



Trustees Annual Report 2019-2020 – to year ending 5th April 2020

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

AAFDA is a centre of excellence for reviews into domestic homicides and suicides/unexplained deaths following domestic abuse. We are particularly expert in Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) methodology and best practice. Working across England and Wales as a national charity, we provide expert specialist advocacy and practical and emotional help for families after fatal domestic abuse. Using our specialist knowledge and collective insights we help agencies to refine their services for victims and to review domestic abuse related deaths more effectively. AAFDA provides a unique national voice for the learning that each DHR generates. While no case is the same, we believe that each DHR is an opportunity to end domestic abuse.

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 fatal domestic abuse, helping them to cope and to be able to contribute and influence statutory reviews and inquiries.

ACHIEVEMENTS 19/20

- 201 families were directly helped, benefiting at least 387 individuals.
- Referrals for unexplained death/suicide increased by 180%.
- Delivering specialist AAFDA training for DHR Chairs (22 new chairs trained).
- 376 delegates attended 13 Information Sharing & Networking events, funded by the Home Office – 96% of delegates were satisfied/very satisfied with these events.
- Over 100 DHRs Reviewed through the Home Office Quality Assurance Panel.
- AAFDA's 16 Days of Activism 'Family Stories' digital initiative received over 11,000 views of the campaign films on Twitter, induced 71,000 tweet 'impressions' and close to 600 visits to our Twitter profile page. The initiative also led to 170 new followers.
- 6235 website users with 84% of those as returning visitors.
- A professional network of 1080 professionals.

WORK WITH FAMILIES

Our advocates are both specialist and highly expert. They work in the space where there is sometimes a lack of specialist understanding about domestic abuse and occasionally a 'job done attitude', which limits the rights of families and compounds their trauma. The advocates are intensively trained to ensure that their work achieves outcomes for families where no other service can. This year we have successfully intervened to achieve families' full legal entitlements in DHRs, Inquests and other statutory reviews.

AAFDA uses a holistic model of advocacy that goes 'above and beyond' to restore dignity and relief for families. Our trauma-informed service provides long-term advocacy. We listen to families and advocate for them in a system that often overlooks the value of their insight.

AAFDA's independence and proficiency means that we can meet the needs of those who are most marginalised and distanced from state services, with the majority of our referrals being self-referrals. A strategic priority remains to

increase representation in DHRs and other statutory reviews from Black and minoritised families. Our specialist advocacy offers an intersectional understanding to families where circumstances are converging to limit their access to justice.

Example **outcomes**:

- AAFDA provides specialist and expert advocacy to ensure that reviews and inquest resumptions take place where none have been planned. We amplify the demands of families to have their experiences heard. In an example where a woman was murdered abroad by her husband, AAFDA interventions were unsuccessful in our representations to the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to commission a DHR. We did however obtain and facilitate a meeting between the CSP and a family member to enable the family to express their knowledge about the abuse and their frustrations. Following this meeting, the CSP committed to an internal learning process to consider the barriers for the victim in this case to inform their future practice. This offered some comfort to the family and we hope will improve responses for victims of domestic abuse in this area.
- In a difficult case our advocate used her specialist knowledge of domestic abuse research to help a local area understand why an unexplained death should attract a DHR. The local area was at first very reticent but eventually moved from complete disagreement to enthusiastic support. The advocate also used her expert knowledge of review methodologies to help the local area to bring on board partner agencies. This has not only helped the local area, by ensuring an appropriate review is conducted which should make the future safer, it has been hugely helpful to the family who report catharsis and some healing of their relationship with public protection agencies.
- Our advocates are kept up to date with emerging practice and domestic abuse research, including, for example, economic abuse and the 'Homicide Timeline' 8 stages research. This keeps them specialist and expert. In one case, a mother whose son was killed, was being chased for 'non-payment of a fine'. The fine was in the name of the deceased. The AAFDA advocate intervened to have the fine quashed. With the financial stress and anxiety this had caused her gone, the mother was able to focus on recovery and understanding her grief following her son's murder.
- In a case that was classified as a suicide, AAFDA influenced a reluctant CSP to commission a DHR. We persuaded the Coroner to widen the scope of the inquest to ensure that the circumstances around the victim's death were fully explored. The expertise of AAFDA advocates mean that even without the help of solicitors they are able to capably represent to Coroners that inquests should be scoped to take into account Article 2, the Right to Life.
- AAFDA intervened in a case to ensure that the final DHR was shared with the best friend of both the victim and the perpetrator, and that he had the right to make amendments to the DHR. He has since gone on to receive DHR Chair training and, at an AAFDA event, he presented to professionals on the important role friends play in providing information in DHRs. This has brought him an additional layer of healing and strength.

