There is evidence that during the time of the pandemic there has been an increase in drinking and alcohol harm, particularly among people whose alcohol use was already harmful. There is much more to do.”

Public Health England will be reorganised into several different organisations from 1 October. The ‘health improvement’ part that is focused on preventing alcohol related harm will be led by a new ‘Office for Health Promotion’ in the Department of Health and Social Care. Everyone who is already involved in this work in Public Health England is expected to simply move across to the new organisation and we will continue to focus on the programmes we are delivering.”

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Public Information updates from around Great Britain & CER

Family Drug and Alcohol Courts (FDAC)

Caroline G from Birmingham met with Solihull FDAC.

- We did an online presentation for them a few months ago, and recently Nav (Birmingham Community Liaison Officer) attended their online Formal Opening event. Last week, we got the chance to visit their offices. I had a fab hour with the team during lunchtime.

For info

Around the UK there are currently 14 specialist FDAC teams, working in 21 courts and serving families in 34 local authorities. <https://fdac.org.uk/current-fdacs/> See Info from the Web site:

- Birmingham & Solihull
- Black Country - Walsall, Sandwell, and Dudley
- Coventry
- East Sussex
- Gloucestershire
- Kent
- Leeds
- London
- Milton Keynes & Buckinghamshire
- Northeast Gateshead, Newcastle and North Tyneside.
- Pan Bedfordshire
- Somerset
- Southampton
- Stockport

London FDAC, the first UK FDAC, started in 2008 as a three-year pilot. In January 2018, London FDAC expanded to provide a Pan-London service working across three London Family Courts: Central, Croydon and West London. In January 2021, service expanded to include 13 local authorities.

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Birmingham July 2021

Banners – still in good use at stations, a hospital stand at City Hospital. Plus a request for two or 3 banners from the University of Birmingham (UoB). And at a local gym

Collegiate Recovery Programme at UoB (University of Birmingham) The Manager UoB has been in touch. The Collegiate Recovery Program promotes and advances students' personal, academic and professional achievement in pursuit of long-term recovery from addictions and co-occurring mental health disorders, health and wellbeing, and productive engagement in society. He would like AA to have a stand at the Freshers Week beginning Sept 20th. He would also like a couple of banners to display – one at least in the Refectory area and another in a seating area. Once the programme is set up, Luke is hoping to have different 'recovery' speakers in each month and would hope that AA could assist.

Fire Service

- Caroline has been building connections with the Fire Services. Caroline is now in touch with Hereford and Worcester Fire Service (HWFS). This has led to networking with PI for Welsh Borders, Ruth, as some Hereford meetings come under the Welsh Borders Intergroup. Three PI Officers and Andy had a successful online meeting with Bob from HWFS. Bob asked for a couple of paragraphs about AA and contact details for the inhouse newsletter which has been done. Andy is to speak to officers from the 'Critical Incident Stress-reducing Team' and at a future National Interservice Officers meeting. This includes the other Blue Light Services. Ruth had a lead to meet up with officers at Ledbury FS.

On 7th July Charli, PI officer for Coventry and Warwickshire did a 'live' presentation at Henley Fire Station. There were 6 officers and staff in attendance. They were made very welcome. After the presentation there was an open discussion and Q&As - and there was even a lunch provided.

Change Grow Live (CGL)

-168 Groups – Caroline and others continue to be invited to join these groups to talk about AA.

Midland Alcohol Forum

- Nav and Caroline are meeting with Sarah Burwood at Public Health England and plan to take part in an all-day event on November 16th during National Alcohol Awareness Week and AA's Alcohol Awareness Month. The theme this year is Alcohol and Relationships. Nav and Caroline have been providing an AA presence at the regular Midlands Alcohol Forum webinar events when possible.

AA IG Community Liaison Officer

Birmingham Intergroup voted to have a Community Liaison Officer role and voted Nav into the role, Nav has written up details about the role. He outlined that as the stories in the back of the Big Book have changed to reflect the changing world, this is also the case in meetings. Nav is looking at better ways of engaging with communities through simple things such as finding a neutral venue, on no specific religious grounds, which has had a big impact. Nav will produce a report in September of key areas to focus on.

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Cornwall – July 2021

PILO report: John W Schools – We have carried out some in-person presentations at Saltash Community College that were every well received and we are already planning for another session of presentations in the new school year.

Health – We are planning some in-person presentations at Treliske knowledge spa

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London West End July 2021

Young Persons Liaison Officer ▪ They are still in talks with a BBC radio show called Life Hacks to record a programme focussed on sober young people

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Liverpool April 2021

Health and Public Information-I'm in contact with Bootle Strand about putting posters in public loos.

