

National Telephone Sub Committee

N.T.S.C. News January, 2017

"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 NTSC.

This is the fourth edition of our News Letter and the first of 2017. This edition includes one Regional report and *extracts* from Intergroup Telephone reports. Please also note the importance of the article that refers to the difficulties that might be encountered during Telephone Service or, indeed, when carrying out any service position and the importance of the leaflets - Hints and Suggestions for 12th Steppers – available from GSO and the January 2013 - GUIDANCE ON 12TH STEPPING AND SPONSORING – this document may be downloaded from the file store.

Thank you to those who have contributed to this, the first News Letter of 2017.

Judy F. Trustee.

The closing date for articles in the April, 2017 issue is 20th March, 2017.

When sending contributions to the News letter

or Regional and Intergroup reports, please send to:

telephonesubcom@aaemail.org

The News Letters may be found on the AA web site:

www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

NTSC Vacancies:

Due to an oversight with Service News publishing dates, some of you may have missed the advert for replacements on the Telephone Sub Committee of the General Service Board. Please be aware that currently two vacancies need to be filled following the rotation, in November of two of our stalwart members, Davie and Bob.

Those of you who attended the Seminar may have missed the first advert. I am placing this article in this edition to remind you all, that the fellowship needs your service, and where better to extend your service than assisting in keeping functioning well one of the most vital strands of contact for the still suffering alcoholic.

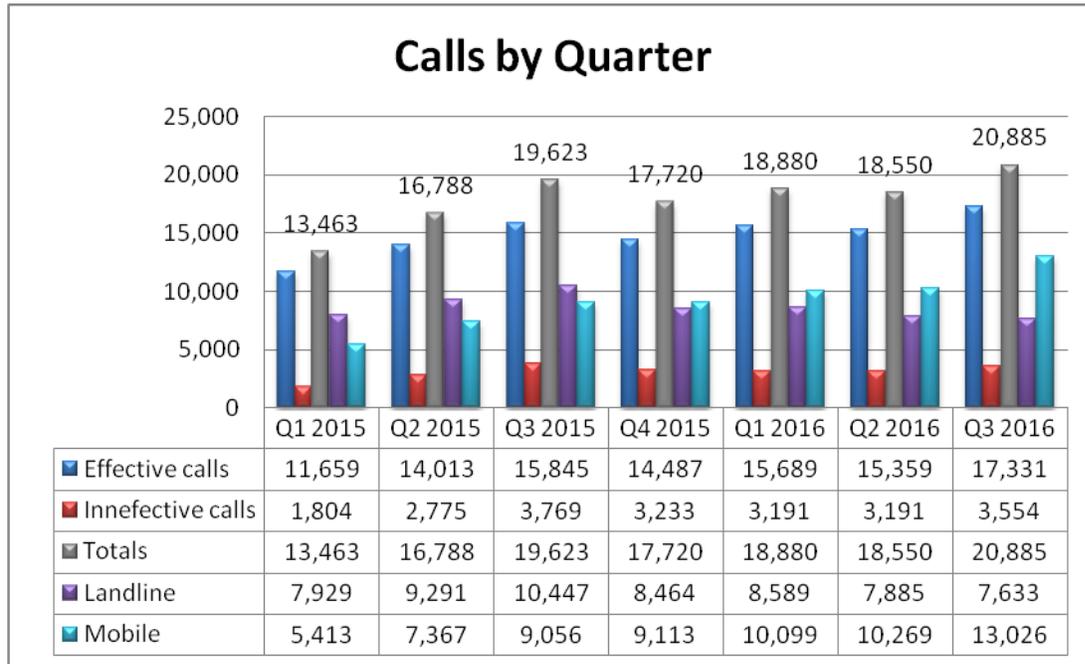
Please do not think you are not good enough or alternatively somebody else will do it. Throw your hat in the ring and let your higher power decide.

Yours in Fellowship **Jim F Trustee elect.**

*"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."*

Stats Report 11.12.16

Since the big increase in the last year, call volume has continued to increase albeit at a slower rate, in Q3 2016 total calls exceeded 20,000 a 6% increase from Q3 2015.



The bar chart showing quarterly numbers for the past 7 quarters makes this clear.

Calls to the 0845 number has continued to decline as expected, in November 2016 307 calls compared with 498 in November 2015. (There were 1,282 in July 2015).

The average call length has been 5.1 minutes in the July-November 2016 period. Calls from landlines continue to decline (41% in Q3 2016), while calls from mobiles increase (59%). Which as we know might lead to calls being routed to the wrong area.

As a matter of interest London Region recently requested information about overnight calls, (10pm to 10am) to inform discussion regarding their use of an answer machine for these night time calls. For the period from January to November 2016 there were 3,271 calls between 10pm and 10am to the London Region. The total calls received in this time (Jan-Nov) was 12,934. So 25% of all calls were made in this overnight period.

Jonathan P 11.12.16

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WALES AND BORDERS REGION.

MOBILE PHONES

We are experiencing some difficulties whilst logging in or contacting the previous responder if they are using a mobile phone. It has been brought to my attention that call divert from mobile to land line could be the cause. Also reception and areas where the network is overloaded could be contributing to this problem.

