



Public Information Newsletter

Shared Service Experience



Spring renewal and fresh opportunities

As spring arrives, this issue highlights the continued dedication of members across the Fellowship in carrying the message to those who still suffer. From local initiatives to outreach events to media engagement, we share inspiring examples of service in action, along with opportunities to get involved. A reminder too that a wide range of PI materials is readily available through our online shop, making it easier than ever to keep up-to-date with literature and resources.

We welcome contributions from all members active in PI - please send in your stories of PI work (including appropriate images) to aainformation@gsogb.org.uk. We will endeavour to publish submitted articles but this may not always be possible. We also reserve the right to edit any submissions for clarity, length, and style.

Contents

Intergroup PI Initiatives.....	2
Somerset in Action.....	2
Milton Keynes PI – Out in the Cold.....	3
Experience Strength and Hope shared at EE Wellbeing Event in Stoke-on-Trent.....	4
Riding the Radio Airwaves: Carrying the Message.....	5
Media request received - should we do this?.....	7
PI Materials available in our Online Shop.....	9
Vacancy on the PI & EComms Sub Committee.....	11
PI Liaison Events.....	12
Annual Combined PI & EComms Liaison Meetings.....	12
Next PI & EComms Liaison Meeting.....	13
Pass it On.....	14

Intergroup PI Initiatives

Somerset in Action

Somerset Intergroup has five Area Teams working with the Intergroup PI Liaison Officer to carry the message to professionals and the general public across the county. The teams have been keeping busy, with multiple events planned for the first quarter of 2026. Communication across a largely rural county is essential, so a WhatsApp group of 30 volunteers from local groups is used to stay in touch and coordinate activities.

NHS agencies are a big part of the PI programme, providing information on how Alcoholics Anonymous can help people suffering from alcohol misuse disorders, alongside other health issues. Several presentations to the Yeovil District Hospital Academy are included in the programme, with each session lasting approximately 40 minutes and aimed mainly at junior doctors and nurses.



Alongside these sessions, the AA presence is maintained each month by two tables set up in the main entrance of the hospital, with literature and a poster display, attended by local Fellowship members to answer queries.

Also in the programme is a series of talks for Somerset Talking Therapies, an NHS mental health service based in Chard that provides support for patients suffering from depression and anxiety. Talks are also planned for several local GP surgeries across the area. Similar talks will be carried out in schools across the county.

The PI Team has been invited to take a tour of the police custody cells in Bridgwater. This has been arranged through liaison with contacts in both the police force and the armed services. Five talks have been held at different Somerset police stations in the past year. The success of these activities has resulted in additional talks being planned for 2026, directly engaging with Police Constables and Police Community Support Officers.



The team is constantly on the lookout for ways to carry the message. With a large military presence in Somerset, expanding contacts with armed service personnel is planned by working with the NHS, which runs regular support sessions with the armed forces throughout the year.

Ongoing contacts lead to new opportunities, and the team has been invited to attend several health fairs, while continuing to develop links with local support charities.

One can see how a team of thirty volunteers is needed to carry the message so widely across just one county.

Milton Keynes PI – Out in the Cold

Milton Keynes Intergroup held an AA PI event on the concourse of Milton Keynes rail station on January 29th — a freezing cold Thursday!

The PI team set up a stand with banners and a literature table, well supported by volunteers from the Intergroup and other group members. The hardy team completed four three-hour shifts in pairs — hardy indeed, as it was extremely cold standing on the concourse in front of large open doors that acted like a wind tunnel.



Perseverance on the day paid off, with 12 enquiries from members of the public, each taking away AA literature. In addition, there was one enquiry about Al-Anon and, as the team had a number of leaflets available, this was also dealt with in a positive way.

Milton Keynes station is a very busy station, with a large commuter footfall throughout the day. As always, it is difficult to quantify the full impact the PI team had with their stall on the day, but the opportunity to raise AA's profile within the community was clear, and the message of recovery was surely carried to many Milton Keynes commuters.

