

AAFDA (ADVOCACY AFTER FATAL DOMESTIC ABUSE) TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT TO 5 APRIL 2015

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 2014-15

Work with Families

During the year, 78 families were helped (61 directly and 17 via a third party) benefiting at least 171 individuals. An unknown number was helped via AAFDA's website. In the previous year, 71 families were helped benefiting 162 individuals.

"I think knowing that there are other people that know how I feel, because they have had this happen, I don't feel, it's very lonely place, it does help to know that there are other people you are speaking to, and that the support that that has given me is incredible."

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 that two families caused Inquests to be postponed and re-opened to ensure they were better informed. 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.

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 2014-15, AAFDA helped 43 families with these reviews (35 directly and 8 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. One outcome was the Rose Card, an initiative in the South East to help victims of domestic violence and named after an unborn child whose mother was murdered.

"Because I was so traumatised with everything your mind is not going to be fully functional, you know your mind is just all over the place, with having AAFDA there, to help me function in that respect, you know what I mean, to guide, to offer support, to pick up on things. ...I wasn't aware that we were allowed to read the whole review, the whole document before it is sent off to the Home Office. Had I not had (the AAFDA peer support worker), it would have gone off to the Home Office and none of my family members who had contributed to it would have seen it. And I think as part of the procedure we are entitled to see it if we wanted to, and I wanted to."

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.

Emerging work has been helping families with combined Domestic Homicide Reviews and Mental Health Reviews. These hybrid reviews, with two different commissioning frameworks and two sets of statutory guidance, cause families new challenges particularly around clarity of scoping of the review.

Impact – We convinced two local areas to undertake Domestic Homicide Reviews where there had been resistance or no plans to undertake a review. Both reviews led to significant learning, the outcome of which will not be known for some time.

Other Achievements

Presented at three different events as part of the “Making Families Count” initiative (we were shortlisted for the Kate Granger Awards for Compassionate Care). These events helped senior National Health Service (NHS) staff to understand the role of families in NHS reviews. An outcome was that the NHSE later allocated £50K to extend the work of the “Making Families Count” initiative.

Continued to influence policy and practice at national level including via:

- Our work with families on Domestic Homicide Reviews and other Inquiries. A regular impact was 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 participating on the College of Policing Task and Finish groups started following the unfavourable inspection by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary. An outcome was to ensure that risk assessment by Police was evaluated academically (Cardiff and Manchester Universities).
- By being active members of key panels conducting Mental Health Enquiries (Health Service Guidance 94/27) and those focussing on scrutiny of individual domestic violence cases, creating a new domestic violence law (coercive control) and beginning the work to create a law ensuring statutory provision of victims' services.

Impact - The Chief Coroner distributed to all Coroners, AAFDA's briefing on domestic abuse and Inquests.

Delivered highly rated two-day training course to Chairs of Domestic Homicide Reviews.

We held our fifth annual conference in January. Around 90 people listened to a family member bereaved by homicide, the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland MP, the Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses, Baroness Helen Newlove and the Chief Executive of Women's Aid. In the audience were many families, other charities, the clergy, solicitors, Police, Probation, Social Care and others.

Joined with Gloucestershire University to present several master classes to Gloucestershire Police and other agencies following the unfavourable report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. Contributed to the development of a specialist domestic abuse reference tool (DART) used by front line practitioners (“Domestic Abuse, Homicide and Gender”, Monckton Smith and Williams with Mullane) Presented at several events on domestic abuse, Domestic Homicide Reviews and working with families after homicide.

Delivered webinar (hosted in America) to an international audience – “Raising the Status of Families”

Invited to present on the "Forensic Narrative" in the USA in 2015-16.

Exhibited at two national Police Family Liaison Officer conferences. These officers are the first people to let families know of Domestic Homicide Reviews. An outcome was that many more officers became more informed. Appeared as expert witness to advise a Local Area Scrutiny Panel Committee hearing on Domestic Homicide Reviews. Referred many individuals suffering abuse to specialist organisations.

"As a Chair, I welcome that AAFDA encourages Domestic Homicide Review panels to meet family members. I have had panel members say that this humanises the whole process and reminds them there is always more than one victim in any domestic homicide. One said to me: I no longer think that identifying minor or administrative errors is a waste of time. The mother of the victim, speaking at our meeting, convinced me that if those little things had been done properly then her daughter would have received help sooner and may now be alive."

Other Feedback from Independent Chairs of Domestic Homicide Reviews

"I would recommend to any new Domestic Homicide Review Chair that they strongly advise families of domestic homicide victims to contact AAFDA, no matter how much other support they may already be receiving. AAFDA is the one support organisation which understands Domestic Homicide Reviews and which specialises in helping families with this process."

"AAFDA members provide a vital link between the DHR process and the victim's families and friends, and those relatives that I have had contact with and who have been in touch with AAFDA have nothing but praise for the support they get from AAFDA."

"I find that AAFDA is very positive and they have given me useful guidance which has been a great benefit to me when meeting with the families."

"As the Chair of the review I find the presence of AAFDA member both reassuring and helpful."

"No matter how empathetic a Chair of a Domestic Homicide Review may be, families need someone who they know is totally on their side; who has experienced what they are going through; who understands the aims, terminology and apparent bureaucracy of DHRs and is able to facilitate their meaningful engagement with the Review. AAFDA is the one support organisation capable of giving specialist help to families through the DHR process."

"As a Chair and Author of Domestic Homicide Reviews for some years, I have worked closely with AAFDA on several reviews. I have met several families in the presence of AAFDA and always found that their presence has a positive effect at a time when families are often sceptical of the benefit of such a review process."

