

Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire Service Manual



For the families and friends of alcoholics

Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire Service Manual



Part One: Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work

Part Two: UK & Eire Service Handbook

Part Three: Policy Digest

Part Four: Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service

The General Service Office (GSO) supplies one copy of this manual without charge to each registered Group, to serve as a source of reference. It should be passed along to each succeeding Group Representative, who will act as its temporary custodian.

Every Al-Anon and Alateen member should own and study the manual. It gives a clear and concise picture of the Al-Anon fellowship, its purpose and functions and how it helps us to resolve Group problems. Additional copies may be ordered from the General Service Office (GSO).

NB: The contents of this manual were originally based on the World Service manual. The 2003 UK & Eire Service Conference approved rearrangement of material and extensive revision. In order to reflect differences in policies, law and taxes, the Policy Digest, Part Three, is amended from the Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies section of the World Service manual.

The 2011 edition was reduced to four parts with the amalgamation of material. This edition includes updates from the 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2019 World Service Conference and changes made in the UK & Eire.

This Service Manual can be downloaded and searched online at

<https://www.al-anonuk.org.uk/members-resources>

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organisation or institution; does not engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practising the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

The Suggested Preamble to the Twelve Steps

Adapted from Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual 2014-2017

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UK & EIRE SERVICE MANUAL

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Preface

Questions pertaining to the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service continually arise within our fellowship. Over the years, four booklets were introduced to assist members in resolving specific situations. In 1993, the four booklets were combined into one manual (UK 1). The Manual reflects the collective experience of our membership in its ongoing effort to interpret the Traditions and Concepts in a spirit of unity and harmony.

Members seeking answers to specific questions or special situations may well find guidance within these pages. The Contents pages list the many topics addressed. The Index lists material pertaining to individual subjects covered.

To reflect new information and changing points of view, the Manual is updated periodically. Al Anon/Alateen members may initiate revisions to the Manual at any time by making suggestions to their District Representative (DR), UK & Eire Service Delegate, or the General Service Office (GSO).

Al-Anon Declaration

Let It Begin With Me

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen
always be there, and - *Let It Begin With Me*

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Part 1

The Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work



Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work provides a framework within which each Group can develop and grow. It offers basic information to all Group members concerning the Group structure and how it relates to other Groups and Al-Anon as a whole

Includes:

- ▶ Meeting Format
- ▶ History of Al-Anon Family Groups and Alateen
- ▶ How to Start Al-Anon and Alateen Meetings
- ▶ Group Tips, Topics, Problems and Solutions
- ▶ Meeting Ideas
- ▶ Structure of the Al-Anon/Alateen Fellowship
- ▶ Terms Used in Al-Anon/Alateen Service

The Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work

These pages describe *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work*. They tell the story of a unique fellowship that unites members of different backgrounds, races and walks of life in an inspiring endeavour: helping themselves and others to lead purposeful, useful lives by overcoming the frustration and helplessness caused by close association with an alcoholic.

Al-Anon Family Groups will always be what we, its members, make it. We believe that our benefits are measured by our willingness to share them with others; for we know we can never give as much as we receive.

Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work provides a framework within which each Group can develop and grow.

The harmony and success of each Group depends on shared responsibility, a warm spirit of fellowship and individual self-improvement.

The message of Al-Anon Family Groups is one of hope. It is the story of men, women and children who once felt helpless, lost and lonely because of another's alcoholism. Today these men, women and children have courage and confidence. They have found understanding friends. They have learned what to do to help themselves and this can indirectly help their alcoholic relatives, loved ones and friends.

Alateen (for members aged 12 to 17 inclusive) is a vital part of the Al-Anon Family Groups' programme. Young people, seeking help with problems that arise when alcoholism afflicts a parent or another close relative or friend, meet to exchange experiences and to gain an understanding of themselves and the alcoholic. This helps their own personal development and can help stabilise troubled thinking resulting from close association with an alcoholic.

The Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship has enjoyed accelerated growth around the world. From its humble beginnings, the Al-Anon fellowship is recognised as a primary resource for those who have been affected by alcoholism in a loved one. Al-Anon grew from a need expressed by the families of members of Alcoholics Anonymous and, although some of our members no longer maintain contact with the alcoholic, Al-Anon and Alateen now offer help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not.

Meeting Format

This format is printed for your convenience. While not every Group chooses to plan its meeting in this way, many find a general outline helpful. Alateen Groups substitute 'Alateen' where applicable (see also pamphlet 'This is Al-Anon' UK45).

Chairman: Will you join me in a moment of silence.

Suggested Welcome

We welcome you to the _____ Al-Anon Family Group and hope you will find in this fellowship the help and friendship we have been privileged to enjoy.

We who live, or have lived, with the problem of alcoholism understand as perhaps few others can. We, too, were lonely and frustrated, but in Al-Anon we discover that no situation is really hopeless and that it is possible for us to find contentment, and even happiness, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not.

We urge you to try our programme. It has helped many of us find solutions that lead to serenity. So much depends on our own attitudes and as we learn to place our problem in its true perspective, we find it loses its power to dominate our thoughts and our lives.

The family situation is bound to improve as we apply the Al-Anon ideas. Without such spiritual help, living with an alcoholic is too much for most of us. Our thinking becomes distorted by trying to force solutions, and we become irritable and unreasonable without knowing it.

The Al-Anon programme is based on the Twelve Steps (adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous) which we try, little by little, one day at a time, to apply to our lives along with our Slogans and the Serenity Prayer. The loving interchange of help among members and daily reading of Al-Anon literature thus make us ready to receive the priceless gift of serenity.

Anonymity is an important principle of the Al-Anon programme. Everything that is said here, in the Group meeting and member-to-member, must be held in confidence. Only in this way can we feel free to say what is in our minds and hearts, for this is how we help one another in Al-Anon.

Suggested Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organisation or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practising the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

At this point in Al-Anon meetings, the Chairperson usually announces any special format for the meeting (Study of the Steps, speakers or discussion group); whether it is open or closed and/or has a specific routine for calling on members. Members are also told how they can obtain Al-Anon and Alateen Conference Approved Literature. Al-Anon/Alateen related announcements can also be made and reports from the GR, secretary and treasurer are received (see page 17).

Many groups also choose to read the following:

INTEGRITY STATEMENT

‘While everyone is welcome, we would like to remind you that this is an Al-Anon meeting and ask members to confine themselves to Al-Anon principles, regardless of membership of any other outside organisation or Twelve Step programme. Only in this way can the integrity of Al-Anon be preserved.

The Al-Anon programme is a gentle one with no deadlines. We start working the Steps and find a sponsor once we feel ready to do so.’

Most Al-Anon Groups then read the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions and some also choose to read the Twelve Concepts. (See page 15 for the Twelve Concepts.)

Suggested Alateen Preamble to the Twelve Steps

Alateen, part of the Al-Anon Family Groups, is a fellowship of young people whose lives have been affected by alcoholism in a family member or close friend. We help each other by sharing our experience, strength and hope.

We believe alcoholism is a family disease because it affects all the members emotionally and sometimes physically. Although we cannot change or control our parents, we can detach from their problems while continuing to love them.

We do not discuss religion or become involved with any outside organisations. Our sole topic is the solution of our problems. We are always careful to protect each other's anonymity as well as that of all Al-Anon and AA members.

By applying the Twelve Steps to ourselves, we begin to grow mentally, emotionally and spiritually. We will always be grateful to Alateen for giving us a wonderful, healthy programme to live by and enjoy.

Most Alateen Groups choose to have a member read one, or all, of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and/or Twelve Concepts of Service.

The Three Legacies

RECOVERY

THROUGH
THE STEPS

UNITY

THROUGH
THE TRADITIONS

SERVICE

THROUGH
THE CONCEPTS

The threefold guides of Al-Anon point the way to a normal, useful life for the individual. They are also a framework within which the Groups can carry on their affairs in harmony.

Twelve Steps

Study of these Steps is essential to progress in the Al-Anon programme. The principles they embody are universal, applicable to everyone, whatever his personal creed. In Al-Anon, we strive for an ever-deeper understanding of these Steps, and pray for the wisdom to apply them to our lives.

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practise these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Traditions - Al-Anon

The Traditions that follow bind us together in unity. They guide the Groups in their relations with other Groups, with AA and the outside world. They recommend Group attitudes towards leadership, membership, money, property, public relations and anonymity.

The Traditions evolved from the experience of AA Groups in trying to solve their problems of living and working together. Al-Anon adopted these Group guidelines and over the years has found them sound and wise. Although they are only suggestions, Al-Anon's unity and perhaps even its survival are dependent on adherence to these principles.

These guidelines are the means of promoting harmony and growth in Al-Anon Groups and in the world-wide fellowship of Al-Anon as a whole. Our Group experience suggests that our unity depends upon our adherence to these Traditions.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.
5. Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practising the Twelve Steps of AA *ourselves*, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.
6. Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.
7. Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

8. Al-Anon Twelfth-Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.
9. Our groups, as such, ought never be organised; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. The Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

The Twelve Traditions - Alateen

Our Group experience suggests that the unity of the Alateen Groups depends upon our adherence to these Traditions:

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend. The teenage relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Alateen Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other Alateen and Al-Anon Family Groups or AA as a whole.
5. Each Alateen Group has but one purpose: to help other teenagers of alcoholics. We do this by practising the Twelve Steps of AA *ourselves* and by encouraging and understanding the members of our immediate families.
6. Alateens, being part of Al-Anon Family Groups, ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money,

property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.

7. Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alateen Twelfth-Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.
9. Our groups, as such, ought never be organised; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. The Alateen Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

The Twelve Concepts of Service

Carrying the message, as suggested in the Twelfth Step, is Service: Al-Anon's third legacy. Service, a vital purpose of Al-Anon, is *action*. Members strive to *do* as well as to *be*.

Anything done to help a relative or friend of an alcoholic is service: a telephone call to a despairing member or sponsoring a newcomer, telling one's story at meetings, forming Groups, arranging for public information, distributing literature and financially supporting Groups, local services, the General Service Office (GSO) in the UK & Eire and the World Service Office (WSO).

Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service, Part 4, can be read for further information.

1. The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon Groups.
2. The Al-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its Service Arms.
3. The Right of Decision makes effective leadership possible.
4. Participation is the key to harmony.

5. The Rights of Appeal and Petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.
(See note on page 151 Concept Five, for explanation of word change.)
6. The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.
7. The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.
8. The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of the Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees.
9. Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.
10. Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.
11. The World Service Office is composed of Selected Committees, executives and staff members.
(See page 165, Concept Eleven, for explanation of word change.)
12. The spiritual foundation for Al-Anon's world services is contained in the General Warranties of the Conference, Article 12 of the Charter.

General Warranties

In all its proceedings the UK & Eire Service Conference of Al-Anon shall observe the spirit of the Traditions:

1. that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle;
2. that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members;
3. that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and, whenever possible, by unanimity;
4. that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy;
5. that though the Conference serves Al-Anon, it shall never perform any act of government; and that, like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

Reports

Secretary:

The Chairperson may call on the Secretary to read appropriate announcements received in the post, the appeals for financial support and matters of general interest.

Treasurer:

The Chairperson may call on the Treasurer to report Group income and expenditure and the remaining balance in the Group account. (See page 29 for further information.)

Group Representative:

A brief presentation on a regular basis keeps the Group informed about District and Area concerns.

The Programme

Some Groups have a Programme Chairperson who presents the topic for Group discussion; otherwise the Chairperson introduces the speakers or the subject to be considered.

Contributions

At some point during the meeting, voluntary contributions are made. It is recommended to refer to Tradition Seven, that we are fully self-supporting and that there are no dues or fees for membership.

Large Groups that may have divided into smaller sessions for the meeting/discussion usually come back together at a given time for the Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing.

Suggested Closing

Chairperson:

In closing, I would like to say that the opinions expressed here were strictly those of the person who gave them. Take what you liked and leave the rest.

The things you heard were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. Keep them within the walls of this room and the confines of your mind.

A few special words to those of you who haven't been with us long: whatever your problems, there are those among us who have had them too. If you try to keep an open mind, you will find help. You will come to realise that there is no situation too difficult to be bettered and no unhappiness too great to be lessened.

We aren't perfect. The welcome we give you may not show the warmth we have in our hearts for you, but the warmth is there and you will soon start to feel it.

Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, but let there be no gossip or criticism of one another. Instead, let the understanding, love and peace of the programme grow in you one day at a time.

Will all who care to, join me in the Serenity Prayer to close our meeting.

THE SERENITY PRAYER

God grant me the Serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
and Wisdom to know the difference.

Recovery Through the Steps

The Twelve Steps

Because of their proven power and worth, AA's Twelve Steps have been adopted almost word for word by Al-Anon. They represent a way of life appealing to all people of good-will, of any religious faith or of none. Note the power of the very words.

The Twelve Steps suggest acceptance of four primary ideas, that:

1. We are powerless over the problem of alcoholism

When we can honestly accept this truth, it brings us a feeling of release and hope. We can now turn our full attention to bringing our own lives into order. We can go forward to spiritual growth, to the comfort and peace to be gained from the entire programme.

2. We can turn our lives over to a Power greater than ourselves

Now that our well-meant aid to the alcoholic has ended in failure and our own lives have become unmanageable, we realise we cannot deal with our problem objectively, perhaps not even sanely.

In Al-Anon we find a Power greater than ourselves which can direct our lives into quiet, useful channels. At first this power may seem to be the Group, but as we grow in knowledge and spiritual understanding, many of us call it God, *as we understand Him*.

3. We need to change both our attitude and our actions

As we become willing to admit our defects, we begin to see how much of our thinking is distorted. We realise how unwise some of our actions have been, how unloving many of our attitudes. We try to recognise and correct these faults.

4. We keep Al-Anon's gifts by sharing them with others

This sharing makes Al-Anon the vital, forward-reaching fellowship it is. Our great obligation is to those still in need. Leading another person from despair to hope and love brings comfort to both the giver and receiver.

The following explanations have helped many newcomers and long-time members understand the disease as well as how they have been affected.

This text is from the Al-Anon pamphlet 'Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism', Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc., Virginia 2009.

Understanding Alcoholism

What is Alcoholism?

The American Medical Association recognises alcoholism as a disease that can be arrested but not cured. One of the symptoms is an uncontrollable desire to drink. Alcoholism is a progressive disease. As long as alcoholics continue to drink, their drive to drink will get worse. If not dealt with, the disease can result in insanity or death. The only method of arresting alcoholism is total abstinence. Most authorities agree that even after years of sobriety, alcoholics can never drink again, because alcoholism is a lifetime disease.

There are many successful treatments for alcoholism today. Alcoholics Anonymous is the best known and widely regarded as the most effective. Alcoholism is no longer a hopeless condition if it is recognised and treated.

Who are Alcoholics?

All kinds of people are alcoholics – people from all walks of life. Only a small percentage of alcoholics fit the stereotype of “down-and-outs”. Most alcoholics appear to be functioning fairly well, but their drinking affects some part of their lives. Their family life, their social life, or their work may suffer. It might be all three. Alcoholics are people whose drinking causes a continuing and growing problem in any area of their lives.

Why do Alcoholics Drink?

Alcoholics drink because they think they have to. They use alcohol as a crutch and an escape. They are in emotional pain and use alcohol to kill that pain. Eventually they depend on alcohol so much that they become convinced they can't live without it. This is *obsession*.

When some alcoholics try to do without alcohol, the withdrawal symptoms are so overwhelming that they go back to drinking because drinking seems to be the only way to get rid of the agony. This is *addiction*.

Most alcoholics would like to be social drinkers. They spend a lot of time and effort trying to control their drinking so they will be able to drink like other people. They may try drinking on weekends or drinking only a certain drink. But they can never be sure of being able to stop drinking when they want. They end up getting drunk even when they promised themselves they wouldn't. This is *compulsion*.

It is the nature of this disease that alcoholics do not believe they are ill. This is *denial*. Hope for recovery lies in their ability to recognise a need for help, their desire to stop drinking and their willingness to admit that they cannot cope with the problem by themselves.

Understanding Ourselves

Families and Friends are Affected

Alcoholism is a family disease. Compulsive drinking affects the drinker and it affects the drinker's relationships. Friendships, employment, childhood, parenthood, love affairs and marriages all suffer from the effects of alcoholism. Those special relationships in which a person is really close to an alcoholic are affected most, and we who *care* are the most caught up in the behaviour of another person. We react to an alcoholic's behaviour. Seeing that the drinking is out of hand, we try to control it. We are ashamed of the public scenes but try to handle it in private. It isn't long before we feel we are to blame and take on the hurts, the fears and the guilt of an alcoholic. We, too, can become ill.

Even well-meaning people often begin to count the number of drinks another person is having. We may pour expensive liquor down drains, search the house for hidden bottles, or listen for the sound of opening cans. All our thinking becomes directed at what the alcoholic is doing or not doing and how to get the drinker to stop drinking. This is our *obsession*.

Watching fellow human beings slowly kill themselves with alcohol is painful. While alcoholics don't seem to worry about the bills, the job, the children or the condition of their health, the people around them usually begin to worry. We often make the mistake of covering up. We try to fix everything, make excuses, tell little lies to mend damaged relationships, and worry some more. This is our *anxiety*.

Sooner or later the alcoholic's behaviour makes other people angry. As we realise that the alcoholic is telling lies, using us, and not taking care of responsibilities, we may begin to feel that the alcoholic doesn't love us. We often want to strike back, punish, and make the alcoholic pay for the hurt and frustration caused by uncontrolled drinking. This is our *anger*.

Sometimes those who are close to the alcoholic begin to pretend. We accept promises and trust the alcoholic. Each time there is a sober period, however brief, we want to believe the problem has gone away forever. When good sense tells us there is something wrong with the alcoholic's drinking and thinking, we still hide how we feel and what we know. This is our *denial*.

Perhaps the most severe damage to those of us who have shared some part of life with an alcoholic comes in the form of the nagging belief that we are somehow at fault. We may feel it was something we did or did not do – that we were not good enough, not attractive enough, or not clever enough to have solved this problem for the one we love. These are our *feelings of guilt*.

Help and Hope

We who have turned to Al-Anon have often done so in despair, unable to believe in the possibility of change and unable to go on as we have before. We feel cheated out of a loving companion, over-burdened with responsibilities, unwanted, unloved, and alone. There are even those of us who are arrogant, smug, self-righteous and dominating. We come to Al-Anon, however, because we want and need help.

While we may have been driven to Al-Anon by the effects of someone else's drinking, we soon come to know that our own thinking has to change before we can make a new and successful approach to living. It is in Al-Anon that we learn to deal with our obsession, our anxiety, our anger, our denial and our feelings of guilt. It is through the fellowship that we ease our emotional burdens by sharing our experience, strength and hope with others. Little by little, we come to realise at our meetings that much of our discomfort comes from our attitudes. We begin to change these attitudes and learn about our responsibilities to ourselves. We discover feelings of self-worth and love and we grow spiritually. The emphasis begins to be lifted from the alcoholic and placed where we do have some power – over our own lives.

History: Al-Anon and Alateen

How Al-Anon Came to Be

The Family Group idea is nearly as old as Alcoholics Anonymous. In AA's pioneering days from 1935 to 1941, close relatives of recovering alcoholics realised that, to solve their personal problems, they needed to apply the same principles that helped alcoholics with their recovery.

As early AA members and their wives visited AA Groups throughout the USA, the visiting wives told the partners of the newer AA members about the personal help received when they themselves tried to live by AA's Twelve Steps and how this helped to improve family relationships that often remained difficult even after the alcoholic had become sober. Thus, partners and relatives of AA members began to hold meetings to discuss *their* common problems.

By 1948, numbers of Family Groups had applied to the AA General Service Office for listing in the AA Directory and scores of relatives of alcoholics had asked them for help, but AA was designed to aid alcoholics only.

In 1951, two wives of AA members, Lois W and Anne B, formed a Clearing House Committee to get in touch with enquirers and to co-ordinate and serve them. As a result of questionnaires, the name Al-Anon Family Groups was chosen. The Twelve Steps of AA, virtually unchanged and later the Twelve Traditions were both adopted as guiding principles. The goal was unity of purpose.

Soon the movement came to public attention. New Groups and individuals, in North America and elsewhere, wrote to the Clearing House about their problems. By 1954, a small paid staff became necessary. The Clearing House was incorporated as a non-profit organisation under the name Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

In 1955, Al-Anon's first book, *The Al-Anon Family Groups, A Guide for The Families of Problem Drinkers*, was published. Since then many more books and pamphlets have been added.

In 1961, Al-Anon initiated its Annual World Service Conference of Delegates, World Service Office (WSO) staff and volunteers to act as the fellowship's overall conscience. In the quarter century from 1951 to 1976, over 12,000 Groups in the United States, Canada and many lands overseas were added to the original fifty-six. By 2012 there were over 25,000 groups in 133 countries and 107 electronic (internet and telephone) meetings.

How Alateen Came to be a Part of Al-Anon

Teenage children in families of alcoholics soon realised that their problems differed from those of adult members. In 1957, Alateen grew out of this need. A 17-year-old boy, whose father was in AA and mother in Al-Anon, had been fairly successful in trying to solve his problems by applying the AA Steps and Slogans.

With his parents' encouragement, he asked five other teenagers with alcoholic parents to join him in forming a Group to help other teenagers. The idea caught on, and the number of Groups began to grow.

In response to articles being distributed by the WSO, ten new Alateen Groups were registered, and by 1958, the Board of Directors announced 31 new Alateen Groups, with 39 more proposed and the decision to establish an Alateen Committee.

By the end of 1962, there were 203 registered Groups and the programme for children of alcoholics was spreading to other countries. In April of 1964, a new staff member was added to work for Alateen; correspondence with members and Groups, free packs of literature to new Groups and enquiries from concerned professionals, were all to be handled by the Alateen Administrator.

By 2012, there were numerous Alateen pamphlets, leaflets, books and a quarterly newsletter, *Alateen Talk*. There are over 1,700 Alateen Groups worldwide.

Structure of the Al-Anon/Alateen Fellowship in the UK & Eire

The keystone of the Al-Anon structure is the membership. The basic unit is the Al-Anon or Alateen Group, which may consist of any two or more individuals coming together for mutual help.

There are two major lines of communication between the individual Group and Al-Anon as a whole. The first is the UK & Eire Service Conference in which the Groups are involved; the second is the Clearing House, known as the General Service Office (GSO), which acts as the service centre for Groups throughout the UK & Eire.

GSO distributes all Conference Approved Literature. All the many functions and activities of the fellowship circulate through this office. It is the centre, not the head; it serves, but does not control or direct.

NB: The work of the Conference, General Service Board, Standing Committees and GSO is described in the Service Handbook, Part 2 of this manual.

How to Start a Group

Starting an Al-Anon Family Group

If there is no Al-Anon Group in your community you may start one, along with one or two other people who need and want Al-Anon's help. Any two or more relatives or friends of alcoholics who meet to solve their common problem may call themselves an Al-Anon Group, provided they have no other affiliation as a Group. The procedure is simple:

General Service Office (GSO) Registration Process

- Decide on a meeting place. Download the Registration form from the members' page of the website or write to the General Service Office (GSO) announcing your decision to start a Group. You will be sent a registration form which should be completed and returned to GSO.
- After your Group is registered with GSO, a pack containing a sample of Al-Anon/Alateen literature is sent to the Group.

Reasons for Registration

- Registration provides a link to worldwide Al-Anon and Alateen, that assures unity of purpose and a common bond of love and friendship available to each member no matter where they travel to attend our meetings.
- Registration helps newcomers find meetings and helps us carry out our one purpose: to help families and friends of alcoholics.

NB: Only those Groups who have registered with GSO are covered by the block insurance for Public Liability held by Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire. This information needs to be updated by returning the Annual Record Check (ARC) form.

Things to Consider When Starting an Al-Anon or Alateen Group

Current Mailing Address

Each Group should provide a Current Mailing Address (CMA). The CMA may be, but does not have to be, a Group officer's address. The CMA can also be that of a member who anticipates keeping the same address for at least a year, who has no difficulty in receiving mail at home and who attends meetings regularly. In this way, the Group can be assured of promptly receiving all the material sent from GSO. When the CMA changes, GSO is to be notified immediately. The CMA is held in confidence for GSO mailing records only.

Telephone Contacts

Each Group is also asked to provide two telephone contacts, which will be listed in GSO's Group records for communication purposes. The Group's meeting place and time will be given to Al-Anon/Alateen members and to individuals who contact GSO seeking a nearby Group. Those who list themselves as telephone contacts are willing to be called by members seeking information about the Group's meeting or by someone seeking Al-Anon's help. **GSO does not give contact numbers to professionals or anyone other than those seeking personal help.**

(Guidelines for Group Contacts, UKG10 is available on the website or from GSO.)

Choosing a Group's Name

Having an appropriate Group name is very important as it may be a potential member's first impression. The Group's name should be inviting to all and conform to Al-Anon principles. A name that includes the town or section of the town, the meeting day or time provides information about the details of the meeting. Nicknames or negative sounding names may turn away potential members. Membership always remains open to anyone affected by someone else's drinking.

A Group's name cannot imply affiliation with AA or any Twelve Step group, self-help group, commercial venture, religious principle or belief or any outside literature or enterprise.

GSO reviews new Group names for adherence to these guidelines and may ask a Group to choose another name if it is not in keeping with Al-Anon principles.

Getting the Meeting Started

- Carefully review all the materials you have received, decide who will be Secretary, Chairperson, Programme Chairperson, Treasurer and Group Representative and work out the details of your meetings.
- At this point you will naturally want to attract more members to your Group. Usually AA Groups are glad to co-operate with Al-Anon. They may be willing to announce the formation of a new Group when they make their own announcements at open AA meetings.
- It would be well to inform local professionals, including members of the clergy, the medical and legal professions and others in your neighbourhood who have occasion to counsel families of alcoholics. This can be done either in person or by mail. Be sure to give them the number of the confidential helpline at GSO and the website address and let

them know exactly when and where your meetings are held. (Remember to update this information if there are any changes.) You may also give them telephone numbers and information concerning local Al-Anon Information Centres/Services. Some newspapers will include such information, without charge, in the local events column.

- No dues or fees are required of Al-Anon/Alateen members, but it is customary to pass a collection basket at each meeting to cover the Group's expenses and for the support of GSO and the work of the World Service Office.
- The Group's expenses may include rent, GR's travel costs, support of District and Area services, the cost of maintaining a supply of Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and contributions to the General Fund at GSO. It is important always to have leaflets and booklets to give encouragement to Al-Anon and Alateen newcomers.
- Copies of the Al-Anon and Alateen books and booklets can be purchased from GSO and on-line from the eshop.
- The Group may have a small attendance at first, but the Al-Anon programme is one of attraction and, given time, the Group will grow.
- If Group problems and questions arise and members are unable to resolve them at the Group level by using the Twelve Traditions and this manual, you can ask for help from District or Area Officers. You may also contact GSO, where suggestions for solutions are derived from the shared experiences of many other Groups and whose role is to ensure that your problem is directed to those who can best help.

How to Start an Alateen Group

Once the Al-Anon Group has become firmly established, serious thought should be given to starting an Alateen Group. **There are special requirements which must be fulfilled before starting an Alateen Group. Refer to the General Service Office (GSO) for further information.** An Alateen Group must be sponsored by two Al-Anon members who have completed the screening procedure and whose names are included in the Register of Screened Group Sponsors.

For further information and free material for starting an Al-Anon or Alateen Group, an Introductory Meeting or Limited Access Group, or to register as a Lone Member where no Group is available, write to GSO.

Group Structure

The individual member usually thinks of Al-Anon/Alateen as the Group to which he or she belongs; yet that single Group is one of thousands that meet in all parts of the world, all trying to cope with the same problems. An understanding of the whole Al-Anon picture will show the important role played by each individual in the overall work of the Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship.

The Group is the basic unit, where close personal interchanges among members take place, where Al-Anon ideas are discussed and applied to specific personal problems. The entire Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship structure exists for the sole purpose of helping the Groups to help people.

The important qualification for every member is participation. To ensure our own growth we should welcome opportunities to be useful to the Group; to accept Group offices and to stand ready at all times to comfort and help other members to meet their problems.

The Group's operations are the responsibility of a set of officers, who are elected by the members. Officers are usually changed every six to twelve months so that everyone has an opportunity to serve the Group. These officers may be: Chairperson, Secretary, Programme Chairperson and Treasurer. The Group Representative, also an officer, is elected for a three-year term.

NB: Each Group should have a Group Representative (GR). Al-Anon and Alateen members who are also members of AA do not serve as Al-Anon/Alateen Group Representative (GR) (see Part 3 - Policy Digest section of this manual.)

The organisation of a Group should be kept simple. Even a small Group, however, needs a Chairperson and a Secretary; the latter often acts as Treasurer until the Group is large enough to elect one. While the Group is small, the Chairperson may also act as Programme Chairperson. Some Groups also have someone in charge of refreshments. The officers of a Group are trusted servants who perform their duties, yet they have no authority over the Group.

Duties of Group Officers

The Chairperson

- plans meetings in advance with the Programme Chairperson
- opens the meeting by reading the Preamble and/or the Welcome
- welcomes newcomers
- introduces speakers or announces the subject of the meeting
- invites members to take part in the discussions and ensures that everyone has an opportunity to take part
- acts as Chairperson of the business committee when there is one.

The Programme Chairperson

- plans meetings (arranges for guest speakers) and prepares a programme
- rotates on a one, three or six month basis.

The Secretary

- handles Group correspondence
- notifies GSO of any changes to the Group details, current mailing address (CMA) or telephone numbers of Group contacts
- makes necessary Al-Anon related announcements at meetings
- orders Conference Approved Literature in sufficient quantities to supply the Group's needs and for distribution to clergy, doctors, social workers and others who counsel the families of alcoholics
- may keep an up-to-date list of members' telephone numbers.

The Treasurer

- acts as collector, custodian and disburser of funds
- organises the collection at Group meetings
- asks another member to help count and record the collection (some Groups have bank accounts requiring two signatures)
- keeps a record of all receipts and expenditure (a legal requirement in Eire)
- submits a financial statement to the Group at regular intervals
- periodically reminds the Group that both members and the Group may send contributions to GSO throughout the year
- encourages individual contributions via Gift Aid, the Planned Giving scheme and Payroll Giving
- draws members' attention to the annual appeals for contributions to GSO and the WSO

- pays the Group's expenses, which may include:
 - a) rent, light and heat for a meeting place
 - b) expenses for its Group Representative to attend the Area Assembly, District and, where appropriate, Information Service meetings
 - c) contributions to District, Area and, where appropriate, Information Services
 - d) contributions to support the General Service Office, which serves all Groups (*in keeping with Tradition Seven, support of GSO is the responsibility of all Al-Anon members, Groups and Service Arms*)
 - e) purchase of Conference Approved Literature, including Al-Anon/Alateen hardback books

The Group Representative (GR)

- acts as liaison between the Group and the District and between the Group and the Area (attends all meetings to represent the Group and reports back).
- gives their contact details to the District Representative and the Area Secretary
- ensures that the Group has the current copy of the UK & Eire Service Manual
- works through the District in helping to initiate PI and institutions work and encourages Alateen Group sponsorship
- serves as local representative of Al-Anon's e-zine *Al-Anon Today*, acquainting members with its usefulness and suggesting that they send, via GSO, stories of interest for publication
- ensures the Annual Record Check form is completed each year in order that current and up-to-date meeting information is available at GSO and on the website. In Eire, the Al-Anon UK121 *Group Treasurer's Record Book* is to be returned to GSO with the ARC form. Correct information is required for cover under Al-Anon's block insurance policy for Public Liability.

Group Business

Group Records

Keeping Group information up-to-date is vital to ensure that the most accurate meeting information is provided to people seeking help in the Al-Anon and Alateen fellowship. Accurate records also keep communication flowing between the Group and GSO, and the Group and local service arms. It is essential that Groups promptly report changes in their meeting, location, meeting day, time, CMA (Current Mailing Address), Group Representative (GR), or phone contacts to their Area Secretary or GSO in writing (email).

Group Business Meetings and Group Conscience

Tradition Two

For our group purpose there is but one authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants – they do not govern.

Group business meetings are held to share information and to include all group members in the activities and concerns of the group. Decisions a group makes are determined by an informed group conscience.

Group Business Meetings

The Group business meeting is an opportunity for members to share their ideas to increase Group membership, express concerns, plan special meetings or projects, and other Group business – such as changing the Group name, CMA, Group phone contacts, the meeting time and place, finances, meeting format, open or closed meeting status, etc. Business meetings are also an opportunity to identify and discuss solutions to Group problems such as: gossip; dominance; the need for additional Group service positions; rotation of leadership; inappropriate behaviour of a member before, during, or after the meeting, etc.

