



News Sheet

Issue: Apr/May 2021

Relationship between the Fellowship and the General Service Board of AA

Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland comprises two separate but closely connected organisations: The Fellowship of AA comprising Groups, Areas, Provincial Intergroups and the General Service Conference (AA) and the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland CLG (GSBAA).

The General Service Conference of AA is what is known as an unincorporated body and as such it is not subject to Company Law or Charity Law. AA is run in accordance with the Service Handbook for Ireland and in accordance with custom and practice built up over decades with its constituent parts being guided by their Group Conscience.

The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous Ireland CLG on the other hand is both a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital and a registered charity, so the company is subject to both Company Law and Charity Law. The Company operates in accordance with its Constitution and the seven Directors of the company are both Company Directors and Charity Trustees with specific legal responsibilities imposed on them by the Companies Act 2014 and Charities Act 2009 respectively.

The company provides a range of services to the Fellowship including:

- Operation of the General Service Office (GSO)
- Management of the AA Website
- Management of national Public Information activities
- Publication of the Road Back Magazine
- Publication of the AA News Sheet
- Literature Publications
- Maintenance of AA's National Archives
- Management of the funds of the Fellowship that are not retained at Group, Area or Provincial Intergroup level

This News Sheet is intended as an aid to Service in AA.

The views and opinions expressed in the News Sheet are not necessarily those of the Fellowship of Alcoholics

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Organisationally these two arms of AA are linked in the following ways:

1. The 30 members of the General Service Conference are also the 30 members of the company GSBAA.
2. The seven Directors of GSBAA are members of Conference and Trustees of the Fellowship. Taking 1 and 2 together this means that, although the Fellowship and GSBAA are separate organisations, the Directors of GSBAA are accountable to the members of Conference for their stewardship of GSBAA and the support provided to the Fellowship. The members of Conference/members of GSBAA can exercise this accountability at the AGM of the Company.

The General Service Conference of Ireland comprises 30 members as follows:

- Four General Service Conference Delegates (GSCDs) or their Alternate proxies from each of the four provinces of Ireland (16 in total);
- Four Provincial Intergroup Secretaries.
- Four Alcoholic Trustees (Members of AA) – one from each Province (Provincial AA Trustees) who are directors of the General Service Board of AA CLG (GSBAA);
- Three other Trustees who are not AA Members who also are directors of GSBAA
- The Secretary to the Conference (who is also the Company Secretary of GSBAA)
- Two World Service Delegates

All members of Conference shall be entitled to participate and vote at meetings of Conference.

(General Service Conference A Service Handbook for Ireland 01/2021)

Why do we need a Conference?

Bernard B. Smith, former non-alcoholic Chairperson of our New York Board of Trustees, and one of the architects of the Conference structure, answered the question superbly in his opening talk at the 1954 meeting:

‘We may not need a General Service Conference to ensure our own recovery. We do need it to ensure the recovery of the alcoholic who still stumbles in the darkness one short block from his room. We need it to ensure the recovery of a child being born tonight, destined to alcoholism. We need to provide, in keeping with our Twelfth Step, a permanent haven for all alcoholics who, in the ages ahead, can find in AA that rebirth which brought us back to life. We need it because we, more than all others, are conscious of the devastating effect of the human urge for power and prestige which we must insure can never invade AA. We need it to ensure AA against Government, while insulating it against anarchy; we need it to protect AA against disintegration while preventing over-integration. We need it so that Alcoholics Anonymous, and Alcoholics Anonymous alone, is the ultimate repository of its Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and all of its services.

We need it to ensure that changes within AA come only as a response to the needs and wants of all AA and not of any few. We need it to ensure that the doors of the halls of AA never have locks on them, so that all people for all time who have an alcoholic problem may enter these halls unasked and feel welcome. We need it to ensure that Alcoholics Anonymous never asks of anyone who needs us what his or her race is, what his or her creed is, what his or her social position is”.

Growing into Service

(Extract from the pamphlet *Growing into Service* (AA York))

Alcoholics Anonymous is more than a set of principles; it is a Fellowship of alcoholics in action. Service is at the center of every AA concept and activity. It is as fundamental to AA as abstinence is to sobriety. Without this giving of oneself

**Growing
into
Service**

to another, there would be no Fellowship. This desire to serve improves recovery. As newcomers, we see people giving time, energy and love in the service of the

Fellowship, and it is suggested that we too should become involved. Those of us who have done this will tell you of the enormous benefits we have received by willingly stepping into service. A great paradox of AA is that rewards come when we begin to forget ourselves.