Experience Strength and Hope shared at EE Wellbeing Event in Stoke-on-Trent

Stoke-on-Trent — Debbie B (Employment Liaison Officer for Potteries Intergroup) recently shared their personal experience, strength, and hope with 25 to 30 professionals from EE during a Wellbeing Event held as part of the public health campaign of Dry January

The opportunity arose through a simple connection when an EE employee reached out to the General Service Office, requesting a talk from a member of the Fellowship to share experience, strength and hope and provide information on how AA can help individuals struggling with alcohol who wish to make positive life changes.

Steve Hexter passed the contact on to Debbie B who jumped at the chance to carry the message. In the manner that we are all familiar with, Debbie described what it was like, what happened and what it is like now, giving an honest account of her journey through

alcoholism and describing the profound impact it had on her private life and career until, after hitting rock bottom, she found peace and freedom in the AA programme.

Debbie reports that the audience engaged openly following her share, asking thoughtful questions about how to support husbands, wives, children, neighbours, and friends who may be struggling with alcohol misuse. The positive tone of the session reflected the genuine care and desire of the attendees to understand how to approach those affected in the workplace and highlighted the importance of awareness and compassion.

A particularly moving moment came at the close of the session when an employee in the audience stood up, identified themselves as a sober member of AA, and offered support to anyone wishing to follow up on the discussion. This spontaneous and powerful gesture underscored the ripple effect of AA's message within the EE team.

Reflecting on the experience, Debbie, a newly appointed Employment Liaison Officer, said how rewarding it was to be able to do service by openly sharing her story. Having retired early from her career, she says that doing Service at Intergroup is one of the ways she can show gratitude for the way AA has transformed her life. She has found renewed purpose in giving back to the Fellowship, helping others and building bridges between her Intergroup and the local business community through connections with the Chamber of Commerce.


Positive feedback from a couple of attendees at the session was shared by the contact at EE:

"It was amazing to hear something supporting and realistic rather than an advert / promotion. If this is held in the future ideally it could be held in a conference room to make sure we can fully hear the story and information being shared."

"Debbie was amazing! I loved hearing her story and how she has been able to improve her life and what the AA has done for her, she was very inspiring. I really think more of these types of Forums to show BT Stoke what help there is around the city is vitally important as people probably don't know what help there is out there for various different things! I know BT has things like EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) however having the support in person is probably more accessible for most."

Riding the Radio Airwaves: Carrying the Message

Over the past year, the North West Region has been developing its approach to Public Information, with a particular focus on using radio to carry the message and remind



people that Alcoholics Anonymous is there when they need it. The great work of the former PI Liaison Officer was continued and developed further. The plan began with meeting the account manager from Smooth NW and the beginning of a new, expanded campaign began to come to life.

Working collaboratively with a professional in this field, this began the journey. In summer 2025, during Alcohol Awareness Week, an initial radio campaign was designed to reach people in their everyday lives, complimented by a GoMo van (digital ad-vans) campaign to support wider visibility within local communities at the ground level. As part of this phase, a new 30 second radio advert, an increase from the prior 20 second advert, was created in collaboration with the creative director in the production team at Smooth Radio. Three authentic fellowship voices were used, and through close collaboration with the creative director, the wording was carefully edited and developed to ensure it provided a true and accurate experience of the fellowship.

Moving into the Christmas and New Year period, the radio campaign expanded. A higher frequency campaign on Smooth Radio North West was introduced, alongside additional coverage on Radio X 90s Manchester. Together, these increased both the reach and repetition of the message, allowing it to be heard across different audiences and at different times of day.

Through this, an important learning emerged, that it is not just about reaching people, but about how often and when the message is heard.

As the campaign developed, it became clear that there were gaps in coverage. Smooth Radio North West did not fully reach areas further north within the North West region, including parts of Cumbria. In response, bus advertising was used to extend visibility into those areas, providing a constant presence in public spaces.

This highlighted the importance of considering Public Information activity across all areas within a region, identifying gaps such as low radio coverage and using alternative methods, like bus campaigns, to carry the message at ground level.

Radio proved to be a powerful way of carrying the message. It meets people where they already are, in the car, at work, or at home, without requiring them to actively seek information. Even when heard in passing, it can plant a seed or act as a quiet reminder that AA is there.