CALLS

Compared to the 470 in the 2nd quarter, we received 584 calls in total this time around. 419 calls to the 0800 and only 19 to the 0845 number, of which 438 were answered (75 %) and 146 were ineffective (25%). type of calls made: from a land line: 435. (74%). from a mobile:146 (25%). Combined with the log sheet data received back, we receive about 49 calls a week. That's 7 calls a day, 2 calls on average per shift.

OTHER MATTERS

Wales and Borders Regional is represented by 7 intergroups, yet has only 3 active T.L.O.'s. With some help from the existing T.L.O.'s , I am required to cover those vacant positions over and above my own duties. Taking into account the loss of regular responders and extra cover needed, this I think, will not be sustainable for long.

I was intending to go with a little recruiting/display stand to those conventions held in Wales this summer, as this had worked well at the Welsh National Convention in Llandrindod Wells. But because of personal matters, I have to put this on hold.

I have contacted those intergroups that currently do not have a T.L.O. with the view to being invited to their meeting. The idea behind this, is not only to inspire someone to take on the vital role of T.L.O, but also to equip and motivate the group to update the twelve steppers list and other phone related issues they may have in their area. So far, only one positive reply has been received.

FINALLY

Although it is much more work than anticipated, I know that this service post is good for me, and It is still a joy to be able to spread my wings across Wales and find like-minded people who have a real love for the fellowship and are committed to giving something back.

Yours in fellowship,

Nico

*"I am Responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
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The Telephone Service and difficult situations; a heavy responsibility.

As Telephone Liaison Officer you are prepared to be there for your responders but I was not prepared for the call from a responder one Saturday saying the police had been in touch.

Subsequent conversations with the police centred on what AA could do to safeguard the public from difficult and controversial situations happening where our guidelines have most certainly been broken. I sought guidance from both the Regional TLO and also the relevant Trustees.

The only actions available were to remind responders of the guidelines as covered in the following leaflets 'Hints and Suggestions for 12th Steppers' and the document produced in January 2013 - GUIDANCE ON 12TH STEPPING AND SPONSORING.

The vast majority of telephone team members are committed individuals seeking to provide help to vulnerable callers in the spirit of service and so our view should not be tainted. As a Telephone Liaison Officer however, we must be aware of the fact that there are predators who seek to take advantage of these people. We should ensure that all responders are fully aware of the documented guidelines and implement guidance as it comes from Conference. In all matters, we can be sure of the support of Region and the Trustees and, most importantly, our approach should be governed at all times by the Traditions.

Ben B. Thames Valley Intergroup. South Midlands Region.

South East Anglia intergroup October 2016

On the 13th August 2016 I attended the National Telephone Seminar in York where there were 70/80 participants. The topics discussed were Communication, Answering the Phone and Training/Recruitment. It was very helpful and a full report can be found in the AA File Storage.

I took the opportunity also to visit AA's headquarters where I was made very welcome.

On the 9th October 2016 I held my first telephone meeting at Stowmarket with 13 persons attending.

I covered my visit to York, discussed the National Helpline No, the A-Z directory, rotas, the Stand-by list, nuisance calls and the formation of a telephone committee.

I feel our telephone service is operating well.

Chris

"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."

Birmingham intergroup November 2016

- In October 91 out of 96 shifts were covered (95% coverage)
 - The Telephone committee has been considering the avenue of 24 hour coverage, which was prompted by the telephone conference in York.
 - Currently the line is open 10am-10pm. Bill has established that currently 25% of calls happen between 10pm and 10am. This was discovered by diverting a phone over 7 days to test call numbers. The results showed that out of seven days:
 - 2 nights = no calls.
 - 2 night = 4 calls,
 - 1 night – 5 calls
 - 2 night = 7 calls.
 - NO MESSAGES were left.
 - There will be a meeting on 25th January 2017 for responders and potential responders to discuss this and other committee matters. All are welcome, the meeting will take place at Chantry Rd Moseley at 7.30pm (25/01/17). If anyone is unable to attend but has any questions please contact Bill.
 - There has been a great response to the service workshop. Bill is training 9 people on 30th November.
 - More volunteers needed for 4 hours per month. 12 months sobriety is required.
- Bill.**

Derbyshire Intergroup.

The main centre of activity is the updating of the 12 step list I know that responders do sometimes have problems contacting 12 steppers not sure why this is. My experience is people often don't answer their phones, maybe they don't recognize the number and don't answer. I appreciate people are not always able to answer phones but maybe respective inter-groups can take this up to encourage more 12 steppers and impress on those on the 12 step list that unfamiliar numbers calling maybe a 12 step call.

There is a suggestion from some areas that all regions operate a 24 hour telephone service. The rationale behind this is that approx 20 % of calls received are after 12am which roughly amounts nationally to 20,000 calls per year. I am aware that some res-ponders who cover the late slot do keep the phone on over night through personal choice. But not sure how we could make this work or whether there would be any value in this, my experience of the tel line and doing a late slot is the later it gets the more drunk people are and are looking for somebody to talk to and are more likely to be abusive or threatening suicide etc. Also we would not be able to deal with these calls in the normal way of passing onto a 12 stepper. Be interesting to get the views of Derbyshire and especially anybody who does keep their phone on.

