

Annual Report 2015-16

Raising the status of families after homicide and bringing the victim's voice into domestic homicide inquiries to build safer societies.

IN MEMORY OF JULIA & WILL PEMBERTON



AAFDA (ADVOCACY AFTER FATAL DOMESTIC ABUSE) TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT TO 5 APRIL 2016

AAFDA is a centre of excellence for reviews into domestic homicides and for specialist peer support. Working across England and Wales as a national charity, we provide emotional, practical and expert specialist help for families after homicide, particularly domestic homicide. We also help agencies to improve their services for victims and to review homicides more effectively.

AAFDA was formed in April 2008 in memory of Julia and Will Pemberton whose murders in 2003 prompted a huge inquiry exposing the difficulties families face in these circumstances. AAFDA's work raises the status of families after homicide, helping them to cope and to be able to contribute and influence statutory reviews and inquiries.

Achievements in 2015-16



Work with Families

During the year, 78 families were helped (70 directly and 8 via a third party) benefiting at least 201 individuals. Our website is also a valuable resource offering guidance to families (and professionals). In the previous year, 71 families were helped benefiting 171 individuals.

AAFDA provided information, support, guidance, advice (including access to some free legal advice) and advocacy around Domestic Homicide Reviews, Inquests, Mental Health Reviews, Independent Police Complaint Commission investigations and in meetings with agencies such as Health, Police and Local Authorities. **An example outcome** was of a Domestic Homicide Review that had to be re-commissioned following representations from AAFDA on behalf of the family. The initial review was very flawed and had not involved the family in an appropriate way. We helped families to become more influential. We raised awareness of domestic abuse, influenced prevention work and trained police and other professionals including local authority personnel and health workers.

"We had no meetings with the Domestic Homicide Review Chair about what it was going to achieve and no one explained what would happen, we only got this through AAFDA who were the first people who understood everything we said – gave us understanding it was brilliant."

AAFDA's work on Domestic Homicide Reviews is particularly valuable as we hold very specialist knowledge not widely held elsewhere. AAFDA is a member of the Home Office panel that quality assures these reviews and the CEO is a Home Office appointed reader (provides individual assessments to the panel). In 2015-16, AAFDA helped 58 families with these reviews (52 directly and 6 via a third party). This work gives families a voice and helps them shape the services provided in their community. A frequent impact was to correct the report by bringing in the facts and perspectives known only by family and friends. This ensured that recommendations were based more on the needs of victims than the needs of service providers.

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One woman described approaching AAFDA because she knew they had previous experience with Mental Health Reviews - *"I knew I couldn't go through it on my own I needed knowledge and support...I was feeling quite confused, not used to these sort of situations. I have been a manager but you suddenly get involved with Barristers, Police, Health, its horrendous, lots of official bodies in your life and you are not sure what you are doing...Really important to have that support."*



International influence.

In November 2015 AAFDA's CEO was invited to Portugal to help their Ministry of Justice to understand Domestic Homicide Reviews and family involvement. Four months later, two officials from their Ministry of Justice came to England to attend our training in Domestic Homicide Reviews. AAFDA's CEO also addressed audiences in the USA and Northern Ireland describing the benefits of helping families and other community members to be integral to reviews after domestic homicide.

Other Achievements

We made two films that are available on the front of our website.

Film One - "Our approach to Domestic Homicide Reviews" This film was made with the help of two practising Chairs of Domestic Homicide Reviews. It is just under five minutes long and depicts a high level approach to Domestic Homicide Reviews. **Impact** - Recently, a Chair of these reviews told AAFDA that he plays the film at the beginning of all meetings of the Domestic Homicide Review panel to set the right tone for the meeting. **Outcome** - He also played this film to a family who called us afterwards to ask for our help with the review.