This work has been about more than delivering a campaign. It has been about learning, adapting, and responding.

Each stage built on the last, shaping a more thoughtful approach to Public Information. It also reinforced the importance of working closely with external organisations to ensure that the message remains accurate and consistent with AA traditions.

Ultimately, Public Information work is about making sure that when someone reaches the point where they want help, they remember that Alcoholics Anonymous is there. Sometimes it simply plants a seed, a reminder that they don't have to face things alone and that help is available when they are ready.

For more information contact: Leigh-Anne NW Region PILO pi.nw@aamail.org

Media request received - should we do this?

In this article, Graham Duncan, a non-alcoholic trustee on the PI & EComms Sub-committee, highlights some of the opportunities and challenges that arise when AA, at intergroup, region or Board level, is approached by the media.

It's not uncommon for AA to be approached by journalists and researchers wanting someone to comment on a news story or to appear on a radio or television programme. These can be great opportunities to carry the message to large audiences so they need to be given serious consideration. However, as always, AA needs to be careful to stay true to the Traditions and our primary purpose.

Several of the Traditions are particularly relevant to our involvement with the media and should cause us to challenge ourselves. Particular attention is paid to these five traditions when considering a media request:

Tradition 5 – will this opportunity carry our message to the still suffering alcoholic? Can't talk about AA's message of experience, strength and hope and how to get help? Then it is thank you, but no thank you.

Tradition 6 – will there be an endorsement to an outside campaign like Dry January or Alcohol Change UK's Alcohol Awareness Week? Or can we talk about our message without affiliation?

Tradition 10 – possibly the one aspect of AA that the media find hardest to understand. "Of course you have a view of the causes of binge drinking" or "..... on whether alcohol duty should be increased to reduce alcohol-related deaths". No, we do not.

Tradition 11 – no blowing of the AA trumpet, just the message of sobriety and how it worked for others. However, if we can mention that the NHS' National Institute for Health and Care Excellence ('NICE') recommends AA's 12 Step approach, so much the better.

Tradition 12 (and 11) – The media loves names and, particularly, faces, but, however tempting the opportunity may be, anonymity is more important – for the individual and for AA as a whole. But that is one of the reasons we have non-alcoholic trustees ('NATs'), who are not bound by anonymity. Although it is always preferable to have a member of the Fellowship carrying the message ("one drunk talking to another drunk") where a face is needed, say on TV, a NAT can be called into service.

Four recent examples of media enquiries serve to illustrate how we try to navigate these challenging waters.

The first came from a relatively modest online publication. The GSO was approached to provide a comment on a Government review of alcohol licensing regulations. There were no issues around anonymity, endorsement or promotion versus attraction but clearly commenting on alcohol licensing would be courting controversy. And it would not have provided an opportunity to carry the message, so we said no thank you and politely declined.

The second was much, much more tempting. The Fellowship were invited to provide a member to appear on ITV This Morning, a national morning TV programme watched by over 700,000 viewers. It was to be an interview about issues around alcohol so a great opportunity to carry the message to an audience who might not otherwise hear it. As it was TV obviously a NAT was required to avoid a breach of anonymity. However, when discussed with the researcher from ITV it was explained that the show also involved a phone-in. That raised the very real likelihood that advice would be expected to be given to callers with drinking problems – on national TV. Not appropriate. So, with considerable regret, we turned the opportunity aside. In the end the programme featured a psychiatrist who did give advice, showing that our decision was right. It should be said that if the phone-in is framed by the presenter as answering questions about AA, not giving advice (other than how to contact AA) then that might be OK but it would still leave open the possibility that someone might use it to challenge AA.

The third opportunity was just as tempting. The Mail on Sunday, with a readership of two million people, wanted to do a case study about a woman alcoholic who hid her drinking from her family. Could the Fellowship provide someone for them to interview? Yes, of course. We found a member who was prepared to speak about her experience. However, when Graham spoke to the researcher to brief them about anonymity it was explained that they needed a photograph of the person they were writing about. No amount of explaining about anonymity could persuade them to do without an identifying photograph. Sadly, that closed the door on a great opportunity.

