

Guidelines

The Shared Experience of Al-Anon Members

Online Al-Anon Meetings

Al-Anon Family Groups recognise the potential and value of the internet and other electronic media for communicating information about Al-Anon and offering hope and support to the families and friends of alcoholics.

*Al-Anon does not endorse, oppose, or lend support to any online service provider or specific communication device. *see below for further clarification.*

Al-Anon members taking part in online meetings are encouraged to carry Al-Anon's message of hope and support to potential members still suffering from the impact of someone else's drinking, and to interested professionals.

WHO CAN START AN ONLINE MEETING?

- Any two or more relatives or friends of alcoholics who meet to solve their common problem may register as an online Al-Anon meeting with the General Service Office (GSO), provided that, as a meeting, they have no other affiliation, and they abide by the Al-Anon Traditions.
- As with starting a new in-person meeting, it is the responsibility of those who qualify for Al-Anon membership to register and conduct the meetings.
- No individual has the authority to block or screen participants. Such actions should only be taken by a Group Conscience of the meeting members.



on the Al-Anon website and ensure the Group is covered by the relevant block insurance.

- For further information, refer to the Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire Service Manual (How to Start a Group).

WHAT NAME SHOULD WE CHOOSE?

Having an appropriate Group name is very important as it may be a potential member's first impression of Al-Anon. The Group's name should be inviting to all and conform to Al-Anon principles. A meeting name should not imply exclusion of anyone, or affiliation with any other Twelve-Step programme, self-help group, commercial venture, religious principle or belief, or other outside enterprise, including the service platform. If you wish, GSO will be happy to help you choose an appropriate name for the Group.

WHERE DO WE BEGIN?

The basics needed to start an online Al-Anon meeting: -



- Identify a suitable online service platform (*Currently Zoom is the only platform for which we have enough experience to provide security guidance to comply with our insurance policy).
- Cyber security, including anti-virus software, is the responsibility of individuals attending online meetings.
- Download an Online Al-Anon Meeting Registration Form from the website.
- Select an appropriate name for the meeting (see below).
- Return the completed form to register with GSO. This will help newcomers find the meeting

WHAT DO WE NEED TO KEEP IN MIND?

Report any changes to the meeting information immediately to GSO. This includes meeting ID and password, Group Representative (GR), meeting day and time, and relevant contact details including an email address.

WHAT ARE THE FEATURES OF AN ONLINE MEETING?

- Although these meetings are virtual rather than in-person, they are conducted in exactly the same way.
- Meetings are open to Al-Anon members or anyone whose personal life is, or has been, affected by another's drinking.
- As with in-person meetings, some online Groups may have an occasional meeting that is open to

health professionals, AA members and anyone else who is interested in learning about Al-Anon, and where Al-Anon members share their experience, strength and hope.

ANONYMITY



Anonymity is an important spiritual principle of the Al-Anon programme. Members must guard the anonymity of all Al-Anon and AA members. Members need to feel secure in the knowledge that what they say will be held in confidence. This means not revealing contact details or what is shared at a meeting to anyone - relatives, friends, and other members.

When attending an online meeting it is important to guard members' anonymity from other people in the same household (refer to the Security Protocol document for further information).

CONFERENCE APPROVED LITERATURE (CAL) IN ONLINE MEETINGS

- In the spirit of unity, only Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL) can be used at meetings. Refer to the Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire Service Manual for further information.
- Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature is copyrighted. Whilst excerpts of CAL may be temporarily displayed during a meeting, no part may be reproduced, stored in, or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior permission of the publishers/GSO.

IS THERE A SPECIFIC MEETING FORMAT FOR ONLINE MEETINGS?

Online meetings use the same meeting format as in-person meetings. Only the method of sharing is different. Any Al-Anon related topic may be used for a meeting.

HOW DO WE REGISTER WITH GSO?

Download an Online Al-Anon Meeting Registration Form from the website. Complete and return it to GSO.



Note: GSO will register an online meeting designating itself as an online Al-Anon meeting with the understanding that it will abide by the Al-Anon Traditions. Meetings will be open to Al-Anon members or anyone whose personal life is, or has been, affected by another's drinking.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM GSO?

Registration with GSO ensures the Group will receive the following: -

- Information on a variety of subjects - such as suggested meeting formats, literature, and service materials.
- Access to the Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire Service Manual on the members' area of the website.
- GSO newsletters, announcements, GSO Appeal Letters, and other periodic mailings.
- Details of the online meeting will be included on the Al-Anon UK & Eire website meeting list.
- Group Insurance.

WELCOMING NEWCOMERS

- Consider how the Group will welcome newcomers (for example: -sending a welcome email which may include a group contact number; or electing a group member to welcome newcomers; explaining how Al-Anon, and the specific online meeting works).
- Inform newcomers about Conference Approved Literature (CAL), what it is and where they can purchase it.

TRADITION SEVEN

- Our Tradition of being self-supporting suggests that the meeting's expenses be met first. Expenses may include provider costs, literature, postage and supporting Area. Remaining funds should be sent to GSO to support the General Fund. Meetings ought never endorse, finance, or lend their name to outside enterprises. It is suggested that the meeting includes a monthly or quarterly Treasurer's report for information.
- Online Groups in Eire need to refer to the UKG25 Group Finances in Eire.
- Tradition Seven also requires the Groups to have the service roles filled so they are fully self-supporting (see below).



SERVICE ROLES

Service roles at an online Al-Anon meeting should rotate, just as they do at in-person meetings. Service roles include: -

- **Key Holder** – accesses the Zoom platform (Refer to UKG27).

- **Group Representative (GR)** - Represents the Group at Area and shares information with the Group (Refer to UKG2).
- **Current Mailing Address (CMA)** - A member resident in the UK & Eire who receives mail from GSO on behalf of the Group. This may be the GR.
- **Host/Co-host** –Admits members into the meeting and deals with the technical side of things.
- **Chairperson** – Opens/closes the meeting, introduces topics and speakers.
- **Treasurer** – A member resident in the UK who collects Tradition Seven donations and prepares a monthly or quarterly Treasurer’s report for information. Groups in Eire refer to UKG25. An Eire Group Treasurer must reside in Eire.
- **Secretary** – Informs GSO of any changes to meeting details.
- **Greeter** – Welcomes newcomers and responds to newcomer questions about the meeting.

For further information, refer to UKG27 Guideline for Service Roles in Online Al-Anon Meetings.