Groups are within their autonomy to determine how to conduct their group business and how to reach a group conscience. Some groups schedule a business meeting on a regular basis and others hold them as needed. Business meetings can be held before, after or during the group meeting.

The manner in which a group business meeting is conducted and how to keep track of the group conscience decisions is as varied as the groups themselves. It is beneficial to the group and promotes unity when members are aware of the group's process for bringing their concerns or ideas to a business meeting. If the group does not have an established process for reaching a group conscience, this important step in the decision-making process would be decided prior to group discussion of a topic.

The group should also discuss who is eligible to vote on group matters; many groups request that only members who regularly attend the meeting vote at the group business meeting. Members who regularly attend more than one meeting may want to consider at which meeting to vote on District or Area matters, keeping in mind that our principles are spiritual, and voting on an issue more than once could be viewed as trying to control or influence the outcome.

Sufficient notice of the meeting and the agenda item(s) should be allowed for members to become informed about the matter. Announcing the business meeting and distributing pertinent information two or three weeks prior to the discussion and voting gives members of the group the opportunity to be informed, helps the group make better decisions, and promotes group unity.

A group's guideline for its business meeting could include: a sample agenda, advance notice needed to call a meeting, who chairs the meeting, length of time for discussion of each topic, what percentage will reflect unanimity and a majority, how the group conscience decisions will be recorded, etc. Many groups use the *Guideline Taking a Group Inventory* and the *Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire Service Manual* as resources when conducting a business meeting.

Group Conscience

The Group conscience is the result of the Group's business meeting discussions. The Group conscience is the will of the Group. The guiding principles for the Group conscience are always the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service. It may be helpful for the Group to review these principles prior to any group discussions. Some simple Group decisions may be decided quickly; however, others may take time. It is by taking the time necessary to hear from all members who want to participate that a Group conscience evolves.

In order to make an informed Group conscience decision, members need access to all the information about the issue they are being asked to discuss, they need clarity on what their discussions hope to accomplish, and they are asked to trust each other's motives and capabilities. By sharing information as equals, taking time for discussion and maintaining principles above personalities during the discussions, Groups are often able to reach unanimity

in their decisions. If unanimity is not reached in the allotted timeframe of the meeting, discussions may continue at another time. Once a Group conscience decision is made, the entire Group supports the decision.

Concept Five tells us that members have the right of appeal. If a member disagrees with the outcome of a Group conscience decision, they have the right to submit an appeal for reconsideration back to the body that made the decision. After an appeal is heard, regardless of whether the decision is maintained or altered, the individual accepts the Group conscience.

Suggested Group Policies

Membership

Al-Anon membership is open to anyone who feels their life has been or is being deeply affected by close contact with a problem drinker. Those eligible join local Groups where the Al-Anon programme is shared.

In keeping with Tradition Three, all family members and friends of problem drinkers are welcome to attend Al-Anon meetings in order to decide for themselves whether Al-Anon can benefit them. New members are encouraged to attend different meetings, to find Groups where they feel most comfortable.

Our discussions centre on solutions for our own difficulties. We try not to tell other people's stories or repeat what we see or hear, always protecting one another's anonymity and the anonymity of Al Anon, Alateen and AA members as well. Long-time members can do much for themselves and others by continued attendance at Al-Anon meetings, where they can share experience, strength and hope.

Purpose

From the leaflet, Purpose and Suggestions (UK41)

'Each Al-Anon Family Group has one purpose: to help families and friends of alcoholics. This is achieved by:

- offering comfort, hope and friendship to the families and friends of compulsive drinkers
- providing the opportunity to learn to grow spiritually through living by the Twelve Steps adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
- sharing experience in coping with the disease of alcoholism and learning how the Al-Anon programme helps us to give understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.'

Where to hold meetings

Al-Anon and Alateen meetings are usually held in churches, school buildings, community centres, hospitals or any other suitable places. When a new Alateen meeting is set up, it must be at a time and place where there is an existing Al-Anon meeting. (*See Policies & Practices concerning Alateen for further information*).

Group problems and solutions

Many Groups have problems at one time or another. Attendance may fall off as personality differences come to the surface. Members may discuss religion, forgetting that membership is open to all. One or two members may dominate the Group, ignoring the principles of rotation in leadership. Lack of money may handicap the Group, or its excess cause disagreements. Therefore, a periodic inventory of the Group helps to keep it healthy. (See Guideline UKG1, *Taking a Group Inventory*.) A re-dedication of the Group to its primary purpose, a study of the Traditions as they apply to the problem at hand and discussing problems at District meetings, are all good methods of overcoming Group difficulties.

Gossip is often at the root of Group problems. Every Al-Anon/Alateen member should feel bound to keep in strict confidence any personal matter heard at a meeting or from an individual. Each member should be able to feel confident that nothing said will be repeated. The three major obstacles to success in Al-Anon are: discussions of religion, gossip and dominance.

The books *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* and *Paths to Recovery: Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts* give detailed suggestions on the application of the Twelve Traditions to solving Group problems.

Public Relations

Al-Anon/Alateen does not seek publicity to glorify the programme, its Groups or any of its members. If the community, however, is informed about the fellowship and understands the help Al-Anon can provide, our Groups will attract many who need the Al-Anon programme of recovery. Good public relations are important to our Groups as well as the community at large.

Groups can undertake public information work by arranging for members to talk to the clergy, health-care providers and educators, contact local hospitals, rehabilitation centres or the prison service. Other ways to enhance Al-Anon's public relations are by holding open meetings to which community professionals are invited and placing Al-Anon and Alateen posters in public places. Some Groups announce meetings in a brief newspaper advertisement;

some papers will include such listings without charge in the local events column.

AA groups are usually glad to co-operate with Al-Anon. They may be willing to announce the formation of a new group when they make their own announcements at open AA meetings.

It is important that the principle of anonymity is understood at the outset. (All enquiries by national organisations, press, radio or television are dealt with by GSO.)

The booklet *PI Guidelines* (UK14), containing many ideas for activities, is available from GSO.

NB: Area PI Co-ordinators should be kept informed of PI activities.

Anonymity

It is important that members understand the principle of anonymity and how it applies when doing public information service. We always protect our members' anonymity, but the Al-Anon/Alateen programme is not anonymous. By tradition, the principle of personal anonymity at the public level is a safeguard for the Al-Anon fellowship. This means, at the level of press, radio, films and TV, all Al Anon and Alateen members are anonymous. As long as members maintain personal anonymity when appearing in the media, as stated in Tradition Eleven, they can use their full names when contacting professionals. It is the member's choice how anonymous he or she wishes to be with friends, associates, the professional community and others. However, there is a much broader meaning of anonymity in the Traditions: principles above personalities is stressed to assure that no one will use Al-Anon for profit, prestige, or power.

Financial Policy

In keeping with Tradition Seven, each Group is supported by the voluntary contributions of its members. Members who cannot afford to contribute should not be pressed, since there are no dues collected in Al-Anon or Alateen Groups. Assistance from sources outside Al-Anon or Alateen would violate Tradition Seven. It is not necessary for Groups to accumulate money beyond current needs and a small reserve. Consider budgeting for expenses. The Group does not provide financial aid to members in need, but individuals can make their own choices.

The Group also supports Al-Anon/Alateen financially at four levels of service:

- District
- Area
- GSO
- WSO

Helpful Ideas for Group Growth

- Participation of members in Group activities is important. This creates real involvement with the Group and solidifies the relationship of the individual member to the Group. Since each has only a limited number of officers, it is best to have a policy of rotation, rather than having one member hold office for successive terms. Other assignments may involve Public Information work (calling on doctors, social workers, clergy and various counselling agencies), bringing the refreshments for a limited period, setting up and clearing up the meeting room. The more jobs, the more members will participate and feel themselves to be an integral and important part of the Group.
- Have a business or steering committee composed of present and recent officers to deal with policy, local public information and other Group matters.
- Plan meetings well in advance. The Programme Chairperson is responsible for selecting meeting topics and arranging for speakers well in advance. At each meeting, the subject of the next one may be announced.
- Ask for volunteers who will check refreshment supplies and bring what is needed. Reimbursement from Group funds is made by the Treasurer at each meeting.
- Work out a financial programme for the Group adding, if necessary, to the voluntary contributions at meetings by having fund-raising events. Plan how funds will be budgeted: rent, purchase of literature, refreshments, contributions to the General Fund / Al-Anon Family Groups CLG (Eire), Area, District and, where applicable, the Al-Anon Information Centre/Service. Some Groups take additional collections for special local projects within the District or Area.
- Use a short article or announcement, perhaps in the free section or calendar of events in the local paper, to announce the time and place (having obtained permission from the meeting venue) and purpose of the Al-Anon or Alateen meeting. Include the telephone helpline number at GSO and the Information Centre number, where applicable.
- Encourage service sponsorship. Service sponsorship is a special relationship where one member shares their service experience with another member. This type of sponsorship can be on a one-time situation, such as an outgoing trusted servant supporting their replacement, or an ongoing relationship. Service sponsorship helps both the service Sponsor and the sponsee acquire new skills while being an example of personal growth through service. Al-Anon Family Groups benefits when members are enthusiastic about service. For more information about service sponsorship, read the pamphlet *Service*

Sponsorship – Working Smarter, Not Harder (UK60).

New Members and Sponsorship

The newcomer to Al-Anon is often nervous, lonely and usually desperate. In addition to the help, guidance and literature provided by the Group, individual attention and the friendship of an established member can be of great help.

New members may have had personal contact with a member before their first meeting. The new member may also have discussed problems with the contact before coming to meetings. This contact may or may not be asked to continue as a sponsor; however, neither a contact nor a newly chosen sponsor should be used as a substitute for a meeting.

If a Group has a Beginners' Meeting, newcomers should be encouraged to attend. After a period of time they usually choose a sponsor with whom they can identify. Where there is no Beginners' Meeting members can extend a helping hand; explain that alcoholism is a disease, give the newcomers Conference Approved Literature (possibly a newcomer's pack that includes *Information for the Newcomer*, UK33) and urge them to read the material; explain the Twelve Steps and the slogans and show them the value of using the programme in coping with problems. It is also helpful to keep in touch with the new members by telephone between meetings.

After the new members have attended a number of regular meetings, Group members should encourage them to express themselves, or in some small way take part in the Group functions so they will feel they belong. Most of all, encourage them to find a sponsor if they haven't already done so. For more information on sponsorship, read the pamphlet *Sponsorship, What It's All About* (UK44) or the bookmark *Sponsorship – Working together to recover* (UK94).

Group Meetings

There is no rigid formula for an Al-Anon or Alateen meeting. The general pattern is to have the Chairperson open and close the meeting, announce the meeting topics, or introduce speakers who share their experience of recovery within the Al-Anon programme.

Meetings usually open with a few moments of silence. The Chairperson then reads the Preamble or the Suggested Welcome or both. Members may be asked to introduce themselves. The Steps and Traditions are normally read since they are the basis of the Al-Anon programme. Some Groups also choose to read the Concepts and the Integrity Statement. Meetings usually conclude

with the Suggested Closing, followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Experience suggests that every meeting have a central theme, particularly when it is a discussion meeting. More can be accomplished by dealing with a single topic on which each member expresses a view.

All Al-Anon meetings conform to the tradition that the Group welcomes anybody in the family – men, women and children – whose lives have been affected by another's drinking. All meetings in Al Anon Family Groups UK & Eire are non-restrictive, regardless of how the Group may wish to name itself.

Generally, Al-Anon/Alateen meetings are 'closed'. Closed meetings are limited to members and prospective members. These are persons who feel their lives have been or are being deeply affected by alcoholism in a family member or friend.

Many Groups also hold open meetings where Al-Anon/Alateen members tell their stories to anyone interested in the family disease of alcoholism. Some Groups invite members of the professional community to hear how the Al-Anon programme aids recovery. Open meetings are often attended by members of Alcoholics Anonymous as well as people working in the health and education fields.

Al-Anon/Alateen members should avoid criticism of one another or the alcoholic, gossip or revealing intimate details of their problems. More detailed discussion may take place in private conversations between individuals before and after the meeting.

A potential member can be made especially welcome at Al-Anon/Alateen meetings by the Chairperson asking members to introduce themselves and briefly tell how Al-Anon has influenced their lives. A warm and friendly welcome before, during and after the meeting, will make the newcomers feel part of the Group and will encourage them to continue to seek help through Al-Anon.

Al-Anon/Alateen speakers often identify themselves as relatives or friends of alcoholics. They describe their experiences in trying to cope with their problems and tell how Al-Anon has helped. Primary emphasis should be on the value of the Al-Anon programme and the elements that have been most beneficial. Not every speaker has a significant message for every listener, but there is sure to be at least one thought with which the newcomer can identify. The important thing to remember is that Al-Anon Family Groups have aided thousands of men and women in achieving a new way of life. Anyone can find help by coming to meetings regularly and keeping an open mind to one another's views. Opinions and ideas expressed at an Al-Anon/Alateen

meeting are those of the speakers and not necessarily those of the fellowship.

Study Discussion Groups. These usually concentrate on the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, the Twelve Concepts and the Slogans.

Beginners' Meetings. Newcomers find help more readily if their introduction to the programme is simple. Beginners' meetings are usually a series of six meetings held before the regular meeting or as a separate Group. They are led by an experienced Al-Anon/Alateen member, who explains alcoholism as a disease with far-reaching effects. Beginners' meetings introduce newcomers to our programme through the Twelve Steps and Traditions and acquaint them with various basic pieces of literature.

Introductory Meetings. Introductory Meetings can be held at institutions, such as hospitals, treatment centres and shelters, or any other location where families and friends of alcoholics gather. Attendance changes frequently. Such a meeting is not considered an Al-Anon Group and does not have its own Group Representative. Experienced Al-Anon members share the responsibilities for conducting Introductory Meetings and for inviting those in attendance to try a regular Al-Anon/Alateen meeting.

Al-Anon Groups, directly or through their District, are encouraged to help with the cost of literature and other expenses for Introductory Meetings. Members must comply with the security requirements of the meeting location.

To start an Al-Anon Introductory Meeting, members are requested to write to GSO for a registration form.

Limited Access Groups. These Groups meet in locations where our general membership may not be able to attend. Groups meeting in industrial, military or school settings would fall into this category. These are Al-Anon or Alateen Groups, but membership may be limited because of location.

NB: Two sponsors, who are currently on the Register of Screened Group Sponsors held at GSO, must be present at each Alateen meeting.

Meeting Ideas

- **The Twelve Steps.** It is suggested that one of the Steps be covered in at least one meeting per month. The Chairperson, or the speaker, usually reads the Step and provides an explanation as given in the books *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* and *Paths to Recovery: Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts*. The Steps also appear in many other Al-Anon publications. Members may then comment on the Step and how it applies to their situation.
- **The Twelve Traditions.** The Group studies one or more of the Traditions and their value in maintaining Group harmony and growth, keeping in mind the goal of Al-Anon unity worldwide. The procedure for a Twelve Traditions meeting and the sources of material, for the most part, are the same as those for a Twelve Steps meeting.
- **The Twelve Concepts.** A better understanding of the service structure of Al-Anon can be obtained by study of the Twelve Concepts of Service (See *Part 4: The Concepts* section of this Manual).
- **Al-Anon Slogans.** One or more of the slogans may serve as the basis of discussion for their value in daily living. They appear throughout our books, literature, *Al-Anon Today* and the World Service Office magazine, *The Forum*, as they also help us deal with our day-to-day personal situations.
- **Personal Stories.** Two or three Al-Anon or Alateen members may be asked to speak at the meeting, to tell how the Al-Anon programme helps them in their daily living.
- **Discussion.** The chairperson presents a topic to help members focus their thoughts and discuss the subject as it applies to them.
- **Panel Discussions.** Members present are invited to write questions, anonymously if so desired, which are answered by a panel of two or three members chosen by the Chairperson. This may also open informal discussion by the entire Group.
- **AA Speaker.** An occasional talk by an AA member often presents insights into the disease of alcoholism.
- **Exchange Meeting.** An individual or a team of speakers from one Group may care to exchange speakers with another Group.

- **Outside Speakers.** Members of the professional community may occasionally be invited to address an Al-Anon/Alateen meeting. Those selected should be knowledgeable about alcoholism; however, having professional speakers too often at Al-Anon/Alateen meetings may divert us from our own recovery programme.
- **Anniversaries.** Special occasions such as anniversaries should serve as showcases for Al-Anon. They should feature Al-Anon speakers whose personal stories of recovery through the Al-Anon programme can give strength and hope to those who hear them.
- **Literature Meeting.** An unlimited supply of topics can be found in Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature. There are books, leaflets, pamphlets, newsletters and *Al-Anon Today* and *The Forum* magazines.
- **Outside Publications.** In the spirit of unity it is suggested that only Al-Anon and Alateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL) be used and displayed at meetings. It is well to remember that all AA literature is written for and from the viewpoint of alcoholics and is not Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature.
- **Open Meeting.** Some Groups hold regular open meetings and notify GSO to this effect. Such meetings allow professionals and other people to see how a Group meeting functions. There are other types of open meetings planned for public information purposes. (See *PI Guidelines* booklet UK 14)
- **Group Inventory Meeting.** This may be based on a questionnaire, available from the General Service Office (UKG1).

Part 2

UK & Eire Service Handbook



The *UK & Eire Service Handbook* explains how Al-Anon is held together, how it is structured and how our trusted servants can best function within our structure.

Includes:

- ▶ Terms Used in Al-Anon
- ▶ General Service Office
- ▶ UK & Eire Service Conference
- ▶ Election Procedures
- ▶ Area Assemblies
- ▶ Al-Anon World Service Charter

UK & Eire Service Handbook

The *UK & Eire Service Handbook* is for every member of our fellowship who has found the personal benefits and satisfaction that come from taking an active part in the growth of Al-Anon.

The opportunities to serve described here can take us far beyond the boundaries of the Group and our personal problems.

While our Tradition Nine states that 'our Groups as such ought never be organised', it does suggest that an orderly structure and logical procedures will make it possible for Al-Anon to carry its message with maximum effectiveness.

The *UK & Eire Service Handbook* explains how Al-Anon is held together, how it is structured and how each member who is elected or appointed to a particular responsibility can best function.

Al-Anon members serving in positions of responsibility at any level should be active members regularly attending Group meetings.

Our growth depends on how well we serve the fellowship and this book can be helpful as a guide. It gives the methods that have long been standard practice in service work worldwide. All these procedures have been drawn from long trial and error experience and should be changed only when an Area Assembly is fully agreed that such changes will better adapt these guidelines to their needs.*

The changes to this version of the *UK & Eire Service Handbook* have been made to bring the material up-to-date and in line with the World Service Al-Anon/Alateen Manual, where appropriate.

** If and when the Area Assembly is agreed on alterations in the procedures recommended, it is vital that all Groups in the Area be informed of the changes and why they were necessary.*

Al-Anon Declaration

Let It Begin With Me

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen
always be there, and - *Let It Begin With Me*

Terms used in Al-Anon

The term 'Al-Anon' is always understood to include Alateen. To keep it simple, the pronoun 'he' is used throughout.

Alternate	An eligible member elected or appointed who can temporarily step in and/or complete the service term of a person unable to do so. Some examples of this service role are Alternate Group Representative, Alternate District Representative, and Alternate Delegate.
Area	A designated geographical part of the UK & Eire represented at the annual UK & Eire Service Conference by a Delegate.
Area Assembly	A meeting of the Group Representatives (GRs) within the Area, which is open to any Al-Anon member. Only GRs may vote.
Area Co-ordinator	An Al-Anon/Alateen member, not necessarily a GR, who is elected at an Assembly to co-ordinate a special service such as Public Information (PI) or Alateen.
Area Service Committee	This committee consists of the officers of the Area, the Delegate, District Representatives, Co-ordinators and Information Service Centres/Service Representatives where applicable
Delegate	See UK & Eire Service Delegate pages 48 and 49.
Districts	Convenient segments into which an Area is divided.
District Meeting	A meeting of GRs, open to any Al-Anon member, held as necessary in an agreed location within a District.
District Representative (DR)	A former or serving GR who is elected by the other GRs in his District to represent the Groups on the Area Service Committee.

General Fund	This is the fund in which Al-Anon's income is deposited and from which UK & Eire services are financed.
General Secretary	The General Secretary (an Al-Anon member) is responsible to the General Service Board (GSB) and the Executive Committee, through its Chairperson, for the general administration of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire.
General Service Board (GSB)	The GSB which is composed of Trustees (see page 72), is the principal committee of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire.
General Service Office (GSO)	The General Service Office, the clearing house of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire, located in London, is also the registered office of the Charity, Family Groups Ltd.
Group	The Group is the basic unit, where close personal interchanges among members take place, where Al-Anon ideas are discussed and applied to specific personal problems.
Group Representative (GR)	A member, with a basic understanding of the Al-Anon programme, who is elected for a three-year term by his Al-Anon or Alateen Group.
Information Centre/Service Representative (ICR)	A member who may be appointed or elected by the Area for a three-year term to serve on the Area Service Committee in order to be a link between the Information Centre/Service and the Area it serves.
International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM)	A biennial meeting consisting of up to two Delegates from each of the General Service Structures throughout the world and members of the World Service Office International Co-ordination Committee.
IAGSM Delegate	A member appointed by the General Service Board to represent the UK & Eire at the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting and the European Zonal Meeting (EZM) and report back.

Region	The UK & Eire is divided into six Regions, each of which consists of a number of adjoining Areas.
Service Arms	The General Service Board, the General Service Office and various committees responsible to the General Service Board.
Standing Committees	Committees with permanent status are sometimes referred to as Standing Committees. They are made up of Al-Anon/Alateen members with a broad understanding of our programme, who concentrate on one of the elements of our fellowship such as Conference, Public Information, etc.
TEAM (Together Empowering Al-Anon Members) Events	Service events organised by Areas.
Regional Trustee	One member, with wide Al-Anon experience, from each of the six Regions serving as a member of the General Service Board.
Trustee at Large	A member of the General Service Board with wide Al-Anon experience and other specialised skills.
Sustaining Trustee	The General Secretary.
UK & Eire Service Conference	The annual Al-Anon Service Conference of the UK & Eire provides guidance for the Service Arms in service matters brought to its attention.
UK & Eire Service Delegate	A former, or serving District Representative (DR) or Group Representative (GR), who has been elected Service Delegate for a three-year term by the GRs at an Area Assembly. At the Conference the Delegate shares Area experience and brings the views and the spirit of Conference back to the Area.
World Service Office (WSO)	The World Service Office, also known as Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters Inc., renders services to Groups all over the world.
World Service Conference (WSC)	This is the senior conference of the Al-Anon fellowship worldwide.

Service Structure in the UK & Eire

The Group

The keystone of the Al-Anon structure is the membership. The basic unit is the Al-Anon or Alateen Group which may consist of any two or more individuals, affected by someone else's drinking problem, coming together for mutual help. The entire Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship structure exists for the sole purpose of helping the Groups to help people.

Group Representative (GR) is a member elected by the Group for a three-year term and is a vital link in the continuing function, growth and unity of Al-Anon. The GR attends District Meetings and Area Assemblies, maintaining contact between the Group and the District and the Group and the Area.

The District

A District consists of a number of Groups within a segment of an Area that have banded together for mutual support and ease of communication.

The District Representative (DR) is a member elected from among former or serving GRs of each District. He is a member of the Area Service Committee and helps the Groups understand how they fit into Al-Anon Family Groups as a whole.

Area

An Area is a designated geographical part of the UK & Eire. Group members within an Area meet regularly at an Assembly to ensure adequate exchange of information about service ideas and activities, not only in the immediate Area but throughout the UK & Eire.

The UK & Eire Service Delegate is a member elected by the Area to represent it at the annual UK & Eire Service Conference and provide a link between GSO and the Area.

The Service Arms

The General Service Board (GSB), the General Service Office (GSO) and various committees responsible to the General Service Board. The GSB, composed of the Trustees, is the principal committee of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire. In general it acts as the chief service arm of the Conference.

Conference

The UK & Eire Service Conference is an annual meeting held to formulate policies affecting the fellowship, to hear reports on service matters and make decisions regarding the administration of Al-Anon Family Groups in the UK & Eire.

The Group

The Group is the basic unit, where close personal interchange among members takes place, where Al-Anon ideas are discussed and applied to specific personal problems. The entire Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship structure exists for the sole purpose of helping the Groups to help people. Each Group elects one member to be its Group Representative.

Group Representative (GR)

GRs are a vital link in the continuing function, growth and unity of Al-Anon/Alateen. They attend both District Meetings and Area Assemblies, maintain contact between the Group and the District and between the Group and the Area.

GRs should be members with experience, stability and an understanding of the Traditions and how they work; they should have the potential to serve as District Representative, Area Service Committee Officer and possibly as Delegate.

NB: An Al-Anon/Alateen member who is also a member of AA is not eligible to serve as GR because this is service beyond the Group level. (See page 98 Policy Digest section of this manual)

Election of a Group Representative (GR) and an Alternate

A GR is elected by the Group using any election procedure it chooses. The term of office for a GR is recommended to be for three years. Service is a vital part of recovery and it benefits both the GR and the Group if a full three-year term is served. To emphasise the need for selecting informed GRs, a special meeting may be called by the Group, with time devoted to discuss the role of the GR in our service structure and the work of GRs in the District and Area. A Group may re-elect its GR for another term.

Since a GR may be unable to attend all District and Area meetings an Alternate is needed. The Alternate is elected at the same time and may be the runner-up in the election. The Alternate GR's duties may include serving as the Group's Public Information contact and welcoming newcomers and visitors.

If the GR resigns or misses two consecutive District Meetings or two consecutive Area Assemblies, the Alternate completes the term and can then be elected for a three-year term of his own. Another Alternate may then be elected.

When the GR has been elected he:

- immediately sends his name and address to the District Secretary and Area Secretary, so that he can be informed of the time and place of the next District Meeting and Area Assembly
- ensures that GSO is aware of the appointment in order to receive a new GR's pack
- attends the District Meeting and the Area Assembly
- makes himself thoroughly familiar with his duties

The GR and UK & Eire Service

Through the contacts made with other GRs and the Area Service Committee at Assembly, the GR can gain knowledge of Al-Anon service and the purpose and work of the Conference. This will enable the GR to explain these to the Group. The GR should be allowed regular time at Group meetings to convey information concerning Al-Anon service affairs.

The GR at District Meetings and Area Assemblies

The GR is expected to participate at all District Meetings and to attend all Area Assemblies. The GR keeps the Group informed of decisions taken and activities planned. The GR encourages members to attend but, adhering to the principle of one Group one vote, only the GR or, if absent, the Alternate votes

Corresponding with GSO

'The GR is expected to participate at all District Meetings and to attend all Area Assemblies. The GR keeps the Group informed of decisions taken and activities planned. The GR encourages members to attend but, adhering to the principle of one Group one vote, only the GR or, if absent, the Alternate votes.'

The GR and Al-Anon Today

The GR serves as local representative of our e-zine *Al-Anon Today*, acquainting members with its usefulness and suggesting they read it and contribute to it. The GR also suggests that articles and sharings be sent to the Editor via GSO.

The GR as a Channel of Communication

The GR can bring the Group's viewpoint on any situation or problem concerning Al-Anon to the District Meeting or Area Assembly. In turn the GR informs the Group of the outcome of the meetings. The GR informs members of items of interest to the Group extracted from the Delegate's report of the UK & Eire Service Conference.

The GR reminds the Group of Al-Anon and Alateen's traditional insistence on being self-supporting. The GR brings the Treasurer's appeals for contributions to the General Fund of Al Anon Family Groups UK & Eire and the annual appeal for the World Service Office to the Group's attention.

The Group supports the District and Area and contributes an agreed amount towards their costs. The GR ensures that the Group's contribution is received by the District Meeting and the Area Assembly. The GR's travel expenses for attending these meetings are paid by the Group. Any surplus funds in the UK are sent to the General Fund and in Eire, to Al Anon Family Groups CLG

The GR, Public Information and Institutions

The GR works through the District and Area in helping to initiate PI and institutions work.

Conference Approved Literature (CAL)

The GR encourages the use of CAL, drawing members' attention to the leaflet *Why Conference Approved Literature?* (UK55)

The District

The District is a segment of an Area containing a number of Groups located relatively close to one another. It is the first link from the Groups to the Area, the annual UK & Eire Service Conference and GSO, connecting the Groups in unity and for mutual aid. Its main purpose is to support the growth and well-being of Groups in its locality. Any Al Anon/Alateen member is welcome to attend District meetings. Alateen Groups should be encouraged to take an active part in District affairs.

District Representative (DR)

The DR is elected from among former or serving GRs of each District. Each DR represents one District in the Area, helping the Groups understand their

part in Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire.

The duties of the DR are:

- to call and chair District Meetings, preferably at regular intervals
- to help the Delegate in every way possible in disseminating Conference information and reports
- to keep in touch with the GRs of the District to learn the views of the Groups and their problems which, in turn, he may report to the Area Service Committee or the Delegate
- to visit all the Groups in the District, particularly new Groups, to make sure they are getting necessary information and help
- to help the Groups understand and apply the Traditions which guide us in our fellowship activities
- to encourage members to become involved in service to co-ordinate programme-related service events and public information projects for the District
- to check the Groups' current mailing addresses (CMA) regularly and to ensure that the Groups notify GSO of any changes
- to urge every Group to complete and promptly return the Annual Group Record Check form sent out annually by GSO, in order that GSO has current and up-to-date information for cover under Al-Anon's block insurance policy for Public Liability
- to remind Groups in Eire that they must return the Group Treasurer's Record Book at the same time as the ARC form
- to make sure that correspondence from GSO is reaching the Groups and being shared with the members
- to attend Area Service Committee meetings and Area Assemblies and report to the Area Service Committee on activities within the District and report to the District relevant items from the Area
- to notify the Area Service Committee and GSO of Groups that have disbanded
- to get to know the Alateen Groups in the District and encourage them to send GRs to District meetings
- to refer to resources available on the Al-Anon website (<https://www.al-anonuk.org.uk/>)

Election of a District Representative (DR) and Alternate

- The DR and Alternate DR, neither of whom are members of AA, are elected from among the GRs, or active past GRs, at a District meeting by a method of its own choosing. The term of office is three years.
- The DR who is completing his term calls a District meeting notifying all Groups in the District for the purpose of electing his successor.
- Once elected, the DR is no longer a GR and the Group elects a new GR
- If the DR resigns, misses two consecutive District Meetings, two consecutive Area Assemblies, proves to be inactive at District, or is unable to serve, the Alternate DR completes the term. The Alternate may then be elected for a three-year term in their own right. If the GRs of a District are not aware of the DR's failure to attend Area Service Committee meetings, the Area Service Committee may request a replacement
- Duties of the Alternate DR may include serving as Treasurer or Secretary of the District, or as PI contact from the District to the Area.

When the DR has been elected he:

- notifies the Area Secretary of his election and that of his Alternate
- studies the duties of a DR

District Secretary:

- compiles a complete contact list of all GRs, District Officers and relevant Area Coordinators and keeps it up-to-date
- attends to all routine secretarial work
- sends out all notices of District meetings and events held in the District
- takes minutes of committee meetings and sends them to the District Committee members soon after the meeting
- takes minutes of District meetings and sends them to the GRs soon after the meeting
- keeps a complete set of District meeting minutes on file to be passed to the next DR
- calls the roll of all voting members at meetings.

District Treasurer:

- prepares a budget for District expenses (see UKG21)
- is responsible for the management of the District's funds
- pays all bills for approved expenditure
- issues receipts to GRs for any contributions received
- makes regular written financial reports to the District meeting
- forwards surplus monies to the Area or the General Fund. In Eire, surplus monies must be sent to the Area.

District Finances

An estimate of the District expenditure is made and the costs divided equally among the Groups in that District. Any surplus funds are normally sent to Area or to GSO for the General Fund.

The Groups in a District are responsible for:

- the DR's travel expenses to attend Assemblies and Area Service Committee Meetings
- expenses of District Meetings such as rent, distribution of minutes, etc
- supporting the District in the purchase of Public Information materials and in its Public Information activities (e.g. literature displays, mailing of special announcements, etc). Money for this purpose may be raised by holding special events.

District Meetings

All District Meetings are closed. Various types of meetings may be held to unite and inform local Groups and to:

- hear progress reports from the District Representative
- hear matters of interest from UK & Eire Service Delegate
- hold sharing sessions for discussion of District matters
- encourage growth and development of Al-Anon and Alateen Groups in the District
- work together to plan Public Information projects
- consider Information Centre matters (if applicable)
- discuss ways to familiarise Groups with Conference Approved Literature
- encourage members to submit articles to *Al-Anon Today*
- find means of increasing contributions from the Groups to the General Fund
- discuss problems that arise when Al-Anon Traditions are disregarded, or when other matters of concern are presented for consideration
- hold workshops on Alateen, PI, or any other Al-Anon topic of interest to the Groups.

