**General Service Board Trustee Responsibilities and Qualifications**

From: *The AA Structure Handbook for Great Britain 2017*

Chapter: ‘The General Service Board’ (pp. 109 – 117)

**Section 1. The General Service Board**

The General Service Board, whose full title is “The General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain) Limited” consists of both alcoholic and non-alcoholic members. The Board is responsible to the General Service Conference for carrying into effect the decisions taken by the Conference on service matters and is required to give an account of its stewardship to the Conference annually.

The General Service Board is the custodian of the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous in Great Britain. As such, it has a responsibility to ensure that the Traditions are preserved intact and that the Fellowship of AA in Great Britain acts in accordance with the Traditions.

Specific services carried out by the General Service Board and for which it is responsible to Conference include:

1. The administration and operation of the General Service Office at 10 Toft Green, York, which serves Great Britain and English-speaking AA groups throughout Europe (Continental European Region) and the Northern and Southern Service Offices.
2. The printing and publishing of AA books and pamphlets (AA published and Conference approved), where applicable under copyright and licence agreements with AA World Services Inc.
3. The distribution of books and pamphlets in Great Britain, and English-speaking AA groups throughout Europe (Continental European Region).
4. Appointment of a Trustee to National Convention Committees in order to ensure that the Convention programme is in conformity with the spirit and the Traditions of AA and to oversee all financial accounting. (All surpluses from National Conventions are to be paid over to the General Service Office.)
5. On their appointment to the General Service Board, alcoholic members simultaneously become full members of the Regional Assemblies which nominated them and, as trustees of the General Service Board, are expected to attend such Assemblies.
6. Co-operation and guidance in Conference arrangements and Agenda.
7. Internal communications; sharing and liaison with AA in the United States and in other countries throughout the world; collaboration, representation and active participation in World Service Meetings; the production and publication of *SHARE* and of *Roundabout* and the production and publication of *‘AA Service News’*.
8. External communications; liaison with outside agencies in the field of alcoholism at national level and the provision of speakers. There are many such agencies, and those with which we currently co-operate most intimately include the Medical Council on Alcoholism, the Society of Occupational Medicine and Alcohol Concern, as well as prisons and hospitals. Maintaining relations with the news media – the press, the television and radio authorities; and providing speakers for these and other appropriate bodies.

The General Service Board operates through committees:

1) Finance

2)  Internal communication

3)  External communications

4) Executive

The Trustees with specifically designated service areas serve on the appropriate committees. Committee reports are presented to the full Board meeting for consideration.

The Board of Trustees shall have all the powers provided for in the Memorandum and Articles of Association and as are vested in a Board of Trustees (Directors) under the laws of England and Wales. All powers of the Company shall be exercisable by the Company in general meeting.

The Board of Trustees may by general resolution delegate to committees or to officers of the General Service Board such powers as they deem appropriate in the service of the purposes to which the General Service Board is dedicated.

(From pp. 109-110)

**Section 3. GSB Members**

Desirable Qualifications for Alcoholic Trustees

**Background and experience**

Many Trustees have brought extensive business or professional experience to the Board, which has been of the greatest value in shaping the structure of the affairs of the General Service Board itself, of Conference and of the administration of the General Services of AA. In particular, it is difficult to imagine how Conference could have been brought into being and developed so quickly into its present strength and sense of high responsibility without such members. Equally, the assumption by the Board of responsibility for the services followed by the rapid and progressive broadening of their range of activities, their sphere of influence outside the Fellowship and the preparation and establishment of a structure designed not only for the present but also for future growth, would not have been feasible without their trained and experienced services.

It is therefore important if we are to provide for a future of growing service to a growing Fellowship that we look for the following qualities in our Trustees.

1. **Leadership**In AA this includes qualities of enabling a member to help his or her group or city or area to grow with a minimum of friction and a maximum of good feeling.
2. **Grasp of AA structure**

Some members of our Fellowship have a special aptitude for the AA structure and are thoroughly familiar with all of its elements, from group to General Service Board and Conference. They are usually good ‘students’ of the movement, familiar with its history and the trends that affect its future.

A Trustee with these attributes can bring useful perspective to Board discussions.