The final example is a cautionary tale. We were approached by BBC Radio Wales to talk live on air about death rates from alcohol-related causes. That would not be something that we would talk about. However, in discussion with the researcher, when Graham explained that we couldn't comment on death rates, they decided that we should take part anyway to talk about recovery. All good, except that either the researcher didn't brief the presenter or the presenter just chose to do her own thing. Fortunately it proved possible to navigate delicately around the questions, avoiding any comment on death rates or the possible ill-effects of over-drinking at rugby internationals, and still get our message (and details of our support) across. The morale of the story is that even after getting agreement from the programme or publication, you still need to remain alert to the dangers of presenters or journalists going off-script!

Don't be put off by engaging with the media. Contact with the media requires careful handling. They can be our friends and are keen to work with us when we explain our traditions and why we have them. It is a brilliant way to carry the message to large numbers of people!

The examples above were ones that came directly to the General Service Office. Frequently we will hand them over to a region or intergroup PI Liaison Officer to take forward, sometimes with continuing support from Graham or another NAT. If you get an approach directly from the media and are not sure how to respond, or you think that a NAT might be needed, please feel free to contact Graham Duncan for a chat at trustee.nat8@gsogb.org.uk

PI Materials available in our Online Shop

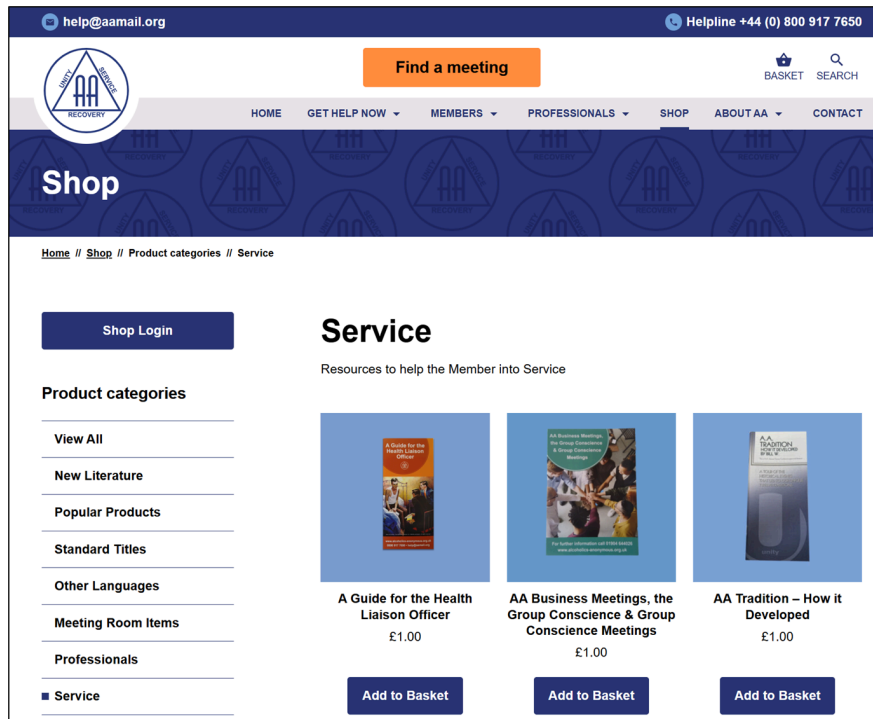
Since the launch of the new AA GB website, the online shop has now settled into a steady "business as usual" rhythm. Behind that phrase, however, sits a significant step forward, one that is already making a tangible difference to members' experience and to the wider Fellowship.

At the heart of the upgrade is a move to a more modern and flexible platform. Built on WooCommerce, the shop now offers a cleaner, more intuitive interface that makes it easier to find and order literature and PI materials. Navigation is smoother, information is clearer, and the addition of printable PDF lists means members can browse and share materials more conveniently than before.