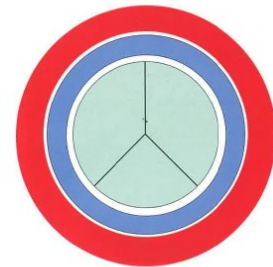
Circles of Love and Service

(extract from the pamphlet)

IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, WE ALL WORK TOGETHER “To those now in its fold, Alcoholics Anonymous has made the difference between misery and sobriety, and often the difference between life and death. A.A. can, of course, mean just as much to uncounted alcoholics not yet reached. “Therefore, no society of men and women ever had a more urgent need for continuous effectiveness and permanent unity. We alcoholics see that we must work together and hang together,

else most of us will finally die alone.” — Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 561
All parts of our Fellowship — group meetings, committees, offices, Conferences, and group jobs — share one common purpose: to help the alcoholic who still suffers.

A.A. is made up of interconnected circles of people within the Fellowship, who work together to carry A.A.’s message of hope. But in order for A.A. to run itself without bosses or rules, in accordance with our Twelve Traditions, we need a system of communication for finding out how A.A. as a whole feels about its world affairs, and how it wants to operate. For



How the parts of A.A. all fit and work together

A.A. to run its own affairs, each A.A. group needs to make its voice heard on overall A.A. policies. This starts with a group’s general service representative (G.S.R.), who represents the voice of the group conscience and has the job of linking his or her group with A.A. as a whole. G.S.R.s make sure their groups receive services from the U.S. and Canada General Service Office (G.S.O) and help groups stay informed about worldwide A.A.

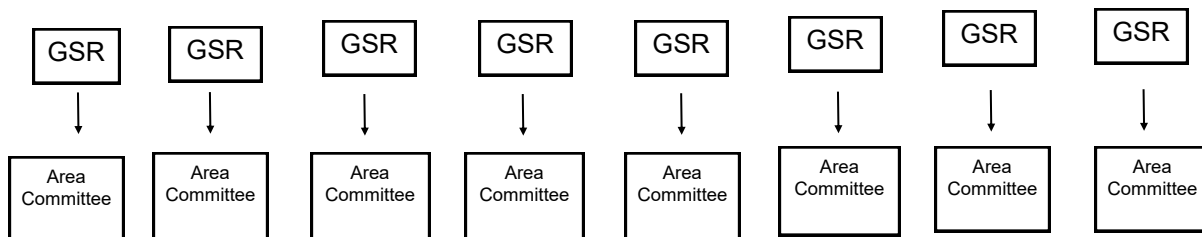
“For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.” —Tradition Two

STRUCTURE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IN IRELAND

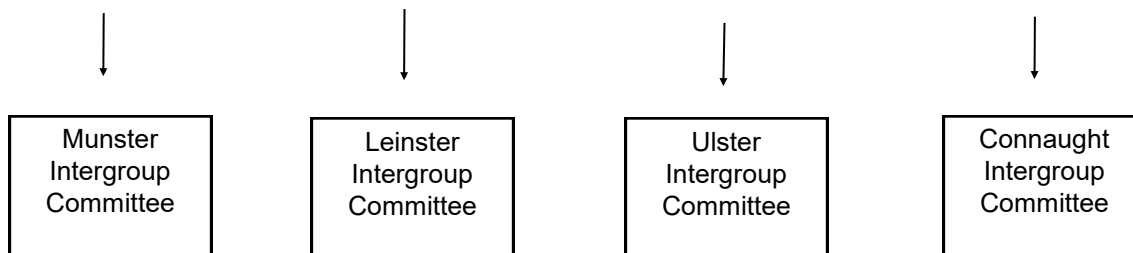
AA GROUPS (G)



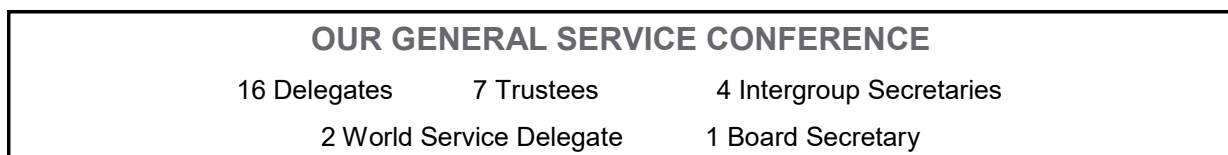
TWO GSR's FROM EACH GROUP FORM AREA COMMITTEE



FOUR MEMBERS FROM EACH AREA COMMITTEE FORM PROVINCIAL INTERGROUP COMMITTEES



FOUR DELEGATES FROM EACH PROVINCIAL INTERGROUP TO GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE



See our website www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie
 For details of forthcoming events in Ireland and abroad (when available)