Film Two - "Working with Families in Domestic Homicide Reviews" This film was made with the help of three individuals, Sally Tyler, Sharon Warren and Kevin Blunnie all of whom lost family members to domestic homicide. It depicts how those conducting Domestic Homicide Reviews should work with families and lays out seven steps to do this. The Home Office has endorsed this film:

"AAFDA is an extremely valued contributor to Domestic Homicide Reviews, and the Home Office welcomes this excellent film which describes how to appropriately engage and work with families in these Reviews. The Home Office supports this approach as we recognise how the contribution from families, friends and other community members can help us to create safer futures for other would be victims. We welcome AAFDA's tireless commitment to ensuring that victims' voices are heard and their family and friends are fully involved and supported through what is inevitably a very difficult process."
Christian Papaleontiou, Home Office, Head of Public Protection Unit and Chair of National Domestic Homicide Review Quality Assurance Panel.

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Annual Conference

We held our sixth annual conference in January 2016. Around 90 people, including 20 families bereaved through domestic homicide, listened to three family members give extraordinary speeches describing the horrific crimes and their journey since then. **Impact** – Many delegates commented on how compelling and powerful these speeches were and how they had made them re-think their approach to working with families after domestic homicide. **Output** – Two of these speeches are now on the front page of AAFDA's website (the third is being checked as there is an ongoing criminal justice system matter).

Other speakers included the Head of the National Police Chiefs' Council Sara Thornton, the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland MP and a senior Home Office civil servant. In the audience were many families, other charities, the clergy, solicitors, Police, Probation, Social Care and others. AAFDA hosted a peer support lunch at a hotel just before the conference started for 15 families allowing them to share their experiences and how they achieved their objectives. AAFDA then hosted another peer support session after the conference and many families stayed overnight in the hotel.



Kevin Blunnie, speaking at AAFDA's conference January 2016. Kevin is the father of Eystna Blunnie murdered in June 2012 days before she was due to give birth to Rose Louise.

Awarded third prize in the Kate Granger Awards for Compassionate Care as part of the "Making Families Count" initiative. An outcome is that these presentations are still being requested by NHS England Trusts and we are seeking ways to integrate it into NHS England regular training.

Translated our leaflets into Portuguese and Spanish

Delivered a Home Office supported two-day training course three times to Chairs of Domestic Homicide Reviews.

We continued to influence policy and practice at national level including via:

- Our work with families on Domestic Homicide Reviews and other Inquiries. Regular impacts were re-balancing of the narratives to ensure that the victims' perspectives were properly recorded and that reviews included recommendations stemming from information and insights provided by families and friends.
- Our work on the Domestic Homicide Review Quality Assurance Panel where we quality assured c.100 reviews.
- By being active members of several key panels focussing on scrutiny of individual domestic violence cases and continuing the work to create a law ensuring statutory provision of victims' services.
- By presenting at numerous events including "Making Families Count" initiatives. Several organisations and families, including AAFDA, join together to provide full or half day presentations to NHS England Trusts. These events helped senior National Health Service (NHS) staff to understand the role of families in NHS reviews.

Demand for AAFDA's services continues to grow. Eight volunteers helped AAFDA in the year, including by directly helping families, providing legal advice, criminology expertise, research findings and administrative assistance.

Feedback from Chairs of Statutory Reviews

"AAFDA is an invaluable partner for our organisation in the work that we do to highlight change needed and lessons to be learned from domestic homicide reviews. Their trusted relationship and ongoing, broad support for families make a crucial difference to a family's ability to engage, direct and fully influence crucial lessons that must be learned by communities about how to improve safety for those suffering domestic abuse. In one case in particular, AAFDA was pivotal in enabling a family to influence a final report to be re-written so that it was corrected to include the family's feelings, views, and correction of the facts. Without AAFDA's help the family would have felt excluded from the process and would have felt further victimised by the system. **AAFDA has transformed this experience.**"

"The families of domestic homicide victims have an important and valuable role to play in reviews and effectively engaging with them is a prime role of the domestic homicide review chair. I always welcome the involvement of an independent AADF member. They bring with them a wealth of experience in support of families at a difficult and vulnerable time. AADF provide an impartial presence and ensure that families have a strong and influential voice in order that their views are accurately reflected in the final report and their key points addressed."

"Supporting the victim's family after fatal domestic abuse is crucial and my experience of working alongside AAFDA has always been very positive. They encourage meaningful and sensitive conversations and interventions between the DHR Chair and panel and those family members happy to engage with the DHR process. They provide reassurance to family members where needed, based upon their experience and ensure that wherever possible the relative's questions about what happened, are answered. They sometimes act as 'critical friends' to the review with observations about the process, based upon a thorough understanding of what works and what may be less effective. Encouraging humility and honesty from the panel, they seek to make the DHR as transparent and open as possible. This is a very positive approach if lessons are to be learnt from domestic homicides"

"As a DHR Chair can I take this opportunity to thank you for the continued help and support provided by AAFDA? I have worked on a number of reviews with your case workers and yourself over the past year, and have found it to be a most positive experience. All your case workers are clearly experts and have been able to provide crucial and specialist advice and guidance. DHRs are invariably complex and sensitive and I always feel more confident knowing that AAFDA are involved. I look forward to working with you over the coming year."

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Finance

Income was £168K and costs were £144K. AAFDA's primary funders were the Ministry of Justice, Esmée Fairbairn, Victim Support and Henry Smith. A further £38K was generated through consultancy work allowing AAFDA to create unrestricted reserves to strengthen AAFDA's financial position.

AAFDA undertakes regular strategic review to inform our fundraising strategy.

AAFDA's costs will increase in 2016-17 partly because two more part time caseworkers have been recruited to help manage increasing demand.

Reserves Policy

AAFDA has taken a prudent approach to financial management throughout the year. AAFDA is a relatively new and growing organisation amidst a very uncertain funding environment. Consequently, the trustees have considered future income and expenditure and the risks facing AAFDA and aimed for reserves to be around two thirds of the following year's forecast operating costs and we are on target to sustain this.

Public Benefit Statement

The trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties. This includes, for example, being clear that the activities AAFDA undertakes are for the public benefit.

Financial Review

AAFDA has prepared accounts on the accruals basis. They show a true and fair view.

	2015-16	2014-15
<u>Income</u>	£	£
Donations and Gift Aid	703	387
Grants	129,628	103,722
Speaking and Training Fees	38,098	18,961
Total Income	<u>168,429</u>	<u>123,070</u>

	£	£
<u>Revenue Expenditure</u>	£	£
Salaries and Caseworker Fees	83,096	58,572
Travel and Office Supplies	20,833	16,996
Website development	300	5,700
Data Security Upgrade	5,963	3,932
Other	33,708	19,860
Total Expenditure	<u>143,900</u>	<u>105,059</u>

	2015-16	2014-15
<u>Balance Sheet</u>	£	£
Fixed Assets	925	1,850
Total Assets less Liabilities	108,659	84,130
Unrestricted Funds	83,659	59,130
Designated Funds	<u>25,000</u>	<u>25,000</u>

Constitution and Organisational Structure

AAFDA was an unincorporated association formed on 1 April 2008 (will become incorporated in 2017-18). It adopted an amended constitution on 23 July 2008 and became a registered charity on 19 September 2008.

Governance and how AAFDA makes Decisions

Our Board comprised of six trustees and included a local authority strategic Violence Against Women and Girls lead and expert in Criminal Justice Sector and statutory and voluntary sector responses; a former CEO of Social Housing; a Safeguarding lead for a Clinical Commissioning Group and Senior Health advisor; a lecturer in Social Work; an expert in gender-based violence; and an operations manager of a charity for single homeless people.

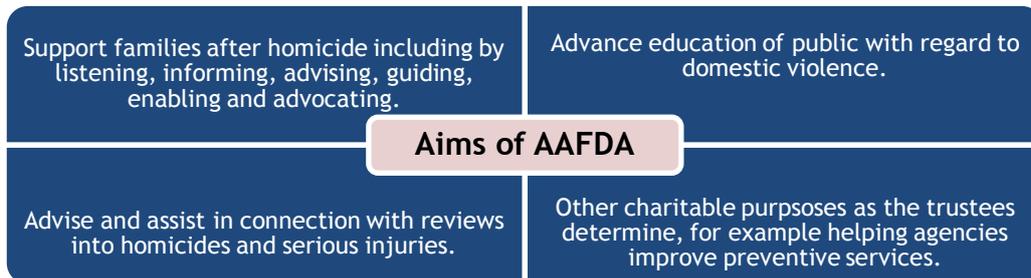
The AAFDA Board met at least on a quarterly basis when the CEO reported on the main aspects of the charity (work with beneficiaries, impact on victims, emerging issues, finance, strategic plan and operational performance and risk). The Board is aware of its responsibilities to identify and manage risk. A risk management register is reviewed regularly by the CEO who raises any increases in risks with the Board. The trustees and CEO are in regular and frequent contact by phone and e-mail.

