

# Guidelines

## *The Shared Experience of Al-Anon Members*

### Local Al-Anon Information Services

*Al-Anon Information Services/Centres are established by one or more Areas or by Groups located close enough to each other for easy access and communication and can be set up as a separate charity. Any local Al-Anon or Alateen Group may contribute and participate in an information service on a voluntary basis. The service exists to serve the common purpose of carrying the Al-Anon message to the suffering families and friends of alcoholics and supporting the Groups they serve.*

#### NAMING A SERVICE

The name Al-Anon Information Services or Information Centres is used for local services. Al-Anon General Services refers to the General Service Office serving an entire structure.

#### HOW DOES AN INFORMATION SERVICE OR CENTRE REGISTER?

The General Service Office will register an Information Service when it meets the following requirements:

1. Has a title indicative of the nature of its operation, for example, ".....Al-Anon Information Service/Centre".
2. Acquires a post office box number or an office address.
3. Conducts activities in addition to Twelve-Step telephone calls. For example, works with local Al Anon/Alateen service committees and publishes meeting lists on a website.

#### WHAT DOES AN INFORMATION SERVICE/CENTRE PROVIDE?

- Maintains an up-to-date list of Groups.
- Receives telephone calls from potential members and directs them to the



appropriate Group. All telephone volunteers should be Al-Anon members and have training annually.

- Channels Public Information work through Areas, Districts and Groups whenever possible.
- Maintains a stock of Conference-Approved Literature (CAL) for sale to local Groups. Registered Information Services/Centres



are currently allowed a bulk purchase discount on literature purchased from the General Service Office (GSO).

#### HOW IS AN INFORMATION SERVICE/CENTRE MANAGED?

A committee is appointed to manage the Information Service/Centre by the participating Areas or Groups:

- The Committee holds periodic meetings with Information Service/Centre Representatives (ISRs/ICRs).
- An Information Service/Centre Representative is appointed by the Area and serves on the Area Service Committee.



## WHO OPERATES THE TELEPHONE HELPLINE?



The decision to implement and support this service is within the autonomy of the Groups it serves.

In accordance with our Traditions, telephone calls are answered by volunteers who are Al-Anon members. Coverage works best when a monthly rota of members, willing to give their time to this service, is drawn up by the Information Service/Centre Committee.

Finding volunteers for this service may be one of the hardest tasks in setting up an Information Service/Centre. It is, however, one of the most important if distressed callers are to be informed of the nearest local groups.

All Helpline volunteers attend training sessions each year.

## HOW DOES THE INFORMATION SERVICE/CENTRE FIT INTO THE AREA AND DISTRICT STRUCTURE?

An Al-Anon Information Service/Centre exists, first and foremost, to disseminate information about Al-Anon and Alateen.

It has no authority or structural role in relation to Groups, Districts or Areas.

Al-Anon members from the local Groups, Districts and Area are responsible for the smooth running of the service.

## HOW IS CONTINUITY MAINTAINED?

According to Tradition Eight, paid staff may be engaged to deal with the day to day running of the Information Service/Centre. It is prudent to engage Al-Anon members for some, if not all, of these tasks, as their knowledge of the programme will be of great assistance.

The hiring and firing of such staff is the responsibility of the Information Service/Centre Committee which oversees the management of the Centre.

“Employees in Al-Anon Services...

“Any Al-Anon member who is gainfully employed in an Al-Anon Information Centre does not serve as a volunteer in a policy-making position, such as Group Representative (GR), District Representative (DR), Area Service Committee Officer or Co-ordinator, 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 practices the Al-Anon programme.” See page 121 *Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire Service Manual*.

## NOTE

Groups are reminded that whilst an effective Information Service/Centre needs proper support, it is important to ensure that it does not become a drain on the General Fund of Al-Anon as a whole.

Further information and guidance may be obtained by contacting the General Service Office (GSO) and by study of the UK & Eire Service Manual.

