

July 2025



# Public Information Newsletter

Shared Service Experience



## Second Edition: Reaching Out & Carrying the Message – Together

Welcome to the second edition of the AA Public Information Newsletter — a snapshot of the energy, dedication, and creativity flowing through our Fellowship as we carry the message to the still-suffering alcoholic and the general public throughout Great Britain and Continental Europe.

In this issue, we follow Bournemouth PI's inspiring service journey, celebrate 65 years of AA at HMP Barlinnie, and highlight powerful outreach efforts — from university campuses in Northampton to scenic country parks and the highlands of Inverness. We also welcome two new non-alcoholic trustees to the PI & EComms Sub Committee, and share exciting updates, opportunities, and invitations to upcoming liaison meetings.

We welcome contributions from all members active in PI - please send in your information (including images) to [aainformation@gsogb.org.uk](mailto:aainformation@gsogb.org.uk) for publication. We will endeavour to publish submitted articles in the next quarterly edition, but this may not always be possible.

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# Intergroup PI Initiatives

## Bournemouth PI: A Service Journey in AA

My AA journey began less than two years ago, and while I initially struggled to find my place, I discovered a passion for Public Information (PI) work. Inspired by the Bournemouth Intergroup PILO, I became involved in a revitalized local PI Committee, focusing on carrying the message of AA to the community while upholding the tradition of anonymity.

Our committee has spearheaded several innovative outreach initiatives, including:

**Educational School Talks:** We conducted mock AA meetings in local schools, allowing students to observe and engage with members, fostering understanding and dispelling misconceptions.

**University Outreach:** We participated in Freshers' Day at Bournemouth University, distributing materials and making personal connections. This led to one student attending their first AA meeting.

**High-Visibility Public Presence:** Using a newly acquired AA-branded gazebo we set up a presence in several different locations such as the Bournemouth Airshow (with over 500,000 attendees), the Bournemouth Train Station and a local Asda Superstore. The gazebo's prominent logo, helpline number, and QR code proved highly effective in reaching a wider audience. Many people were seen taking photos with their phones at a distance, without necessarily coming up to us in person, especially if they are with family and friends. The message is now on their devices!

**Community Engagement:** We have participated in summer events and music festivals, and placed posters in local businesses, including post offices, laundromats, barbershops, and homeless shelters. We also placed banners in five local doctors' surgeries.



## Impact and Results:

These efforts have yielded significant results:

- Increased awareness of AA within the community.
- Successful 12-stepping of two individuals into the fellowship through outreach at the local Asda
- Engagement of younger AA members in service work.
- Strengthened fellowship through collaborative PI activities.

**Maintaining Anonymity and Adherence to Traditions:** Throughout our outreach, we have emphasised upholding AA's traditions and maintaining member anonymity. Experienced members mentor newer members, ensuring adherence to guidelines and providing support.

**Personal Reflection:** My experience in AA's PI work has been incredibly rewarding. It has allowed me to combine my desire for service with a fun and engaging way to share the message of recovery. The guidance of experienced members ensures we remain aligned with AA's principles. I encourage anyone considering PI work to give it a try; it might surprise you how fulfilling it can be. - Theo O (Bournemouth PI)

## Northamptonshire Intergroup represent at The National Students Drug and Alcohol Conference - Northampton University

On the 1st April, Tom McD and a team of PI volunteers from Northampton Intergroup set up a stall with literature and contact posters at The National Students Drug and Alcohol Conference. The Conference was held at Northampton University with a central theme of 'Harm Reduction'

The PI Team engaged with approximately 15-20 representatives from universities across the UK and drug/alcohol counselling services.

Many representatives were familiar with AA although the concept of alcoholism as an allergy was a real "attention grabber". The idea that the first drink causes the damage proved to be a particularly effective point of engagement.

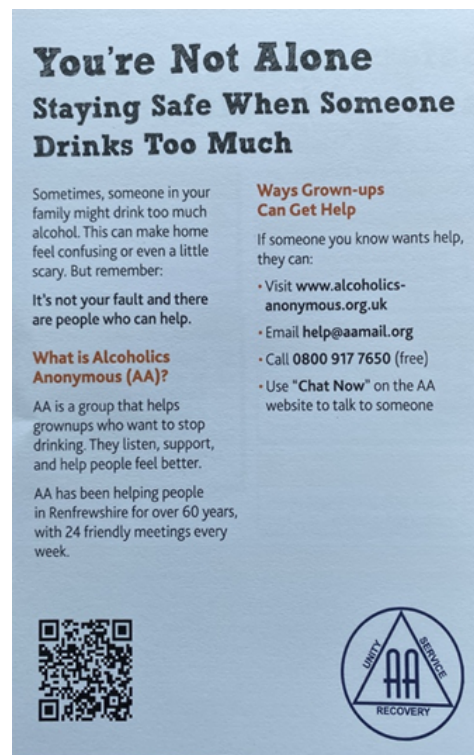
Several representatives expressed appreciation for Northamptonshire Intergroup's presence, highlighting that harm reduction strategies are not universally effective and total abstinence is an additional successful strategy.