WORK WITH PROFESSIONALS

AAFDA has a wide-ranging training and professional development offer, for professionals across a number of agencies and sectors. A primary focus is the accredited training and development of DHR Chairs, given the importance of DHRs in driving improvement in domestic abuse services.

Delivering AAFDA training Domestic Homicide Review Chairs:

Across the reporting year, we trained 22 new and existing DHR Chairs. Feedback from a delegate following Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) Chair training:

"Thank you, for a bloody brilliant, enlightening, informative, energising and entertaining two days! Please pass on my thanks to Jane, I can never get bored of her 'matter of fact' delivery of the reality - most refreshing. And of course, [xx & xx], what an amazing pair of humans they truly are, a privilege to have their time. If I had ever been put in the

position they are, I can only hope, that I would have an ounce of their strength and drive. I completely embrace the ethos of what a good Chair is there to do - it totally fits with my values of meaningfully ensuring that the human(s) sitting in front of us is(are) the one(s) that feel valued, heard, represented. Given the requirement for a DHR Chair, it sounds macabre to say, but I am excited to be given this opportunity to do this right and get this right for a family. There haven't been many training's that I have attended where passion and seeking truth and fairness have been core focus"

Our small and dedicated team also designed and delivered many bespoke workshops, events and presentations to local areas to improve their statutory review practice. Areas this year included Rochdale, Portishead, Devon and the Thames Valley, covering professionals from a range of statutory services including Police and Housing.

Example impact:

- AAFDA was approached by Safer Plymouth to help them strengthen their DHR process. AAFDA listened to their policy leaders, reviewed their current practice and designed a tailored package of training for 20 delegates across February and March 2020. Evaluation showed the impact of the blend of technical skill and lived experience at the heart of AAFDA's values and approach.
"very informative and timely training input. I learned so much about the DHR process and practice and feel much better informed. Brilliant combination of a family's lived experience and subject area expertise. Thank you."

AAFDA's unique voice and specialism continues to be valuable to national and international policy makers and leaders. In September 2019, both senior leaders at AAFDA presented to the Third European Conference on Domestic Violence in Oslo – providing both a Key Note address and Workshop input.

Our reputation for learning and development was recognised in January 2020 when AAFDA'S Deputy CEO was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to investigate and share an international perspective on non-homicide domestic abuse death reviews in the USA and Australia, with a particular focus on domestic abuse related suicide reviews.

The CEO was personally thanked by Baroness Newlove¹ in her speech to the House of Lords in June 2019, as she reflected on her role as Victims Commissioner and raised the need for the government response to domestic abuse to focus on "those families whose lives have been shattered as they try to cope with the loss of their loved ones".

AAFDA has commissioned research with the University of Gloucester on advocating for best practice for families and look forward to the completion of that work next year.

Our expertise is utilised by professionals innovating in the social care sector, and AAFDA is represented on the Single Unified Safeguarding Review Pilot in Wales, as a key member of their steering group.

CAPACITY-BUILDING PROJECT FUNDED BY THE HOME OFFICE

Our Home Office Funded project, which began in 2018, aimed to increase the number of bereaved families accessing expert and specialist AAFDA advocacy. This year we have worked to increase our reach by establishing new referral pathways and increasing the professionals' knowledge of the advocacy available to families.

¹ [Victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse - Thursday 6 June 2019 - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

This year we delivered ten ‘Information and Networking’ events across England and Wales, involving 376 delegates and seven guest Chair speakers. In addition, we ran three smaller events using the same networks. Committed to ensuring the engagement and centring of the voices of bereaved families, we provided the opportunity for seven family speakers to tell their story at the 13 events. This served the dual functions of connecting professionals with the impact of domestic abuse and domestic homicide, and keeping the victim’s memory alive for the family. The combination of technical skill and lived experience creates lasting change in the way professionals respond to domestic abuse.

In evaluation of our ‘Information and Networking’ events we asked professionals to tell us about changes they have made to their practice due to AAFDA’s input;

- *“We will look to develop a role internally that has a specific focus on any Trust wide referral (Adult or child) that features domestic abuse and develop a coordinated response for staff dealing with these cases on the front line”.*
- *“We have arranged an awareness session around DHRs and the process prior to a DHR being carried as we all assumed all homicides would result in review”*
- *“Put on our DHR Process Flowchart all the opportunities for advocacy for the family”*
- *“Added more inputs into our DA training on the content of the DHRs, rather than relying on staff to read them.”*