The Board complied with statutory obligations to submit to the Charity Commission, Full Year Accounts, a Trustees' Annual Report and an Annual Return.

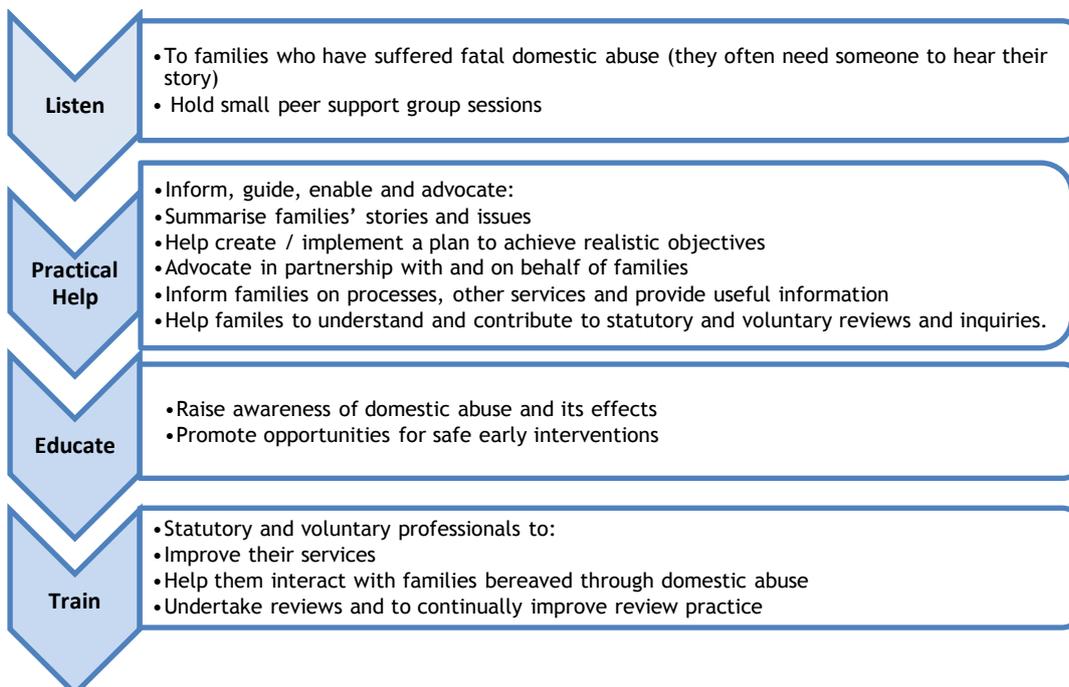
Trustee Induction and Training

AAFDA's trustees are highly skilled professionals with great knowledge and experience in areas including domestic violence, influencing public bodies via casework, and managing charity operations at a senior level. All new trustees are supplied with a copy of 'The Essential Trustee' provided by the Charity Commission and invited to discuss any queries with the Chair. The trustees receive no remuneration or other benefits.

Summary of Aims from the Constitution



Activities



AAFDA Details

Trustees as at 5 April 2015

Cheryl Smith MBE
 Shan Kilby (Chair)
 Cath Kane
 Heather Wilson
 Amanda Morrison
 Melissa Friedberg

Former trustees

Councillor Julie Wright (resigned 16/10/16)
 Councillor Bob Wright (resigned 16/10/16)
 John Latham (died January 2010)
 Ken Leather (resigned December 2009)

Patrons

Vera Baird QC, Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria and former Solicitor General
 Helen Grant MP for Maidstone and the Weald. Former Minister for Culture, Media and Sport
 Anne Snelgrove, former MP for South Swindon
 Julia Drown, former MP for South Swindon

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