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WEIG PI Service Report

Pride London 2021 London North and South are collaborating to be part of Pride London on 11 September 2021. We have applied to be part of the parade under the theme of 'Sober Pride' and are talking to the organisers about having a recovery tent in the festival area.

London Ambulance Service - Cait and Stephen from London Region South are working with the London Ambulance Service to support better health and wellbeing for LAS service users and staff. AA will provide information to increase awareness of the issue of alcoholism and the ways to signpost alcoholics towards help.

There are 5 areas of collaboration are: 1. Managers- increase awareness with LAS managers

2. Vulnerable and frequent LAS service users including the homeless community

3. LAS staff/Union

4. Workshops: AA to provide presentations/workshops between 10 and 60 minutes to share information about AA and demonstrate how the fellowship works.

5. Information: AA to provide literature, posters and resources to LAS and potentially be included in their weekly bulletin and/or Wellbeing Hub intranet site.

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SE Region "Darkness into Light" exhibition, Ellie SE Region PILO

- **This is a touring exhibition, starting in Portsmouth Sept 2021, and touring a different venue every month in the SE Region during 2022.**

The public facing website is <https://aadarknessintolight.org.uk/>

This gives information about the exhibition including the dates and venues (where known) for next year.

These are the banners that will form part of the exhibition



Welcome to Alcoholics Anonymous

Darkness Into Light

This exhibition tells the story of Alcoholics Anonymous.

It will take you from before AA's beginnings, through strange twists of fate and circumstance to today, and the AA that is serving your local community right now.

We hope you enjoy what we AA members have put together. If you leave just a little bit in awe of how AA began, how far it reaches today and with an understanding of how we help people struggling with a drink problem; where families and friends can find support, how we work with healthcare, employers, schools and much more - we'll be happy with that.

We hope that when you have finished wandering through, you too will be pleased you stopped for a moment.

aadarknessintolight.org.uk
National Helpline 0800 917 7650

Who this is called... Darkness Into Light

"Some day we hope that Alcoholics Anonymous will help the public to a better realisation of the gravity of the alcoholic problem, but we shall be of little use if our attitude is one of bitterness or hostility. Drinkers will not stand for it"

Bill W. 1939

Alcoholics Anonymous was founded in the USA in 1935 by two men, William Griffith Wilson (Bill W) and Robert Holbrook Smith (Dr Bob). Until their meeting, both had been chronic alcoholics whose families held little hope for permanent sobriety. Whilst in his third treatment for alcoholism, Bill W, a New Yorker, had become convinced of a recovery method.



Dr Bob's house in Akron, Ohio, now a museum.



Yet when he was six months off the booze, and away on business, he became desperate for a drink at the Mayflower Hotel in Akron, Ohio. Calling a chance phone number in the local directory, he soon found himself in the home of Dr Bob, a well-known local drunk. Rather than having a drink, Bill W was attempting to help someone else get sober.

A week later, on 10th June 1935, Dr Bob too was sober, and whilst what would become Alcoholics Anonymous was yet to be imagined, the seed of recovery from a fatal condition had just been sown.



AA World Convention, Atlanta 2015

The title of this exhibition reflects what we feel happened to us as individuals - we have moved from Darkness into Light. Our families, friends and colleagues hold their own testimony to each individual recovery creating a positive ripple - an effect now felt across the globe.

Excerpt from "Alcoholics Anonymous"

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Myth Busting Darkness Into Light

Don't believe everything you think!

Whilst it's true that drinking too much can cause physical addiction to alcohol, drinking too much is one of the symptoms of alcoholism rather than the cause. AA sees alcoholism as an abnormal physiological reaction to alcohol which results in the body craving more, coupled with a mental health issue which keeps the alcoholic returning to drink even when the evidence suggests they should quit.

Myth: Alcoholism is caused by drinking too much



Myth: AA is a cult

We don't actually hit the criteria for a cult as we are not a religious organisation, we have no leaders, and are funded solely by voluntary contributions from our members (with strict limits on the amount any one member can donate). Individuals usually contribute a few pounds to the meetings they attend to cover the hire of a venue and cost of tea and coffee. Money left over is used by AA to produce our literature and cover the expenses of such things as talks to schools, the medical profession, the armed services and other organisations we reach out to.

Myth: You have to believe in God...

The word God appears in our 12-step programme, however the full wording is "God as you understand Him". It applies to Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Jews... any religion, or none at all. AA merely suggests that the alcoholic seeks some Power greater than themselves to help overcome their desperate urge to drink. Our members reflect the diverse beliefs of any cross section of society. Our programme is spiritual in nature, not religious.

Myth: AA is for the homeless.