Participation at the Conference provided a valuable opportunity to raise awareness of AA among professionals working with students struggling with drug and alcohol issues. The Northamptonshire PILO is hopeful that this initial contact will lead to future participation at similar conferences and maintain the focus on AA's core message while remaining neutral on external issues.

## Carrying the Message to the Next Generation

In April, the Chief Executive's Office of Renfrewshire Council invited Paisley & District Intergroup to take part in this year's Safe Kids Event. The long-running initiative is aimed at raising awareness among schoolchildren about the risks in their community and the importance of making positive choices. Proudly funded and organised by Renfrewshire Council, the event brings together local partners including Police Scotland, NHS 24, Fire & Rescue Services, and the British Transport Police. The 2025 event took place over nine days in May at St Mirren FC Stadium, welcoming over 1,800 Primary 6 pupils (aged 10–11) from 52 schools across Renfrewshire. It was a brilliant opportunity for young people to learn from a range of community organisations and for the Paisley & District Intergroup, it was a chance to bring the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to a truly new audience.

To ensure their presentation was consistent and impactful, Paisley & District Intergroup created a five-minute video specifically for the event. Filmed on a shoestring budget in just an hour at a local Scout Hall in Paisley, the video focused on challenging misconceptions about alcoholism—asking important questions about who can be affected and what it really means to live with the illness. Throughout the event, small groups of students watched the video and shared their thoughts. The response? Honest, thoughtful, and deeply moving. These young voices asked questions that cut straight to the heart of the issue and reminded everyone there of the value of open, age-appropriate conversations about addiction.



*The booklet produced by Renfrewshire Council, featuring Alcoholics Anonymous as well as other invited partners.*

Each child took home a Council-produced handbook featuring contributions from every partner, including Alcoholics Anonymous. In doing so, the message of recovery in AA reached far beyond the stadium's walls, entering 1,800 households across Renfrewshire with a clarity and speed Paisley & District Intergroup could scarcely have imagined.

Those attending from the Intergroup hope that this initiative has planted seeds of understanding—and perhaps compassion—in young minds and families alike. Colin A (Intergroup Secretary) says “What we as an Intergroup can be certain of, is that this whole initiative has strengthened and enhanced the sobriety of each and everyone of us, and for that, we are all extremely grateful to have been of Service.”

## The Sky's the Limit for Inverness and District Intergroup

Inverness and District Intergroup has been highly proactive in recent months, launching a series of impactful Public Information (PI) initiatives. These efforts have contributed to a noticeable increase in local membership. Their outreach activities showcase diverse methods of sharing The Alcoholics Anonymous message with those struggling with alcoholism, supported by various venues and organisations.



With permission from Highland Council, AA posters have been installed in 10 bus shelters along some of the city's busiest routes.



Highlands & Islands Airports Ltd has agreed to feature the AA message on digital billboards at Inverness, Sumburgh, and Stornoway airports.



Highland Council Traffic & Parking agreed to display an AA banner on the exterior of one of their multi-story car parks.



After securing approval from the relevant authorities, the members have made significant strides in their awareness campaign across the City of Inverness and the surrounding areas.



A large AA banner is on display at the Longman Road Roundabout on the A9 in Inverness. The banner features a phrase used in the national Alcoholics Anonymous Anonymous Ad Campaign and was created by Inverness and Islands Intergroup. Fastened to the palisade fencing at the rear of Highland Industrial Supplies, the banner is in full view of traffic at this busy junction.

The Public Information Liaison Officer attended the Belladrum Tartan Heart Music Festival with his family this year. After gaining permission from the event organizers, a large AA pavement sign with 2 posters was displayed in a prominent location with a passing footfall of over 1000 people per day. The display remained in place for the duration of the Festival.



Stagecoach Highland is now showcasing AA posters across its fleet of 60 buses and has also allowed a banner to be displayed at its central depot.



Scotrail agreed to display AA banners at some of their train stations in the North of Scotland.

A fantastic achievement from Inverness and District Intergroup and their PI initiatives, highlighting a variety of ways AA can attract the still suffering alcoholic.

## Mid Surrey Intergroup - Carrying the Message of Recovery in Multiple Ways

At their March 2025 Assembly meeting, the Mid Surrey Intergroup (MSIG) agreed to a three pronged campaign of PI activity to support Alcohol Awareness week 2025. The proposed PI projects included:

### In Person Event

A PI networking meeting was held in Guildford Guildhall in April. Opened by the Mayor of Guildford the event was attended by professionals from the Royal Surrey Hospital alcohol liaison team and the Priory hospital. The charity sector was represented by The Samaritans and various housing and addiction charities and, for the first time at a PI event, there was representation from industry with staff in attendance from Kinly Ltd (audio visual/communications specialists) and Unilever (consumer goods).