Area

The Area is a designated geographical part of the UK & Eire. Members of an Area meet regularly at an Assembly to ensure adequate exchange of information about service ideas and activities, not only in the immediate Area but throughout the UK & Eire.

UK & Eire Service Delegate

The conscience of Al-Anon can work effectively only if it is informed. The Delegate is a channel through which information flows, bringing to the Conference the viewpoint of the Area on matters affecting the entire fellowship and returning to the Area with a broader perspective of Al-Anon. He is the bridge of understanding which links the Groups in the Area with worldwide Al-Anon and Alateen to help them continue to function in unity. The Delegate is the servant of Al-Anon as a whole.

Area UK & Eire Service Committee

The primary function of the Area Service Committee should be to plan for the general improvement of both the Area and the Groups. It also plans the Assembly agenda and prepares the Area budget. Voting members are the Officers (Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer), the Delegate, the DRs and Co-ordinators of special services such as Alateen and PI and, if applicable, the Information Centre Representative.

Committee meetings, called and chaired by the Area Chairperson, should be held at stated intervals to hear and discuss the Delegate's report and to consider Area matters with the purpose of informing and unifying the Groups in the Area. Successive meetings may be held in various localities within the Area.

All members of the Committee vote at Area Service Committee meetings but only vote at an Area Assembly if they are also currently serving as Group Representatives.

During the year there may be questions that, even after reference to this Manual, cannot be resolved at the District or Area level. The Area Service Committee is responsible for sending these to GSO for forwarding to the relevant Service Arm.

Areas may also formulate Questions of Current Concern about items that need to come to the attention of the whole fellowship. These are submitted to GSO; the Conference Committee researches them, proposes any necessary amendments and organises their discussion at the UK & Eire Service Conference as appropriate.

When advisable, the Area Service Committee may suggest sub-divisions of existing Districts to be approved at the Area Assembly.

When Al-Anon and Alateen Groups are to participate in Al-Anon or AA Conventions a separate Convention Committee is formed using the talents of the membership as a whole. Where possible members planning an Area Convention work closely with the Area Service Committee. The Convention Committee Chairperson/Convenor is responsible to the Area Service Committee and may be appointed by it, or elected at the Area Assembly. The Chairperson, or a Convention Committee liaison member, has a voice and may have a vote on the Area Service Committee.

Duties of Committee Members

Chairperson

A Chairperson should have leadership and organisational ability, serving rather than dictating. It is essential to be able to plan an agenda and conduct meetings in an orderly manner. Communication and co-operation with others are key elements of good chairmanship.

The Chairperson:

- chairs all Assemblies and Area Service Committee meetings during his three-year term of office
- ensures the Secretary sends out notices of Committee meetings to all members of the Committee
- appoints a DR, to fill the office temporarily, if any officer resigns before the end of his term. At the next Assembly a successor is elected to complete the unexpired term. If the Chairperson resigns, the Area Service Committee names a Chairperson pro tem, or the Delegate may serve as Chairperson until an election can be held
- calls an Assembly, after consulting with the Delegate, soon after the Delegate's return from Conference, to hear the report of the UK & Eire Service Conference proceedings and decisions
- calls meetings of the Area Service Committee, preferably at regular intervals, to discuss Area matters
- calls an Assembly before the end of the Delegate's three-year term of office, at which the election of a new Delegate takes place, in order that the new Delegate's name can be given to GSO by 1st January.

The Delegate

Election of UK & Eire Service Delegate

Once every three years, before the end of December, an Election Assembly is held to elect a UK & Eire Service Delegate. The Delegate takes office in January and serves for a term of three years. An Alternate Delegate is elected at the same time.

When the Delegate has been elected he:

- notifies the Conference Secretary at GSO
- studies the duties of a Delegate as set out below.

Duties:

- at Conference
- a) attends all sessions of the Conference, in order to consider the issues brought up, to cast an informed vote and thus helps to guide the Trustees in making their decisions
- b) tries to get a clear and comprehensive picture of our fellowship throughout the UK & Eire to bring back to the Groups in the Area
- c) learns facts and figures and, even more importantly, gains a vision of a great movement in action
- d) learns what our Service Arms have meant to Al-Anon/Alateen in the past and what they, with the guidance of the Conference, will mean to the future welfare of the fellowship
- e) is allocated, as a member in the field, to one of the Standing Committees for a three-year term to gain insight into another aspect of Al-Anon service and to broaden the scope of that Committee. Contact during the year is maintained by receiving Committee minutes. Each year at the Conference the Delegate attends a meeting with the Committee Chairperson.
- as an allocated Delegate, participates in the work of the Standing Committee by responding to the Chairperson when consulted on Committee matters
- sends to the Conference Secretary at GSO, before 1st April, items to be considered for the Conference agenda as suggested by the Groups
- prepares a report on the Conference for the Area Service Committee and presents it at the Area Assembly for GRs to carry back to their Groups. As often as possible the report is given in person at District Meetings; nothing is more impressive than an eye witness account
- attends Area Service Committee Meetings to learn and evaluate the Groups' reaction to his report and to hear ideas on other pertinent matters. He can thus be better prepared to present the Area's views at the next Conference

- gathers, when requested by the General Service Board, a cross section of the Groups' ideas through the DRs and GRs and reports his findings if, between Conferences, the GSB needs an overall Group opinion on some urgent matter. Thus, through the guidance of the Delegates, it becomes possible for the GSB to take any necessary action during the year
- may serve as a contact for public information within his Area if the PI Co-ordinator is unavailable
- submits to GSO, no later than 14th May of the Regional Trustee election year, either a nomination for Regional Trustee or notification that the Area does not have a candidate.

NB. If the Delegate misses two consecutive Area Assemblies or two consecutive Area Service Committee Meetings or for any reason is unable to serve, the Alternate Delegate completes the term and then may be elected for a three-year term of his own.

The Alternate Delegate:

- works along with the Delegate as much as possible in communicating with the Groups
- acquaints himself with all the Delegate's duties so that, if the Delegate is unable to finish his three-year term, the Alternate completes it
- if the Alternate must complete the term, a temporary Alternate may be appointed by the Chairperson from among the DRs to act until a new Alternate can be elected at the next Assembly.

The Secretary:

- compiles a complete mailing list of all GRs, DRs, Officers and Co-ordinators and keeps it up-to-date
- attends to all routine secretarial work
- sends out all notices of Assemblies and Area Service Committee meetings
- takes minutes of committee meetings and sends them to the Area Committee members soon after the meeting
- takes minutes of Area Assemblies and sends them to the Area Service Committee, all GRs, the Regional Trustee, GSO and, where appropriate, the Information Centre
- keeps a complete set of Committee and Assembly minutes on file to be passed to his successor
- calls the roll of all voting members at Area Assemblies

The Treasurer:

- prepares a budget for Area expenses (see UKG21)
- is responsible for the management of the Area's funds
- pays all bills for approved expenditure
- issues receipts to GRs for any contributions received
- in the event of a Group not being represented at the Assembly writes to the GR asking for their Group's contribution to the Area Fund
- forwards to GSO, before 1st May, the equalised sum for the Delegate's Conference fee
- makes regular written financial reports to the Area Service Committee and every Assembly
- forwards surplus monies to GSO for the General Fund. In Eire, forwards surplus monies to Al-Anon Family Groups CLG.

District Representative (DR)

Brings to the Area Committee the views of the Groups in his District. The DR also assists the Delegate in passing on information about UK & Eire Service activities and Conference decisions to the GRs in his District.

Area Co-ordinator

A co-ordinator is responsible for unifying one of Al-Anon's special services such as PI or Alateen in an Area. He usually serves for a three-year term and votes at Area Service Committee Meetings but not at the Assembly unless he is a GR.

An Alateen Co-ordinator must be a screened Group Sponsor whose name is on the Register of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors held at GSO. For further guidance, 'Policies and Practices concerning Alateen in England and Wales' can be obtained from GSO.

The Public Information Co-ordinator serves on the committee to:

- encourage and instigate PI activities in the Area
- make presentations and hold workshops at both Area and District, as requested
- serve as a communication link between the General Service Office and the Area, enabling the distribution of PI projects and information
- request reports on PI activities from the Groups and Districts to share with the Assembly and GSO.

Information Centre/Service Representative

A member appointed to be a link between the Information Centre/Service and the Area it serves for a three-year term in order to:

- represent the Area at the Information Centre/Service
- attend Information Centre/Service business meetings, AGMs etc. and present reports to the Area
- ensure that Groups are informed about volunteer and telephone helpline opportunities and training.

(See pages 81-82 for details of Information Services)

Area Assemblies

The purpose of the Area Assembly is to ensure adequate interchange of information and ideas about service activities in the immediate Area and throughout Al-Anon in the UK & Eire. Area Assemblies are held at regular intervals and once every three years an Election Assembly must be held.

In addition to the GRs and Area Service Committee members any Al-Anon/Alateen member is welcome to attend. Alateen Groups should be encouraged to elect a GR and take an active part in Area affairs. All Assemblies are closed meetings.

The agenda might include:

- roll call of GRs in order to establish the voting strength
- approval of minutes of the last Assembly
- Chairman's report on Area Service Committee activities
- Delegate's report on Conference and/or recent communications from GSO
- Secretary's report
- Treasurer's report
- District reports from DRs on progress and problems
- election of Area Service Committee Officers as necessary
- approval of candidate for Regional Trustee nomination

Note: A Delegate who will be attending the Conference at which the Regional Trustee selection will be made is not eligible to become a candidate

- approval of Current Concerns questions for submission to Conference
- discussion time for GRs' ideas, opinions and questions

- application of the Twelve Traditions of Al-Anon
- interpretation of the Twelve Concepts of Service
- workshops - intensive discussion in small groups
- report on Area Newsletter (if applicable)
- reports from co-ordinators of special services
- reports from any other committees, such as Convention and, if applicable, Al-Anon Information Services
- brief information session on UK & Eire service conducted by the Delegate.

Finances

All money to support the Area financially comes from the Groups in that Area.

There are overhead expenses for the Area, such as rent for the Assembly venue, distribution of minutes and other costs. In addition, agreed expenses incurred by the Delegate and other members of the Area Service Committee e.g. postage, telephone and travel costs, are paid from Area funds. (It is sound business practice to have several members authorised to sign cheques; of these, two signatures should be required on every cheque.)

The Treasurer is responsible for preparing an annual budget of the Area's expenses which will include an amount to cover the Delegate's Conference fee. After discussion with the Area Service Committee the Treasurer presents it to the Assembly for approval. GRs attending the Assembly should come prepared to discuss and approve the Treasurer's report and budget.

The total amount of the agreed budget is divided among the Groups and the share of each Group will be less if all contribute.

Election of a UK & Eire Service Delegate

The Chairperson asks the GRs to vote to elect a Delegate. Only the GRs have a vote, thus maintaining the principle of one Group one vote.

1. The Chairperson asks each DR whether he is prepared to serve as Delegate for three years. If so, he becomes a candidate. (Note: Because some Areas have few Districts, it is within the autonomy of the Area to widen the eligibility to include suitably experienced former GRs for the office of Delegate.)
2. As suggested in Warranty Three, the voting process should be followed

even if there is only one candidate.

3. The roll is called to ascertain the number of GRs present.
4. Candidates describe their suitability for the role before leaving the room.
5. A discussion may now take place, following which votes are cast. Non-voting members are selected to collect and count the votes.
6. In the spirit of substantial unanimity, the first candidate to receive a two-thirds majority vote is elected.
7. If no candidate receives the required two-thirds vote, the Chairperson may suggest that the election continues between the two candidates with the highest number of votes and the other candidates withdraw their names.
8. Another ballot is taken.
9. If neither candidate has two-thirds of the vote, the Chairman may ask the Assembly whether it prefers:
 - a) to draw by lot between the two highest candidates or
 - b) to take one final ballot and the candidate with the most votes becomes Delegate.
10. When a DR becomes a Delegate he is no longer a DR or a GR and his District elects a new DR and his Group a new GR. He has a vote at the Area Service Committee but not at the Assembly as this would mean more than one vote per Group.

Years of experience have shown the system described to be fair and trouble free. If another method is considered, it should be clearly understood and agreed upon by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly. In keeping with the principle of one vote per Group, the Chairman has a vote only if he is still a GR.

Note: Al-Anon members who are also members of AA are not eligible to serve on the Area Committee as they do not hold office beyond the Group level. See page 98

Election of Alternate Delegate and Area Officers

The election procedure for these positions is the same as that for the UK & Eire Service Delegate. Ideally they are elected from among former or serving DRs or GRs. They serve for a three-year term. Area Service Committee Officers including the Alternate Delegate may continue to serve as DRs.

Suggested Procedures

While the procedures outlined in this Service Handbook are only suggestions,

they have been found by Al-Anon/Alateen members who have followed them to be a simple and direct method of selecting Delegates for the Conference and for conducting Area and Conference affairs, free of political friction. Unlike elected government officials, our Delegates do not represent local interests. They may reflect Area opinion and contribute Area ideas, but they are not bound by directives from their Groups. The Delegates, as well as all other Conference members, are the trusted servants of Al-Anon in the UK & Eire.

Al-Anon experience suggests that we follow these procedures before deciding on changes and make changes only when they clearly become necessary. Using the same structural plan makes it simple for all of us to understand each other's Area procedures. The help of every Area is needed in forming the best possible framework and to make our future secure. However, if by majority agreement an Area decides to alter one or more of these procedures, the changes should be a matter of record so all members of the Area can clearly understand them.

General Information for Areas

1. Al-Anon members who are also members of AA are not eligible to serve on the Area Committee as they do not hold office beyond the Group level.
2. The Delegate, not the Alternate, receives all communications from GSO, even if the Delegate is not able to attend Conference.
3. The Al-Anon and Alateen Groups are notified of each Assembly by the Chairperson, either through the Secretary or any other effective method.
4. If the Delegate resigns or proves inactive, the Alternate finishes the Delegate's term and then may be elected for a three-year term as Delegate.
5. If the Delegate and Alternate both resign and lack of time before the date of the Conference makes it impossible to elect replacements, the Chairperson may attend the Conference in the Delegate's place. If the Chairperson is unable to attend, next in line would be a past Delegate, beginning with the most recent one.
6. If an officer resigns or for any reason is unable to serve, a DR may be appointed by the Chairperson to replace the officer until another can be elected to complete the term. He may then be elected for a three-year term of his own.
7. In the Delegate's third year his successor is elected at an Assembly. The Conference Secretary at GSO should be notified of the name and address of the new Delegate by 1st January of the year of his first Conference.
8. Some Areas may elect the retiring Delegate as Chairperson of the Area. Other Areas may use the Delegate's Conference experience by electing or

- appointing him as Area Co-ordinator of a special service.
9. Al-Anon/Alateen members are eligible to serve as Area Co-ordinators with the exception of the position of Alateen Co-ordinator. Alateen Co-ordinators are elected from Group sponsors currently on the Register of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors.
 10. In Areas that have not as yet formed Districts, the Delegate and Officers are elected from among the GRs.
 11. In order to draw on experience gained in service, an Area may choose to nominate, for the office of Delegate, anyone who has served a three-year term as DR, has remained active at Area level and regularly attends Al-Anon meetings.
 12. No-one can hold office in more than one Area.
 13. Results of elections and minutes of Area Assemblies should be sent to GSO by the Area Secretary.

Area Procedures for Joining the Conference

An Area having more than two hundred groups may petition the Conference to divide and send an additional Delegate to the Conference.

The Area must first submit a request for admission to the UK & Eire Service Conference. The Admissions Committee will review the request and make a recommendation based on policies previously accepted by the Conference.

The Area which is to divide would agree at an Assembly which Districts and Groups are to be in the new Area.

At its first Assembly the new Area would elect a Delegate to the UK & Eire Service Conference, an Alternate and other Area Service Committee Officers.

The Al-Anon/Alateen Relationship

Alateen is an integral part of our fellowship. Area Service Committees are urged to encourage Alateen participation at District and Area levels. An Alateen GR has both voice and vote in the District Meeting and Area Assembly and, if elected by GRs, may hold office at all service levels: District Representative, Area Service Committee Officer and Delegate. **The exception to this is service as an Alateen Co-ordinator who must be an Alateen Screened Group Sponsor.**

The UK & Eire Service Conference

Purposes

Al-Anon's Tradition Two states that: 'For our group purpose there is but one authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.'

The UK & Eire Service Conference makes the group conscience available and effective for Al-Anon UK & Eire. It is the practical means by which the Group conscience can speak; it is the voice of Al-Anon in the UK & Eire and the guarantee that our services shall continue to carry on under all conditions.

The Conference protects Al-Anon and Alateen against a service breakdown; it makes for unity and enables our fellowship to act as a whole upon important matters. This makes it the principal guarantor of Al-Anon and Alateen's harmony and survival in the UK & Eire.

The World Service Conference will always be the senior conference.

Conference Structure

Al-Anon and Alateen Groups in the UK & Eire are represented annually at the UK & Eire Service Conference. Each Group Representative represents a Group, each District Representative represents a District, each Area Service Delegate represents an Area. This succession of links gives every Al-Anon and Alateen Group a voice at the UK & Eire Service Conference, ensuring a continuous chain of communication between the Groups, the Conference and its Service Arms. As information and questions converge at District Meetings and through them to the Area Assembly and finally to Conference, the decisions of Conference travel back through the same links, from Delegate to District Representative to Group Representative and then to the Group members.

Composition of the Conference

The voting members are one Delegate from every Area in the UK & Eire and the Trustees of the General Service Board (GSB). (See Trustees, page 72).

Those attending with voice but no vote are the Conference Secretary, the Secretary to the General Service Board, representatives from GSO and invited observers from the UK & Eire and other countries.

(The Chairperson of the Conference Committee, who is a Trustee and a voting member of Conference, chairs the Conference.)

How It Works

The Conference is structured on a three-year rotation system. This ensures that, as well as a balance of new ideas, Conference will always include Delegates with two years' experience. The Service Arms follow a similar rotation pattern.

Voting Procedure: The Conference Chairperson will explain the voting procedure at the start of Conference. This procedure ensures that the total number of non-Delegate votes will never exceed and always be as close as possible to one-third of the whole.

A majority vote of the Conference constitutes only a suggestion to the General Service Board; a two-thirds vote is binding upon it subject to the provisions of Concept Seven 'The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional'.

On over-all policy matters the Conference makes the final decisions. The General Service Board and the General Service Office are Service Arms of the Conference, a part of the whole fellowship.

The Conference is empowered to pass resolutions, make recommendations to the General Service Board, direct committees to further study, or refuse to act at all in a given situation. It cannot, however, mandate or govern the Al-Anon fellowship which it serves. The Conference represents the Al-Anon membership but does not rule it.

Prior to their first Conference, all newly elected Delegates are assigned to one of the UK & Eire Standing Committees. During Conference they meet with the relevant Standing Committee Chairperson along with the other Delegates allocated to that Committee.

Upon arrival at the Conference, newly elected Delegates meet second and third-year Delegates, as well as the General Service Board and other Conference members.

Typical Conference activities are:

- discussion and approval of the annual reports of the General Service Board Chairperson, Standing Committees, the General Secretary and the General Service Office
- presentation by the Treasurer of a detailed financial report and proposed budget
- discussion, by Conference members, of Current Concerns questions which are submitted in advance

- presentations from one or more Standing Committee Chairpersons.

Conference Agenda

The agenda is developed over the previous months by the Conference Committee. The Delegate members of the Conference Committee are in touch throughout the year and are kept informed of progress. Their suggestions and those of all other Conference members and the membership in general, are carefully considered. The final draft of the agenda is submitted to the General Service Board for approval at its Spring/Summer meeting.

Typical items an agenda might include are:

- any action proposed by the General Service Board affecting Al-Anon as a whole, to be presented for Conference debate and approval
- literature matters
- workshops and open discussion sessions on service matters
- questions and decisions in the field of national Public Information
- amendments to the UK & Eire Service Manual
- appropriate Policy and Concept amendments from the World Service Conference
- traditional approval of all newly selected Trustees
- consideration of local problems, provided they do, or may, affect Al-Anon as a whole
- special requests for guidance from the GSB or Service Arms members
- voluntary contributions - how Groups can be better informed
- problems caused by deviation from Al-Anon Traditions affecting Al-Anon in the UK & Eire as a whole
- matters concerning Conference procedure, structure and function.

How the Conference is Financed

Equalised Delegate Fee

The Delegate fee will be equalised across all the Delegates. This sum is sent to GSO by the Area Treasurer by 1st May. The equalised fee will be calculated by dividing the total of the direct cost by the number of Delegates. Where costs are not known, for example travel costs, an estimate will be made.

Depending on the state of the General Fund, the Executive Committee may approve a subsidy of the equalised fee from the General Fund. This subsidy

will be identified separately.

Responsibility and Timetable for Setting the Equalised Delegate Fee

The equalised Delegate fee will be announced by the Executive Committee in January.

Direct Costs of Conference

All direct costs associated with holding Conference are to be covered by the Delegate fees. Any deficit or surplus in the direct costs following Conference will be absorbed by the General Fund.

Direct costs associated with Conference are:

- a) accommodation and meal costs for all attendees at Conference including Delegates, staff, Trustees and any other people required to attend
- b) travel costs for all attendees (see exception iii below)
- c) equipment and room hire at Conference
- d) production of the Conference Summary and the Conference brochure.

The following costs are excluded from the direct cost and are met from the General Fund:

- i) expenses incurred by the Conference Committee in preparing for Conference
- ii) GSO costs incurred in supporting the Conference Committee and arranging and attending Conference.
- iii) travel costs for Trustees and staff if attending a General Service Board meeting pre- or post-Conference.

All members reap the benefit of the Conference.

The UK & Eire Service Arms

The General Service Office (GSO)

The General Service Office of Al-Anon UK & Eire, located in London, is administered by the General Secretary with assistance provided by paid staff, most of whom are Al-Anon members, and dedicated volunteers.

As the principal service centre of Al-Anon in the UK & Eire, GSO acts in conformity with the wishes of the Conference. All the many functions and

activities of the fellowship circulate through this office. It is the centre, not the head; it serves, but does not control or direct.

GSO serves the needs of the General Service Board (GSB) and the Standing Committees of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire and is the registered office of Family Groups Ltd.

The General Service Office (GSO):

- acts as the clearing-house for enquiries from those who need help or want information
- serves the Al-Anon/Alateen Groups in the UK & Eire
- registers new Groups and provides them with literature, information and help
- informs Delegates of new and disbanded Groups in their Areas
- maintains a database of Al-Anon/Alateen Groups in the UK & Eire
- maintains a telephone service for distressed callers
- ensures that current information is disseminated to all those concerned
- corresponds with the World Service Office (WSO) and other structures
- co-ordinates and handles Public Information at the national level
- publishes and distributes Al-Anon Public Information literature
- encourages the carrying of the Al-Anon message to institutions and the formation of Al-Anon Introductory Meetings
- distributes Conference Approved Literature (CAL)
- reprints some items of CAL with the permission of the WSO
- publishes an e-zine *Al-Anon Today* on the members' website
- distributes material on behalf of the WSO to all Groups in the UK & Eire
- co-ordinates and administers the UK & Eire Service Conference
- helps to administer TEAM events
- keeps the Register of Alateen Screened Group Sponsors and administers the screening procedure
- co-operates with the General Service Office of AA, where appropriate
- reports its activities three times a year to the GSB and annually to the Conference
- organises and preserves material of historic interest for the archives

- takes out block insurance for public liability for all Groups registered with GSO.

GSO is linked to the World Service Office (WSO) and to other GSOs throughout the world.

The General Service Board

The General Service Board (GSB) is the principal committee of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire and serves to protect our principles from distortion and dilution and in general acts as the chief Service Arm of the UK & Eire Service Conference. It serves as guardian of the Twelve Traditions, the Twelve Concepts of Service and the Conference Charter.

The General Service Board is composed of Trustees. The Officers of the GSB are the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Treasurer who are Trustees at Large. There are six Regional Trustees, one from each Region: Eire, England North & North Wales, England South & East, England West & South Wales, Ireland North and Scotland. The remaining Trustees at Large are the Standing Committee Chairpersons, the General Secretary and the IAGSM Delegate. The Secretary to the GSB is in attendance at each meeting.

The Regional Trustees are selected from nominations forwarded from the Areas within the Region concerned. *(A Delegate who will be attending the Conference at which the Regional Trustee selection is approved is not eligible to become a candidate.)* A three year trial period to change the selection procedure for Regional Trustees began in 2013.

Each year, application forms from two Regions are graded by the Regional Committee on Trustees and six Trustee members of the GSB Nominating Committee. The committee consists of all of the Delegates within the region and two delegates from outside the Region chosen by lot at the previous year's Conference. The names of the selected candidates are presented to the Conference for traditional approval. The GSB ratifies these Motions.

Trustees at Large are selected by the General Service Board from a list presented by the GSB Nominating Committee. Their names are presented to the next Conference for traditional approval. All newly selected Trustees begin their term at the next January meeting.

Except for the General Secretary, who is a paid member of staff, the term of office for Trustees of the GSB is three years; they may serve two terms which may be consecutive. *(Before a Regional Trustee can serve a second term they must be nominated by an Area in their Region and be selected by the Regional*

Committee on Trustees.) However, the IAGSM Delegate serves a four-year term attending two International Al-Anon General Services Meetings. If a Trustee serves two consecutive terms and wishes to serve again as a Trustee, at least one year must elapse before they are eligible for re-election.

In managing the affairs of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire, the General Service Board is authorised to:

- establish and maintain the policies of Al-Anon UK & Eire
- make long-range plans
- authorise expenditure
- appoint the Chairperson and each member of the Executive Committee and all Standing Committees
- appoint a General Secretary and GSO staff
- take whatever measures are prudent and effective in carrying out the purpose of our fellowship
- approve the final agenda for the UK & Eire Service Conference.

Any Trustee who has a substantial financial interest in any contract or transaction requiring authorisation by the GSB may not vote on the matter.

Details of the relationship between the GSB and the Conference and the responsibilities of the GSB may be found in the Conference Charter, articles 4 and 10 (see pages 78 and 79). The final decision-making body is the UK & Eire Service Conference.

Executive Committee

This committee is responsible for the routine administration of Al-Anon Family Groups in the UK & Eire. It is composed of a Chairperson, the Treasurer, the General Secretary, and at least three experienced members, preferably past Trustees.

IAGSM Delegate

A member appointed by the GSB to represent the UK & Eire at the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting and report to the GSB and Conference.

The IAGSM is a biennial meeting at which Delegates from each of the General Service Structures throughout the world and the WSO International Co-ordination Committee come together to discuss the worldwide affairs of Al-Anon Family Groups. The WSO invites two Delegates to attend.

Standing Committees

The General Service Board selects, from among the Trustees, the Chairperson of each Standing Committee, who then recruits committee members and presents their names to the General Service Board for approval.

Except for the Editorial Committee, members of Standing Committees serve for 3 years and retire in rotation. Members of the Editorial Committee also serve for three years but, because this Committee may be located in different parts of the UK & Eire, the whole Committee retires at the same time.

Conference A committee set up to organise the UK & Eire Service Conference. It is composed of a Chairperson, the Conference Secretary, the General Secretary (ex-officio member) and other experienced members.

Editorial A committee set up to produce an e-zine. It is composed of a Chairperson and four to six experienced members.

Finance Originally a subcommittee of the Executive Committee set up to assist in safeguarding the finances of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire. It is composed of a Chairperson (the Treasurer), the General Secretary and members with financial skills. This committee was subsumed into the Executive Committee in 2011.

GSB Nominating Committee A committee formed of Trustees which works with its allocated Delegates to evaluate application forms submitted by candidates for Trustee positions. It prepares a short list of candidates for Trustee positions to present to the General Service Board. It is composed of a Chairperson, the General Secretary and five other Trustees.

Literature A committee set up to review and, if required, anglicise Conference Approved Literature for use in the UK & Eire. At the May 2007 GSB meeting it was reported that, as there had been no nominees for the post of Trustee and Chairperson of the Literature Committee, the committee be disbanded for a trial period of three years. At the September 2010 GSB meeting it was agreed unanimously that the suspension would continue until the need arises.

Public Information (PI) A committee set up to encourage members to participate in PI activities and to inform them of ways to do this. It ensures that the general public is informed of the existence and availability of Al-Anon and Alateen as a resource for families and friends of problem drinkers. It is composed of a Chairperson, the PI Secretary at GSO and other experienced members.

TEAM Events Committee (TEC) A committee set up to assist in co-ordinating TEAM events throughout the structure. It is composed of the

six Regional Trustees, one of whom chairs the meetings, and the General Secretary.

Other UK & Eire Committees

Alateen Committee at Conference A committee set up to discuss Alateen matters. It meets annually at Conference and is composed of one Delegate from each Region under the Chairpersonship of the General Secretary. The Chairperson of the General Service Board attends all meetings of this Committee

NB Terms of Reference for Committees are available from GSO.

Thought/Task Forces

Some of the work handled by the Standing Committees has been moved to 'work groups', 'thought forces' or 'task forces' which report back to their originating bodies. Here are the current definitions:

- A *standing committee* is formed by the General Service Board and responds to an ongoing need of Al-Anon Family Groups, e.g. the Public Information Committee. It is often thought to be a permanent part of the service structure. A thought force or task force may evolve from such a committee.
- A *work group* is a unit of people established to meet an ongoing need of Al-Anon Family Groups. A thought force or task force may evolve from a work group. The objective is to complete its activity and present it to the originating body to move forward.
- A *thought force* is a temporary unit of people, established at any level of the structure, to gather ideas and to develop strategies on a single defined task or activity. The objective is to identify a potential idea. The thought force is not expected to have all the answers or to provide the final solutions. It may lay the foundation for the work of a task force. Sometimes they offer recommendations resulting from their findings. A thought force presents its information to the originating body to move forward. They are 'thinkers', not 'doers'.
- A *task force* is a temporary unit of people established to work on a single defined task or activity. It may fulfill the recommendations made by a thought force. Task forces are the 'doers'.

None of these groups is a decision-making body, but they may make recommendations. Each body's objective is to complete its activity and present it to the originating body, to move forward.

Reaching consensus on standing committees, work groups, thought forces and task forces is done in the same manner as it is done at the group level. Members need access to all the information about the issue, they need clarity in what their discussions hope to accomplish, and they trust each other's motives and capabilities. Committee decisions take time, but it is in allowing time for all members who want to participate to put forward their ideas, that a group conscience evolves.

Family Groups Ltd

Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire incorporated as Family Groups Ltd, a Company Limited by Guarantee, in 1970. Its registered office is: 57B Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 0BB. Experience has shown that incorporation is the best way of ensuring the efficiency and continuity needed to maintain Al-Anon/Alateen services throughout our structure. Advantages include tax exemptions and protection against personal liability in all business transactions.

In addition to being a non-profit making company, Family Groups Ltd is a registered charity which means that, among other things, it can reclaim any tax paid on contributions given in the form of Gift Aid.

The Trustees of the General Service Board, (except for the General Secretary who, as a paid member of staff, is precluded by the Articles of Association), are Company Members of Family Groups Ltd., and need always comply with their legal obligations. Included among these are:

- Company Members must follow a resignation procedure in accordance with Company law
- any Trustee who has a substantial financial interest in any contract or transaction requiring authorisation by the General Service Board may not vote on the matter.

Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire Service Conference Charter

Introduction

The Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire Service Conference Charter is a body of principles and relationships through which Al-Anon in the UK & Eire can function as a whole. Since the Conference is not incorporated, the provisions

of the document are not legal, but traditional. This Charter is an informal agreement between Al-Anon in the UK & Eire and its Service Arms.

Charter

1. Purpose of Conference

- a) To be the guardian of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire services and also of Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions.
- b) To be a service body, not a government.

2. Composition of Conference

- a) Voting members - Delegates from each Area in the UK & Eire, Trustees of the General Service Board (See page 66).
- b) Non-voting members - Conference Secretary, Secretary to the General Service Board and representative(s) from the General Service Office. (See page 66.)
- c) By arrangement with the Conference Committee, and with the agreement of the General Service Board, observers from the UK & Eire and other countries may be invited to attend Conference at their own expense.

