

January 2013

GUIDANCE ON 12TH STEPPING AND SPONSORING

This guidance is offered following changes in the law affecting minors and vulnerable adults and supersedes that issued by the General Service Board in February 2010. It refers to all who come into AA including children (under 18 years old) and vulnerable adults (any person over 18 years old who is the recipient of a regulated activity).

- AA members do not require DBS or Disclosure Scotland checks for 12th Stepping or Sponsoring, as they are members of self-regulating groups. The Disclosure and Barring Service and the Scottish Government have confirmed this following discussions with the General Service Board's solicitors.
- The spirit of the law however should be borne in mind and AA members should acknowledge the duty of respect that is due to one another
- Sponsors should have substantial sobriety and be aware of the duty of care towards others
- Contact with new members (including minors and vulnerable adults) to be conducted by two members – preferably a man and a woman
- Any meeting with a new member would be best held in a public place and where appropriate the date, time and place reported in advance to the Group Secretary
- Smaller Groups and those in rural areas may find it useful to contact other Groups in the area to pool resources for 12th Stepping
- If members are able and willing to do so they may inform the Group Secretary of any CRB or Police checks held

For members attending schools: If members are attending schools frequently (which is now defined as more than 3 days in a 30-day period, or overnight), to do unsupervised activities (e.g. teaching, advice, guidance) they *will* be required to obtain an enhanced DBS check for the activity. However, the onus to obtain these checks will fall on the school, and not AA. This requirement does not apply to supervised volunteers (supervision being defined dependent on the type of activity and the age of the children, but generally as reasonable day-to-day supervision by someone also engaging in a regulated activity, e.g. a teacher).

For members attending prisons: Please note that if the members were to come into contact with any under-18s in a prison, the situation relating to regulated activities provided to children would apply as above.