In addition, there are basic considerations which experience has shown to be important to all Trustees.

One is maturity or “time-in”. Ten years continuous sobriety and previous experience, full term or about to complete, as a delegate to the General Service Conference is essential. If in exceptional circumstances a delegate is unable to complete their 3 year term the sponsoring region may, at their discretion, permit the delegate to complete their term.

Another basic is resoluteness – having the courage of one’s convictions. The chosen candidate should bring to Board Meetings good judgement, objectivity and the courage to express himself or herself.

Another important basic is availability. How much time does the candidate have to devote to the work of the Board without hurting family or career? Is he or she available for meetings nationally, to attend Conference and to give extra time in his or her own area when necessary?

**Composition of the General Service Board**

The Articles of Association of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (Great Britain) Limited state: “The number of members with which the Company proposes to be registered is unlimited.” In practice, the number of alcoholic members of the General Service Board is determined by the requirements of the Fellowship at a particular time, the availability of suitable members in the light of the qualifications described above, and the number of regions in Great Britain.

As a condition of election as a member and election as a Trustee of the General Service Board, each person shall before qualifying to serve as a member and Trustee, execute appropriate instruments addressed to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, stating that he or she has no bar to becoming a Trustee and agrees to comply with and be bound by all the terms and provisions of the Articles of Association.

**Appointment of new members of the General Service Board**

Alcoholic members of the General Service Board are appointed on the basis of one from each of the 16 regions.

In addition, a region whose Trustee is elected to serve as Chair, Vice-Chair or Treasurer of the Board shall be entitled to submit new nominations for another Trustee to take the place of the member elected to serve in one of these offices. Trustees appointed under this provision shall serve a full term of membership.

At least six months before the retirement of an alcoholic member, the Secretary of the Board will notify the region which the retiring member represents, and invite the region to submit the names of suitable candidates for consideration by the Board. This invitation will be accompanied by nomination forms and reference copies of *The Good Trustee Guide* and *Introduction to the Board.*

Regions are requested to nominate at least two candidates in order to afford the Board the opportunity to select the candidate whose personal qualities are most needed at a particular time. This may mean that an excellent candidate whose experience and aptitudes are already matched in the existing membership may be less suitable than another candidate who could make a unique contribution to the work of the Board.

In considering who to nominate, regions should bear in mind the service of former office- bearers who may no longer be active but whose experience would make them especially suitable for Board membership. Regions will wish to give careful consideration to the suggested qualifications for Board membership outlined in previous paragraphs.

The Nominations Sub-committee will make its recommendations to the General Service Board which is empowered to make an appointment to the Board or to decline any or all of the nominations. The appointment of an alcoholic member will be submitted to the next General Service Conference for confirmation and will take effect immediately after such confirmation. Ideally, nominations of new alcoholic members should be approved by the General Service Board at the meeting immediately prior to the General Service Conference.

New members of the General Service Board are required to attend a formal ‘Introduction to the Board’ at which they receive copies of the Introduction to the Board, Good Trustees Guide, Charity Leaflet CC3 and GSB policy documents explaining their responsibilities as Trustees.

When an alcoholic member moves away from the region which nominated him or her as a Trustee, the region and the Trustee concerned should consider whether he or she should resign from the Board. Vacancies resulting from such resignations, or from resignations for other reasons, will be filled by the procedure described above.

Non-alcoholic Trustees are appointed to the General Service Board for the special contributions they are able to make by virtue of their personal experience and background. Such appointments are made by the General Service Board on its own initiative and are subject to confirmation by the General Service Conference. The Fellowship of AA owes a deep debt of gratitude to our non-alcoholic Trustees who have helped us very greatly over the years by opening many doors which might otherwise remain closed to the message of AA. They come from many different walks of life and gladly and voluntarily share in the work of spreading the AA message.

**Rotation**

Alcoholic Trustees are initially elected for a maximum term of four years. Alcoholic Trustees elected to the Executive Committee may serve a maximum term of six years as a Trustee.

NAT’s (non-Alcoholic trustees) serve for four years with an option of a second four-year term, by mutual agreement, giving a maximum of eight years under all circumstances.

In principle, the term of office on the Executive Committee should be a maximum of four years.

(From pp. 111-113)