3. Relation to Al-Anon

- a) The Conference acts for Al-Anon in the perpetuation and guidance of its UK & Eire services.
- b) The Conference is a vehicle by which Al-Anon members can express their views on policy and note deviations from the Traditions.
- c) Delegates are free to vote as their conscience dictates and not necessarily as instructed by their Areas.
- d) No changes are to be made in the Al-Anon or Alateen Traditions, the Steps, the Concepts of Service (except the descriptive text) or the General Warranties of the Conference Charter (Item 12) without written consent of three-quarters of the Al-Anon Family Groups throughout the world.
- e) Wording in the Charter may be changed by the vote of three-quarters of the Conference members; however, the protections afforded the Al-Anon and Alateen Traditions, the Steps, the Concepts of Service and the General Warranties in item 3d may not be taken away or lessened by Conference vote.

4. Relation to the General Service Board

- a) A vote by two-thirds of Conference members in attendance is binding upon the General Service Board except where it has legal obligations under the Charities and Companies Acts and other legislation.
- b) Three-quarters of all registered voting members at the Conference may bring about a re-organisation of the Service Arms, if or when it is deemed essential and may request the resignation of the whole General Service Board and nominate new Trustees. For this purpose only, the number of Service Arms members voting shall be limited to one-quarter of the total Conference vote. Any resignation by a Trustee must conform to the requirements of the Articles of Association of Family Groups Limited.

5. Areas: Purpose

- a) Areas are concerned primarily with the service affairs of Al-Anon in the UK & Eire.
- b) Each Area meets as often as is deemed necessary to conduct its affairs but at least every three years for the purpose of electing a Delegate to the UK & Eire Service Conference, an Alternate Delegate and Area Service Committee Officers. Any District which has not elected its representative at the District meeting may do so at the Area Assembly.

6. Area Assemblies: Composition

- a) The elected representatives of all Al-Anon Groups in each Area meet together at an agreed location.
- b) An Area having more than 200 Groups may petition the Conference to divide and send an additional Delegate to Conference.

7. Area Assemblies: Preferred Method of Election

- a) Delegates are chosen from District Representatives by a two-thirds majority in a written ballot or by lot.
- b) Alternates are elected at the same time and for the same term of office.
- c) It is strongly advised that the method of election of the Chairperson and other Area Service Committee Officers follows the same pattern.

8. Delegates' Terms of Office

Each year one third of the Areas elect a new Delegate for a three-year term. This staggered election and term of office is provided so that a Conference shall always include Delegates with two years' experience.

9. The Conference

The Conference meets annually. In a grave emergency, a special Conference may be called. Conference members may also be asked to give advisory opinions at any time.

10. General Service Board - Composition, Jurisdiction, Responsibilities

- a) The General Service Board (GSB) is a committee composed of experienced Al-Anon members who are known as Trustees. The GSB elects its own successors from nominees subject to the approval of the Conference or a committee thereof.
- b) The GSB is the chief service arm of the Conference, which is guardian of Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions. The GSB has entire freedom to conduct the routine policy and business affairs of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire.
- c) When any subsidiary services are formed, the GSB will be primarily responsible for their policy and financial integrity.
- d) Except in a grave emergency, the GSB ought never take any action liable to greatly affect Al-Anon in the UK & Eire without consulting the Conference. However, it is understood that the GSB shall reserve the right to decide which of its decisions may require referral to the Conference.

11. Conference Procedure

- a) The Conference considers reports from the UK & Eire Service Arms.
- b) Conference members take into consideration all matters affecting Al-Anon in the UK & Eire, engage in debate and pass suitable motions for the direction of the GSB.
- c) The Conference may recommend action regarding serious deviation from Al-Anon Traditions and Concepts of Service.
- d) The Conference may adopt procedures and elect any officers deemed necessary by a method of its choosing.
- e) A quorum shall consist of two-thirds of the voting members registered at the Conference.
- f) After each Conference a summary of the proceedings is made available on the members' website to all Conference members and Al-Anon Family Groups throughout the UK & Eire.

12. General Warranties of the Conference

In all proceedings, the UK & Eire Service Conference of Al-Anon shall observe the spirit of The Traditions: that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members; that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible, by unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference serves Al-Anon it shall never perform any act of government; and that like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

Note: The term Al-Anon includes Alateen. Therefore, the above Charter applies to all registered Groups, including Alateen.

General Information

World Service Office (WSO)

The World Service Office (WSO) also known as Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., renders services to Groups all over the world.

World Service Conference (WSC)

The annual week-long meeting attended by World Service Delegates from the United States, Canada and their territorial areas.

General Service Office Structure

A service structure of one or more nations outside the US and Canada with a Board of Trustees and other elected Al-Anon members responsible for Al-Anon service-related activities in their respective structure.

Division of the UK & Eire

If a country within the UK & Eire wishes to establish its own General Service Office, this decision should be brought to the Conference for full discussion. At least one more UK & Eire Service Conference should take place before the country concerned becomes an independent structure, so that ample time is allowed for the necessary changes to take place in a spirit of mutual co-operation and harmony.

Al-Anon Information Services

An Al-Anon/Alateen Information Service is a local service centre established by one or more Areas or by Groups located close enough to one another for easy access and communication. Geographical boundaries need not be observed unless one Information Service conflicts with another nearby. In this case the boundaries should be set by mutual agreement.

An Information Service usually, but not necessarily, performs the following functions:

- maintains a listing in the local telephone directory, providing a telephone number for those seeking information about Al-Anon and Alateen
- maintains a PO Box number or an office address for listing with the General Service Office

- receives post and telephone enquiries and channels them to the nearest Group
- distributes lists of Group meetings
- serves as an avenue for local Public Information (PI) which is channelled through the Area whenever possible
- maintains a stock of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and may register with the WSO as a Literature Distribution Centre (LDC) for CAL
- holds periodic meetings attended by all the Information Centre Representatives. Group problems are discussed in light of the Twelve Traditions
- prints and distributes a newsletter about local activities for the Groups that support it.

Any local Al-Anon or Alateen Group may agree to support an Information Service, but joining is purely voluntary. The Information Service is supported by the Groups it serves within its geographical boundaries; it should not seek or accept support outside that area. Contributions are voluntary and are not a condition of membership.

Historical Background

World Services

From 1951, when Al-Anon began, until 1961 when the World Service Conference was born, the world services for Al-Anon were conducted from the Clearing House office in New York. All the work was done by a group of volunteers and a few paid workers, all of them living in the New York area. In 1954 these services were incorporated as Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters Inc solely for business purposes. There was a Board of Directors which took care of the business and policy matters, with the help of an Advisory Board.

When our fellowship was still small, this service arrangement worked well and did much to unify Al-Anon and spread its message around the world.

This meant, however, that Al-Anon services were not linked to the growing Groups. There was no way for the services to share with, and account to, those they served. It was only by means of mail polls and correspondence that the World Service Office was able to receive the guidance and direction of the whole Al-Anon membership.

This degree of isolation from the fellowship as a whole could have proved hazardous for the future. If an unauthorised decision proved to be a serious error, confidence in the World Service Office could be weakened, which would affect the whole vital service effort. Without direct linkage with the widespread Al-Anon Groups, it might not have been possible to repair such a condition.

Al-Anon has followed the path of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) from the beginning, using its principles and adapting its service structure to our own needs. AA had found that the group conscience of its fellowship as a whole could best be heard through the establishment of a Conference of Delegates representing all sections of the continent and meeting yearly with the Board of Trustees and the General Service staff. AA's first Conference met in the spring of 1951.

From 1955 until 1962, Bill W, co-founder of AA, spent much time developing suitable principles and philosophies for the guidance of AA's services. These, he felt, should agree with AA's experience and the principles and philosophies expressed or implied in the Steps and Traditions.

By 1961 Al-Anon had agreed that its group conscience should have the same means of being guided in the performance of its services worldwide. A simple, inexpensive plan, worked out by Bill and his wife Lois W, co-founder of Al-Anon, was put into effect on a three-year trial basis.

By 1963 it had been proved that this linkage between the Groups and Headquarters was so effective that the members of the trial Conference voted unanimously to make it permanent. Using AA's Service Manual as a guide, the World Service Handbook had been developed for Al-Anon by a Handbook Committee chaired by Lois W.

The Conference Charter, long in the process of development, was unanimously adopted by the 1967 World Service Conference. This is a traditional, not a legal, framework within which the Conference functions.

It was always the intention of the World Service Office (WSO) Board of Trustees that each country or closely related group of countries outside the US and Canada should eventually develop its own service structure when there was a sufficient number of Groups to make it practical.

UK & Eire Services

In 1951 a Group in Belfast was the first in the UK and Eire to register with the World Service Office, and from 1960 (when 13 Groups were known to exist in England) to 1969 (115 Groups in the UK & Eire), services for Al-Anon were conducted from members' homes in or near London, by individual members working as a committee. In addition, as many Groups as were able sent a representative to attend quarterly meetings where Al-Anon affairs were discussed and voted upon. A new committee was elected annually.

After three years, the original committee became the Working Committee and a Standing Committee was elected in addition. These two committees were known as the United Kingdom Central Services. The Working Committee, still in their own homes, gave the service which would have been carried out by a General Service Office had one existed, viz: General Secretary, Treasurer, Clerical Assistant, News Sheet Editor, Literature Liaison and News Sheet Distributor. By this time committee members were spread over a wide area of the United Kingdom. In 1963 the News Sheet was enlarged and re-named *News & Views*. The Standing Committee (Chairman and three members) met quarterly to discuss and evaluate, if necessary with guidance from WSO, suggestions sent in by Groups and to formulate policy. This was subsequently voted on at quarterly UK Central Services Meetings by Group Representatives. Groups who could not attend had a postal vote.

From 1965 onwards various Guidelines were adapted for our own needs; an Al-Anon poster (later adopted by the World Service Office) was produced; the first piece of UK & Eire Al-Anon literature *A New Life* was published after appearing as a chapter in *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* and a press handout was later incorporated in the Public Information leaflet *The Al-Anon Family Groups*.

In 1967, UK Central Services voted to use only Conference Approved Literature.

In 1969 it was realised that the Central Services were without real representative links to the fast growing and scattered Groups throughout the UK & Eire and hence were not directly accountable to those they served. It was also found that the responsibilities and work entailed were becoming too big for individuals working for the most part in isolation.

In the late 1960s it was becoming apparent that our structure needed revision and, with the information brought back from the World Service Conferences in 1968, 1969 and 1970 by an Al-Anon member representing UK Central Services, it was decided to set this in motion.

In the summer of 1969 the Standing Committee nominated a subcommittee of five to investigate 'the possibilities and costs of a UK & Eire Central Service Office or any other suggestions for improving the present method of administration.'

It should be put on record that on the morning of the subcommittee's first meeting, the Chairman received a letter from St. Giles' Centre, Camberwell, London, offering a room for use as an office at a very low rent.

Using the knowledge gained by our Representative to the World Service Conference, and following the suggestions and experience of the World Service Office, the subcommittee produced an experimental plan which it presented to the November 1969 UK Central Services Meeting, with the recommendation that it be implemented for one year. This proposal was adopted by the Groups by 63 votes to 2.

Al-Anon General Service Office

On 5th January 1970 the General Service Office at St Giles' Centre, Camberwell Church Street, London SE5 opened and was manned on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays by three volunteers each giving one day's work per week. A telephone was installed and a circular was sent to all Groups announcing the opening and appealing for basic equipment.

Duties were allocated under the headings General Secretary, Treasurer and Third Member, and an additional member took on the organisation of volunteer help. The Editor of *News & Views* and the Loner Liaison Member continued to work in their own homes. A Staff Meeting was held once a month.

Shortly after the opening of the General Service Office permission was granted by the WSO to reprint some of the most popular literature.

The 1970 Conference approved the formation of an Editorial Committee for *News & Views*, to serve for three years, and in the same year the work of Loner Liaison was taken over by a District for one year.

1972 saw the office open five days a week, and in October 1975 the General Service Office moved to larger premises in Great Dover Street, London SE1 with two part-time paid workers assisted by volunteers. In 1976 this was increased to three, all taking equal responsibility. The title of General Secretary lapsed.

In 1981 the office was being run by a full-time paid Office Manager and six part-time paid staff, assisted by volunteers, serving over 600 Groups.

On 14th November 1983 a General Secretary to Al-Anon UK & Eire was appointed. In 1988 GSO registered the 1000th Group in the UK & Eire.

In 2013, premises were purchased at 57B Great Suffolk St, London SE1 0BB for the General Service Office.

UK & Eire General Service Board

A Board of Trustees was formed, initially by appointment - three from England appointed by the original Standing Committee and one each from Scotland, Northern Ireland and Eire, chosen by members in those countries. The three office staff members (General Secretary, Treasurer and Third Member) became ex-officio members. As each Standing Committee was formed the Chairperson became an ex-officio member of the Board with voice and vote.

The Board first met in May 1970 for one day and subsequently twice a year, one of its meetings being held during the weekend of Conference. The provision was made that if the need arose for urgent discussion or decision, an interim meeting could be called by the Chairperson, provided a minimum of four Trustees attended and the issue could not be resolved in any other way. A rotation of the six Regional General Service Board Members began in 1972 (two leaving annually in May). Thereafter nominations for all new Regional Board Members were made by the Districts from within that Region. These nominations were presented annually to the Conference for approval and the Board made the appointments.

In 1973 the name 'Board of Trustees' was changed to 'General Service Board'. From 1982 Regional Board Members (one from each Region concerned) were selected by the Regional Trustee Nominating Committees.

These Committees sat at Conference and included DRs from that Region and others. The whole Conference then voted to approve the two Regional nominees whose names were then passed to the General Service Board for ratification.

In 1984 the General Service Board was restructured so that it no longer included all the Standing Committee Chairpersons. At this time the GSB consisted of the Treasurer, the Executive Committee Chairperson and the Regional Board Members. The name 'Regional Board Members' was changed to 'Regional Trustees' and an additional January meeting was introduced bringing the number of meetings to three a year. Until 1986 the Chairperson was elected from the Regional Trustees. As the work of the Chairperson increased an extra member was then appointed to the GSB to serve in this capacity.

In 1995 the General Service Board was restructured to include all Standing Committee Chairpersons as Trustees at Large.

UK & Eire Service Conference

In 1970 the UK & Eire was structured into 14 Districts and six Regions.

The first one day Conference was held in October 1970 at the General Service Office. Of the 14 Districts, 11 were represented mainly by District Chairpersons, as few Districts had at that time elected District Representatives. This Conference was organised by the Chairperson and Secretary of the General Service Board and the World Service Conference Representative, but by the following year in 1971 a Conference Committee was formed.

In 1974 the Conference was extended to a weekend and was held at Nottingham University, with 19 Districts sending Representatives.

In 1981, out of 25 Districts, 24 were represented, and in 1984 all of the 28 Districts then in existence were represented at the Conference.

In 1983 the Conference Committee, whose task had been to organise the Conference, was replaced by a volunteer Conference Secretary who liaised with the General Service Office to arrange Conference and plan the agenda.

In 1988 Conference approved a change which brought the UK & Eire structure into line with that of the World Service i.e. Group, District, Area, by introducing a new service layer. The old Districts were renamed Areas, 33 at that time, each electing a Delegate to represent it at Conference. Each Area was then able to subdivide into as many new Districts as it wished.

By 1989 the increased workload of the Conference led to it being extended to begin on Friday morning and the position of Conference Secretary changed from a volunteer to a staff position. A GSO-based Conference Committee was formed.

International Al-Anon General Services Meeting

The first biennial International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (Trial) was held in New Orleans in 1980 and the second in New York City in September 1982. At its third meeting in Stamford, Connecticut, in 1984, it became a permanent part of the Al-Anon worldwide structure, meeting every two years. The UK & Eire sent one Delegate to the first meeting and two Delegates to the next meeting. In 1988 the first IAGSM to be held outside the USA took place in London.

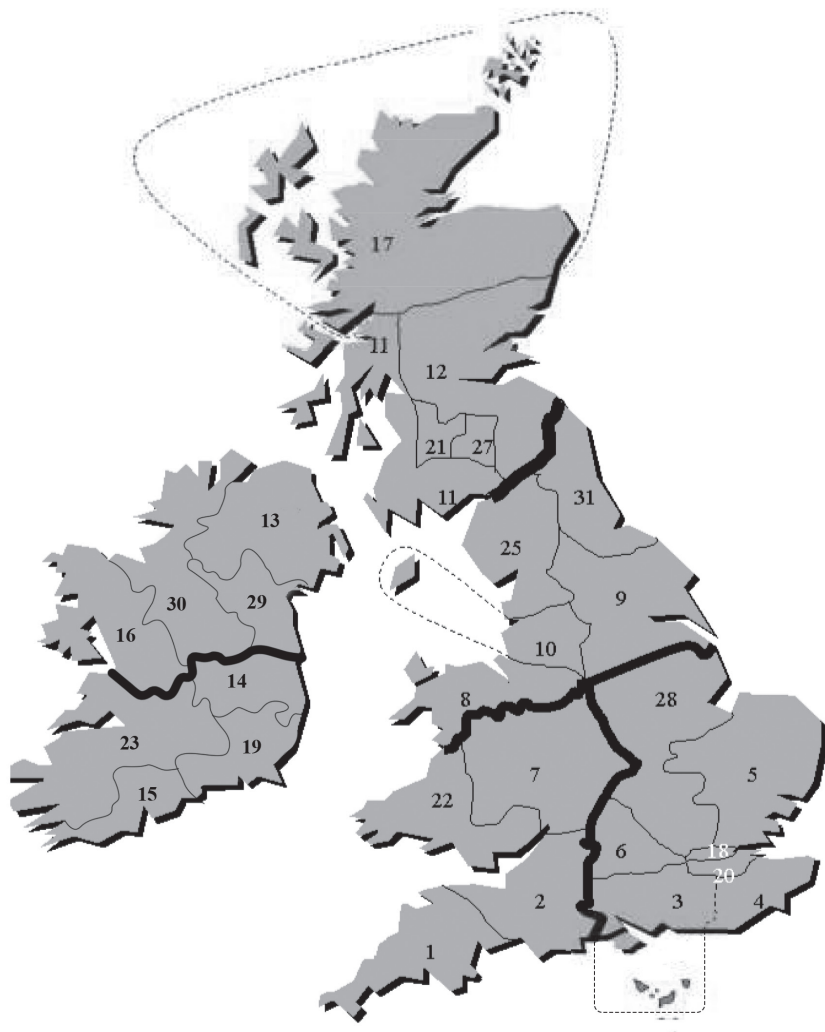
Incorporation as a Non-Profit Making Company

Following the example of AA in this country and of Al-Anon in the USA, Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire registered as a non-profit making company called Family Groups Ltd on 23rd June 1970. In 1973 charitable status was obtained.

Historical List of Events

- 1951** First UK Al-Anon Group registered with the World Service Office.
- 1960** 10 Groups held the first Intergroup Meeting at YMCA, Tottenham Court Road, London.
UK Central Services Committee formed.
- 1961** First News Sheet issued.
- 1963** News Sheet enlarged and renamed *News & Views*.
- 1964** First Alateen Group formed.
- 1968** Al-Anon member from UK Central Services attended the World Service Conference.
- 1969** 100th Group registered.
- 1970** First General Service Office opened at St Giles' Centre, Camberwell Church Street, London SE5.
First UK & Eire structure formed by division into 14 Districts and six Regions.
The Board of Trustees met for the first time.
Incorporation as 'Family Groups Ltd'.
The first one-day Conference was held at GSO.

- 1973** First UK & Eire Service Handbook adopted.
Registered as a charity. Covenant Scheme started.
Lois W (co-founder of Al-Anon) visited the UK & Eire and attended the UK & Eire Service Conference.
- 1974** Conference extended to weekend and held at Nottingham University.
- 1975** GSO moved to larger premises at 61 Great Dover Street, London SE1.
Dublin Information Centre opened.
- 1977** Glasgow Information Centre opened.
- 1980** UK & Eire represented at the first International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (exploratory) in New Orleans.
Belfast Information Centre opened.
- 1981** First Al-Anon/Alateen UK & Eire Convention.
- 1983** General Secretary appointed.
- 1985** First Regional Service Seminar held.
- 1988** Structure changed to that of the World Service.
First IAGSM outside USA held in London. GSO registered 1000th Group.
- 1997** Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire adopted Screening Procedures for Alateen Sponsors and Registration Requirements for Alateen Groups.
- 2001** 50th Anniversary of WSO structure.
50th Anniversary of first registered Group in the UK & Eire.
- 2007** First European Zonal Meeting took place in Essen, Germany.
- 2012** Production of *News & Views* suspended.
- 2013** Premises were purchased for the General Service Office at 57B Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 0BB.
First TEAM Event held.
- 2014** *Al-Anon Today* published online.
Closure of Glasgow Information Centre.

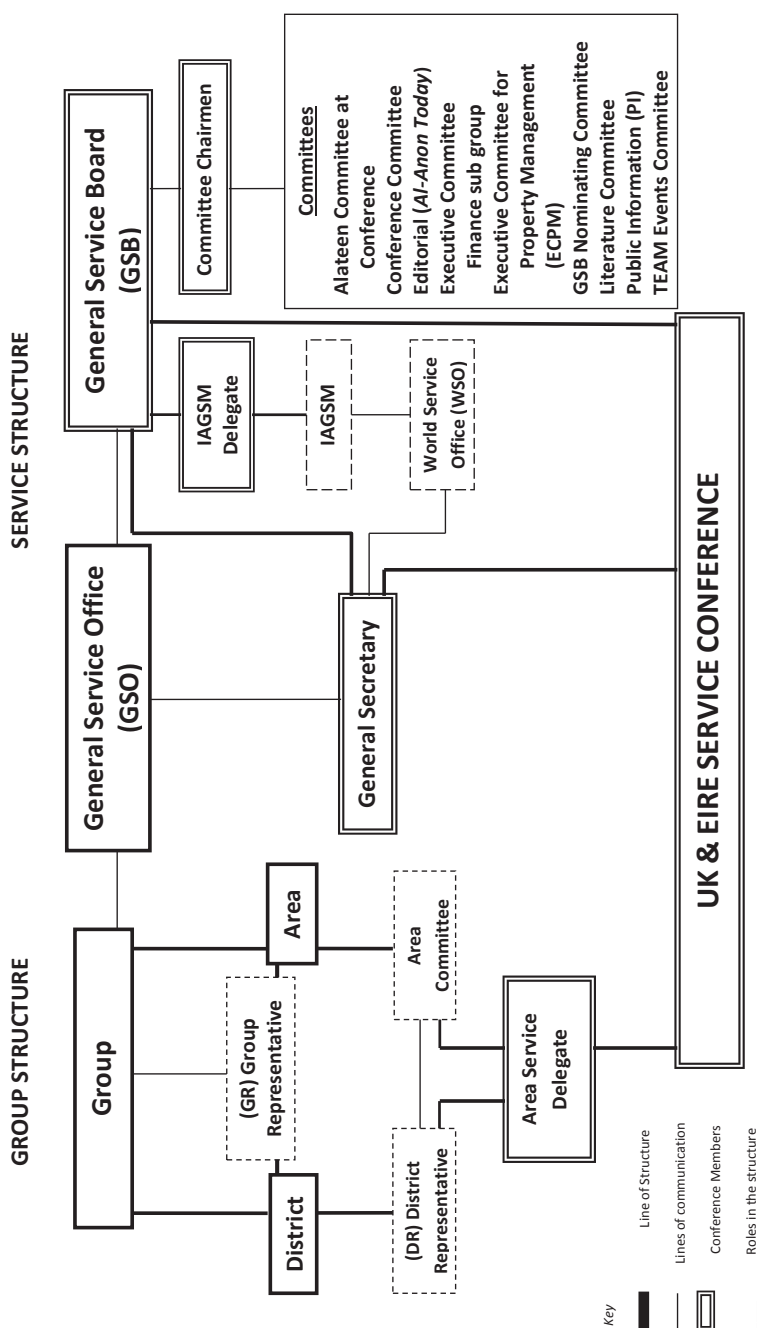


Areas

Regions

1, 2, 7, 22.....	England West & South Wales
3, 4, 5, 6, 18, 20, 28.....	England South & East
8, 9, 10, 25, 31.....	England North & North Wales
11, 12, 17, 21, 27.....	Scotland
13, 16, 29, 30.....	Ireland West, North East & North Midlands
14, 15, 19, 23.....	Ireland South, South East & South Midlands

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS UK & EIRE



Part 3

Policy Digest



The Policy Digest reflects policy statements that grew out of questions and experiences from the Al-Anon fellowship worldwide. They are interpretations of our basic guides, the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service.

Includes

- ▶ Membership
- ▶ Anonymity
- ▶ Public Relations
- ▶ Finances
- ▶ Conference Approved Literature and Service Tools/Materials
- ▶ Incorporation/Taxes
- ▶ Al-Anon as it Relates to Others

Policy Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen

These policy statements grew out of questions and experiences from the Al-Anon fellowship worldwide. They are interpretations of our basic guides: the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service.

The questions and shared experiences came from many sources: Al-Anon and Alateen members, regional and national conferences, Delegates to the World Service Conference; they came from all over the United States, Canada and from many other countries.

When an individual or a group seeks clarification of any matter relating to the Al-Anon fellowship, it is the responsibility of the World Service Office (WSO) Policy Committee to make statements that interpret and encourage use of the Traditions and Concepts. After approval by the WSO Board of Trustees and the World Service Conference, these statements are set forth in the Policy Digest. To arrive at answers that are consistent, loving and helpful, takes time and patience, both on the part of the individual seeking clarification and the WSO Policy Committee.

As our fellowship grows and many more ideas and questions are raised, let us strive to live with, and by, what we have here, secure in the knowledge that changes and additions will be made as circumstances and growth require.

Channel for Arriving at Policies

The WSO Policy Committee is composed of a Chairperson, all members of the Board of Trustees, at-large members of the Executive Committee, the Chairperson of all WSO Committees and the Conference members of the WSO administrative staff.

The WSO Policy Committee is often asked to help when there is confusion about how a specific Tradition applies to a new or controversial situation in Al-Anon or Alateen. The Committee meets regularly during the year to review and discuss each problem or issue in light of the Traditions and determines an appropriate policy recommendation. The proposed policies are then brought to the Board of Trustees for consideration.

The Chairpersons of the Policy Committee reports the interim policies passed by the Board of Trustees to the World Service Conference (WSC) each year for its review. If the wording or intent of these policies is to be changed, it is done at the Conference. Action on each policy requires a majority of no less than a two-thirds vote for approval or disapproval by the entire Conference. The same procedure is required for major revisions and amendments to existing policies.

Policies approved by the World Service Conference are reported in many WSO publications, including *The Forum* and the *World Service Conference Summary*. Appropriate adjustments are made in updating this *UK & Eire Service Manual* and other Conference Approved Literature.

The World Service Conference (WSC)

The WSC is the permanent body for the expression of the conscience of the Al-Anon /Alateen fellowship in the light of our Traditions. It usually meets annually during April. Its membership is composed of the elected World Service Delegates from each Assembly Area in the United States and Canada, the Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc, the Chairpersons and WSO Staff Administrators of all Standing Committees and the members of the Executive Committee. Representatives from countries other than the US and Canada may participate but not vote.

To keep the conscience of the fellowship alive, Delegates serve on the WSO's Standing Committees or subcommittees. For the sake of continuity and unity, each Standing Committee has its Chairperson plus 'in-town' members who meet regularly throughout the year at the World Service Office.

The UK & Eire Service Conference

The UK & Eire Service Conference is composed of one Delegate from each Area, Trustees of the General Service Board, the General Secretary, the Conference Chairpersons and representatives from GSO. The World Service Conference will always be the senior Conference.

Each Delegate is allocated to one of the Standing Committees and attends a meeting with the Committee Chairpersons at the Conference. The purpose of Delegate representation on Standing Committees is to give a broader group conscience and perspective to the Committee, whose work is of relevance to Al-Anon Family Groups in the UK & Eire as a whole.

The World Service Office (WSO)

The WSO is composed of executives, staff members and Selected Committees supervised by a legally empowered Board of Trustees and its Executive Committee. It functions as a clearing-house, providing service to the fellowship and spreading Al-Anon's message worldwide.

The UK & Eire General Service Office (GSO)

GSO functions as a clearing-house providing service to the fellowship and spreading Al-Anon's message. It is administered by the General Secretary of Al-Anon UK & Eire with assistance provided by salaried staff and volunteers and is supervised by the General Service Board and its Executive Committee.

Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions

Membership and Groups

Membership Eligibility

Anyone who feels that their personal life is or has been deeply affected by close contact with a problem drinker is eligible for membership in Al-Anon (see page 33). Alateen, part of the Al-Anon fellowship, is designed for members between the ages of 12 and 17 inclusive. Once Alateen members reach 18 they are encouraged to attend Al-Anon meetings. Family members below teen years may not be ready for the Alateen self-help programme. Such children may have to depend on others to choose what they learn. This dependency could lead to the development of a teaching programme rather than a shared learning experience. 'Teaching' is not compatible with the Al-Anon principle of sharing.

Who Can Start a Group

The actual founding of the Group and its functions is the responsibility of those qualified for membership. Occasionally a minister, doctor, social worker or AA member initiates the formation of an Al-Anon Group. However, after the group has started, professional or AA participation should be limited to open meetings.

Registration of Groups

GSO will register any Group designating itself as an Al-Anon Family Group with the understanding that it will abide by the Traditions and that meetings will be open to any Al-Anon member. Alateen meetings, however, consist of younger family members assisted by two Alateen Screened Group Sponsors whose names are on the Register of Screened Group Sponsors held at GSO.

GSO cannot register any Group that is solely for Al-Anon members who are also recovering alcoholics and members of AA, because it does not qualify to have a Group Representative.

Alateen Groups

Two Alateen Screened Group Sponsors who are not also members of AA are essential to every group in order to keep the focus on the Al-Anon interpretation of the programme.

Introductory Meetings

Introductory Meetings can be held at institutions such as hospitals, treatment centres and shelters, or any other location where families and friends of alcoholics gather. Attendance changes frequently. Such a meeting is not considered an Al-Anon Group and does not have its own Group Representative. Experienced Al-Anon members share the responsibilities for conducting Introductory Meetings and for inviting those in attendance to try a regular Al-Anon/Alateen meeting. Al-Anon Groups, directly or through their District, are encouraged to help with the cost of literature and other expenses for Introductory Meetings. Members must comply with the security requirements of the meeting location.

Limited Access Groups

Limited Access Groups meet in locations where our general membership may not be able to attend. Groups meeting in industrial, military or school settings would fall into this category. These are Al-Anon or Alateen Groups but membership may be limited because of location.

Choosing a Group's Name

A Group's name cannot imply affiliation with any other Twelve Step group, self-help group, commercial venture, agency, religious group, rehabilitation facility or other outside enterprise.

Assembly Representation

Each Al-Anon/Alateen Group elects a GR (*see Part 2*). Areas should encourage the attendance of Alateen GRs at District Meetings and Area Assemblies.

Multiple Group Membership and Office-Holding

Al-Anon members who attend several groups *regularly* and *participate fully* in all of them may consider themselves members of all those groups. Most members, however, consider one group their home group.

Membership entitles a person to vote and hold office. Whether members may hold office in more than one group is a matter of group autonomy, although it does deprive other members of the privilege of serving and growing. No

member may, however, be Group Representative (GR) of more than one group at the same time.

Service Participation by Members of Al-Anon Family Groups Who Are Also Members of Alcoholics Anonymous

Al-Anon Family Groups and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) share a common spiritual legacy in AA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Before Al-Anon was founded, family groups met with, and alongside, AA groups. In 1951 these family groups banded together and agreed to organise into Al-Anon Family Groups, to follow a programme dedicated to helping the families and friends of alcoholics. Over the years, Al-Anon developed its own service structure, based on the model provided by AA's experience and guided by the Twelve Traditions.

Tradition Five defines Al-Anon's single purpose. Tradition Six encourages co-operation with Alcoholics Anonymous, maintaining that Al-Anon is a separate entity that ought never affiliate or create the appearance of affiliation with any outside enterprise. Putting these principles into practice maintains a separation between the service structures of Al-Anon and AA. This separation helps avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest and safeguards Al-Anon's singleness of purpose. Accordingly, Al-Anon's policy is that members who are also members of AA do not serve as Group Representatives (GRs), District Representatives (DRs), Area Co-ordinators, Newsletter Editors, UK & Eire Service Delegates and/or any of their alternates, nor do they serve on Standing Committees.

Filling service positions is a matter of District and Area autonomy, within this policy and the spiritual principles that form its basis. Tradition Four grants autonomy to local service arms, except in matters affecting Al-Anon or AA as a whole. Al-Anon members who are also members of AA participate fully in all group activities, including group conscience decisions. However, they do not hold Al-Anon service positions that vote in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.