Well, yes, it is. It's also for lawyers, doctors, engineers, nurses, teachers, stay at home parents, chefs, truck drivers, scientists, cleaners and rock stars - to name a few. One thing we know is that the condition of alcoholism is indiscriminate. Some alcoholics have a family history of alcoholism, others have none - but if you are an alcoholic it does become apparent, and often family, friends and work colleagues realise the problem before the alcoholic themselves. As members of AA, we can assure you we didn't choose our path, or the harm our drinking caused to ourselves and those around us. It felt much more the path of no choice.

Myth: Alcoholism is a choice.

An alcoholic who can't stop drinking is not your fault. You didn't create it; you can't cause it; and you can't control it. The support groups for family, friends and children of alcoholics are Al-Anon and Al-Ateen. Both can be found at www.al-anonuk.org.uk

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Problems with Alcohol... Darkness Into Light

"How dark it is before the dawn"
Alcoholics Anonymous 99



England, 1751
Hogarth's infamous "Beer Street and Gin Lane" depicts rising alcohol consumption as the cause of social problems.

USA, 1794
Benjamin Rush, part of the American Enlightenment and instrumental in America's independence, records observations of a growing phenomenon he calls "an uncontrollable, overwhelming and irresistible desire to consume alcohol"

Scotland, 1804
Thomas Trotter, a retired Scottish naval doctor, published his "Essay on Drunkenness". This was the first ever scientific consideration of the phenomenon of alcohol dependence and its treatment.

England, 1813
Staffordshire doctor William Suttton identified and defined "delirium tremens" (the shakes) to describe his observations of growing alcohol consumption and withdrawal problems.

USA, 1840s
Abstinence movements grow as alcohol continues to be seen as the cause of a problem. The largest and most powerful was the Washington Society, with over 600,000 members and heavily involved in politics and the abolition of slavery alongside "not drinking". After trying too hard to focus on too much they had disappeared again after only a few years!

Sweden, 1849
Magnus Huss coined the term "alkoholism" - from the Latin expression "Alcoholismus Chronicus" to describe repetitive and uncontrolled drinking.

Russia, 1897
At the 13th International Medical Congress in Moscow in 1897, Sergei Korsakoff presented his research into patients with chronic alcoholism. On a special form of mental illness combined with degenerative polyneuritis. After that Korsakoff's syndrome is used to describe alcoholic "wet brain" where lack of vitamin B1 causes the brain to change physiologically with dire consequences.

USA 1920-1933: Prohibition
A nationwide ban on the production, importation, transportation, and sale of alcoholic beverages - made only a small impact on consumption, and the rise of organised crime and loss of tax revenue led to its abandonment.

Whilst the understanding of alcoholism was growing rapidly, treatment involved institutionalisation, electric shock therapy and laboratories.

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Treating Alcoholism Darkness Into Light

These men more will have a remedy for thousands of such ailments
Alcoholics Anonymous, "The Doctor's Opinion" p 88-91

In 1930s America... Dr William Silkworth is chief physician at Towns Hospital in New York, part of a new wave of hospitals springing up in the USA to treat alcoholism. He develops a belief that alcoholism is not a moral failing or a matter of will power, but an illness. He describes this as an allergy - an abnormal reaction - to alcohol, which sets off an uncontrollable physiological craving once the first drink is taken.

In 1934 Bill W is committed to Towns Hospital for the third time. Dr Silkworth explains his theory to Bill, who leaves the hospital convinced that, now he understands his alcoholism, he can stop drinking for good; but within weeks he is drunk again.

Meanwhile in Europe... the psychiatrist Carl Jung has been treating a chronic alcoholic, Roland Hazard in the late 1920s but each time Hazard returns to the USA he is soon drunk again. He returns to Switzerland one final time where Jung says that he can do no more, and his only hope is to have "a vital spiritual experience" or psychic change. Jung has heard of alcoholics occasionally having such experiences but has exhausted his methods for Hazard and lets him go.

And then... in New York, 1933: Roland Hazard does get sober as a result of joining the Oxford Group - an evangelical movement practising first century Christianity (it later became called Moral Re-Armament). Hazard subsequently rescues one Ebby Thatcher from a drink related jail sentence, and takes him to the Oxford Group where he also gets sober. Ebby Thatcher visits an old friend - none other than Bill W - and relates his experience. Bill is impressed, but still drinking is soon in Towns Hospital again.

Here Ebby visits him and explains more about the program of action he should follow. The next day Bill has a thunderbolt experience - Dr Silkworth had told him what the alcoholic problem is, and now he knows what the solution is... and he has a vision of carrying that message to sober up other alcoholics.

1935, Akron, Ohio: Bill W visits Akron and meets Doctor Bob, who sobers up on June 10th and AA is born.