MSIG were particularly pleased to see that The Samaritans published a full-page article on AA in the local Guildford area Samaritans newsletter.

### Ad Campaign using Local News Channels

An in-print ad campaign with a local newspaper has been scheduled to coincide with an online article. The Surrey Advertiser will print a half-page ad in the weekly newspaper for 4 weeks.

The article will run in the SurreyLive online news portal ([www.getsurrey.co.uk](http://www.getsurrey.co.uk)) with a condensed version running for 4 weeks in a social media campaign on Facebook. The article describes the physical and social harm caused by alcoholism and provides information on the help and support AA in Surrey can provide.



The emphasis is on people emerging from destroyed lives and accessing a sober way of living with the benefits of improved health, social life, family bonds and success at work. A key aspect of the online campaign is that Surrey Advertiser will supply metrics

of traffic and engagement with the article. Both the in-print and online campaigns began on Friday, 27th June and run throughout Alcohol Awareness week to the end of July.

## Contact Coins

The third initiative to carry the message of recovery is the purchase of 4,000 AA 'contact coins'. About the size of a 2p coin, with a QR code link to the AA Meeting finder, they are a great way of connecting to AA GB. These convenient discs were particularly popular at the face-to-face PI event in April with many handed out and picked up by the attendees. They have proven to be perfect for people to pass on to those in need. A portable contact token for that moment when a decision is made to reach out to AA for help.



## Country Park Noticeboards get an AA Lift

Alison J, is a member of the Fellowship in the Wirral and lives near to Rivacre Valley Country Park, a well-loved, local nature reserve and park located near Ellesmere Port.



On a regular visit to the park, it occurred to Alison that the noticeboards in the park were a bit bare and didn't contain much information. Quick off the mark, Alison spotted an opportunity to do service for the local community and the Fellowship.

Taking the initiative, Alison joined the Friends of Rivacre Valley as a volunteer and was soon cleaning and tidying up the noticeboards. Combining service for the public with her creative skills, she designed some new information posters for park activities, making them eye-catching and attractive to the public. At the same time, and with permission from the Park Ranger, an Alcoholics Anonymous poster was placed in each and every noticeboard too – a different one in each board. Our message of recovery and contact details are clearly shown in several locations within the park.



Alison says “The country park is very popular indeed so I'm hoping that this will reach whoever may need help. It's nice to be creative in order to get the message out there”.

A local GP saw the posters and remarked "We have a large number of patients in the area with drug and alcohol challenges who need to see this message. It's nice to see these posters in the Country Park where people are relaxed out in nature and perhaps more receptive to the idea of getting help. Every little helps, and whilst I do signpost AA to our patients, sometimes seeing the message in a different location can encourage people to reach out."

We couldn't agree more and what a great way to carry the message!

## 65 Years of Alcoholics Anonymous at HMP Barlinnie

This year marked a double celebration: the 90th birthday of Alcoholics Anonymous and the 65th anniversary of AA meetings within HMP Barlinnie, Scotland's largest prison.

On the 10th June 2025 the Fellowship in Glasgow celebrated 65 years of AA meetings inside HMP Barlinnie, the largest, and possibly the most notorious, prison in Scotland. To those who were brought up in Scotland, Barlinnie was often used as a threat to warn of the consequences of misbehaviour – “if you don't behave, you'll end up in the Big Hoose” (one of the prison's many less than affectionate nicknames).

Despite Barlinnie's formidable reputation, by 1960, a dedicated group of AA members had established a weekly meeting, which continues to this day, now spanning two of the prison's five halls.

A recent joint anniversary event with the Scottish Prison Service showcased the profound impact of AA within the prison walls. The guest list included prison staff, current and former inmates, the Lord Provost of Glasgow, The Deputy Chief Executive of the Scottish Prison Service and several journalists. The General Service Board was represented by two Trustees and the General Secretary.

An open AA Meeting was held in the Prison Chapel and five members shared their experience of AA in prison and the impact it had, and continues to have, on their lives. These powerful personal testimonies highlighted the transformative power of AA, offering hope and recovery even within the challenging environment of prison life. The importance of creating a link to AA for prisoners, which could continue to support them after their release, was very clearly made.

As one current inmate said

*“I’m ten months sober.... I’ve been in prison every year of my adult life.... I always thought I wanted to die, but I didn’t have the balls to do it....but I’m looking forward to life now.... My mum sees me smiling and says she’s got her son back, who she lost all those years ago.”*

The day concluded with a football match, a symbol of unity and camaraderie between former inmates, AA members, and current prisoners. The success of the event is a testament to the dedication of AA members in Glasgow, the vital support of prison staff, and the enduring power of AA's message of experience, strength, and hope. This long-standing partnership highlights a significant achievement in providing support and recovery to individuals within the prison system.