I would like to give my thanks and appreciation to those members who have given me support in running the telephone service over the last couple of years. I also wish to give my thanks to responders/reserves and 12 steppers for the amazing work they do in providing support to alcoholics struggling with the disease and offering hope of recovery from a disease we know all too well is a vicious debilitating killer. **Tony TLO**

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Jersey Telephone Report for Intergroup – September, 2016.

Cards with the telephone liaison email address have been distributed to Groups.

Direct contact with each group and the means of communicationg the gaps in the Rota is essential. The TLO has a email list but at the moment it is comprised of members who do phone duty anyway. Please could each group ensure that the TLO has an email contact (GSR or Chairperson or another regular attender).

A message usually sent on a weekly basis by blind copy could then be read at each Group taking only a few seconds of the groups time but ensuring that members know of the need for volunteers for this service.

Sponsorship and support is available for phone responders who can share experience, suggestions and complaints at the next Telephone Meeting – date of which to be advised.

Bristol Telephone Service:

We found the seminar very stimulating and it was great to meet other TLO's and particularly the current members of the NTSC. We are exploring some of the ideas that came from the seminar. At present we email all our responders on mass to fill slots, however we have begun researching text blasting to fill slots and also to arrange 12 step calls, i.e. Sending one text to a large group of people. Historically we have sent out paper copies and then later email copies of current 12 step lists and other responder information e.g. the A-Z local helpline directory, but are now rolling out an encrypted file storage system to give home responders access to all the confidential documents that are available to our office responders. The advantage of this system is it is free and any updates are available to all responders instantly.

One of the other suggestions was regular service workshops. Although we have been doing these annually ourselves at the Bristol Office solely about telephone service we are considering teaming up with both our local intergroups to hold them more regularly focusing on service within AA, including telephone service and then using our office and local website to continue to raise awareness about benefits, privilege and responsibility we have to.

Matthew H.

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Northdown intergroup Oct 2016

9.5 Telephones – Jo Together with our corresponding team in Solent Intergroup, the Northdown telephone service team continues to provide a 24 hour service 7 days a week to the still suffering alcoholic and other callers to our local helpline number. The telephone continues to act as an important first point of contact and I am grateful to all our team for the fantastic service they give. 24 hour Service: At the last Intergroup I raised the issue of stopping our 24 hour service, following a proposal from our friends in Solent. Thank you to those groups who sent in strong opinions that the service should continue on a 24 hour basis. I'm pleased to let you know that the proposal has been set aside and our 24 hour service will continue.

One important point to raise here is that since the change to the 0800 number the number of calls (nationally) has increased. South East Region has reflected this national trend. So the process of changing the number has been worthwhile and aided us in fulfilling our primary purpose.

North Herts Telephone Liaison Officer.

Hello, my name's Sue and I'm an alcoholic. I've been in the fellowship for a few days now, and was nominated for the position of Telephone Liaison Officer for North Herts in October 2016. I started doing telephone service when I was a year sober, trained by a very efficient and caring lady whose example I still try to follow. In the past few years I've been asked several times if I'd be interested in being TLO but have always said no as during my working career I was responsible for hiring and firing, doing monthly rotas and sorting out the problems that came with running a residential home. I felt I wanted to get away from all that and just live a quiet life and was happy with my regular Tuesday night duty.

However, it's surprising how persuasive some people can be – you know who you are! I was eventually offered the opportunity (ie volunteered Army-style) to try the position of TLO with the promise of much support (pressure?!) from others who are and have been TLO's in the past. They made it sound so easy, something I could do as an extension to my Responder duty, an extra small service in my retirement. I thought okay, I'll do it, after all with my background it should be a walk in the park.

Little did I know! Five weeks on I'm still wading through the muddle that arrived in assorted boxes and files of paperwork, the rota's which were full of gaps, the phone numbers on the 12-Step list which needed updating etc., etc. Plus of course at this time of year the Christmas meetings, cover and rotas to consider which everyone is crying out for. Then there's this article for the Newsletter which is asking for contributions, and has to be submitted by tomorrow. I'm very aware that there are a lot of people waiting on up-to-date rotas and lists, and as is human nature, waiting to see whether or not I'm going to make a hash of the position!

Indeed it is a walk in the park. Just no-one told me it was Jurassic Park!

Sue L

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On a final note, please inform the NTSC of any amendments that may be necessary to the documents held in the File Store as soon as possible in order that this information is kept up-to-date – in particular the A-Z directory of AA (GB) Telephone Services by Town. Also, and of particular importance, is the fact that:

A number of organisations have already been advised of the new number – 0800 9177 650. However, the older 0845 number is still being displayed. The committee need the help of all AA members in this matter. Where the 0845 769 7555 number is encountered we would ask that the company is informed of the correct telephone number in order that amendments may be made as soon as possible.

We are all responsible.

Once again, thank you to those of you who have taken the time to contribute articles for this January. 2017 News Letter.

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