Participating in Al-Anon service is integral to recovery for every member. Step Twelve, carrying our message to others, is a very important part of Al-Anon service. Members of Al-Anon who are also members of AA are often in a position to carry our message to those who are not aware of the benefits of attending Al-Anon Family Groups. Members of Al-Anon who are also members of AA may be invited by local/Area service arms, the Board of Trustees, or the General Service Office to participate in projects, in keeping with the spirit of this policy.

This policy on service participation by members of Al-Anon who are also

AA members protect Al-Anon's viability as a programme dedicated to helping the families and friends of alcoholics. It ensures that Al-Anon's service structure represents the unique perspective of families and friends of alcoholics, recognising that the alcoholic's perspective is represented in AA's service structure. Members honour this policy out of respect for Al-Anon unity and the group conscience process, in accordance with Tradition One and Tradition Two.

Group Problems

Any group or service arm within an Area that fails to resolve its disputes or misunderstandings by application of the Traditions and Concepts of Service should seek guidance from its District or Area. If further guidance is needed, the matter can then be referred to GSO. GSO can only offer suggestions by relating the shared experiences of other groups or by providing the appropriate references in existing service material.

Meetings

Locating Meetings

Al-Anon meeting information can be obtained on the Al-Anon website www.al-anonuk.org.uk or by contacting the Helpline on 0800 0086 811 between 10am and 10pm. Alateen meeting information can be obtained by contacting the Admin line 020 7593 2070 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. Alternatively, contact your local Al-Anon Information Office in Belfast (02890 682 368).

Open/Closed Meetings

Closed meetings are for all Al-Anon members i.e. anyone whose personal life is or has been deeply affected by close contact with a problem drinker. Open meetings are attended by anyone interested in Al-Anon/Alateen. They are often attended by both members of Al-Anon and members of Alcoholics Anonymous. They provide an opportunity for professionals to hear how families have experienced recovery.

What to Announce at Meetings

Generally those events put on by, or connected to, Al-Anon service arms are announced at our meetings, in newsletters, through registered Information Services and on the UK & Eire Al-Anon website. These events bring members together to connect through experiences and discussions.

Audio Recordings and Podcasts*

Occasionally, Al-Anon/Alateen meetings may be recorded provided that:

- every member is aware and approves of the recording
- anonymity is carefully preserved.

(See 'Anonymity' section in the Policy Digest.)

Recordings of members' sharings may appear as podcasts on the UK & Eire Al-Anon website for PI purposes. A release form must be signed by the members, agreeing to Al-Anon Family Groups' ownership of the material.

Video Recording/Photography/Film

In keeping with Tradition Eleven, video recording, photographing and filming at meetings is not recommended.

**WSO/GSO has no responsibility in the matter of enthusiasts who realise a profit from the sale of recorded talks of Al-Anon members.*

Films

The use of films at closed meetings is not appropriate; experience shows such use lessens the opportunity and desire for personal exchange between members. This sharing is basic to our programme of recovery.

Although it is not suggested as an alternative to having members speak, the occasional use of films at open meetings may be helpful. It is not, however, the most effective way to carry the Al-Anon message. The explanation under *Speakers from the Helping Professions* (see page 133), applies equally to the use of films.

Conventions

Al-Anon/Alateen Area-wide Conventions, Mini Conventions, Rallies, Reunions, Roundups or other large Get-togethers

Conventions attract many members, drawing them together to celebrate and share their experiences. Where possible, members planning Area or Region-wide conventions work closely with the local Area Service Committee(s). Good liaison assures better attendance as well as good will. In many Areas, the convention Chairpersons are appointed or elected at the Area Assembly. The Chairperson or another convention committee liaison member has a voice and may have a vote on the Area Service Committee.

Distribution of Proceeds from Al-Anon/Alateen Conventions

Surplus funds derived from conventions are usually distributed between the Area and GSO (in the UK for the General Fund, and in Eire, to Al-Anon Family Groups CLG) with a reasonable sum held in reserve to seed the next convention (see page 117).

Workshops or other Get-togethers

Members may choose to plan get-togethers for public information, service or other sharing purposes. Chairpersons of these events are not necessarily chosen by, nor are members of, their Area Service Committee. To avoid calendar conflicts and encourage unity, they can alert the District Representative, the UK & Eire Service Delegate or some other member of the Area Service Committee, making known their dates, purposes, etc.

Alateen Participation

It is within the autonomy of the planning committee to make the decision whether or not the Alateen members have a separate agenda. **Any Alateen meeting must have two Alateen Screened Group Sponsors present.**

Alateen at Conventions

It should be noted that members who take a direct part in organising the convention owe a duty of care to the participating Alateen member in relation to that event. Organising committees should, in the event that the parent or guardian is not present at the convention, ensure that they get written consent from the parent/legal guardian giving their permission for the Alateen member to attend the convention and naming the adult responsible for the Alateen member.

- a. The organising committee must ensure that two Screened Group Sponsors are present at each Alateen meeting.
- b. There should be guidelines for acceptable behaviour. The Group Sponsors should read and discuss the guidelines thoroughly with the Alateen group members.
- c. The Alateen member is required to obtain a written permission slip from his/her parent/legal guardian in order to attend.
- d. The completed permission slip should be signed by the adult who undertakes full responsibility for the Alateen member for the duration of the function.
- e. Alateen Group Sponsors should always be aware of the specific whereabouts of the individual Alateen members during Alateen meetings and supervise them for the duration of their specific responsibility.

Al-Anon/Alateen Events with AA participation

Al-Anon service arms may invite AA to participate in an Al-Anon hosted event. (See '*Al-Anon as it Relates to Others*' for participation in AA conventions.)

Films

Sometimes films are used at large meetings and conventions for entertainment between meetings and workshops. The use of Conference Approved films is suggested in keeping with Tradition Six.

Video recording or filming in any format does not occur at conventions, workshops or other events since it is a violation of Tradition Eleven in safeguarding anonymity.

Anonymity

The experience of our groups suggests that the principle of anonymity, summed up in Tradition Twelve as ‘the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions’, has three elements: there is anonymity as it applies outside Al-Anon, governing our contacts with the general public, the media and professionals; anonymity within the fellowship; and anonymity as it contributes to our personal growth.

Anonymity Outside Al-Anon

Anonymity and the General Public

When dealing with the general public it is important to use discretion in revealing one’s Al-Anon membership. In settings where there is no media involved (health fairs, speaking to community groups or schools, etc.), members are free to use their full names, if they are comfortable doing so.

Anonymity and the Media

Tradition Eleven gives a specific guideline, ‘...we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films and TV’. It is Al-Anon policy to interpret Tradition Eleven to include the internet as well as all forms of evolving public media. Personal anonymity in the media guards the fellowship from the Al-Anon member who may be tempted to seek public recognition.

When speaking or writing as an Al-Anon member in any form of press, radio, films, TV, Internet or other evolving public media, members use only their first names and last initial or pseudonyms. Members can also speak without identifying themselves or sign articles ‘Anonymous’.

Photographs, video, film or web postings in published or broadcast media should not reveal full face images of those identified as members.

On any website accessible to the public, whether an Al-Anon site or not, full names, phone numbers or other identifying information are not posted if they are identified as belonging to Al-Anon members.

(See ‘Anonymity in Al-Anon/Alateen Publications’ in the ‘Anonymity Within Al-Anon’ section, page 106).

Anonymity and Professionals

It is important to make the name of Al-Anon Family Groups known through our Public Information work with the many types of professionals who come into contact with families suffering from the effects of someone else's drinking. When working with professionals, Al-Anon members are more credible and effective when they give their full names and contact information. While personal anonymity is not required in contact with professionals, it is helpful to inform the professionals of the importance of anonymity and confidentiality in Al-Anon.

Electronic Communication outside Al-Anon

Email provides a quick and easy way to communicate the Al-Anon message to the media and professionals. Members' business email addresses should not be used for Al-Anon Public Information work as they could imply affiliation and may not be confidential to the member.

Web-based communication, such as online audio/visual materials (e.g. webcasts or podcasts), social networking sites and blogs, provides members with easy access to distribute information about Al-Anon recovery to a large audience. In keeping with Tradition Eleven (*Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.*), members who use this type of communication outlet must maintain their personal anonymity and that of any Al-Anon or AA member because the Internet is a form of media.

Anonymity Within Al-Anon

Members use their full names within the fellowship when they wish. The degree of anonymity a member chooses (first name, pseudonym or full name) is not subject to criticism. Each member has the right to decide.

Regardless of our personal choice, we guard the anonymity of everyone else in the fellowships, Al-Anon/Alateen and AA. This means not revealing to anyone, even to relatives, friends, and other members, whom we see and what we hear at a meeting.

Anonymity goes well beyond mere names. All of us need to feel secure in the knowledge that nothing seen or heard at a meeting will be revealed. We feel free to express ourselves among our fellow Al-Anon members because we can be sure that what we say will be held in confidence.

Special Note: Anonymity is a spiritual principle and cannot be used as a legal basis to shield criminal behaviour, past or current.

Anonymity at open Al-Anon meetings and events

At open Al-Anon meetings, group anniversaries, conventions or workshops where non-members may be present, Al-Anon and Alateen members are free to decide how much anonymity they prefer. It is well to open such meetings with a brief explanation of the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions. One suggestion is as follows:

There may be some who are not familiar with our tradition of personal anonymity in any form of press, radio, films, TV, Internet and other electronic media. If so, we respectfully ask that no Al-Anon, Alateen or AA speaker or member be identified by full name or picture in published, broadcast, or web-posted reports of our meeting. The assurance of anonymity is essential to our efforts to help other families of alcoholics, and our tradition of anonymity reminds us to place Al-Anon and Alateen principles above personalities.

At any function that records its speakers, members need to be aware that some recorders have websites that are open to the public. If speakers use full names, their sharings including full names could be posted, which violates the principle of anonymity. (See *Audio Recordings page 100.*)

Anonymity in Service

In Al-Anon/Alateen service positions Group Representatives, District Representatives, Co-ordinators, UK & Eire Service Conference members, etc. it is practical to use full names and addresses to facilitate communication.

Confidential Mailing Lists

Confidential mailing lists are maintained throughout our service structure by Groups, Districts, Areas and GSO. Care must be taken that members' identifying information from these confidential lists is not made available to the public in published materials or posted on public Al-Anon websites.

Posting material meant for members (such as printed flyers, reports, letters, email messages and newsletters) on websites that are not password-protected could result in publishing a member's full name, which violates the principle of anonymity. (See *'Anonymity and the Media' page 103.*)

Service Communication

Service communication via email is expedient and efficient, but care and common sense must be taken in its use, particularly in forwarding messages. Use of blind copies protects members' anonymity. Members should select with care the email address(es) they use to conduct Al-Anon business. It is recommended not to use members' full names in them. Business email addresses might not provide privacy and could imply affiliation.

- Current Mailing Addresses (CMAs), Group Representatives (GRs), and other trusted servants sending information by email to group members take care in the wording of email subject lines and use an email address that protects anonymity as the email addresses to which they are mailing may not be private.
- Email addresses of trusted servants are assumed to be private. Electronic correspondence sent among the links of service may include the name Al-Anon or Alateen.

As postal correspondence is delivered by public means, letters (including the return address) to an Al-Anon or Alateen member *should never* have the name Al-Anon or Alateen on the envelope. The General Service Office uses 'AFG' on envelopes sent to members in order to protect anonymity.

Anonymity in Al-Anon/Alateen Publications

In all publications available to the general public, personal anonymity is maintained. Although GSO requires member submissions for the e-zine *Al-Anon Today* to include full name, address and phone number, GSO publishes the material signed with first name and initial, 'Anonymous' or a pseudonym. Service arm publications follow the same publishing policy when distributed outside the fellowship.

Anonymity in our Personal Growth

In Al-Anon we share as equals regardless of social, educational or financial position. Common sense in the use of anonymity provides freedom and the security of each member is assured in Al-Anon. Our spiritual growth has its roots in the principle of anonymity.

Each member has the right of decision regarding personal anonymity within the fellowship, which we respect, whether the member is attending meetings, not attending meetings or deceased. (*See page 111.*)

Public Relations

Attraction - Not Promotion

Our Traditions state that our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion. For clarification, the sixth World Service Conference (1966) adopted the following statement, which was reaffirmed at the 1971 WSC:

It is the consensus of the sixth World Service Conference that if Al-Anon is to continue to exist, it must continue to grow. There is no standing still without retrogression. Al-Anon must continue to grow if it is going to fulfil its primary purpose of reaching millions who need Al-Anon's help but who are not yet aware of the existence of our fellowship.

We will fulfil this primary purpose most effectively by attraction and co-operation - not promotion or affiliation. For the guidance of our fellowship here are authoritative definitions of these sometimes controversial terms:

- to attract:** *to draw by other than physical influence; to invite; to draw to; to cause to approach.*
- to promote:** *to push forward; to further advance, as in a business venture (implies 'hard sell', advancement for profit).*
- co-operation:** *joint operation or action (implies coming together of two or more people to work together for a common goal or benefit or on a common problem).*
- affiliation:** *association or close connection; a uniting (implies lending one's name, endorsement, legal or financial association).*

Al-Anon is attracting when it tells people why we are, what we are, what we do and how; we let them know that we are available if and when help is needed. We state the facts, which are communicated via the press, radio, films and TV, always stressing anonymity at the public level.

Al-Anon is co-operating when it works with others, rather than alone. In working with others, our scope and contacts are broadened and we reach many more of those in need.*

**Examples are: private health agencies, law enforcement, judicial and correctional agencies, institutions, hospitals, churches, doctors, nurses, clergymen, social workers and educators.*

The Philosophy and Spiritual Principles for Al-Anon's Public Relations

Our Public Relations is based on the following spiritual principles that promote unity and clarity within the fellowship as well as awareness and hope outside the fellowship. Whenever there are questions concerning public relations it is helpful to return to these spiritual principles for resolution:

- members and groups carry the message (see below)
- Public Information (PI) is based on attraction rather than promotion (*see page 111 following*)
- personal anonymity is maintained at the level of press, radio, films, TV and the Internet (*see page 111 following*)
- co-operation and goodwill strengthen public relations (*see page 112 following*)
- members continually broaden the way they carry the message by using new and innovative forms of communication (*see page 113 following*)

Members and groups carry the message

Carrying the message is essential to attracting new members. Our Twelfth Step suggests that members carry the message of recovery to others and make Al-Anon known in their communities.

Al-Anon members who do Twelfth Step work carry the message of Al-Anon recovery keeping in mind adherence to Tradition Eleven. There is no replacement for individual Al-Anon members carrying the spiritual message of recovery within their communities in ways that the media cannot.

Local Public Information: Roles and Responsibilities

Al-Anon members who have an understanding of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions have an important role in local Public Information. They carry the message of hope through local media and to professionals throughout their communities.

Providing speakers and literature for community events, participating and exhibiting at health fairs, placing ads in public places and talking with local radio/TV stations to request that they play Public Service Announcements are some local PI opportunities. (*See also under the heading, 'Members continually broaden the way they carry the message by using new and innovative forms of communication'.*)

Making contact with professionals

Groups, Districts, Areas and other Service Arms can host public meetings, inviting members of the professional community, to ensure that professionals are aware of Al-Anon as a credible resource for helping friends and families of alcoholics. Meeting schedules and contact information of Area and local service arms should contain current and accurate information. In this way, the public will have direct and ready access to information, furthering Al-Anon's reputation as a credible local resource.

Personal sharing with professionals is one way to carry the message of hope to others. Members may have established relationships with doctors, nurses, members of the clergy, therapists, educators or other professionals. Every Al-Anon member is encouraged to share the benefits of Al-Anon with members of the professional community with whom they come into contact, divulging their Al-Anon membership whenever they are comfortable doing so. These one-on-one relationships provide the professional with credible evidence of the benefits of Al-Anon's programme of recovery and may encourage them to learn more about Al-Anon and perhaps recommend the Al-Anon programme to others. Al-Anon does not endorse any outside enterprise. Professionals who are also Al-Anon members may endorse the Al-Anon programme without violating the Traditions, providing they do not reveal their personal Al-Anon membership.

National and International Public Information: Roles and Responsibilities

Although Al-Anon members carry the message of Al-Anon, it is GSO which is solely responsible for creating public information messages beyond the local level. This ensures that there is consistency in media messages throughout the UK & Eire.

The World Service Conference has designated the WSO as sole publishing agent for the fellowship. The WSO is responsible for production and distribution of all *worldwide* communications including those on the Internet. The UK & Eire website covers our local structure.

Whenever national publicity on Al-Anon/Alateen may be of interest to local groups they are, if possible, notified in advance by GSO.

An Al-Anon general service structure outside the United States and Canada that has received permission from the WSO to print Conference Approved Literature may reprint WSO public outreach materials. The general service structure is not limited in the number of public information pieces it can produce. The WSO reserves the right to review such items before publication or broadcast.

Public Information

Paid Advertisements

A group may pay for an advertisement in the media to make the community aware of Al-Anon and Alateen. In accordance with our Traditions, an individual member may pay for such an advertisement with group approval. This payment may be considered a member's personal contribution. Members and local service arms may pay for local advertisements. GSO reserves the right to approve the content of the message before public placement.

Publicising Meeting Locations

Meeting information may be printed in church bulletins, newspapers and other publications to provide public information.

GSO Produced Posters

Al-Anon/Alateen posters may be displayed on the Internet or in any public place with the permission of the respective venue. A local Al-Anon Information Centre phone number, P.O. Box, website, email, and/or office address, may be used as a point of contact.

Posters and Flyers for Public Information for Al-Anon Service Arms

Al-Anon Information Centres and Area Service Committees may have a need for public information posters that can be produced and distributed within their area of service. This could include outreach to a particular cultural group, for example. Information Centres, Districts and Areas work together on such projects so the Al-Anon message remains consistent and unity among the service arms is ensured. Before creating a poster, service arms contact GSO. GSO has posters available that might meet the needs of an Area Information Centre or Area

GSO extends permission for the production of such posters, reserving the right to review these items before they are printed and distributed in order to preserve Al-Anon's public information message. These PI posters may be produced, provided that no member's name, phone number, or other identifying information appears, so that anonymity is maintained. Permission is not required when public information flyers are created for a single local event. Posters and flyers on the Internet are accessible to the public and must protect members' anonymity.

Public Information Literature

Although the World Service Conference has designated Al-Anon's WSO as the sole publishing agent for the fellowship, the WSO extends permission to Al-Anon Information Centres or Area Service Committees for the production

of only one public information piece for distribution solely within their area of service, reserving the right to review the publication before printing and distribution in order to preserve Al-Anon's public information message. To assist potential members in locating a meeting, a meeting schedule may be included with such a publication.

Public Service Announcements

The media (TV, radio, newspapers, etc.) may offer free air time or print space to not-for-profit organisations for public service announcements (PSAs). The wording of all PSAs must be authorised by GSO.

Public Information is based on attraction rather than promotion

It has always been Al-Anon's approach to carry a clear and simple message about our programme of recovery: to let people know who we are, what we do, and how they can come into contact with us. We do this in many creative ways while avoiding high pressure tactics which distort our message of hope or bring us into public controversy.

We attract interest in Al-Anon Family Groups when we communicate what our lives were like before we came to Al-Anon, what we found in Al-Anon that helped us, and what our lives are like today. In error, we would be promoting Al-Anon if we offered promises, guarantees, personal advice, or gave the impression that we are the experts who know what is best for all families and friends of alcoholics.

Personal anonymity is maintained at the level of press, radio, films, TV and the Internet

Tradition Twelve tells us that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our entire programme. Members maintain personal anonymity in all forms of public media including press, radio, films, TV and the Internet as well as other ways of reaching the public. It is essential that members consider Tradition Eleven as they keep public information messages free from personalities. No one person can ever be the sole representative of Al-Anon. The message of recovery in the media is too important to be overshadowed by a single person or group no matter how well-intentioned.

Anonymity at Local Events for Individuals and Service Arms

As an organisation Al-Anon is not a secret; however, we always protect our members' anonymity. Members are encouraged to participate in local events where Al-Anon information can be shared. Participation at health fairs, speaking at schools, etc., where members might be recognised, is not

considered a break in anonymity since it does not occur at the level of press, radio, films, TV and the Internet.

If the media is present, members who staff such events are requested to practice the principle of personal anonymity.

Anonymity in Public Media for Individuals and Local Service Arms

Tradition Eleven is sustained when members maintain personal anonymity by using a first name or a pseudonym and by appearing back-to-camera or in silhouette. This principle applies to all types of visual, audio or print media or in any way on the Internet when Al-Anon membership is revealed.

If membership is not revealed when participating in any form of public media, members can use their full name, face the camera or appear in print.

Members avoid revealing the identity of any AA member.

As an individual, not an Al-Anon spokesperson, any member may write an article about the fellowship for local or national publications and may be financially remunerated. The personal anonymity of someone writing as a member is maintained by signing anonymously or using a pseudonym. Personal anonymity also applies to members who write books or create other public communications.

Co-operation and goodwill strengthen public relations

Al-Anon fulfills our primary purpose most effectively by co-operating with others and creating goodwill in the media and in the professional community.

Al-Anon is *co-operating* when it works with others, rather than alone. In working with others, our scope and contacts are broadened and we reach many more of those in need. However, we would give the impression of affiliation if we posted links to professional services on an Al-Anon website or if we added the Al-Anon name as sponsor or co-sponsor for a commercial or community event. The concept of goodwill is simply maintaining our positive relationships and reputation as we work with others. Al-Anon exhibits goodwill when it works harmoniously in the community to provide information and carry the message of hope. In accordance with Tradition Ten, the Al-Anon fellowship does not officially respond to adverse publicity and avoids public controversy. As individuals, members may take any action they wish as long as they do not divulge their membership or appear to be a spokesperson for Al-Anon.

Members continually broaden the way they carry the message by using new and innovative forms of communication

In the dynamic world in which we live, we need always consider broadening our outreach efforts so that those needing our help may easily find us. This means that there is no end to the possibilities for carrying our message locally, nationally and internationally.

In developing or conducting public information using new forms of communication, including emerging technologies, Al-Anon's message is safeguarded by consistently referencing the primary purpose of public information and by applying its underlying spiritual principles.

Media

Individual Al-Anon members and Groups are encouraged to work with their Districts, Al-Anon Information Services and Area Service Committees on projects for media outreach. In this way, a broad group conscience is reached and the Al-Anon message remains consistent.

The Internet

The Internet is a global computer network that is in the public domain. Service arms are encouraged to post Public Service Announcements on the Internet or to create links to the GSO website. In keeping with our Legacies, Al-Anon members guard with care their own and others' anonymity and avoid any actions or behaviours that could draw Al-Anon into public controversy or harm Al-Anon's name.

(Service guidelines are available on the Al-Anon website.)

Social Networking Media

Social networking and social media internet sites and blogs present special challenges to members and GSO. Social networking can be an important venue for carrying the message of Al-Anon as it fulfills its primary purpose of reaching millions who are not yet aware of the existence of our fellowship.

Social Networking – Individual Members / Groups / Service Arms

Blogs, profiles, social networks or other forms of social media are appropriate for national public information. Members maintain the principle of anonymity and do not appear to speak for Al-Anon as a whole. They avoid actions, behaviours or commentary that could draw Al-Anon into public controversy or harm Al-Anon's name and public information message.

The names 'Al-Anon' and 'Alateen' are trademark names and therefore may not be used as usernames, logos or identifying characteristics on profiles, blogs or in titles of social media pages. Only Al-Anon service arms may use the Al-Anon logo. (See also 'Anonymity' and 'Symbols/Logos' section of the *Policy Digest*.)

Social Networking – GSO

GSO, in carrying out its responsibility for creating public information messages beyond the local level, will continually look for new ways to do so using the capabilities of social networking and emerging technologies while adhering to Al-Anon's spiritual principles.

Finances

Spiritual Principles of Al-Anon's Self Support

Tradition Seven is Gratitude in Action. Al-Anon is supported by members' financial and service contributions together with the sale of our literature.

Our spiritual principles inspire members to support the fellowship as it serves both members and prospective members. As we receive the hope and help we each sought, we use these spiritual principles to ensure that those following in our footsteps have the same opportunities:

Abundance—We learn to change our thinking from what we don't have to an awareness of gratitude for what we do have. As that idea expands, we continue to give of our time and money, realising we can never give back all we have been given. Thinking abundantly allows us to accomplish our primary purpose of reaching out to families and friends of alcoholics.

Anonymity—Within our practice of anonymity we are reminded that our personal donations are made without recognition or public acknowledgement.

Gratitude—We express our gratitude by giving generously of our time and resources. We want to ensure that Al-Anon will continue to be available to others.

Responsibility—Step Twelve suggests that reaching out is essential as we strive to carry out our responsibility to be there for the newcomer. To fund this very important work, we consider what combination of service and money each of us is willing to provide.

Trust—We believe our trusted servants practise these spiritual principles

when making informed decisions about the use of our resources. We realise that we all want what is best for Al-Anon as a whole. As we trust others, we come to understand that we too are worthy of trust.

Unity—Our contributions provide the means to create, maintain, and expand the services that are necessary to enhance the sense of belonging so all members are connected in fulfilling our primary spiritual aim.

Members may contribute in the following ways:

In keeping with our Seventh Tradition, Al-Anon is supported by members' contributions and by the sale of our literature. All contributions are used to meet expenses for UK & Eire services, including a portion of the operating expense of the UK & Eire Service Conference.

Members may contribute in the following ways:

Contributions to the General Fund - Individual

Annual Appeal - UK & Eire

In keeping with Tradition Seven on self-support, an appeal is made to all groups in the UK & Eire as and when required. Since it is not possible to maintain a list of all members of Al-Anon, the appeal letters are mailed to the group's Current Mailing Address. It is requested that the letter be read at two successive meetings followed by a special collection other than the regular group collection. This gives each member an opportunity to participate in Twelfth-Step work beyond the group level. It is traditional for the Treasurer to make an appeal at Conference.

Direct Contributions

At any time during the year, individuals may contribute directly to the General Fund and/or Al-Anon Family Groups CLG, indicating their membership since Al-Anon is self-supporting.

Gift Aid (UK Taxpayers only)

Contributions can be Gift Aided by individual members who pay tax in the U.K. A Gift-Aided donation enables Al-Anon Family Groups to claim a refund of tax from His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Donations made under this scheme can be regular or one-off amounts. Funds sent by Groups are not eligible for inclusion in this scheme.

N.B. Gift Aid Forms are available on the website

Planned Giving (UK & Eire)

This scheme is for members who wish to make a regular donation to Al-Anon Family Groups but who do not or cannot use the Gift Aid Scheme. Some members may wish to make a donation on a significant anniversary; others may wish to give a regular amount monthly, quarterly or annually.

Payroll Giving

A nominated amount is deducted (pre-tax) from the member's salary and this amount is sent directly to Al-Anon. This way of donating to Al-Anon can only be used by members who are employed and whose employer runs a Payroll Giving Scheme.

Bequests

The General Service Office may accept a one-time legacy from an Al-Anon member in any amount. (Contact GSO for details.)

NOTE: It is essential that bequests are made payable to Family Groups Ltd or Al-Anon Family Groups CLG.

In Memoriam Contributions

We do not solicit donations at funerals as not all attendees will be Al-Anon members. However, members can make donations to the General Fund in memory of any deceased person.

Earmarking Funds

All contributions are allocated to the General Fund and cannot be earmarked for special purposes unless recommended by the General Service Board.

Contributions to the General Fund - Groups

Groups make donations to the General Fund on a regular basis without limit after meeting the Group's expenses and contributions to local and Area service entities.

Contributions to General Fund - Other

Al-Anon Service Contributions

Districts, Al-Anon Information Services, Areas and other Al-Anon service entities in the UK may also contribute directly to the General Fund and in Eire, to Al-Anon Family Groups CLG without limit.

Al-Anon and Alateen Conventions

A portion of the funds derived from Al-Anon and Alateen conventions in the UK is often contributed to the General Fund and in Eire, to Al-Anon Family Groups CLG (see page 101).

AA Conventions

Contributions received from AA conventions, that are offered to Al-Anon as acknowledgement of its participation in these functions, may be accepted by GSO.

Reserve Fund

Family Groups Ltd has the right and legal obligation to establish and maintain a Reserve Fund. The purpose of the Reserve Fund, which was established in 1977 from the accumulation of net income and is ideally maintained at the equivalent of one year's expenditure, is to ensure that essential Al-Anon services can continue in the event of a severe economic recession and for special projects approved by the General Service Board.

WSO Annual Appeal

Members in the UK & Eire are asked to respond to the annual November appeal from WSO so that they may have the opportunity to contribute to Al-Anon's worldwide services.

Fund-raising

As part of our responsibility to be self-supporting, many Groups, Districts, Areas, Information Services, Conventions and Assemblies often raise funds to provide services.

Activities and Service

Fundraisers such as, dances or other social events are usually conducted in agreement with the Al-Anon/Alateen Groups directly involved. If such events are open to the general public, use of the name Al-Anon or Alateen violates our Traditions of anonymity and self-support.

Discounts of Goods and Services

GSO and other Al-Anon service entities may accept discounts of goods and services that are routinely available to other not-for-profit organisations (e.g. non-profit postal rates, free placement for public service announcements, freeware and other digital media) provided that members' anonymity is protected and there are no appearances of affiliation or requirements that would violate our Traditions.

Outside Contributions

Al-Anon and Alateen Groups do not solicit or accept contributions from outside the Al-Anon membership in order to adhere to Tradition Seven on full self-support and avoid the appearance of affiliation or influence by others. Seeking or accepting any outside funding through awards, endowments, gifts, grants, scholarships, etc. would not be in keeping with our spiritual principles.

Avoiding Commercialism

Raffling various articles at meetings or other gatherings is a matter of autonomy but to avoid commercialism in the fellowship, it is suggested that these items relate in some way to our spiritual principles. Items such as Al-Anon or Alateen books, or the donated products of the creative efforts of individual members are suggested.

GSO does not stock or offer programme-related jewellery or other items for sale because these actions could divert our service office from our primary purpose and our principle of self-support. Furthermore, in keeping with Tradition Six, GSO does not provide lists of suppliers for articles associated with the fellowship, e.g. plaques, jewellery.

Selling Products

Selling Products at Meetings/Conventions

Tradition Five states that the one purpose of each Al-Anon Group is to help families of alcoholics. Therefore, it is inappropriate for an individual or outside entity to use Al-Anon meetings or other Al-Anon events as a marketplace before, during or after those gatherings for the sale of services or products.

Selling Products at AA Meetings

In keeping with Tradition Seven, Al-Anon and Alateen members should refrain from selling any products at AA meetings.

Raffle Tickets

Raffles are subject to local bye-laws. If it is determined that the proposed raffle falls within the legal restrictions of the locality where it is to be held, additional precautions need to be taken so that we are not diverted from our primary purpose and do not imply endorsement. Distribution and sale of raffle tickets should be limited to Al-Anon/Alateen meetings and events. (See 'Avoiding Commercialism' under 'Fund-Raising,' as well as the other sections under 'Selling Products' for clarification.)

It is illegal to send raffle tickets through the mail unless the organisation holds

a licence.

Use of Group Funds

Rent and other Group Expenses

Our Tradition of self-support suggests that the expenses for the group's operation such as rent, literature and Group Representative expenses be met first. Remaining funds are used to support local and Area structures and the General Fund. At locations where rent is not accepted, a Group may provide a supply of Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature to the facility as an appropriate alternative.

Gifts to Members

Group funds are used for group purposes only, not for personal gifts to members.

Donations to Outside Agencies

Contributions to any outside agency, activity or programme are not made from Group funds which are to be used for Al-Anon/Alateen purposes only. As part of their Twelfth Step responsibility Groups may use their funds to purchase Al-Anon/Alateen literature to donate to outside agencies, activities, and programmes for public information.

Child Care

Due to Child Protection legislation within our structure, it is no longer advisable to have a policy on supplying child care facilities.

NB: Members participating in such an arrangement should make themselves aware of their legal responsibilities and liabilities.

Fees for Speaking

Sharing our experience, strength and hope as Al-Anon/Alateen speakers is an example of the important Twelfth Step Work of carrying the message. In keeping with Tradition Eight, Al-Anon speakers are reimbursed for expenses only. Fees are not charged or accepted for speaking. When a member is speaking to an outside organisation and a fee is offered, the speaker may suggest that funds in excess of expenses be used by the organisation for the purchase of Conference Approved Literature (CAL), for distribution by the organisation as an educational service.

Public Meetings

During open meetings when the public has been invited, it is appropriate to read the Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps and Tradition Seven before passing the basket to clarify our spiritual principle of self-support.

Local Services

Naming a Service

Al-Anon Information Services, or groups that perform similar services, often call themselves Information Services, or Information Centres. Al-Anon General Services refers to structures serving countries other than the US and Canada.