## Non-Alcoholic Trustees join the PI & EComms Sub Committee

The PI & EComms Sub Committee has welcomed two new Non-Alcoholic Trustees (NATs), in addition to Tim B. and Angela S. NATs are integral members of the General Service Board (GSB), contributing valuable professional expertise and diverse perspectives to support the GSB and enhance Fellowship service efforts. Their non-alcoholic status uniquely positions them to effectively convey our recovery message through contemporary media channels while upholding member anonymity.



### Dr Hassan Zaidi, CSci, CEng MIET

Hassan has a background in Technology, Innovation and Artificial Intelligence (AI), recently being one of the AI Science Advisors within UK Gov. He is a visiting researcher at King's College London at St Thomas Hospital, where his research interests include AI-based cardiac modelling and biomarkers. He sits on the Finance committee and the PI & E Comms sub-committees. His outside interests include long walks, playing piano and triathlons. Hassan completed his first marathon at the 2025 London Marathon.

## Graham Duncan

Graham is a 20-year veteran of the charity sector, and brings experience of governance, charity regulation and project management to the AA Board. This builds on his expertise in finance, gained as a banker and management consultant in the UK and abroad. Part of his role as a NAT is to act as one of the visible public faces of AA to the media. Graham is a member of the PI & EComms Sub-committee.



## PI Service

### Vacancy on the PI & Electronic Communications Sub Committee

#### **Can you help carry our message to the still suffering alcoholic?**

The PI and Electronic Communications Sub Committee (PI & EComms SC) invites members of our Fellowship to apply to join us in the exciting work of carrying the message of recovery and making the most of electronic communications to help those who need help, and to keep existing members informed.

The Primary functions of the Sub Committee are to:

- Create a consistent message externally that differentiates AA from other bodies.
- Increase awareness of the AA programme with professionals and professional bodies, members of the media, and journalists at national level
- Offer support and advice to regional PI and ECLO committees and liaison officers
- Provide leadership to the PI and ECLO networks.
- Assists Region and Intergroup ECLOs with Microsite set up and maintenance within the AAGB website.
- Monitor and maintain the AAGB Filestore area, supporting users and ensuring access requests are properly validated.
- Respond to service-related requests and queries submitted to the AAGB Helpdesk
- Monitor the AAGB Website, working with the Web Content Manager in keeping it up to date and relevant
- Identify PI and EComms information in other resources which requires updating
- Contribute to publication of the PI Newsletter

- Communicate effectively with all levels of the Fellowship
- Comply with the Traditions, principles and guidelines of AA

An interest in electronic communications and/or public information, with a desire to do meaningful service in a fascinating area, is more important than anything else in these roles. Although good computer literacy is required, more important to us is an understanding of how people communicate and the desire to help us improve what we do.

As with all Sub Committee vacancies, five years' continuous sobriety and the endorsement of your region or intergroup are required as well as a sound knowledge of the service structure and Traditions of the Fellowship. Working within PI Sub Committee Terms of Reference, you should be flexible in time commitments and be prepared to join us occasionally online as well as attending 3 meetings per year in York, where accommodation is provided and expenses paid.

To submit an application for this vacancy, please obtain an up-to-date application form from either Jenny Pryke at GSO, PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York, YO1 7NJ: 01904 644026, [jenny.pryke@gsogb.org.uk](mailto:jenny.pryke@gsogb.org.uk) or from the Document Library on the AA GB website – [www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

Your application must be endorsed with a covering letter from a currently serving officer of your intergroup or region and sent to Jenny Pryke by the deadline of the 8<sup>th</sup> August 2025.

If you have any questions and would like to talk to a Trustee, please email either:

Tim B - [trustee.southmidlandsregion@gsogb.org.uk](mailto:trustee.southmidlandsregion@gsogb.org.uk)

Angela S – [trustee.northwesteegion@gsogb.org.uk](mailto:trustee.northwesteegion@gsogb.org.uk)

## PI Events

### PI & Ecomms Liaison Meeting

**Friday 1st - Saturday 2nd of August 2025**

All Regional PI Officers and ECLOs are invited to York for a two-day meeting to share experience, strength and hope. Members of the PI & Ecomms Sub-Committee will also be in attendance and online participation is also possible.



## Pass it On

Feel free to forward this newsletter onto Intergroup Officers, GSRs, and anyone interested in Public Information service. Groups are welcome to print it out and place a copy on their literature table.

Note: when forwarding via email please be mindful of members' anonymity and privacy. It is recommended to use the "bcc" function and service position specific email or @aamail addresses.

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[www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

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Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain