

N.T.S.C. News January 2016

"Each day, somewhere in the world, recovery begins when one alcoholic talks with another alcoholic, sharing experience, strength, and hope."



Happy New Year To Everyone

From the National Telephone Sub-committee.

This is the first Official News Letter for the Telephone Service.

This is issue one, of what will be a quarterly newsletter, intended as information for the telephone service throughout the United Kingdom.

It is hoped that by sharing information throughout the fellowship on telephone matters., we can better serve the still suffering alcoholic.

Newsletter Content

The next newsletter will be published in April after the first Quarters statistics become available.

When sending contributions to the Newsletter or Regional and Intergroup reports, please send to: telephonesubcom@aa-email.org.uk

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome from Telephone Liaison Officers and all members involved in the Telephone Service.

Please let us know of any changes to RTLO & TLO contact details.

Any News from your Region will be gladly accepted and included in future issues of the Newsletter.

Information CD

We are in the process of preparing a data CD for the Telephone Service, containing a generic responders pack, operator training, regional/local telephone numbers and other information, which will be available at the Seminar in August.

N.T.S.C Treasurer News

As from March 2016 the NTSC will no longer be responsible for the payment of the the monthly telephone bill from BT.

The General Service Office will take over paying the charges for our 0800 & 0845 number and our entry into the 168 white pages telephone directories.

This means that the annual contribution from regions will be minimal for the upcoming year.

I will be contacting each regional treasurer regarding regional contributions and any overpayments they may have made up to February 2016

The cost of the calls to the fellowship is averaging out at approximately £750 per month these charges are for both our 0800 and our 0845 numbers .

We also have a monthly charge for our entry into British Telecoms white pages telephone directory

So as you can see with our charges for two numbers to our helpline and our entry into the telephone directory the charges are currently averaging well over £1.050 per month

Now we all know that calls to our helpline can be diverse and no two calls are exactly the same , so lots of times on the helpline some reassuring to the caller is needed, However it is everyone's responsibility that incoming calls are kept to a minimum which will help keep costs at a manageable level

Davie

ANNUAL CALL VOLUMES TO THE AA NATIONAL HELPLINE NUMBER 2008 - 2015				
YEAR	ANSWERED CALLS	INEFFECTIVE CALLS	TOTAL CALLS	+ / - %
2008	114,169	30,678	144,847	
2009	93,271	24,659	117,930	-18.6%
2010	79,285	16,447	95,732	-18.8%
2011	75,569	13,710	89,279	-6.7%
2012	66,891	10,849	77,740	-12.9%
2013	59,547	10,173	69,720	-10.3%
2014	50,692	9,183	59,875	-14.1%
2015	56,013	11,581	67,594	+12.9%

ANNUAL ANSWERED CALL VOLUMES TO THE AA NATIONAL HELPLINE NUMBER JUL - DEC 2014 - 2015					
MONTH	2014 - 0845 answered call volumes	2015 - 0845 answered call volumes	2015 - 0800 answered call volumes	2015 Total answered calls	+ / - %
July	4,062	1,282	4,160	5,442	+34.0%
August	4,366	1,019	4,041	5,060	+15.9%
September	3,967	709	4,642	5,353	+34.9%
October	4,000	494	4,173	4,667	+16.7%
November	4,174	498	4,193	4,691	+12.4%
December	3,902	468	4,661	5,129	+31.4%
TOTAL	24,471	4,470	25,870	30,342	+24.0%

Call Statistics

According to the earliest records in AA's file store, call volumes have declined year on year from 144,847 calls in 2008 to 59,875 in 2014. This represents a total fall in the volume of calls to AA's national helpline (including answered and ineffective calls) of 58.7% (table 1). 2015 was the first year in which call volumes actually increased in number compared to those in the previous year, with total calls increasing from 59,875 in 2014 to 67,594 in 2015.

Since it 'went live' on 1st July 2015, **answered** call volumes have increased significantly each month. Table 2 (above) shows the average monthly increase against calls received on the 0845 number in 2014 (total increase was +24%). **It does not include those calls which are ineffective i.e unanswered.** In real terms AA responded to nearly 6,000 more calls in the period from July to December in 2015 than in the corresponding period in 2014.

Since July 2015, AA has consistently received over 4,000 calls to the new free phone number every month whereas the volume of calls to the 0845 number declined from 1,282 in July to 468 in December.

There was a noticeable increase in the call volumes received from mobile phones. During the period July - December 2014, 11,505 calls were received from mobiles which represented 39.5% of the total of 29,107 (including ineffective) calls. During the same period in 2015 (July to December), 18,169 calls came from mobile phones, representing 48.7% of the total recorded volume of 37,343 (including ineffective) calls. It is therefore likely that over half of the calls to AA's national helpline number in 2016 will originate from mobile phones.

During the first few months of the 0800 Freephone number, the average length of calls was shorter than in the corresponding period in 2014 (5.1 minutes down to 4.8 minutes) and the number of calls lasting over an hour had been reduced (from 53 to 48). However, this trend is no longer the case as responders seem to have become accustomed to the number change and are no longer restricting the length of calls for cost reasons. The overall average call length therefore remains at 5 minutes.

Regional News

South East Region

A new flyer is being developed by Mid Surrey Intergroup - possibly for distribution throughout SE Region. It explains the difference between telephone responders and 12th steppers and highlights the opportunity to do AA service from home;

it was felt that the AA national website is now much more user friendly and that the new 0800 free phone number is prominent on the home page. This should help people to find AA;

ITLOs were pleased that the decision to choose the 0800 number has proved to be correct and that the statistics show significant improvement in call volumes;

As young people now feature more prominently in AA's service structure, it was felt that 12th step lists should include a separate section which identifies young AA members. Young 12th steppers would be available to meet up with younger people who call for help and perhaps introduce them to young persons' meetings;

The ITLOs had received their invitations from York and expressed great interest in the national telephone service seminar in York.

Wales & Borders

Here in Wales and Borders we continue to operate a 24 hour service, 7 days a week, which is covered by 28 responders. All shifts are covered, one day at a time through the continued efforts and commitment of those involved in providing and maintaining this vital service. But the recruitment of telephone responders willing to commit to a 5hour shift once a week continues to be challenging and emergency cover is stretched.

Since the introduction of the 0800 number the calls have increased, in the last quarter by 25%.

The category breakdown of calls as gained from responder log sheets is similar to past years. This is not an accurate measure as not all responders return log sheets.

12step 30%, AI Anon 29%, Meeting inquiry 27%, Other 14%

Eastern Region

After the broadcast on channel 5 of, I'm an Alcoholic my name is There was a definite increase in calls in the eastern region.

North East Region

In an effort to save time in finding an available 12 stepper. The telephone service in Hull have started text blasting their 12 stepper list, asking for any available 12 stepper to contact the local help line.

This has been very successful in reducing the time it takes to find an available 12 stepper.

The North East region RTLO is monitoring the results of this service and thinks we should "Embrace the new technology", especially if it helps the still suffering alcoholic.

North West Region

The Manchester, Cheshire East & East Lancs Intergroups, together support the Manchester Telephone Helpline. Recently all of the MAH 12 steppers were mass texted, asking them if they were still available for 12 step service. The response was instant, and has resulted in the 12 stepper list being updated to include active available members.

Operator Headsets

Sometimes when answering a call, the caller is speaking very softly, or the quality of connection is bad, or due to the amazing diversity of dialects we have in this country, it is hard to understand everything the caller is saying. Also in the telephone offices, if another operator is in the room taking a call it can be very difficult to hear well.

Using a dual ear headset with microphone, greatly increases the operators ability to hear, especially in situations where there is background noise. Hearing through both ears simultaneously, greatly increases contact with the caller and keeps both hands free for finding information that the caller requires, or accessing meeting information from the computer.

During February, the operators on the Manchester Alcohol Helpline, will be testing dual ear headsets.

In the next newsletter, it is hoped to have determined whether, over ear, on the ear, wireless or wired headsets work the best for our situation.



Telephone Seminar August

As you are all aware we are planning a Telephone Seminar to be held on 13th August this year. All Intergroup and Regional Telephone Liaison Officers are invited.

This will be preceded by the Annual RTLO meeting which will take place on Friday, 12th August, 2016 at the General Service Office.

Any Contributions for topics from all those involved in the telephone service are welcome. Please send your topic suggestions to:

telephonesubcom@aa-email.org.uk

Telephone Service History Manchester Alcohol Helpline

On the 13th July 2013, the building where the Manchester Alcohol Helpline's office was located, was involved in a devastating fire. Operators on duty were evacuated from the building down the external fire escapes. Two firefighters became trapped inside the burning building, and later one of the firefighters sadly died.

Everything inside the building was affected. All of the MAH office equipment and archives were destroyed.

As the office was completely offline, all calls were transferred to the London office, whilst the MAH moved to a temporary location.

After the fire, the building, on Oldham Street in the centre of Manchester was completely renovated, and the MAH were again allowed to set up operations, and continue to operate in service to the Greater Manchester areas members, giving help to newcomers, and support to the 251 weekly meetings in the area.

The AA Telephone service in the United Kingdom, are very grateful to the chair and committee members of the Manchester Telephone Helpline, for all of their hard work, restoring service to the Manchester area.

*"I am Responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."*