Answering Services

The term ‘Answering Service’ is usually used for service entities that handle only Twelfth-Step telephone calls. The decision to implement and support this service is within the autonomy of the groups it serves.

Information Services

Requirements for Registration at WSO/GSO

GSO registers an Information Service when it meets the following requirements:

- has a title indicative of the nature of its operation, e.g., ‘Al-Anon Information Service’
- acquires a post office box number or an office address
- conducts activities in addition to Twelfth-Step telephone calls, for example: works with local Al-Anon/Alateen service committees; arranges group exchange meetings; publishes meeting lists and performs any other function as outlined in Part 1.

NB. GSO will inform WSO of all Information Services registered at GSO.

Finding Al-Anon/Alateen Worldwide

Al-Anon Information Services and General Service Offices worldwide which meet the above requirements are listed in the WSO online database

Getting in Touch with *Al-Anon/Alateen*. Since individuals' names, addresses, or telephone numbers are not disclosed, this listing can be used by the membership as well as the public and professional community (see page 103).

Co-operation

In the spirit of co-operation, the Areas elect an Information Centre/Service Representative and the Chairperson of the Information Centre/Service stays in regular communication with the Area through this Representative.

Employees in Al-Anon Services

Tradition Eight states that 'Al-Anon Twelfth-Step work should remain forever non-professional...' Therefore, any Al-Anon member who is gainfully employed in an Al-Anon Information Centre/Service does not serve as a volunteer in a policy-making position, such as Group Representative (GR), District Representative (DR), Area Service Committee Officer or Coordinator, Delegate or Trustee.

Autonomy of Groups

In keeping with the Traditions and Warranty Five of Concept Twelve (*Part 4*), local, Area or UK & Eire service entities have no authority to close a group or engage in other punitive actions against a group because they disapprove of the way in which a group practises the Al-Anon programme.

Conference Approved Literature and Service Tools/Material

Conference Approval

What It Is. Conference Approval is the process for development of recovery literature (including recovery literature with a service focus) which reflects the group conscience of the Al-Anon Family Groups, through actions taken by the World Service Conference. The conceptual ideas recommended by the World Service Conference are delegated to the WSO Literature Committees for implementation. Each item, when completed, bears the Conference Approval seal.

How Material Receives Conference Approval. Al-Anon Conference Approved material grows out of need. Whether the need is for recovery literature or for recovery literature with a service focus, (hereafter both referred to as Conference Approved Literature), the process of Conference Approval ensures that designated Al-Anon members, Delegates, WSO staff

and volunteers will review the material before publication and/or production. Many members' participation in the Conference Approval process guarantees the fellowship that the material is an expression of Al-Anon principles. Proposals of new and major revisions of existing material are brought to the World Service Conference for recommendation and approval.

Service committees may propose material with a service focus. Proposed manuscripts and/or content of Conference Approved Literature are reviewed by a Literature Committee.

As a final step, the Executive Director (WSO), the Chairperson of the Policy Committee (WSO) and four other members of that Committee review all new pieces and major revisions of existing material, before they are approved.

The Board of Trustees (WSO) through the Executive Director (WSO) authorises minor revisions.

UK & Eire Conference Approval. In 1985 Conference agreed that new literature produced by the World Service Office may be ordered and included on the UK & Eire literature list after consideration and unanimous approval by the Literature Committee, Executive Committee and one other appropriate Standing Committee. Any item not unanimously approved by these committees would be brought to Conference.

Material Written by Al-Anon/Alateen Members. The actual writing is done by Al-Anon/Alateen members. Material submitted is subsequently co-ordinated and edited for literary style by Al-Anon members who may be professional writers.

In keeping with the spirit of Al-Anon, the full name of any individual member does not appear in the title of Al-Anon/Alateen material, nor is authorship acknowledged. All published material becomes the sole property of the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., on behalf of the Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship.

Material Written by Non-members. A few items were not developed in the above manner. Such exceptions were made when a booklet, talk or article by a non-member met a specific need and then only with Conference Approval. As a necessary courtesy, credit was given to the author or the organisation where the material originated.

WSO Service Tools

Service tools and materials are created by a World Service Office service department, committee, or as a result of a World Service Conference discussion. They are designed to assist members at meetings and in conducting Al-Anon/

Alateen service. Service tools are developed by WSO staff or committees and are subject to Literature Committee and Executive Committee approval. As a final step, the WSO Executive Director, the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, and designated Policy Committee members approve the text of service tools.

Al-Anon Family Groups Service Manual. Approval for additions and/or revisions to this Policy Digest and the Twelve Concepts of Service sections of the manual is given by vote at the World Service Conference and subsequently by the UK & Eire Service Conference. The approval for amendments to the UK & Eire Service Handbook section is given at the UK & Eire Service Conference.

Authorisation for Production

Production of new material to be added to the list of Conference Approved material that has been recommended and approved by the World Service Conference must be authorised by the Board of Trustees.

Identification of Al-Anon/Alateen Publications

The original seal, with the letters 'AFG' in the circle and the words, 'World Service Conference' within the triangle, appears on, and is reserved for, all Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature and material with the words, 'Approved by World Service Conference'.

Service tools carry the Al-Anon logo  and indicate production by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters Inc (*see page 126/127 Symbols*).

UK & Eire Literature

World Service Conference Approved Literature, which was anglicised and is printed in the UK & Eire, carries the original seal. The few items of literature generated in the UK & Eire, and approved by the UK & Eire Service Conference carry the logo of the circle within a triangle. Copies are sent to WSO before publication.

Use of Material

To keep Al-Anon's message in focus, it is suggested that only Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature and Al-Anon/Alateen service tools be displayed, distributed and used at Al-Anon and Alateen meetings, conferences and conventions. These items reflect an informed group conscience. Conference Approved Literature provides a unified view of Al-Anon/Alateen to professionals, other individuals and outside agencies. Service tools produced by the World Service Office reflect the Al-Anon/Alateen service structure and the shared experiences of our membership.

Other Publications

Timely Reprints

In 1977, the World Service Conference affirmed the continuation of the use of articles and reprints of articles from major outside publications by Standing Committees (WSO). The use of such timely pieces does not endanger Tradition Six regarding endorsement, rather it enhances the public's view of the Al-Anon programme of recovery and helps service committees spread the message of Al-Anon's value as a community resource. These committees may also reprint articles from *The Forum*, WSO newsletters or other WSO publications when interest in a particular subject is indicated.

Such reprints can be proposed for development as a permanent piece of Conference Approved Literature if a strong interest in them is evident. Because of their timeliness, reprints are often distributed between Conferences. These items are reviewed for appropriateness, use and distribution by the service committees of origin as well as appointed members of the WSO Policy Committee.

These reprints are identified by the Al-Anon logo  and carry the words 'reprinted and distributed by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.'

Guidelines

All guidelines are a collection of shared experience and can be adapted by the membership. Guidelines can be identified by this Al-Anon/Alateen logo  and the words 'compiled and distributed by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.'

The World Service Conference Summary

The Conference Summary is the annual report to the groups of the World Service Conference and the World Service Office activities. Groups and individuals may purchase copies from the WSO or download it from the WSO members' website.

The UK & Eire Service Conference Summary

The UK and Eire Service Conference Summary is the annual report to the groups of the UK & Eire Service Conference. It may be downloaded from the website.

Outside Publications

Other Literature at Meetings

There are many outside publications on alcoholism, religion and philosophy which appeal to members as individuals. Brief excerpts from such material may be part of their personal sharing at meetings. In a spirit of unity, it is suggested that only Al-Anon and Alateen Conference Approved Literature be used and displayed at meetings.

It is well to remember that all AA literature is written for and from the viewpoint of alcoholics and is not Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature. Reliance on opinions expressed in AA and other outside publications can distort the Al-Anon approach, particularly for the newcomer. See *Al-Anon Spoken Here* (UK51), *Why Conference Approved Literature?* (UK55) and *Alcoholism, the Family Disease* (UK13).

Reading Matter Outside of CAL

Individuals may read whatever they find helpful but Al-Anon cannot assume the responsibility for evaluating or recommending reading matter other than CAL. See *Why Conference Approved Literature?* (UK 55).

Publications by Information Services/Local Service Centres

Traditions are violated when a group, Information Service or any other Service Arm publishes its own literature (*see the only exception, page 110, Public Information Literature*). It is also ignoring Traditions to promote the sale of outside literature.

Al-Anon Today

In January 2014 the GSB appointed a Trustee at Large as Chairperson of the Editorial Committee to produce an e-zine. *Al-Anon Today* is produced regularly by the Editorial Committee from contributions submitted by the membership, and letters and articles from members in other countries. It also offers meeting ideas and material to be used as a basis for group discussions.

As a concept, the e-zine is Conference Approved, but it is not possible for each issue to follow the full procedure for Conference Approved Literature. Sharings received are reviewed by the Editorial Committee for their fidelity to the Al-Anon programme and principles. Material submitted becomes the property of Al-Anon Family Groups and may be used in any publication or other media.

The e-zine is published on the website with back issues appearing in an archive.

The Forum

The Forum is the monthly magazine in which Al-Anon and Alateen members share their experiences. It is 'The Voice of the Fellowship', a forum where individual members and groups can be heard. *The Forum* staff at the WSO, with assistance from a volunteer committee, edits the letters and articles sent from all over the world. This assures a publication that a broad-based international audience can understand and use for growth in the programme.

Since it is copyrighted material, the WSO does not grant permission for substantial reprints from *The Forum* in Area, District or other Service Arm newsletters in the US and Canada. Newsletters of other countries may, upon informing the WSO, use additional *Forum* material if they give a proper credit line in their publication. However, it is permissible for all newsletters to reprint any articles that appear in the 'Inside Al-Anon' section of *The Forum*. *The Forum* is available by subscription.

Copyrights

Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL), *The Forum* and most service material/tools are copyrighted. The WSO does not grant permission for substantial reprints of CAL in Area, District, or other Service Arm newsletters, or to outside publications, in the US and Canada.

Whenever a violation of a copyright comes to the attention of the Board of Trustees, it is the responsibility of the Board, through its duly appointed representative, to notify the violator. This is necessary in order to avoid invalidation of the copyright.

Symbols

The three symbols shown below are registered as Al-Anon 'marks' with the US Patent and Trademark Office and internationally. Use of these marks for other than Al-Anon/Alateen purposes or any alteration of these symbols endangers their legal status.

The circle within a triangle logo and the names Al-Anon and Alateen are also registered as trade and service marks in the UK & Eire.

- The Al-Anon/Alateen logo with AFG in the circle is a popular means of identification at conventions and joint fellowship affairs.
- The logo without the AFG was adopted by the WSO for easy identification of stationery, service tools and other Al-Anon/Alateen material. Al-Anon/Alateen service arms (such as Areas, Districts, and Information Services) and conventions with Al-Anon/Alateen participation may use this logo without alteration for identification on printed material.
- The original logo, accompanied by the words 'Approved by World Service Conference Al-Anon Family Groups', identifies Conference Approved Literature (*see page 125*).



Reprint Authorisation

The World Service Conference has authorised Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc, also known as WSO, to be the publishing agency for the fellowship worldwide. Permission to reprint extensively from our publications is not granted in the US and Canada to any individuals, within or outside of our membership, or to any outside agency. Forms to request reprint permission are available from the WSO. Each request received at the WSO to reprint limited excerpts will be evaluated on its merits and the circumstances. Requests for permission to reprint limited excerpts from copyrighted Al Anon/Alateen material must include at least four paragraphs from the proposed new text. The new text should include the two paragraphs of the author's/writer's/editor's material immediately prior to the excerpt and the two paragraphs of the author's/writer's/editor's material immediately following the excerpt. When reprint permission is granted by the WSO the appropriate credit line must accompany the excerpt. Two copies of the published material/document must be sent to the WSO on or before publication. The WSO terminates permission to reprint if the volume is not published within two years from the date of the request

Countries Outside US and Canada

Permission to publish CAL is extended only to national Al-Anon General Service bodies in countries outside the US and Canada. Occasionally such permission is extended to Al-Anon Central Service Committees, centres or even a single group, with the provision that the right to publish be relinquished when a General Service body is formed.

Granting Permission to Translate CAL

All translations of Al-Anon CAL to other languages are to be submitted to the WSO for review and approval before permission to print or reprint is granted.

Service Tools/Materials and Electronic Publishing

A listing of Al-Anon/Alateen service tools/materials that may be posted on websites is found on the WSO website: www.al-anon.alateen.org/members. A credit line 'Reprinted by permission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.' is required. No other Al-Anon/Alateen copyrighted literature may be reprinted electronically without express written permission from the WSO.

Translations

Al-Anon literature in translation should conform to the spirit and meaning of the original English version. Application and understanding of the Al-Anon philosophy is naturally affected by varying local customs and culture in different areas of the world.

Literature Sales Outside US and Canada

The WSO cannot refuse to fill orders for literature from anyone: Al-Anon members, General Service Offices or others. It is up to the Al-Anon General Service Offices to educate their groups to the advantage of purchasing literature from them. In this way, the groups strengthen their own national General Service Committees. Members wishing to purchase items of CAL not on the UK & Eire list may order them through GSO.

Incorporation/Taxes

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

Tax-exempt status was granted to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. our World Service Office, in 1956 under Sec. 501 (c)(3) of the US Internal Revenue Code as a non-profit corporation organised under the laws of the State of New York and operated exclusively for educational purposes. When New York State law was amended subsequently, WSO registered as a not-for-profit corporation. Contributions to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. may qualify as a charitable deduction, but the World Service Office makes no judgement as to the specific deductibility of a contribution by any member.

National General Services

Incorporation as a non-profit organisation relates to the tax laws of the US, which stipulate that any excess of income at the end of the year is non-taxable. Most other countries have some equivalent of the US regulations governing non-profit corporations. At the suggestion of the WSO, the General Service Boards of UK & Eire, Finland, Germany and other countries have made comparable registration for such legal status with their governments.

General Service Boards should consult with local legal counsel when considering non-profit incorporation for their organisations outside the United States and Canada. Advantages and disadvantages may vary from structure to structure.

Traditionally, organisation within a group should be kept to a minimum, but worldwide unity of our fellowship depends upon creation of national Al-Anon service boards outside the US and Canada, which should obtain legal recognition as non-profit membership corporations or the equivalent.

UK & Eire Company Registration/Taxation

Family Groups Ltd.

Al-Anon/Alateen in the UK & Eire registered in 1970 as a non-profit making company called Family Groups Limited. Subsequently in 1972 it was granted charitable status.

Company registration is not only for legal reasons, but because experience has shown it to be the best possible way of ensuring the efficiency and continuity needed to maintain Al-Anon/Alateen services throughout the country.

Another advantage is the objectivity of a company. There is greater willingness to rotate trustees than there is to rotate the members of a small personalised committee or working team.

Other advantages are:

- tax exemption
- protection of physical assets including office equipment
- protection against personal liability in all business transactions.

NB. Family Groups Limited is registered in England and Scotland under Company Law

The Inland Revenue and Charity Commissioners' Rules do not contain provisions under which Family Groups Limited could apply for blanket exemption for its Areas or local groups, now or hereafter formed. Only central organisations which effectively control their local units (churches, scouts, etc.) can apply for group exemption. Family Groups Limited has no knowledge or control over Area or group funds; it is therefore not in a position to furnish the financial statements required to be filed annually with the Inland Revenue in order to obtain tax exempt status for groups.

Al-Anon Family Groups Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG)

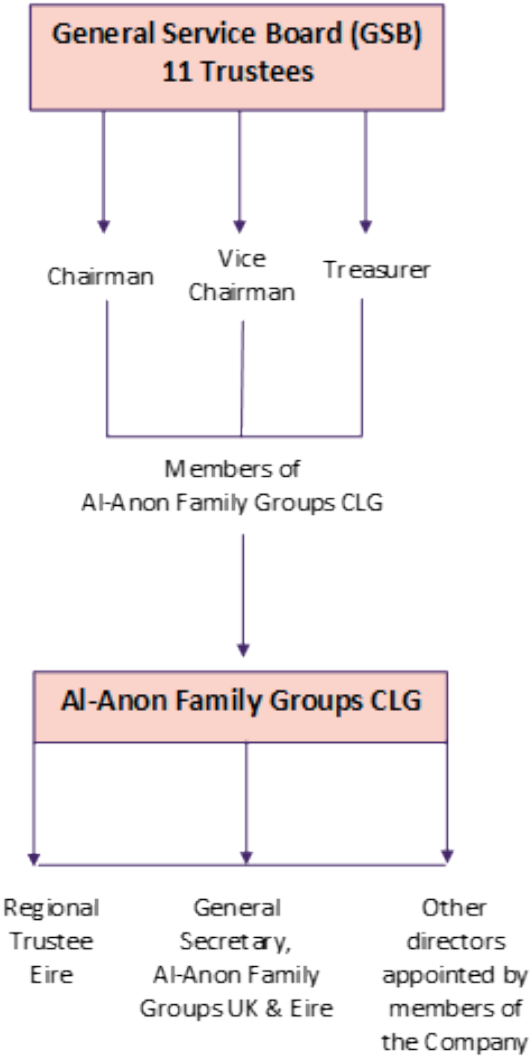
The enactment of the Charities Act 2009 and the appointment of the Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) in 2017 made it a legal requirement for Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire to register as a charity in Eire. The company was incorporated in August 2019 and registered with the Revenue Commissioners in July 2020. Al-Anon Family Groups CLG was granted charitable status in October 2021. The establishment of this charitable company means that the Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire Structure is two charities in one fellowship.

Some of the features are:

- It is a requirement that Al-Anon Family Groups CLG have five Directors, four being resident in Eire. The fifth Director is the General Secretary who is a permanent Director.
- All administration is provided by GSO under the management of the General Secretary, and the policies and strategies for both charities will be agreed at the UK & Eire General Service Board.
- Every Group in Eire, registered with GSO, is listed as a member of the charity. This listing means that each Group has legal responsibilities to the charity.
- Procedures for the control of, and maintenance of, financial information by Groups is a legal requirement. UK121 *Al-Anon Group Treasurer's Record Book* is provided for use by the Groups to meet this requirement.
- The *Finance Policy* for Al-Anon Family Groups CLG and UKG25 *the Group Finance in Eire* guideline provide detailed information on the requirements and procedures to be followed by the Groups.
- For audit reasons all Group donations in Eire must be lodged in the Al-Anon Family Groups CLG account.
- Annual accounts are prepared and audited separately for the two charities.

NB. Al-Anon Family groups CLG is registered in Eire under Company Law and Charity Law.

Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire



Local Information Services (Information Centres, Service Centres)

Local Al-Anon/Alateen committees that perform business functions, sign contracts, rent an office, buy equipment, employ staff, print meeting lists, bulletins or sell Al-Anon material etc, may want to explore registration as a company in accordance with the tax laws of their country. They may also need to check regulations regarding VAT registration. These suggestions are primarily to protect individual members, volunteers and employees from possible personal liability.

Being a company would not give local services authority over the groups they serve.

However, a word of caution. Registering a company carries definite statutory obligations and it is essential that a competent lawyer be consulted. Bookkeeping systems would have to be set up and annual audits by a qualified accountant would be required. Returns to the relevant statutory body would have to be filed annually.

It must be understood, of course, that GSO is in no way equipped or qualified to advise or aid individual services in obtaining tax exemption.

Al-Anon as it Relates to Others

Alcoholics Anonymous Co-operation

Local Service Centres

Although a separate entity, Al-Anon should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous (Tradition Six). In relating to local AA Intergroups or central offices, Al-Anon may offer to:

- name one or two members to liaise with AA on local activities being carried out by both fellowships. This co-operation could assist in finding speakers (both AA and Al-Anon) for joint platforms, conventions, PI activities in schools, health fairs and other events
- reimburse AA for any expenses incurred on Al-Anon's behalf, such as telephone calls, copying costs, etc.

Where Al-Anon is not able to support its own Al-Anon Information Service it may share facilities with AA when offered, provided that Al-Anon meets its portion of the financial expenses (desk space, telephone, etc.).

Newsletters

Where Al-Anon is relatively new, it may accept offers from AA to include an Al-Anon page in their newsletter. It is desirable for Al-Anon/Alateen to develop its own periodical when feasible.

AA Events with Al-Anon/Alateen Participation

AA may invite Al-Anon/Alateen to participate in conventions at the Area or local level. It is within the autonomy of the Area/local service arm to participate or not. However, to hold a separate Alateen meeting at an AA event, there must be two registered Alateen Screened Group Sponsors present at the meeting. If an Alateen member is speaking at a joint platform meeting at an AA event, the presence of two Alateen Group Sponsors is not needed.

See Co-operation between Al-Anon and AA (UKG9)

Twelfth-Step Work

Al-Anon performs its own Twelfth-Step work in alcohol treatment centres, hospitals and other facilities and with professionals who work with families and friends of alcoholics. Experience has shown that co-operation with AA can be mutually beneficial.

Outside Agencies

Speakers from the Helping Professions

The purpose of Al-Anon is personal growth through applying the Twelve Steps and sharing our experience, strength and hope. It is from Al-Anon and Alateen members that we hear the ideas and experiences that guide us in our personal recovery.

Outside speakers at Al-Anon and Alateen meetings may divert the focus from our own recovery to that of the alcoholic. Thus the group tries to ensure that any occasional guest speaker be knowledgeable about the Al-Anon programme. Additionally it is suggested that outside speakers be made aware of Tradition Six in advance and be asked to discuss an appropriate topic.

In any announcement of an Al-Anon and Alateen meeting with outside speakers, it is suggested that a statement such as the following be included:

'Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organisation or institution.'

Shelters for Families

In keeping with our Traditions:

- establishing shelters is not in accordance with Tradition Six, 'Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise...'
- Al-Anon members, as individuals, are free to manage such shelters and help to finance them
- Al-Anon/Alateen institutions or limited access groups may hold meetings at such a facility.

Sharing Facilities

In some localities Al-Anon may not be able to support its own answering service or Al-Anon Information Service. If it is necessary to share space with another enterprise, using Al-Anon letterhead and renting a private P.O. Box, for example, will prevent any appearance of affiliation.

Clubhouses

Operated by AA Members

Many groups use meeting facilities provided and operated by AA members. In keeping with Tradition Seven, the Al-Anon and Alateen Groups pay an agreed sum for rent and are maintained as separate entities at all times.

Operated by Al-Anon Members

Members, as individuals, may establish and operate a clubhouse where Al-Anon and Alateen meetings are held. In keeping with Tradition Six, a clubhouse is not owned, operated, financed or endorsed by an Al-Anon Group, District, Area, Al-Anon Information Service Office or Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. It is suggested that Al-Anon and Alateen Groups meeting at such facilities be self-supporting and function as separate entities.

Restrictive Policies

Should any clubhouse policy be so restrictive as to exclude any Al-Anon member or include terms for the use of the facility which are contrary to Al-Anon/Alateen Traditions and principles, another meeting place may be more suitable.

Members' Outside Involvement

When Al-Anon members serve on any alcoholism boards or councils they do so as individuals, not as spokespersons for Al-Anon. Al-Anon membership

may be disclosed to the board or council, provided that anonymity is maintained at the level of press, radio, films and TV in accordance with Tradition Eleven.

Al-Anon members who engage in legislation or support outside issues are free to do so as individuals. However, Tradition Ten suggests that the Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues. Thus, individuals do not discuss any such legislation or issues at meetings.

Since Tradition Eight states that Al-Anon Twelfth-Step work should remain forever non-professional, individuals who are professionals do not use their titles in conjunction with the Al-Anon name.

Commercial Enterprises

Filmmakers

Some private filmmakers have indicated interest in producing films concerning Al-Anon and Alateen to sell to public agencies. In the interest of worldwide unity, it is recommended that prospective filmmakers should be asked to write to the WSO to explain the proposed project and its probable audience. No commitments should be made to such producers by either groups or individuals. The Al-Anon name may not appear among the film's credits even though technical assistance has been provided.

Magazines

Mail directed to Al-Anon/Alateen should not be addressed to a post office box obtained by a publishing company, e.g. a magazine printing an article about the fellowship. Members co-operating with the author of such an article should encourage the inclusion of an Al-Anon address for responses. For magazines with national coverage, the appropriate national address or P.O. Box should be used.

Religion/Philosophies

Meetings

Al-Anon is a spiritual programme, thus the discussion of specific religious beliefs at meetings may divert members from Al-Anon's primary purpose. Our meetings are open to all those who are affected by alcoholism whether the member has a religious belief or not.

Retreats

Al-Anon/Alateen Spiritual Meetings

It has been suggested that the name 'retreat' often has religious connotations and could imply affiliation if used in connection with an Al-Anon/Alateen event.

Outside the Fellowship

Al-Anon does not affiliate with other organisations, neither endorses nor opposes any other philosophies or spiritual programmes. The Al-Anon/Alateen name, therefore, cannot properly be used to identify nor publicise retreats or activities sponsored by others. This applies when most or even all of the participants are members of Al-Anon/Alateen. Otherwise there could be a misunderstanding of Al-Anon's purpose and function. In order to avoid any appearance of Al-Anon/Alateen affiliation, it is important to keep promotion of such events outside Al-Anon/Alateen meetings and meeting locations.

Our experience suggests that confusion arises when such events are announced in Area newsletters, Al-Anon/Alateen local bulletins and at group meetings.

Area Newsletters or Local Al-Anon/Alateen Bulletins

These should not be used as a means of promoting or announcing retreats of any kind to the Al-Anon/Alateen membership, nor should retreats be promoted before, during, or after Al-Anon/Alateen meetings by use of leaflets or announcements.

Conventions

Religious services and announcements of them are not a part of any Al-Anon/Alateen event.

Dilution of the Al-Anon Programme

Outside Therapies

Our Al-Anon experience helps us understand we are powerless over another person's drinking. This makes us aware at a meeting of the danger of being diverted from our own recovery by techniques which are focussed on the recovery of the alcoholic.

Further, Tradition Six suggests that there be no promotion or endorsement of any outside therapies. At an Al-Anon/Alateen meeting, in keeping with the Al-Anon/Alateen focus, the groups do not announce or discuss activities

of other anonymous Twelve Step programmes. Al-Anon/Alateen Area newsletters and local bulletins may publicise activities of Al-Anon/Alateen Groups and those AA activities with Al-Anon participation. Publicising other organisations' activities creates an appearance of affiliation.

Labels

Focus on the Al-Anon interpretation of our programme is strengthened when we avoid using professional terms and labels, since they may confuse members by implying affiliation with certain persons or specific therapies.

Professional Involvement

Professionals may initiate the formation of an Al-Anon/Alateen Group provided that the meetings are then conducted by Al-Anon/Alateen members. Professionals who are not Al-Anon members may want to invite an existing Al-Anon or Alateen Group to provide a brief on-site meeting to demonstrate how group meetings function.

Drugs/Narcotics/Prescription Medications

A symptom of alcoholism in the home may be the abuse of drugs by family members. Occasional discussion of this topic is acceptable at an Al-Anon or Alateen meeting as it may be one of the results of living with alcoholism. However, our responsibility is to ensure Al-Anon's survival as a resource for families and friends of alcoholics. By focussing on these drug-related problems, we risk being diverted from Al-Anon's primary aim. Referral to appropriate sources of help may be suggested to those in need.

Families with Related Problems

Many individuals come to Al-Anon seeking help. If these individuals determine they have not been affected by a problem drinker, they may be informed of Tradition Three, which states in part, '... the only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend'. They may also be informed of other sources of help.

Part 4

Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service



Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service deals with the 'why' of our service structure in such a way that the valuable experience of the past and the lessons drawn from that experience can never be forgotten or lost.

Includes

- ▶ Twelve Concepts of Service
- ▶ General Warranties of the World Service Conference Charter

History of the Concepts

After AA's General Service Office was established, Bill W spent several years developing suitable principles and philosophies for its guidance, which would coincide with the principles and philosophies of the Steps and Traditions and with AA experience. These are called AA's Third Legacy.

Although Al-Anon is a distinct entity, our fellowship has its roots in Alcoholics Anonymous. Through our own Al-Anon experience, however, we have recognised the need for using AA's three sets of principles or 'Legacies': The Steps, The Traditions and, now, The Concepts.

A poll of the one hundred or so Groups in existence in 1951 led to the adoption of the Twelve Steps as a way of life for Al-Anon members. Later, the Groups accepted an adaptation of AA's Twelve Traditions as a framework within which to operate.

In 1968, the Al-Anon World Service Conference unanimously approved the idea of Al-Anon developing its own Concepts of Service.

Then in 1969, the Conference Delegates were given copies of a tentative document worked out by a committee chaired by Lois W, showing service Concepts that reflected Al-Anon experience and structure. A selection of knowledgeable Al-Anon members were also sent copies. During the year, both Delegates and long-time members sent in their suggestions.

Thus, the Concepts were well considered and revised before the World Service Conference of 1970 affirmed them as guidelines for our services.

One theme welds the three Legacies together - Pass Along Understanding:

1. Recovery - The Steps urge the individual to carry the message to others.
2. Unity - The Traditions protect the Groups from distracting or disrupting influences, so they can be free to pass along the Al-Anon word.
3. Service - The Concepts show how Twelfth-Step work can be done on a broad scale; how members of a World Service Office can relate to each other and to the Groups to spread Al-Anon's message across the world; and how a Conference of Delegates from all parts of the United States and Canada can supervise such a world service, so it will always conform to the Traditions.

The 1984 World Service Conference voted that the Twelve Concepts are to be accorded the same stature as the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Development of the Structure in the UK & Eire

The first Groups became active in the 1950s. By 1960 a UK Central Services Committee was formed following a meeting of members of these early Groups.

Over the next decade the Groups were polled on major decisions. A great deal of help and support was provided by the staff at the World Service Office

By 1970 the basic structure was in place with the opening of the General Service Office, the first meeting of the General Service Board, the incorporation as Family Groups Limited and the establishment of the first UK & Eire Service Conference.

In 2019, Al-Anon Family Groups Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) was incorporated to meet new legal requirements in Eire. Its incorporation means that the Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire Structure is two charities in one fellowship.

Introduction

The Al-Anon Concepts record the 'why' of our service structure in such a way that the valuable experience of the past, and the lessons drawn from that experience can never be forgotten or lost.

Each new generation of members in service quite rightly will be eager to make operational improvements. Unforeseen flaws in the present structure will perhaps show up in time. New service needs and problems will arise that may make structural changes necessary. These contingencies should be squarely met and suitable alterations effected.

When structural change does seem advisable, its advocates need only present a strong case for such a change to both the General Service Board (GSB) and the UK & Eire Conference for consideration. This is no more than would be required for the transaction and passage of any other piece of Al-Anon business.

For an appropriate period, any far-reaching structural change should be labelled 'experimental' and such changes, as well as lesser ones, shall on final approval be entered in the body of this manual. Following any changes the original text will be kept at GSO as a record of former experience.

Change does not necessarily spell progress. Innovations may produce little more than a painful repetition of earlier mistakes. These Concepts, it is hoped, will forestall such repetition by holding the experience of the past clearly before us. If a mistaken departure is nevertheless made, they provide a

ready means of safe return to an operating balance that otherwise might take years of floundering to rediscover.

The Concepts include a number of principles that have become traditional to our services but that have never been clearly defined and put into writing. For example: *Right of Decision* gives our service leaders proper discretion and latitude. The *Right of Participation* gives each member in service voting status commensurate with his responsibility. The *Right of Appeal* protects and encourages minority opinion. The *Right of Petition* makes certain that grievances will be heard and properly acted upon. These general principles can, of course, be used to good effect throughout our entire structure.

The Concepts also delineate those important traditions, customs, relationships and legal arrangements that weld the Trustees of the General Service Board into working harmony with the Executive Committee, staff and the primary committees of the Al-Anon Family Groups in the UK & Eire.

Great emphasis is placed on the need for a high order of personal leadership, careful induction methods for all incoming personnel and for the best possible relations among those who work in our services. The Concepts portray a structure in which all may labour to good effect with minimum possibility of friction. This is accomplished by a fair and balanced relationship of our workers to their work and to one another.

In service organisations there is generally a choice between the authoritarian structure, in which one person or group of persons has unqualified authority, and the democratic, which calls for checks and balances. It is human nature to try to enhance one's own authority and prestige when in the saddle. But when someone else holds the reins, we tend to resist heavy-handed management. Many of us can recognise these traits in ourselves.

The Concepts define working relations that can be friendly yet efficient. They would especially restrain a tendency to concentrate money and power, this being an underlying, though not always conscious, motivation.

It is to be hoped that these Twelve Concepts will be a welcome document for the use of our General Service Board, the General Service Office and the members of the Conference and that it will prove to be a reliable working guide in years to come.