One of the most noticeable improvements is the introduction of a persistent basket. Members can now select items and move around the website without losing what they've chosen, returning later to complete their order. Alongside this, the option to

create a personal account allows users to log in, view past purchases, and reorder items quickly—small changes that make a big difference in day-to-day use.

Payment flexibility has also improved. The new system is no longer limited to PayPal, and the removal of the old “1p minimum” requirement for free items resolves a long-standing frustration for many in the Fellowship.



The shop’s content has evolved alongside its functionality. All literature approved by Conference is now printed, in circulation, and available to order. Ongoing work continues behind the scenes to refine categories and improve the document library, while enhanced product options, such as selecting quantities or language versions within a single listing, help reduce clutter and simplify the browsing experience.

Purchasing literature directly through the national website shop is more than a transaction, it is a practical way of supporting the Fellowship’s primary purpose. Every order helps ensure that AA’s message remains available to those who need it, today and in the future.

Vacancy on the PI & EComms 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 644

026, jenny.pryke@gsogb.org.uk or from the Document Library on the AA GB website – 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. The next two application deadlines are the 24th April and 7th August 2026.

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

Angela S – trustee.northwesteegion@gsogb.org.uk

PI Liaison Events

Annual Combined PI & EComms Liaison Meetings

This article outlines the development, implementation, and outcomes of the combined Public Information (PI) and Electronic Communications (EComms) liaison meetings organized by the PI & EComms Subcommittee (SC). These meetings aim to foster collaboration, share experiences, and enhance the effectiveness of Regional and Intergroup service officers in carrying the message of recovery to professionals and the general public.

Historically, annual liaison meetings for Regional PI and EComms officers were held separately, although organised by the PI & Ecomms SC. In 2024, the SC initiated a combined liaison meeting by inviting Regional PI and Regional ECLO officers to York for a joint in person event. This innovative approach was designed to encourage collaboration and the sharing of best practices between the two disciplines.

The success of the 2024 combined meeting generated enthusiasm among attendees, who expressed a desire to meet more frequently than the traditional annual schedule and extend the invitation to include Intergroup officers.

Continuing with the initiative the PI & EComms SC organised a meeting for the 22nd February 2025. 21 participants attended, including both Regional and Intergroup PI and ECLO officers. Each session of the meeting was open to all attendees with sharing of experiences between seasoned officers and those new to their roles.

The outcome was a positive engagement and a stronger sense of a service community. It was easy to recognise the value of combined meetings.

The second online Zoom meeting was held on the 7th February 2026 with 37 participants, showing significant growth from the previous year. Again, there was a high level of participation, engagement and enthusiasm. A wide range of activities was discussed with a particular focus on the success of awareness campaigns conducted on local radio stations in Northwest Region and Mid Surrey Intergroup.

The benefits were easy to see:

- Combining PI and EComms officers in one forum has improved communication and cooperation between these closely related service areas
- Officers new to their roles benefit from the knowledge and support of experienced colleagues, accelerating their effectiveness
- Discussions on successful campaigns and activities provide replicable models for other regions and intergroups, amplifying outreach efforts
- The meetings foster a positive and supportive environment, strengthening the fellowship's service network
- The use of Zoom has enabled wider participation, including officers from multiple intergroups and overcoming geographical challenges to collaboration.

The PI & EComms SC is committed to continuing these combined online liaison meetings as a regular feature in the annual service calendar. The positive feedback and growing attendance demonstrate the value of these sessions. By facilitating these meetings, the SC is helping to strengthen the delivery of the recovery message to professionals and the public, ensuring ongoing service development and success.

If further details or follow-up actions are required, please feel free to request additional information from aainformation@gsogb.org.uk

Next PI & EComms Liaison Meeting

Friday July 31 - Saturday 1 August 2026

All Regional PI Officers and ECLOs are invited to York for a two-day meeting to share experience, strength and hope. Online participation is also possible.

This is an opportunity for those new in service and those looking for inspiration and collaboration to share experience, strength and hope with each other.

Members of the PI & EComms Sub-Committee will facilitate the meeting and will also be in attendance to provide an update on the work of the Sub Committee.

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.

.....



www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Published by the Public Information & Electronic Communications Sub-Committee

Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain