

Conference 2024

Proposed text for external leaflet for Probation and Criminal Justice Services professionals.

The text only is set out.

If approved by Conference, the text will be formatted into a leaflet which follows the new AA 'Family Guidelines', with input from the Probation and Criminal Justice Services Sub Committee.

The text for the proposed leaflet is as follows:

Alcoholics Anonymous as a Resource for Criminal Justice Professionals

Our Aim

This pamphlet provides information about Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) as a resource that criminal justice professionals can utilise in helping people with alcohol problems.

What is AA?

Our primary purpose is for our members to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. Alcoholics Anonymous is self-supporting and does not have any ties with any other organisation.

Members are encouraged to follow AA's 12-step recovery programme. There is no waiting time to access AA.

How AA views Alcoholism

AA members view alcoholism as a progressive illness of emotional (or mental) and physical components. Once we start drinking, we find we have little control over the amount we take, and when we honestly want to, we find quitting entirely almost impossible by ourselves.

Through their own experience AA members have found that they can never safely use alcohol in any form at all; 'once an alcoholic always an alcoholic.' If a member applies AA principles in their lives, one day at a time, they find that they can recover and lead fulfilling, useful happy lives without needing to drink.

Alcoholism & Crime

AA co-operates with criminal justice services (CJS) to carry the message that we offer a solution to alcoholism.

Alcohol abuse is a major factor in crime, prosecutions, and court cases. Typically, the individuals involved have long histories of re-offending. For many people, engagement with AA has broken the cycle of re-offending.

AA welcomes contact with probation, police, court, and associated services; our Fellowship is keen to provide information and help where possible. We publish and provide literature for such professionals and their clients. We can contribute to staff training, for example, by offering presentations to those in contact with offenders.

Our 24hr Helpline 'contact card' is widely available. Experienced members are available to arrange to meet a caller and take them to a local AA meeting.

AA is developing a 'Confirmation of Attendance' ('chit') system, which provides evidence of attendance at many of our meetings upon a member's request. Chits may be required by outside agencies such as police, courts, probation, social services, or an employer e.g., where an Alcohol Treatment Requirement or similar directive may be in place. This allows participants to 'self-report.'

The direction and quality of offenders' lives have been transformed through regular AA participation. Our members share their stories of such transformations. This inspires current offenders and professionals alike.

Examples of AA Co-operation

AA members can:

- Develop cooperation with local criminal justice agencies (probation offices, police forces, courts etc).
- Provide literature, posters, and meeting lists to inform both professionals and their clients about AA.
- Give talks to staff as part of formal team meetings: some agencies have nominated a professional to act as their contact point (liaison) with AA members.
- Organise demonstration AA meetings in the workplace for professionals where they can then ask questions and discuss what they have heard.
- Share personal experience of prisons and probation by telling their stories of recovery in AA to professionals.
- Conduct informative presentations to staff and officers both in person and via online conferencing.
- Make presentations at parliamentary and ministry levels, and share experience that may assist policymaking.

Where links between an individual's offending, and/or reoffending and drinking have been identified, case officers can ensure that these people are made aware that AA exists and that we might be able to help them. This starts the offender's recovery journey. Some do not engage with our solution immediately, but many eventually return after that first contact.

AA sees continuity of recovery as crucial, particularly when prisoners are released. Prisoners who have found their way to AA via prison meetings will also find guidance and support available from AA on their release.

AA meetings

There are two main types of Alcoholics Anonymous meetings:

- **The Closed Meeting:** Is intended for alcoholics and for those with an alcohol problem who have a desire to stop drinking.
- **The Open Meeting:** Is intended for alcoholics and non-alcoholics e.g., family, friends and anyone interested in AA and alcoholism.

Professionals are welcome at open meetings of AA. Many have reported that going to AA open meetings is the best possible way to get a feel for the form and dynamics of AA. We suggest trying several; no two are exactly alike. Open meetings can provide a vivid demonstration of the fact that many alcoholics can recover. This experience may prove very helpful for professionals, even more so to the alcoholics with whom they are engaging with.

Having a newcomer attend their first AA meeting with an existing member is desirable, although not essential. Established members can share experience as former problem drinkers; this enables newcomers to get the identification they need to start on their journey of recovery.

AA is not a religious organisation

AA is not allied with any religious group, nor does it tell its members what to believe. The 12 Steps of recovery suggest belief in a 'Higher Power', but the form that this Higher Power takes is entirely up to the individual member.

AA membership includes people with beliefs, and also atheists and agnostics.

AA availability

- There are 'in person' AA meetings every day and night of the week throughout the UK
- There are online meetings 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- AA also offers an online response and chat now service 24 hours a day, seven days a week

Information about these and the services AA offers for professionals can be obtained by telephoning the General Service Office in York 01904 644026, the Northern Service Office in Glasgow 0141 226 2214, or the Southern Service Office in London 020 7407 0700.

Contact Details

Telephone
Email

National Helpline 24hrs: 0800 917 7650
help@aamail.org

Webchat	https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/About-AA/Newcomers/Get-help-now Chat Now facility on home page
Website	www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk Information on Alcoholics Anonymous and Alcoholism
Link to find local provision on website	www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Regional-&-Local-Websites Find a meeting facility on the home page

The AA mailing address is:
AA General Service Office
PO Box 1
10 Toft Green
York YO1 7NJ

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