It was agreed at the 1986 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) that the wording of the Concepts would not be changed when countries translated material to fit their language and structure. However, it was agreed that the descriptive text below each Concept could be altered as appropriate.

Concept One

The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon World Services belongs to the Al-Anon Groups.

Historical Background:

The first move toward the creation of a service structure for Al-Anon was the formation, in New York in 1951, of a central office or clearing-house as it was then called. This clearing-house was designed to inaugurate and maintain those special services for Al-Anon, as a whole, that could not well be performed by single Groups or Areas, such as writing uniform literature, the development of a sound public relations policy and the handling of large numbers of pleas for help. It was hoped to encourage and aid new Groups to form and to furnish them with information based upon experience of older and already successful Groups. It was thought there might be a need for a monthly magazine and perhaps later for translations of the literature into other languages.

While visiting AA Groups throughout the United States & Canada, Bill W ran across quite a few groups of wives of AA members who met for a variety of purposes. He mentioned that these groups needed a unifying centre to which they could write for information and suggested that his wife, Lois, establish such an office.

Thereupon Lois and Anne B, working in the former's home in the suburbs, began by asking AA whether they had the names of any AA wives' groups. Surprisingly, there were 87 names of families and groups of wives who had asked AA for help. Lois and Anne wrote to them, and 50 registered immediately. As correspondence increased, the office was moved to New York City, where more help was available.

In 1954, the clearing-house was incorporated as a non-profit unit under the title Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc, directed by a Board of Trustees consisting of volunteer Al-Anon members.

By 1960, Al-Anon membership had jumped from 50 Groups to nearly 1,500. Unity of purpose had pretty much replaced the early dissimilarity of groups. The AA Auxiliary and 'Coffee and Cake' groups had fallen away or been changed to real Al-Anon, as had many of the early AA wives' groups. The basis for membership had broadened. Membership in many Groups was 50 percent or more of families of alcoholics who did not belong to AA and perhaps never would. National publicity had brought in hundreds of members who had no contact with Alcoholics Anonymous. Al-Anon members were confidently

united in their purpose of helping themselves in order to help others, and indirectly the alcoholic, and to do this through the use of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

At its start, the clearing-house had polled the Groups on the major questions of name, purpose and method of support for the fellowship and the adoption of AA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, slightly modified for Al-Anon's use.

As Al-Anon entered its second decade, polling Groups on important issues became impractical. The procedure was slow and cumbersome and, as many Groups did not respond to letters, polls were ineffectual and sometimes inaccurate. There were also constant questions of policy, which could not be settled by a poll and on which wrong decisions might lead to ultimate disaster. The Group conscience had to point a way on these matters.

It was in order to meet this need that the Al-Anon Groups in 1960 voted for the formation of the Al-Anon World Service Conference.

Tradition Two declares, 'For our Group purpose there is but one authority – a loving God as He may express himself in our Group Conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.' This clearly implies that the Groups are to be the final authority, that our leaders are to be entrusted with delegated responsibilities only.

The Al-Anon Groups today hold ultimate responsibility and authority for our world services, those special elements of overall service activity that make it possible for our fellowship to function as a whole.

Concept Two

The Al-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its Service Arms.

The many Al-Anon Groups scattered all over the world hold in their hands the Group conscience. But it is evident that, in order to get effective action, the Groups must delegate the actual operational authority to chosen service representatives who are empowered to speak and act for them. The Group conscience of Al-Anon could not be heard unless a properly chosen Conference in each structure was fully trusted to speak for it in most service matters. Hence, the principle of delegated authority and responsibility to our trusted servants must be implicit from the top to the bottom of our active service structure.

Historical Note

The World Service Office (the clearing-house) had taken on a crucial meaning for Al-Anon's future. If this vital centre were to collapse or bog down, the unity within and the carrying of our message to innumerable potential members without, would suffer serious and perhaps irreparable damage. Were they ready to take the precautions AA had taken to guard against such a possibility and to establish a Conference of Al-Anon Delegates to whom the service headquarters would be accountable?

Many of them thought they were ready. Also they recognised that the average member, preoccupied with Group life and personal Twelfth-Step work, knew little if anything about Al-Anon's worldwide activities. Few Al-Anon members realised how much their Group membership and unity were due to the little-noticed activities of the headquarters office.

A few at headquarters felt this attitude showed a lack of faith in Al-Anon. They said: 'Why change? Things are going fine. We poll the Groups' opinion on any important question. Delegates from all over the country will mean expense and politics. We don't want either; let's keep it simple.'

However, the decision lay with the Groups. In 1960, Al-Anon held a meeting at the AA International Convention, in California. There this matter was discussed. Al-Anon members from all over the United States and Canada had come to this Convention. Their vote on the question would represent a cross-section of all Al-Anon. Those present voted unanimously to set up an annual conference of delegates on a trial basis for three years. This action was later confirmed by a poll of the Groups.

Some years after the Conference had become a permanent foundation for Al-Anon world services, they found that their fears had been largely groundless. Its success had exceeded their highest expectations. It proved that the Al-Anon Groups can and will take the final responsibility for their world services. The World Service Conference is the active voice and the effective Group conscience of the fellowship in world affairs.

UK & Eire Al-Anon Groups were formed throughout the early 1950s. These Groups were very isolated and were serviced by the World Service Office. By 1960 there were 13 Groups and members from these Groups met at the first ever Al-Anon meeting officially scheduled at an AA Convention. 'All those who had been present at that meeting, although strangers to each other, had sensed the stirring of a united aim.'

Referring to this original ideal the beginning of a structure was framed with the formation of a service committee.

In May 1970 the inaugural meeting of what would become the General Service Board was held. Members present were representing Groups from the whole of the UK & Eire. At this meeting it was agreed to hold the first UK & Eire Service Conference in October that year. Thus the first Annual Conference of UK & Eire Groups was held, embodying the principles and ideals outlined in this Concept.

We believe we are a spiritual fellowship characterised by enough enlightenment, responsibility and love for God and man to ensure that our democracy of service will work under all conditions. We rely confidently on Tradition Two, our Group conscience and our trusted servants.

Concept Three

The Right of Decision makes effective leadership possible.

Within the framework of their general responsibilities, whether these be defined by charter, resolution or by custom, it should be traditional for all service boards, committees and executives to decide which matters they may properly dispose of and upon which they will report, consult or ask specific directions. Our members in service should be trusted with these discretions, otherwise no effective leadership is possible. Let us consider why the Right of Decision is imperative for our leaders. Let us examine this principle in its practical application to all levels of our service structure.

The Charter of the Conference and the Articles of Association of Family Groups Limited define in broad terms the responsibility of the Conference and Trustees to act on behalf of Al-Anon as a whole. In these documents a large area of delegated service authority and responsibility has been spelled out. They describe the relationship between the Groups, the Conference, the Trustees and the active service units. These broad definitions and descriptions are an indispensable frame of reference; we could not function without them.

Nevertheless, it has long been evident that the Charter, important as it is, cannot by itself ensure smooth functioning and proper leadership at the various levels of service. For example, knowing that they have the final authority, the Groups may be tempted to instruct their Delegates exactly how to vote. There is no doubt that the Al-Anon Groups have the right to do this; they can give directives to their Delegates on any and all Al-Anon matters. Although they may exercise this ultimate right, were the Groups to carry their instruction of Delegates to extremes, we would be proceeding on the false premise that a Group's opinion could be superior to Conference opinion. As a practical matter, this could almost never be the case. How could 'instructed' Delegates settle a question as well as Conference members, acting freely with full facts to guide them?

It is understood that complete reporting of Conference actions is always desirable, as is full consultation with District Representatives and Group Representatives. Nevertheless, the ‘instructed’ Delegate who cannot act according to his own conscience on a final Conference vote would not be a ‘trusted servant’ at all, but a messenger.

The Conference Charter does not actually solve typical problems like these. It is a broad document that can be construed in various ways. Under one interpretation, the Groups can instruct the Delegates as much as they like. Under another, the Delegates and Trustees can actually go counter to such instructions, whenever new information gives them reason to change their point of view.

Let us look at another illustration: in matters of policy, principles and programme procedures, the Conference has practically complete authority over the Trustees consistent with the individual legal obligations of the Trustees and the General Service Board respecting charity law and corporate business transactions. It surely would not be practical for the Conference to issue hasty and flat directives to the GSB on matters about which the Trustees would be far more knowledgeable than the Delegates.

Again this same kind of confusion could beset the relations of the General Service Board to the Executive Committee, and to committees directed by non-Trustee volunteers and paid service workers. The General Service Board certainly does have authority to control these entities; its authority is final. Yet if the Trustees were to constantly exert their full and absolute authority and attempt to manage these operating entities in detail, then the volunteers and staff members would quickly become demoralised. They would be turned into buck-passers and rubber stamps; their only choice would be to rebel and resign or to submit and smoulder.

Therefore, some traditional and practical principles must be applied, which at all levels will continuously balance relations between ultimate authority and delegated responsibility. How then shall we accomplish this?

The Al-Anon solution to these questions is to be found in Tradition Two, which refers to ‘trusted servants’. This provides that our responsible leaders be trusted to decide, within the framework of their duties, how to interpret and apply their authority and responsibility to each problem or situation as it arises. This sort of leadership discretion is the essence of the Right of Decision. We need have no misgivings about granting this privilege at every level of service.

There will always be plenty of ultimate authority to correct inefficiency, ineffectiveness or abuse. If the Conference does not function well, the Groups are free to choose better Delegates to represent them. If the Trustees get badly out of line, the Conference can censure them or even reorganise the General Service Board. If the General Service Office services should sour, the Trustees can appoint a more effective Executive Committee and engage better staff. These remedies are direct and adequate, but for so long as our services function reasonably well, then 'trust' must be our watchword, otherwise we shall wind up leaderless.

The above reasons show why it is necessary to have a traditional Right of Decision, which could be practically applied as follows:

- (a) The Conference always should be able to decide which matters it will fully dispose of on its own responsibility and which questions it will refer to the Al-Anon Groups or, more usually, to their Area Committee or GRs.
- (b) Similarly the General Service Board (operating of course within their Terms of Reference) should have the right, at all times, to decide when it will act fully on its own responsibility and when it will ask the Conference for guidance, approval of a recommendation or for actual direction.
- (c) The General Service Board (the principal committee of Family Groups Limited), the Standing Committees and the General Secretary, operating within the scope of their defined or implied responsibilities, should have the right to decide when to act wholly on their own and when to refer a problem to the next higher authority.

This Right of Decision should never be an excuse for failure to render proper reports of all significant actions taken or used as a reason for exceeding a clearly defined authority, or for repeated failure to consult those who are entitled to be consulted before an important decision or action is taken.

Our entire Al-Anon programme rests squarely on the principle of mutual trust. We trust our Higher Power, we trust Al-Anon and we trust one another. Therefore we cannot do less than trust our leaders in service. The Right of Decision we offer them is the practical means by which they may act and lead effectively; it is also the symbol of our implicit confidence.

Concept Four

Participation is the key to harmony.

The Principle of Participation has been built into our whole service structure. If all authority were to be assigned to one Group and virtually all responsibility to another, we would seriously handicap efficiency of operation and real harmony.

The Conference Charter specifically provides that the Trustees of the General Service Board shall always be voting members of the UK & Eire Service Conference. Furthermore, as the need arises, the door is open for the inclusion of other Service Arms members.

As indicated in Concept Three, if the Groups, sensing their great power, should try to over-exercise it by directing their Delegates how to vote at the Conference, those Delegates would feel they were neither participants nor trusted servants. If, in turn, the Delegates over-exercise their power, they could make the members of the General Service Board mere rubber stamps.

Though it may seem inconsistent for service workers and Trustees to participate in voting on reports of their own activities, these reports constitute only a fraction of the business of the Conference, which is far more concerned with policies, plans and actions to take effect in the future. The Conference needs the votes of such knowledgeable people as the Trustees and other members.

Since our Conference, unlike the government, cannot be constantly in session, there is good reason not to give Delegates absolute voting authority over the Service Arms members. Because they meet for only a few days, once a year, they cannot have first-hand knowledge of many problems on which they are expected to vote. This is all the more reason for allowing the often better-informed minority of Service Arms members to vote.

Some Delegates may object that, on close votes in the Conference, the combined ballots of the Service Arms members may decide a particular question. But their greater familiarity through experience fully justifies this. It should also be noted that they are not likely to vote in a bloc. Differences of opinion among them may be as sharp and considerable as those to be found among the Delegates.

The same concept is borne in mind when our General Service Board elects a Chairman and members of the Executive Committee. If it wished, the Board could appoint its own members to most of these positions, but this, of course, is not done because it would nullify the Principle of Participation.

The active management of the Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire is vested in the Executive Committee whose duty is to see that all projects are carefully carried out. The Executive Committee is composed of a Chairman, the Treasurer, both of whom are Trustees, the General Secretary, and approximately three others, preferably past Trustees, who contribute their advice and professional experience. The Finance Sub Group, (up to three members), are also members of the committee.

These arrangements permit a proper degree of voting participation. No class is set in absolute authority over another. Thus, in the participating method of doing business there are no superiors and no inferiors, as distinguished from the institutional, military or governmental method.

However, other than the General Secretary, no paid staff worker should become a Trustee. Firstly, it would interfere with the rotation of the General Service Board; secondly, if ever the General Service Board had to be reorganised by the Conference, paid Trustees in a bloc might prove a vested interest difficult to dislodge.

Our Trustees may, however, invite paid staff members, accountants and any others whose reports or advice may be required, to attend meetings of the General Service Board, where they would have voice but no vote.

Perhaps new generations of Conference members may wish to weaken, modify or eliminate the Principle of Participation. Occasionally a few Delegates may question the right of the staff and even the Trustees to vote in the Conference. New volunteer members of the Executive Committee may ask why any paid staff member should be on this business management committee. Every now and then a move may be made to abolish the Executive Committee as a separate entity so that the General Service Board could manage the office directly. But the right of participation in our service structure is of such high importance to our future that it is urged we preserve this traditional right in the face of every attempt to whittle it down.

Participation also responds to our spiritual needs. All of us deeply desire to belong. The Al-Anon ideal of a working partnership could never regard any member as second class. This is perhaps the main reason we have struggled to achieve participation at every level.

Concept Five

The Rights of Appeal and Petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.

Note: The United States uses a different version of English from that used in the UK & Eire where 'insure' would be replaced by 'ensure'.

The Rights of Appeal and Petition aim to protect and make the best possible use of minority feeling and opinion.

In the principle of the Right of Appeal, all minorities - whether among the members of the General Service Board, the Executive Committee, Standing Committees - should be encouraged to present minority reports whenever they feel a majority to be in considerable error. Furthermore, when a minority considers an issue to be so grave that a mistaken decision could seriously affect Al-Anon as a whole, it has the actual duty of presenting a minority report to the Conference.

This traditional Right of Appeal acknowledges that minorities can be right and that even when they are partly or wholly in error, they still perform a valuable service when, by asserting their Right of Appeal they compel a thorough debate on important issues. The well-heard minority, therefore, is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty or angry majority.

The traditional Right of Petition permits any Al Anon member, whether paid or unpaid, to petition the General Service Board for the redress of a personal grievance, after having exhausted all avenues of resolution, beginning with the service arm that made the original decision and working through the links of service.

GSO employees, members of the Executive Committee, the GSB or Standing Committees may also petition for the redress of a grievance. One should be able to do this without prejudice or fear of reprisal. Though in practice this right will be seldom exercised, its very existence will tend to restrain those in authority from unjust use of power.

In our Al-Anon Groups, individual freedom is of enormous importance. Anyone who feels his personal life is, or has been, deeply affected by close contact with a problem drinker is eligible for membership in Al-Anon. We never take away this right to belong. Neither do we compel our members to believe anything or pay anything.

In our services, we also go to great lengths in our trust of minorities. Under Tradition Two, the Group conscience is the final authority for Al-Anon world

services. Nevertheless the Groups have recognised that for the purpose of the service structure, the Group conscience has certain limitations. It cannot act directly in many service matters, because it is seldom sufficiently informed about the problems at hand. During times of stress it may not be the best possible guide, because emotional bias may prevent it, temporarily, from functioning efficiently or wisely. When, therefore, the Group conscience cannot act directly, who does act for it?

We trust our servants, knowing that, in the unusual event that they fail in their responsibilities, we still have ample opportunity to recall and replace them.

As trusted servants, our Al-Anon leaders must always be in readiness to do for the Groups what the Groups obviously cannot do for themselves. Consequently our servants are bound to use their own information and judgement, sometimes to the point of disagreeing with uninformed or biased Group opinion.

The foregoing observations illustrate Al-Anon's concern for the freedom and protection of individual members and the whole membership's willingness to trust able and conscientious servants to function for us all.

Our Conference Charter is infused with provisions that ensure protection and respect for minorities. This is exemplified, for instance, in the method of selecting Delegates. Unless the majority candidate can poll a two-thirds vote, the Assembly may make a choice to draw by lot. Thus the minority candidates have an equal chance with the majority's choice.

This method of electing Delegates strengthens the spirit of democracy among us. Unity is cemented, co-operation increased, and when the Delegate is finally chosen, the minority has no reason for discontent. To increase the actual spirit of democracy by special deference to minority opinion is better than to follow blindly the rule that insists on unqualified dominance by majority vote.

Consider another example: our respect for the minority position, plus a desire for unity and certainty, often prompt the Conference to debate important questions of policy even in cases where a majority could easily be obtained. Such a voluntary practice is evidence of real prudence and courteous deference to the views of all. The Conference usually makes important decisions on no less than a two-thirds vote.

This same consideration for the minority position can be found in the Charter provision that no Conference vote can be considered binding on the General Service Board, unless it equals two thirds of the voting members at Conference. Up to this point the GSB has a power of veto. It may ask for further debate to check any tendency to haste or emotionalism. It may choose

to veto a simple majority or to act with it. Here again is recognition of the constructive value of a trusted minority.

If to such ample recognition of minority privileges we now add the traditional Rights of Appeal and Petition, we shall have granted to all minorities, whether of Groups or of individuals, the means of discharging their service duties confidently, harmoniously and well.

In Al-Anon we believe the spirit of democracy in our fellowship and in our service structure will always survive despite any counter tendencies that may beset us.

We believe that we shall never be subjected to the tyranny of either majority or minority, provided we carefully define the relationship between them. We can then tread the path of service in the spirit of our Twelve Steps, our Twelve Traditions and these Concepts.

Concept Six

The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.

Note: The General Secretary is a Trustee of the General Service Board but, as a paid member of staff, is precluded by our Articles of Association from being a director of Family Groups Limited and a Charity Trustee.

Just as the Al-Anon Groups can act decisively in service affairs only by entrusting authority and responsibility to their Conference, so must the Conference in turn entrust administrative authority to the General Service Board in order that it may act freely and effectively in the absence of the Conference.

For several important reasons the Trustees must have freedom to act. Next to the Conference, Al-Anon's General Service Board should be our most influential group of trusted servants. We shall have to consider carefully the kind and degree of authority, responsibility and leadership the Trustees must possess in order to function at top effectiveness in the years to come. We shall need to define clearly the kinds of professional and financial experience that will be required to provide a balance. Thus, we permanently ensure the General Service Board's capability of future leadership.

It will also be necessary to show precisely how the Trustees ought to be related to the Conference and, in turn, to the Executive Committee and any other active service committees that may be needed in the future. In a general way these relationships are already indicated in our Conference Charter. They

should never be frozen into a rigid pattern. However satisfactory and right our present arrangements are, the future may require changes that we do not yet envisage. New conditions may require refinements or even considerable alterations. For this reason our Charter is capable of being readily amended by the Conference itself.

If later we do make changes that happen to work out poorly, the experience of the past will provide a point of safe return to tested procedure.

A careful review of the traditional rights of the members of the General Service Board and the legal responsibilities of the directors of Family Groups Ltd clearly indicates their actual administrative responsibilities. Their authority in this field is unquestionably great.

Why should they be given this wide latitude of judgement and action? The answer is that they are held chiefly responsible for all our service activities, as well as for Al-Anon's public relations. They are expected to monitor the formulation of Al-Anon policy and ensure its proper execution. They are the active guardians of our Twelve Traditions. The Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the preservation and prudent management of all Al-Anon's financial assets. They are accountable for the internal controls of funds received and the investment thereof. *(The wide range of their activities is further detailed under Concept Eleven).*

While the Trustees must operate under the close observation, guidance and sometimes the direction of the Conference, it is nevertheless true that only the Trustees can evaluate and handle most of the innumerable transactions involved in our service operation. In view of this great responsibility, they must be given a correspondingly large grant of authority and leadership with which to discharge it. It must be understood, too, that the conduct of our services is primarily a matter of policy and business. While our objectives are spiritual, these aims can be achieved only by means of an effective business operation. Our Trustees must have ample authority to manage and conduct Al-Anon's business.

Concept Seven

The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.

Note: In the UK & Eire it is those Trustees who are on the Boards of Family Groups Limited and Al-Anon Family Groups CLG who have legal rights.

At first this Concept may appear contradictory. Actually both the rights of the Trustees and the Conference work well together. On the one hand we

see a General Service Board, operating with delegated authority from Family Groups Limited, invested with power over Al-Anon's funds and services; on the other hand Al-Anon's Service Conference has such great responsibility for and authority over all aspects of Al-Anon's programme and policies that in those areas it could give the Trustees of the General Service Board directives and secure its compliance.

This means that the actual power of the Conference will nearly always be superior to that of the Trustees since it flows from the powerful traditional influence of the Conference Charter itself. It derives from the large majority of Group-chosen Delegates in the Conference. And finally, in any great extremity, it would rest upon the unquestioned right of the Conference to deny the General Service Board the monies with which to operate - those voluntary contributions of the Al-Anon Groups themselves. Theoretically, the Conference is an advisory body; practically speaking, it has the ultimate rights and powers.

The General Service Board is not likely to contest the clear and sustained will of the Conference. If some day a crucial stalemate arose, the Conference, as the conscience of Al-Anon, would find itself in complete authority over the General Service Board and its Service Arms.

Experience shows that this balance of powers between the Trustees and the Conference is thoroughly workable. We believe this balance can be maintained indefinitely, because the one is protected by tradition and the other by law.

An interesting question often raised by new Trustees is whether they have a legal right to say no to something the Conference wants. In certain business areas, the Trustees certainly do have this legal authority but on the other hand are quite at liberty to accept, even seek, advice and recommended directions from qualified sources. Just as the Conference should avoid the overuse of its traditional authority, so should the Trustees avoid the overuse of their legal authority. Clearly, then, our General Service Board does reserve a veto power over any Conference action; this is legally necessary and right in principle, even though the veto will seldom be used. At certain times, however, the Trustees' veto could be of important and constructive use.

Here, for instance, are three typical examples in which it would be the duty of the Trustees to veto Conference action:

1. If, in a time of haste or heavy stress, the Conference should take an action or issue a directive to the Trustees in clear violation of its own Charter or the Articles of Association of Family Groups Limited, or if the Conference were to pass any measure so ill-considered or so reckless as to seriously injure, in the judgement of the Trustees, Al-Anon's public relations or Al-Anon as a whole, it would then be the duty of the Trustees to ask for Conference reconsideration. In the event of a Conference refusal to

reconsider, the Trustees could then use their legal right to veto. If desirable, they could appeal the issue directly to the Al-Anon Groups themselves.

2. Although traditionally the Trustees never should substantially exceed a Conference-approved budget without consulting the Conference, they should feel entirely free to reduce this budget figure during any fiscal year, even though such an action might curtail or cancel plans or projects initiated and directed by the Conference itself.
3. If, by reason of unforeseen conditions, any particular plan, project or directive of the Conference should become impractical or unworkable during a fiscal year, the Trustees should, without prejudice, be able to use their right of veto and cancellation.

In the years ahead, the Conference should always bear in mind the actual rights, duties, responsibilities and legal status of the General Service Board. The Trustees should constantly realise that the Conference is the real seat of ultimate service authority. Then we may be sure that neither will be seriously tempted to make a rubber stamp of the other. In this way, grave issues can always be resolved by harmonious co-operation.

Concept Eight

The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of the Al-Anon Headquarters to its Executive Committees.

Note: In the UK & Eire the General Service Board has delegated full authority for the routine administration of Al-Anon Family Groups in the UK & Eire to the Executive Committee.

The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two major capacities:

- (a) in matters of policy and finance, they are the principal planners and are responsible for final decisions;
- (b) in routine operations, the Trustees delegate full authority to the Executive Committee.

To arrive at this Concept, experience led us through various stages of development.

From 1960 - 1970 the administration was carried out by the UK Central Services Committee which was comprised of two committees, the standing committee which dealt with matters of programme and policy and the working committee which dealt with routine administration.

In 1970 the structure was formed and incorporated as Family Groups Limited. The General Service Office was opened and the General Service Board met for the first time. The first Conference was also held that same year.

The day-to-day administration of GSO remained in the hands of the Trustees for a number of years but in 1975 it became necessary to set up an Executive Committee. The business of GSO had grown so large that it became unwieldy for the Trustees to handle the routine administration of the office; they could no longer be concerned as a body with the endless details that arose. They also realised the need to devote themselves to the more serious questions of policy, leadership, finance and public relations.

The GSB's position thus became that of custodian and guarantor of good management of Al-Anon in the UK & Eire.

In 1998 the General Service Board changed the remit of the Executive Committee making it responsible for the routine administration of Al-Anon in the UK & Eire. The management of GSO became the responsibility of the General Secretary under the supervision of the Executive Committee.

In 2009, the UK & Eire Service Conference agreed to the purchase of property, on a 15-year trial basis, to house GSO. The motion required that the GSB establish a separate executive committee for the management of the property to ensure that Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire not be diverted from its primary purpose. In 2012, the UK & Eire Service Conference affirmed the establishment of the Executive Committee for Property Management (ECPM). The Great Suffolk Street office was purchased in 2013.

The ECPM is composed of the Chairperson (the Treasurer), a member of staff and up to three Al-Anon members who are not Trustees. The Chairperson of the GSB, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee and the General Secretary are not ex-officio members of the Committee.

The GSB delegates to the ECPM the oversight and the management of the property owned by Family Groups Ltd. The GSB maintains its overall supervision and responsibility for the administration of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire.

Concept Nine

Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.

No matter how carefully we design our service structure of principles and relationships, no matter how well we apportion authority and responsibility,

the operating results of our structure can be no better than the personal performance of those who man it and make it work. Good leadership cannot function well in a poorly designed structure. Weak leadership can hardly function at all, even in the best of structures.

Good leadership can be here today and gone tomorrow. Furnishing our service structure with able and willing workers is a continuing activity. We must constantly find the right people for our many service tasks. Since our future effectiveness thus depends upon ever-new generations of leaders, it seems desirable that we now define what a good service leader should be; that we carefully indicate for each level of service (especially for our General Service Board) what special skills will be required; that we regularly review our methods of finding and choosing leadership.

First let's remember that our service structure rests on the dedication and ability of Group Representatives, District Representatives and Delegates. These are the direct agents of the Al-Anon Groups; these are the indispensable links between our fellowship and its service structure; these are the primary representatives of Al-Anon's Group conscience.

When choosing GRs Al-Anon Groups should therefore bear such facts well in mind. It is only the GRs who, in District Meetings or Area Assemblies, can elect District Representatives and finally name the Delegate. Hence, great care needs to be taken in choosing these Representatives. Hit-or-miss methods should be avoided. Groups without GRs should be encouraged to elect them. Improvement in this field is a matter of increased care, responsibility and education.

As the GRs meet at their Area Assembly to choose a Delegate, an even greater degree of care and dedication will be required. Personal ambitions must be set aside, antagonisms and controversy forgotten. 'Who are the best qualified people?' This should be the sole thought. The Handbook method of electing Delegates by a two-thirds vote or by lot greatly reduces friction; it makes each Delegate feel that they are truly a trusted servant rather than merely the winner of a contest. Thus far, this method has produced District Representatives and Delegates of a high level of dedication and competence. Our Areas need only to continue to act with care and in a selfless spirit.

Let us now consider the specific personal qualities a service leader ought to have. The following essay on leadership has been adapted from one written by Bill W, a co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, for a 1959

issue of the AA Grapevine and applies equally well to Al-Anon.

No society can function well without able leadership at all levels, and we are no exception. However, we sometimes warp the traditional idea of 'principles before personalities' to such a point that there would be no personality in leadership whatever. This would imply rather faceless automatons trying to please everybody.

At other times, we may demand that our leaders be people of the most sterling judgement, morals and inspiration.

Real leadership, of course, has to function in between these entirely imaginary poles. In our fellowship certainly no leader is faceless, nor is any leader perfect. Fortunately we are blessed with any number of real leaders - those men and women whose dedication, stability, vision and special skills make them capable of dealing with every possible assignment. We have only to seek these folks out and trust them to serve us.

A leader is a person who can put principles, plans and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back him up and help him with his job. When a leader is a power-driver, we rebel; when he is just an order-taker and exercises no judgement of his own, he isn't a leader at all.

A good leader originates plans and policies for the improvement of our fellowship. In new and important matters, he nevertheless consults widely before making decisions. Good leadership knows that a fine plan or idea can come from anyone, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership often discards its own cherished plans for those that are better, giving credit to the source.

Good leadership never passes the buck. Once assured of sufficient backing, it freely makes decisions and puts them into action, provided of course that such actions be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility. A 'politico' is an individual who is forever trying to 'get the people what they want.' A statesman is an individual who can carefully discriminate when and when not to do this. He recognises that even large majorities, when badly disturbed or uninformed, can be dead wrong. When such an occasion arises with vital matters at stake, it is the duty of leadership to take a stand against the storm, using its every ability of authority and persuasion to effect a change.

Nothing, however, can be more hampering to good leadership than

opposition for opposition's sake alone. 'Let's have it our way or no way at all', is often powered by a visionless pride or a gripe. The opposition that casts its vote 'no' without giving any real reasons won't do either. Leadership should always have good reasons and give them.

Then, too, a leader must realise that even very prideful or angry people can sometimes be right, when the calm and the more humble are quite mistaken.

Another qualification for leadership is 'give and take', the ability to compromise cheerfully whenever it can cause a situation to progress in what appears to be the right direction. Compromise comes hard to many of us.

Nevertheless, progress is nearly always characterised by a series of improving compromises. We cannot, however, always compromise. Now and then, it is necessary to stick flat-footed to one's conviction. Careful discrimination and keen timing are required in all situations.

Leadership is often called upon to face heavy and sometimes long-continued criticism - an acid test. There are always constructive critics, our friends indeed. We ought never fail to give them a careful hearing. We should be willing to let them modify our opinions or change them completely. Often, too, we shall have to disagree and then stand fast without losing their friendship.

Then there are destructive critics. They power-drive, they are 'politicos', they make accusations. Maybe they are violent, malicious. They spread rumours and gossip to gain their ends - all for the good of the fellowship! We have to learn that these people, who may be a trifle sicker than the rest of us, need not be destructive at all, depending on how we relate ourselves to them.

If we are the target, we ought to listen carefully to what they say. Sometimes they are telling the whole truth, at other times, a little truth. More often, though, they are just rationalizing themselves into nonsense. If they speak even a little truth, we had better thank them, take our respective inventories and admit we were wrong. If it is nonsense, we can ignore it or lay all the cards on the table and try to persuade them. Failing this, we can be sorry they are too sick to listen and try to forget the whole business. There are few better means of self-survey and of developing genuine patience than the workouts these usually well-meaning erratic members afford us. This is a large order and sometimes we shall fail to make good on it, but we must keep trying.

Now we come to the all-important attribute of vision. Vision is, I think, the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future. Some might feel this to be heresy. But the valuable principle of “One Day at a Time” really refers to our mental and emotional lives and means that we are not to repine over the past nor daydream about the future.

As individuals and as a fellowship, we shall surely suffer if we cast the job of planning for tomorrow onto a fatuous idea of Providence. God has endowed human beings with considerable capability for foresight and evidently expects us to use it. Therefore, we must distinguish between wishful fantasy and thoughtful estimate. This can spell the difference between future progress and unforeseen woe.

Of course we shall often miscalculate the future in whole or in part, but that is better than to refuse to think about it at all. The making of estimates has several aspects. We look at past and present experience to see what we think it means. From this we derive a tentative idea or policy. First, we ask how this idea or policy might work in the near future. Then we ask how it might apply under differing conditions in the longer future. If an idea seems good, we try it experimentally, when that is possible. Later, we evaluate the situation and ask whether our estimate is working well.

At this stage, we may have to make a critical decision. Maybe our policy or plan still looks fine and is apparently doing well. Nevertheless, we ought to ponder carefully its long-term effect. Will today’s advantages boomerang into liabilities for tomorrow? The temptation might be to seize the immediate benefits and forget the harmful precedents or consequences that might result.