Both men immediately set to work with alcoholics at Akron's City Hospital, where one patient quickly achieved complete sobriety. Though the name Alcoholics Anonymous had not yet been coined, these three men actually made up the nucleus of the first AA group. By the end of 1939 there were two more groups - New York and Cleveland - and about 100 sober men and women.

In 1939 the Fellowship published its basic textbook, Alcoholics Anonymous. Mainly written by Bill, it explained AA's philosophy and methods, the core of which was the now well-known, Twelve Steps of recovery. The book was also reinforced by case histories of some thirty recovered members. From this point, AA's development was rapid.



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Global AA Darkness Into Light

Wherever you go in the World, A.A. will be there.



Today an AA presence can be found in approximately 180 nations worldwide, with membership estimated at over two million. There are more than 118,000 AA groups around the world.

AA literature is translated into more than 100 languages and the Big Book has been translated into 70 languages, with more translations currently in progress.

In 1951 the American Public Health Association presented the Lasker Award to Alcoholics Anonymous, "in recognition of its unique and highly successful approach" to an "age old public health problem, alcoholism". This prestigious award is often compared to the Nobel Prize.

2020 saw the world being brought to a standstill with lockdowns and restrictions in the Covid 19 pandemic. For AA it meant going online... and Zoom became the new meeting room. Early figures suggest AA has welcomed more new members in 2020 and 2021 than in previous years, and online meetings now run 24/7.

Also in 2020, the 40 millionth copy of AA's basic text, Alcoholics Anonymous (the Big Book), was presented to the USA's National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Seen this hanging in a public place or on a ship? It is the not-so-secret sign for an AA meeting.



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Each local IG can do their own local info banner.

(copies of these banner images will also be stored in the PI Resource Library in Google Drive folder)

Resource Library for PI Liaison information - On Google Drive

Louise F of the PI & Comms Sub Committee pi5.sc@aamail.org has over the last couple of years, compiled a collection of info sheets regarding PI initiatives that have been done around the fellowship, as a PI Resource library for all to benefit from.

If you haven't seen it, try this link to the Files stored in Google Drive,

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CQhHlBPqqtLFIE4zALE_irWc2WB2EOI?usp=sharing

Public Information and Communications Sub Committee

The Public Information Sub Committee and GSB Trustee Communications Sub Committee recently merged to create one PI & Comms Sub Committee. This committee continues to report to the GSB. This is a great time to get involved in public information and communications for the fellowship. For more information about joining the PI & Comms Sub Committee, email Tom Fox on Trustee.nat5@gsogb.org.uk

VACANCIES on the Public Information and Communications (PI&CSC) Sub Committee of the General Service Board.

Our primary functions are to:

- Support the GSB by implementing PI initiatives as directed by the GSB resulting from AA GB Conference.

- Carry the message of the fellowship & increase awareness of the AA programme among the general public and professionals.
- Establish and maintain good relations with professionals, professional bodies and the media at a national level.
- Create a consistent and clear message that differentiates Alcoholics Anonymous from other bodies or organisations.
- Provide support to Regional and Intergroup PI Liaison Officers, via resources, information and advice. Organise periodic seminars for Regional & Intergroup liaison officers and support the sharing of good PI practice & communicate this effectively.

Basic Role requirements are:

- Sub Committee members serve for a period of four years
- A minimum of five years' continuous sobriety at the time of applying
- A working knowledge of the AA GB service structure and AA Traditions & Concepts
- Willing to work within the PI&CSC Terms of Reference and as part of a team which is directly responsible to the General Service Board of AA.
- Prepared to attend up to 4 meetings a year in York or in GB.
- Good organisational and communication skills. Relevant IT skills.
- A personal service history at Intergroup or Region in this discipline or other relevant AA Service experience

Desirable requirements:

- The ability to produce written and verbal reports.
- Experience of preparation and delivery of workshops and presentations.
- Some experience in PR, marketing, social media, journalism & communications.

The Committee particularly invites applications from members with digital marketing experience.

If you have questions about the specific responsibilities of service on the Public Information & Communications Sub Committee, please email Tom Fox, GSB (NAT) Trustee and Chair of the committee Trustee.nat5@qsogb.org.uk

Application Forms are available from GSO or the AA GB website in the Document Library <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Document-Library#> under "Forms".

The next opportunity is to apply by August 15, 2021, to be interviewed and considered at the Sept 2021 GSB meeting.

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www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

AA General Service Office 01904 644026 (0900 – 1700hrs, Mon-Fri)

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain) Limited

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Registered in England, Wales and Scotland / Limited by Guarantee

Company Registration: 587316 / Registered Charity Nos: 226745: SCO38023