Finance

Income was £123K and costs were £106K. AAFDA's primary funders were the Ministry of Justice, Esmée Fairbairn and Victim Support. A further £19K 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 2015-16 partly because a fourth caseworker has 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.		
	2014-15	2013-14
Income	£	£
Donations and Gift Aid	387	1,605
Grants	103,722	74,700
Speaking and Training Fees	18,961	20,512
Total Income	123,070	96,817
Revenue Expenditure	£	£
Salaries and Peer Support	58,572	52,673
Sessional Worker		
Travel and Office Supplies	16,996	14,556
Website development	5,700	
Data Security Upgrade	3,932	
Other	19,860	13,851
Total Expenditure	105,060	81,080
	2014-15	2013-14
Balance Sheet	£	£
Fixed Assets	1,850	
Total Assets less Liabilities	84,130	66,120
Unrestricted Funds	59,130	41,120
Designated Funds	25,000	25,000
Funds	84,130	66,120

Constitution and Organisational Structure

AAFDA was an unincorporated association formed on 1 April 2008 (Became incorporated in 2015-16). It adopted an amended constitution on 23 July 2008 and became a registered charity on 19 September 2008.

Governance and how AAFDA makes Decisions

We strengthened our Board growing from four to six trustees. A member of a family that had lost a loved one to homicide took part in the recruitment process. Four new trustees joined and two long-serving trustees left. New trustees included a former director of Social Housing, a Senior Health Advisor, a lecturer in Social Work and an expert in gender-based violence.

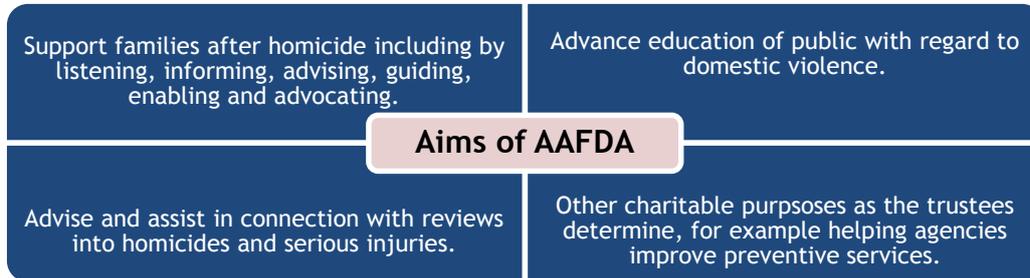
The AAFDA Board met on a quarterly basis when the CEO reported on the main aspects of the charity (work with beneficiaries, impact on victims, emerging issues, finance, strategic plan and operational performance and risk). The Board is aware of its responsibilities to identify and manage risk. A risk 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.

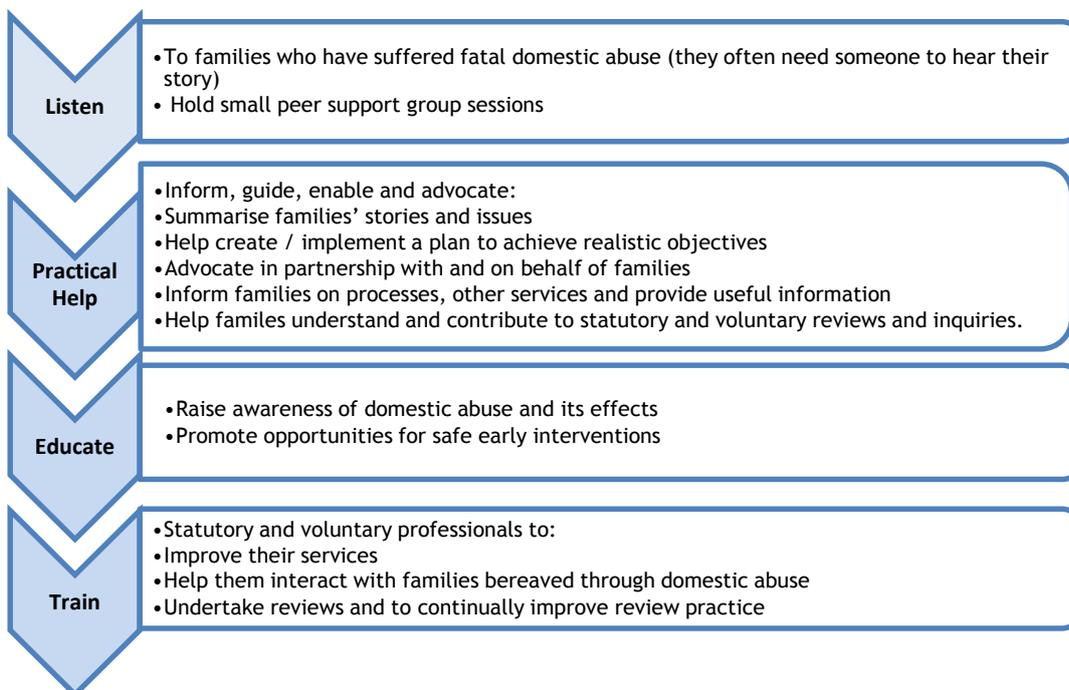
Trustee Induction and Training

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

Current trustees

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

Former trustees

Councillor Julie Wright (resigned 16 October 2014)
 Councillor Bob Wright (resigned 16 October 2014)
 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. Minister for Sport and Tourism
 Anne Snelgrove, former MP for South Swindon
 Julia Drown. former MP for South Swindon

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