We must think about our service needs as they relate to general economic conditions, Group capability and willingness to contribute. We often must try to think months and years ahead.

Such is the process of estimating the future. Responsible leadership must be proficient in this vital activity. It is an essential ability, especially in our Trustees. Most of them should be chosen on the basis that they have already demonstrated foresight in their activities for the fellowship and in their own careers.

Thank God that so many of our service leaders at all levels of operation are blessed with the attributes of tolerance, responsibility, flexibility and vision.

Concept Ten

Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.

The guarantee of harmonious and effective function of good operational structure is in the relation of its several parts and people, so that none can doubt the nature of their respective responsibilities and corresponding areas of authority. Unless these relationships are well-defined, and those holding the final authority are able and willing to delegate suitable operational authority; unless those holding such authority feel able and willing to use it freely as trusted servants; and unless there exists some definite means of interpreting and deciding doubtful situations - then personal clashes, confusion, and ineffectiveness will be inevitable.

The matter of responsibility and its necessary and co-equal authority is of such urgent importance that it might be profitable to reconsider what has already been said, at the same time taking a bird's-eye view of our entire structure to better envisage how this principle does, and always must, apply in our every activity and attitude.

The first characteristic that any working structure must have is a point, or succession of points, where there is ultimate responsibility and ultimate authority. We have already seen how, for Al-Anon's world service, this kind of final responsibility and authority resides in the Al-Anon Groups themselves. They, in turn, have entrusted some of their ultimate authority to the Conference and the Trustees.

We have observed how the Conference Delegates, directly representing the Groups, are actually in a position of ultimate authority over the Trustees. We have seen further how the Trustees are in ultimate authority over the Service Arms.

The principle of ultimate authority runs through our entire structure. This is necessary, because all our service affairs and activities must be directed at the point at which final responsibility rests, so that each volunteer or paid worker knows who makes final decisions.

If, however, authority is not specifically delegated, we would have the opposite result: the Groups could direct their Delegates on every important issue; the Delegates could similarly turn the Trustees into a spineless committee to be given specific direction on almost every matter; likewise, the Trustees could regard themselves as the sole directors of the service entities, making automatons of the staff. In short, such a misuse of ultimate authority would add up to a dictatorship in which nearly every category of Al-Anon servants

would have large responsibilities but no definite authority, and hence no capability of effective decision and leadership. Big or little tyrannies and passing the buck would be the inevitable consequence.

Therefore, it is clear that ultimate authority is not something to be used indiscriminately. Indeed, ultimate authority should practically never be used in full, except in an emergency. That emergency usually arises when delegated authority has erred, when it must be reorganised because it is ineffective, or because it constantly exceeds its defined scope and purpose. For example, if the Groups are dissatisfied with the Conference, they can elect better Delegates or withhold funds. If the Delegates must, they can censure, and under certain circumstances, they can bring about the reorganisation of the General Service Board. The Trustees can do the same with the Service Arms.

These are the proper uses of ultimate authority, because they correctly discharge an ultimate responsibility. The influence of ultimate authority must always be felt, but it is perfectly clear that when delegated authority is operating well, it should be left alone. Otherwise those charged with operating responsibility will be demoralised, because their work will be subject to arbitrary invasion, and the demands made upon them would be greater than their authority.

Let us review the foregoing Concepts and note how, at each structure level, accurate definitions of authority and responsibility have been given. This has been done in the following three ways.

- (a) Traditional means: consider the Conference Charter. It is not a legal instrument, but practically speaking, it is substantially a contract between the Al-Anon Groups and the Conference. The Charter indicates that the Al-Anon Groups have delegated some of their ultimate authority and their operational authority to the Conference. This includes the Trustees and the Service Arms. It further suggests that each Conference member be entitled to cast his vote according to the dictates of his own conscience; that the Conference itself also be granted, under the traditional Right of Decision, the privilege of choosing which matters it will decide and which it will refer back to the Groups for their discussion, guidance or direction. These are the traditional definitions designed to check the natural tendency of the Groups to over-instruct Delegates. This gives the Conference an authority equal to its responsibility.
- (b) Legal means: consider next the position of the Trustees. It has already been stated that although the Conference has the ultimate authority, the Trustees must have the right to actively administer our service affairs. Their right has been further strengthened and its use encouraged by the traditional Right of Decision. We recognise also that the Trustees have a legal right of veto over the Conference when, in rare cases, they feel it should be used.

By these means we have guaranteed the Trustees administrative authority equal to their actual responsibility. The position of the Trustees is further strengthened by their voting participation in the Conference and by the recognition that they are Al-Anon's primary service administrators. All this, of course, does not deny in any way the ultimate authority of the Conference, or of the Delegates, should it be necessary to give the Trustees directives or censures or to reorganise the General Service Board.

Much care has also been taken to guarantee the Executive Committee an ample operating authority that fully matches its responsibility for the routine conduct of our active services. The same would be true of any later-formed committees. However, the legal authority of the Trustees over all of its subsidiary committees is not only ultimate, it is absolute the moment the Trustees have reason to make such a decision. They can name new committees at any time; they control the budget and can withhold operating funds. Nevertheless, so long as things go well, it is highly important that the Trustees do not unnecessarily interfere with or usurp the operating authority of these entities. Hence, the care taken in constructing these definitions of delegated authority.

To a considerable degree, the Standing Committees have a similar latitude. Under the principle of the Right of Decision, each primary committee may choose, within its Terms of Reference, what business it will dispose of and what matters it will refer to the Trustees. The position of these committees is also fortified by the appointment of a generous proportion of non-Trustee members. Here, too, provision has been made to equalise the authority of these committees with their responsibility.

- (c) Principles under which doubtful or conflicting situations can be interpreted and resolved: now we come to the matter of conflicting authority and how these conflicts are to be resolved. Most routine conflicts in the active services are easily settled, because ready communication has been provided between all Service Arms.

In all matters of joint or conflicting authority, a primary jurisdiction must be established, an understood point or body where a final settlement can be reached. The secondary jurisdiction must also be heard. Minor conflicts will not need to be referred to the Trustees, but the point of final decision is always located there.

Suppose, for example, that one of the Service Arms develops plans for a major project, it first takes these plans to the Executive Committee. If, after consultation with the Finance sub group, the Executive Committee agrees that the expenditure is warranted and is in line with the overall budget, the project proceeds. However, if the Executive Committee does

not agree, it informs the initiating committee which has the option to submit the plans to the General Service Board for a decision. If necessary the General Service Board will refer the matter to Conference.

It also works the other way around. If the Executive Committee, after consulting the Finance sub group, for example proposes a large expenditure that may strongly affect Al-Anon feeling and policy, it refers the matter to the General Service Board for its decision.

A condition to be avoided at all costs is double-headed business or policy management. Authority can never be divided into equal halves. The vital need to avoid double-headed management will be fully discussed under Concept Eleven.

In addition to the methods we use to make delegated authority equal to delegated responsibility, we have two more guarantees - the Right of Appeal and the Right of Petition. Therefore, we use the Right of Appeal and Right of Petition to ensure that every minority and every worker has an authority and a status commensurate with the responsibility involved.

To sum up: let us always be sure that there is an abundance of final or ultimate authority to correct or to reorganise; but let us be equally sure that all of our trusted servants have a clearly defined and adequate authority to do their daily work and to discharge their clear responsibilities. All of this is fully implied in Al-Anon's Tradition Two. Here we see the 'Group conscience' as the ultimate authority and the 'trusted servant' as the delegated authority. One cannot function without the other. We well know that only by means of careful definitions and mutual respect can we constantly maintain a harmonious working balance.

Concept Eleven

The World Service Office is composed of Selected Committees, Executives and Staff Members.

Note: The Service Arms in the UK & Eire are composed of the Trustees of the General Service Board, various committees and the General Service Office.

While the Trustees of the General Service Board hold final responsibility for Al-Anon's service administration in the UK & Eire, they should always have the best possible assistance from the Standing Committees and staff. This means careful consideration of these committees, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the way in which they relate to each other, the special rights and duties of our staff and consultants, together with a proper basis for their financial compensation.

The long-range success of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire will rest not

only on the capabilities of the Trustees but also upon the competent leadership and harmonious association of those non-Trustee committee members and staff members who actively carry out Al-Anon's services. Their quality and dedication, or their lack of these characteristics, will make or break our structure of service. Our dependence on them will always be great.

Staff are in direct contact with members through correspondence and/or travel. Their performance is constantly on view by visitors to the General Service Office. They perform most of the routine tasks and carry out most of our services. They often initiate, develop and implement new plans and policies. Because this group is the visible image of service, most Al-Anon members evaluate our service by what they see and feel about them. These servants not only support the leadership of the Trustees, they share leadership with them.

The General Service Board appoints Committee Chairmen, and the GSB Chairman is, along with the General Secretary, an ex-officio member of each committee. The Committee Chairmen recruit their members, subject to the approval of the General Service Board. Staff members serve on some committees. Conference Delegates are also allocated to a number of these committees.

The Standing Committees include: Conference; Editorial; Literature; GSB Nominating; Public Information; TEAM Events.

None of these service committees is executive in character. They do not manage or conduct the active affairs of the General Service Office.

Advisory Committees and Subcommittees make recommendations to the Executive Committee or to the General Service Board. From time to time, ad hoc committees and/or task forces may be established to fulfil a specific, limited purpose. Ad hoc committees and task forces report to the entity which appointed them. The Admissions Committee, when required, is a subcommittee of the Conference Committee. It determines if an Area meets the criteria for seating at the UK & Eire Service Conference. The Alateen Committee at Conference is an Advisory Committee to the General Service Board.

Let us look at each of these in turn.

1. **The Conference Committee** ensures the smooth and efficient organisation of the annual UK & Eire Service Conference. It has the responsibility to prepare the agenda that will be as informative as possible, facilitating the active voice and effective group conscience of our fellowship while giving the Delegates an opportunity to present the needs of the Groups to the Service Arms and a chance for the Service Arms to report the extent and

breadth of their work to the Groups through the Delegates.

To foster communication regarding the work of Conference, the committee produces a summary of the Conference sessions for all Conference members and groups.

2. **The Editorial Committee** produces an e-zine, *Al-Anon Today* from contributions submitted by the membership. It also offers meeting ideas and material to be used as a basis for Group discussion.

As a concept, *Al-Anon Today* is Conference Approved, but it is not possible for each issue to follow the full procedure for Conference Approved Literature. Sharings received for the e-zine are reviewed by the Editorial Committee for their fidelity to the Al-Anon programme and principles.

3. **The Literature Committee:** the pages of our literature tell a story of a unique fellowship that unites members of different backgrounds, races and walks of life. Our literature is a principal means by which Al-Anon growth, unity and service are facilitated. The influence of the many books and pamphlets is incalculable.

The Literature Committees at the World Service Office develop Conference Approved Literature (CAL). Their policy is to aim at only the best. Cheap-looking, cheap-selling, and poorly conceived literature is not in Al-Anon's best interest.

The WSO is the sole publishing agent of Al-Anon and Alateen recovery material. Each General Service Structure outside the United States and Canada may, with permission, reprint WSO material.

Items which are reprinted in the UK may be anglicised.

Before inclusion on the literature list, all new and revised material is reviewed and approved by a committee with allocated Delegates and the Executive Committee. It is the participation of Delegates in this process that gives UK & Eire Conference approval. (See page 121.)

4. **The GSB Nominating Committee** aids the Trustees in discharging their prime obligation to see that all vacancies are properly filled with members of the greatest possible competence, stability and diligence.

The GSB Nominating Committee, having consulted with its Delegate members, will make recommendations that will determine, to a large extent, the continuous success of our services. Its members will have the primary voice in choosing future Trustees at Large. Careful deliberation, painstaking investigation, refusal to accept casual recommendations,

advance preparation of lists of suitable candidates - these need to be the principal attitudes and activities of this committee.

‘The Regional Committee on Trustees is composed of all UK & Eire Service Delegates from the Region nominating a Regional Trustee, plus two additional Delegates from outside the Region chosen by lot at Conference.’

5. **The Public Information Committee** ensures that the general public is informed of the existence and availability of Al-Anon/Alateen as a resource for families of alcoholics and those whose personal lives are, or have been, deeply affected by close contact with a problem drinker. It also informs members at Group, District and Area levels and encourages them to participate in Public Information activities.

Although it is helpful to have members experienced in the field of public relations, the Committee should always include some members who have ‘Al-Anon sense’, that is, a thorough grasp of our total picture and our relation to the public.

6. **The TEAM Events Committee** assists in co-ordinating TEAM events throughout the structure. The committee is comprised of the six Regional Trustees, one of whom chairs the meeting.

The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is not considered one of the Standing Committees since it is responsible for the routine administration of Al-Anon Family Groups in the UK & Eire with authority bestowed by the General Service Board to conduct its day-to-day affairs. Its membership includes the Chairperson, the Treasurer, other experienced Al-Anon members, preferably past Trustees, and the General Secretary. The Chairperson and the members are elected by the GSB.

All new projects considered by any of the Standing Committees should in the first instance be submitted to the Executive Committee for its approval. Any expenditure of money if greater than authorised by the budget needs to be carefully considered by the committee. However, any project that entails a change in policy should be first brought to the GSB for consideration.

The Finance sub group, up to three members, are also members of the Executive Committee. The main responsibility of this sub group is to see that the operation of Al-Anon in the UK & Eire remains financially sound, in good times and in bad, always aligning the use of our money with the spiritual principles of our programme. Here money and spirituality do have

to mix, and in just the right proportion. Here we need hard-headed members with financial experience. All should be realists, and a pessimist or two can be useful. The whole temper of today's world is to spend more than it has, or may ever have. When a new and promising Al-Anon service project moves into sight, we may cry, 'Never mind the money, let's go at it'. This is when the sub group members are expected to say, 'Stop, look and listen'. This is the exact point where the 'savers' come into a constructive and healthy collision with the 'spenders'.

This sub group conservatively estimates each year's income. It develops plans for increasing our revenues and keeps a watchful eye on expenditure. It closely scrutinises the annual budgets of estimated income and expense. It makes budget revisions when necessary. It considers every new expenditure in the light of, 'Is this necessary or desirable now? Can we afford it?' It also sets literature pricing in a way that adequately supports the needs of the service structure.

When appropriate, the Finance sub group sets aside sums in our Reserve Fund with the assurance of the availability of those funds. This should enable us to meet hard times or even a calamity.

This is not to say that our Finance sub group should be negative and fearfully hoard our money at the expense of services. Penny-pinching could affect our services and deprive us of the confidence of our Groups. Such false and unimaginative economy could prove very costly - in spirit, in service and in money.

Real prudence is neither hoarding nor recklessness. We may occasionally be compelled to risk temporary deficits, but uncontrolled spending could result in the severe curtailment or collapse of our vital services, and should be guarded against with great care.

Executive Committee for Property Management

The main responsibility of this committee is to oversee the management of property occupied by the General Service Office and/or owned by Family Groups Ltd in order to separate maintenance and management from the day-to-day operation of the Al-Anon fellowship.

The Alateen Committee at Conference (Advisory Committee)

This Committee is made up of one Delegate from each of the six Regions, the Chairperson of the General Service Board and the General Secretary who is the Chairperson.

'Its role is to oversee Alateen activities in the UK & Eire and to monitor the forms and procedures for the Alateen Group Sponsors' screening process.'

Principles That Operate at the General Service Office

Executives: Any active service, to function well must be managed by a competent executive. It must always be directed by one person, supported by such staff as are needed. This function must be delegated to an individual, with ample freedom and authority to do the job without interference, so long as the work is done well. In UK & Eire this is the General Secretary.

An executive is often the one who takes the initiative in planning. When making new plans and putting them into operation, consultation must be held with those whose work is to be affected and those whose experience and wisdom are actually or officially required.

A good executive knows when to ask for specific definitions and directions and when to make decisions. This choice is structurally guaranteed by Concept Three (Right of Decision). If there is an error in judgment or if authority is exceeded, the decision can be reviewed.

Staff Members: Certain key people at the General Service Office (GSO) must be Al-Anon members. Some of these have a vote on our committees. It is not a requirement that all staff be Al-Anon members. It is important that all be treated fairly. As in the management of any business, the prime consideration is getting the job well done.

At GSO we treat our paid workers in all respects as we do our volunteers. The fact that our employees receive a salary should never consciously or unconsciously be used as a lever against them. To do so would be neither good spiritual practice nor good business. When we can afford it every employee should be compensated in relation to those offering similar services and abilities in comparable not-for-profit organisations.

Our employees are part of a team. No organisational structure can fully guarantee GSO against the possible damage done by clashing personalities. If, however, they cannot or will not do their jobs, we can and should let them go.

By our sustained willingness to practise spiritual principles in all our affairs we can realise these ideals.

Concept Twelve

The spiritual foundation for Al-Anon's World Services is contained in the General Warranties of the Conference, Article 12 of the Charter.

In order that the Conference shall never become the seat of perilous wealth or power, the General Warranties of the Conference read: 'In all its proceedings the UK & Eire Service Conference of Al-Anon shall observe the spirit of the Traditions':

- that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle
- that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members
- that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and, whenever possible, by unanimity
- that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy
- that though the Conference serves Al-Anon, it shall never perform any act of government, and that, like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

The Conference Charter is an informal agreement made between the Al-Anon Groups and their Trustees and is the basis upon which the World Service Conference operates. Articles 1 to 11 were rewritten to conform to practice in the UK & Eire and were adopted by Conference in 1973.

But Article 12 stands by itself. An amendment or a cancellation of any of its vital Warranties would require the written consent of three quarters of all the registered Al-Anon Groups throughout the world. Each Group should vote on any such proposals after taking at least six months for careful deliberation. Thus, changes in the Warranties have been made difficult but not impossible.

It is believed that all of these Warranties are permanently important to Al-Anon's general welfare. A change in them should be made only upon positive evidence of some defect, and then only by common consent of the Al-Anon Groups. They rank, therefore, with the Twelve Traditions and are as important to Al-Anon's services as The Traditions are to the Groups.

All the Warranties counsel prudence - prudence in personal relations, prudence in money matters and prudence in our contacts with the world about us. For Al-Anon, prudence is a middle ground, a channel between fear

on the one hand and recklessness on the other. Prudence creates a climate of harmony, effectiveness and consistent spiritual progress. These Warranties express the wisdom of taking thought for the future based on lessons of the past. They protect us against needless errors and the natural human temptations of wealth, prestige and power.

The Conference above all should feel bound by the Al-Anon Traditions. Indeed the Conference is named 'the guardian of The Traditions.' The Traditions, which express the principles and attitudes of prudence, set the pattern of unity and of function which Conference is expected to exemplify.

'In order that the Conference shall never become the seat of perilous wealth or power' does not mean that the Conference should have virtually no money and no authority. We must use some money and there must be some authority. But how much? How and where should we draw the line?

The principal protection against too much money and too much power is to be found in The Traditions themselves. So long as the General Service Board refuses to accept outside contributions to Al-Anon, we shall not become wealthy to a perilous degree. Indeed, it seems that the chief difficulty will continue to be that of effectively informing the Al-Anon Groups as to the actual financial needs of the General Service Office and their responsibility to support it. It is certain therefore that we shall never become too wealthy through Group contributions. We need only avoid the temptation of accepting money from the outside world.

There can be little risk either in giving Delegates, Trustees and staff the necessary authority. Experience indicates that we are unlikely to encounter problems of too much service authority. On the contrary, our difficulty may be to maintain enough of it. We are protected from too much authority by participation, by the Right of Appeal and by the Charter. A leader who demands too much authority could not long remain in leadership. The Delegates, directly representing the Groups, control the ultimate supply of our service funds. This constitutes a direct check upon the rise and use of personal power. Taken altogether, these factors should be reliable safeguards against too much money and too much authority.

But there is another sort of authority and power that the Conference cannot be without, the spiritual power that flows from the activities and attitudes of truly humble, unselfish and dedicated Al-Anon servants. They do not rule by mandate, they lead by example. This is the real power that makes Conference function.

Warranty One:

That only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its

prudent financial principle.

Our attitude toward the giving of time, compared with giving money presents an interesting contrast. We give much time to Al-Anon activities for the sake of our Groups, our Areas and Al-Anon as a whole, as well as for our own protection and growth. We often take time from home duties or business to do Twelfth-Step work. We do not think these sacrifices are unusual. We remember that people once gave their time to us as we struggled for understanding.

But when it comes to the spending of cash for service overheads, many of us become reluctant. When we drop money in the meeting basket, its usefulness is not as obvious as when we talk to a newcomer. There is no romance in paying the landlord. Sometimes we hold back when asked to meet District or Area service expenses. As to UK & Eire services, we may remark, 'Well, our Group doesn't get anything out of it. Let's not spoil Al-Anon with money and service organisation. Let's keep things simple.'

These reactions are natural and understandable, easy to justify. But they quickly disappear when the real need for a given Al-Anon service is made clear by right information and education. We see this in the job now being done by Delegates, District Representatives and Group Representatives, who are finding that raising money by pressure and exhortation is not needed in Al-Anon. When each member can be shown how much the money really buys in terms of helping families to find Al-Anon, contributions are willing and generous.

We can take comfort, too, from the fact that the cost of our services is small in relation to the size of the fellowship; paid workers at GSO are comparatively few.

In 1973 the General Service Board was able to establish a Reserve Fund. Until then the Trustees hoped and prayed that the budget would be met by contributions and literature sales. Fortunately this turned out as they hoped. But such a hand-to-mouth system of finance, although inevitable in our early years, was not a prudent one for the future.

Reserve Fund

Is a Reserve Fund needed?

This may not seem necessary in a period of prosperity. However, what would happen in bad times without a reserve? Suppose our income was decreased by a deep depression, or expenditure increased by steep inflation. We could be faced by a gaping deficit that would make it necessary to discharge some of our paid staff, which could result in mail going unanswered and requests for

information not being properly serviced. Conference members might have to be drastically reduced. These could be some of the penalties if we did not have a Reserve Fund to fall back on. Is it not wise to increase our savings whenever possible, especially in good times?

If the Reserve Fund continues to grow, will 'perilous wealth' result?

There is always a need for more working capital so that it is hard to imagine having too much. However, we can be secure in the knowledge that the Conference would not allow the Reserve Fund to become excessive.

Will the presence of a Reserve Fund discourage Group contributions?

We believe that good communication will help the Groups understand the need for such a fund.

Does the establishment of a Reserve Fund mean that we lack faith in a Higher Power?

We believe we are expected to exercise a reasonable amount of foresight in the conduct of our affairs. This is certainly not a denial of faith in a Higher Power; it is instead a willingness to shoulder our own clear responsibility and so merit His trust in us.

Should our books and other literature be sold at cost so that hard-pressed members could purchase them more easily; or sold for less to encourage the general public to buy them?

No, because this would mean sacrificing the support of Al-Anon's services for small financial advantages to individual members. Experience shows that without a modest profit on literature, we could not pay for our many services.

Because of its specialised character there is no reason to believe that large sales of Al-Anon literature could be made to the general public even at lowered prices.

To sum up, the Reserve Fund is seen to be the aggregate of many small financial sacrifices made by individual members for the good of the whole fellowship.

Warranty Two:

That no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over any other members.

The application of this principle has already been extensively discussed

under Concept Four, *Participation is the Key to Harmony*. It is so important, however, that it is the subject of this Warranty, thus ensuring that Conference action alone can never overturn or amend the Right of Participation. For such a purpose widespread Group consent would be needed, which might be difficult though not impossible for the Conference to obtain. Our whole service experience fully justifies taking this strong stand against the creation of unqualified authority at any point in our Conference structure.

This Warranty against absolute authority is far more general and sweeping in its nature than a guarantee of voting participation. It really means that we in Al-Anon do not want or need absolute human authority in any form.

Article 12 of the Conference Charter might be called 'The Service Bill of Rights', because these Warranties, and especially this one, express deep and loving respect for the spiritual liberties of our fellows. May God grant that we shall never be so unwise as to desire anything less.

Warranty Three:

That all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and, whenever possible, by unanimity

Here, on the one hand, we erect a safeguard against any hasty or overbearing authority of a simple majority; and on the other hand, take notice of the rights and the frequent wisdom of minorities, however small. This principle further guarantees that all matters of importance will be extensively debated, until a really heavy majority can support every critical decision we are called upon to make in the Conference.

The Conference voice would thus speak with authority and confidence beyond that which a simple majority could confer. If any persons remain in opposition, they are likely to be better satisfied because their views have had a full and fair hearing.

The principle of substantial unanimity does, however, have certain practical limitations. Occasionally a matter will be of such extreme urgency that a Conference decision must be made at once. In such a case a minority, however well-intended, could not be allowed to block a vitally needed action or one which is evidently in the best interests of Al-Anon. Here we shall need to trust the majority, sometimes a mere majority, to decide whether Conference debate is to be terminated and a final decision taken. In certain other cases, the majority will also have to exercise its prerogative. Suppose, for example, that a small minority obstinately tries to use the principle of substantial unanimity to block a clearly needed action. In such an event it would be the plain duty of the majority to override such a misuse of the principle of

substantial unanimity and call for a vote.

However, majorities will probably seldom need to take such radical stands. If and when they do, the Conference will have to decide, by a simple majority vote, what the requirements of substantial unanimity should be, whether two thirds, three quarters, or an even greater majority.

The practical and spiritual results of substantial unanimity will make themselves evident.

Warranty Four:

That no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy.

Practically all societies and governments feel it necessary to inflict personal punishments upon individual members for violations of their beliefs, principles or laws. Because of their spiritual character both Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon find this practice unnecessary. When AA members fail to follow sound spiritual principles, alcohol cuts them down. It is not so obvious with us. It is easier for us as Al-Anon members to fool ourselves that we are right and that our indignation is justified. However, anger and resentment betray us, and we soon recognise we've had a 'slip'. Therefore no humanly administered system of penalties is needed in either society. This unique condition is one on which we can fully rely and one which we should never abandon by resorting to personal attack or punishment.

For much the same reason we cannot and should not enter into public controversy, even in self-defence. Nothing could be more damaging to our unity and to the goodwill Al-Anon enjoys than public contention, no matter how promising the immediate dividends might appear.

Therefore, it is evident that the harmony, security and future effectiveness of Al-Anon will depend largely upon our maintenance of a thoroughly non-aggressive and pacific attitude in all our public relations.

If we recognise that religion is the province of the clergy, the practice of medicine is for doctors, and social welfare is for social workers, we can helpfully co-operate with all. Certainly there is little basis for controversy in these areas. Al-Anon has no concern with reform or politics. We should strictly mind our threefold purpose.

Because our Service Conference represents us all it is especially charged with the duty of setting the highest possible standards with respect to these attitudes.

The Conference, however, may sometimes have to apply these principles to specific situations and take certain protective action, especially in the area of Tradition violation. This action, however, need never be punitive or aggressively controversial. When the infractions have serious implications, the GSB consults the Conference for its advice and direction. For the more routine deviations the GSB takes appropriate action, which it later reports to the Conference at its next session.

Let us take some situations that would require consideration and decision:

- Suppose that Al-Anon falls under sharp public attack or heavy ridicule with little or no justification in fact.

Almost without exception, it can be confidently estimated that our best defence would be no defence whatever - namely, complete silence at the public level. Unreasonable people are stimulated all the more by opposition. If in good humour we leave them strictly alone, they are apt to subside the more quickly. If their attacks persist and it is plain that they are misinformed, it may be wise to communicate with them in a temperate and informative way; also in such a manner that they cannot use our communication as a springboard for fresh assault. Such communication need not be made officially. Very often we can use the good offices of friends. Such messages should never question the motives of the attackers, but should be purely informative. These communications should also be private. If made public, they will often be seized upon as a fresh excuse for controversy.

If, however, criticism of Al-Anon is to any extent justified, it could be acknowledged privately, together with our thanks.

- We might be confronted by public violations of the Al-Anon Traditions. Individuals, outside organisations and even our own members sometimes may try to use the Al-Anon name for their own private purposes. As Al-Anon grows in size and public recognition, the temptation to misuse our name may increase.

It has been said, 'Al-Anon is prepared to give away its knowledge and experience - all except the Al-Anon name itself'. Our principles can be applied in any situation. We do not wish to monopolise them. We simply request that the public use of the Al-Anon name be avoided by those other agencies who wish to avail themselves of Al-Anon techniques and ideas. In case the Al-Anon name should be misapplied, it would of course be the duty of Conference to press for the discontinuance of such a practice - avoiding, however, public quarrelling about the matter.

The Conference, as we know, is the guardian of the Traditions. But this does not imply the right nor the duty of the Conference to publicly punish or sue every wilful violator. Such aggressive public acts would place the Conference in the position of having violated one of its Traditions in order to defend another.

Privately, however, violators of our Traditions can be informed that they are out of order. If they persist, our resources of persuasion may be used. Consistent firmness will often bring the desired result. In the long run though, we shall have to rely mainly on maintaining continuous education of the public through communication channels of all kinds.

Experience has shown that continuous and general education respecting our Traditions will be a reliable protection in the years to come.

- Severe internal disagreement among us that comes to unwelcome public attention is unlikely to occur in Al-Anon, but it did in AA.

What should our Service Conference do about this should it ever happen? While always remembering Group autonomy, the best course is usually to make an offer of mediation. What the Tradition means, and what our experience has been, can be recounted. Avoidance of any breakthrough to the public level should always be urged and all parties reminded that an unfavourable public image could keep new prospects from joining Al-Anon.

Many of these difficulties with the Traditions represent honest differences of opinion in interpretation of The Traditions. The Traditions sometimes reveal grey areas where violations are often debatable and inconsequential. In such cases we refrain from offering suggestions, unless they are insisted upon. Many such problems can be solved by the local people concerned.

- It is possible that some day there might be a deep rift dividing either or both AA and Al-Anon - a difference of opinion so serious that it might involve a withdrawal of an appreciable proportion of members into a new society, or in one faction's making an alliance with an outside agency, ignoring the Traditions. It might be powered by religious, political, national or radical forces. It might represent an honest effort to change for the better, but it would certainly pose a serious question of what to do.

Such a contingency is hard to imagine, yet this is no reason for refusing to give it calm forethought. If it ever came, its development might be such a terrific surprise and shock that aroused passions could flare, making any constructive solution difficult, perhaps impossible.

The best attitude in such a circumstance might be complete non-resistance

- certainly no anger, no attack. Al-Anon has no doctrine that has to be maintained. There is no authority that has to be supported; no prestige, power or pride that has to be satisfied and we have no property or money that is worth quarrelling about. In the event of a threatened major division, the best possible use should be made of these advantages in a calm and considered attitude of non-resistance.

We have always practised this attitude on a lesser scale. If a member says there is too much dominance by one person in her Group, we simply say, 'Why don't you try another one? Or start one of your own'. If individual members wish to gather together for retreats or any undertaking whatever, we still say, 'Fine. Only we hope you won't designate such activities as an Al-Anon Group or enterprise'.

In the event of an extensive split we would not waste time persuading the dissenters to stay with us. Should they become happier and more serene under new auspices and changed conditions, we would ask ourselves if we could not learn from their fresh experience.

Warranty Five:

That though the Conference serves Al-Anon, it shall never perform any act of government, and that, like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.

In preceding Concepts, attention has been drawn to the extraordinary liberties that The Traditions accord to the individual member and Group. No penalties are to be inflicted for nonconformity to Al-Anon principles, no fees or dues levied; contributions are always voluntary. No member can be expelled from the fellowship; membership always is the choice of the individual. Each Group conducts its internal affairs as it wishes, only abstaining from acts that might injure Al-Anon or AA as a whole. Finally any Group of the relatives of alcoholics gathered together for mutual aid may call itself an Al-Anon Family Group provided that as a Group it has no other purpose or affiliation.

Because we set high value on our liberties and cannot conceive of a time when they will need to be limited, we urge our Conference to abstain from any act of authoritative government that could curtail Al-Anon's freedoms. To maintain these freedoms the Conference must remain democratic in spirit and in action.

Therefore, we expect that our Conference will always try to act with mutual respect and love, one member for another; that no action will be taken in anger, haste or recklessness; that care will be observed to respect and protect all minorities; that no action will be personally punitive; that whenever

possible, important actions will be taken in substantial unanimity; and that our Conference will ever be prudently on guard against tyrannies, great or small, whether these be found in the majority or in the minority.

The sum of these several attitudes and practices is the very essence of democracy. Our freedom to serve is truly the freedom by which we live and have our being.

THE SERENITY PRAYER

God grant me the Serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
and Wisdom to know the difference.

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This Service Manual is downloadable and searchable at
www.al-anonuk.org.uk/members-resources

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