AAFDA CEO Frank Mullane addresses the Lincolnshire Roadshow

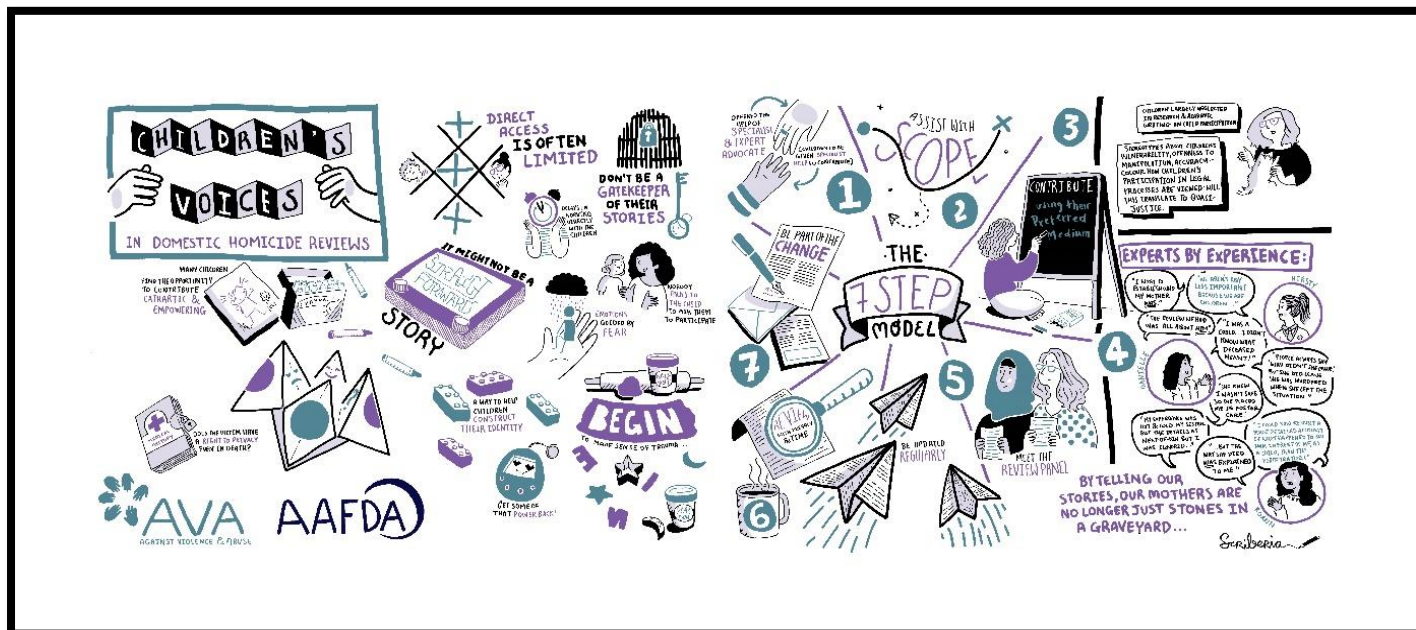
Events around Covid-19 resulted in the cancellation of our annual conference in March 2020 but we continue to provide our high-quality resources and support to families, professionals and organisations. This year we began a redesign of our website to ensure continued access to our expertise and resources.

CHILDREN’S VOICES IN DHRs

In April 2019 AAFDA, alongside AVA (Against Violence and Abuse), were successfully awarded funding from MOPAC (The Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime, London) for a one-year pilot project ‘When Dad Killed Mum: Children’s Voices in Domestic Homicide Reviews’. This project aimed to engage children in DHRs with the support of the ‘specialist children and young peoples’ advocate from AAFDA. Like all AAFDA’s work, we aimed to give children and young people a voice in the DHR process to ensure they have the opportunity to make sense of their experiences.

“By telling our stories our mothers are no longer just stones in a graveyard”

The investment from MOPAC was also to scale and cascade our learning from this pilot through provision of e-learning and resources to carers of children bereaved by domestic homicide, professionals working with children, and DHR Chairs. Despite initial challenges and delays in scoping, we were able to start this direct work with children, survey and consult with professionals, and in March 2020 delivered a seminar to professionals in London. However, due to COVID further work with children and the subsequent learning documents have been delayed. As agreed with the funder we will continue with this pilot work into 20/21 to deliver on outcomes.



Artwork by Scriberia from the London seminar
with children and young people
5 March 2020

Improving the Domestic Abuse Bill

The publishing of the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill in January 2019 gave AAFDA an opportunity to work with key colleagues across the domestic abuse sector to raise the needs of families bereaved by domestic abuse. Throughout the year, AAFDA was part of a Domestic Abuse and Children working group made up of organisations working in both the children’s and domestic abuse sectors. The work of this group has ensured that the Bill will view children as victims in their own right and represents a significant success through collaboration.

FEEDBACK FROM FAMILIES SUPPORTED BY AAFDA

“Thank you for being patient with us. We all agree that we could not have wished for a better advocate. We are greatly impressed by your compassion and empathy, as well as your steel and determination for getting the DHR commissioned and for getting us to this stage. We thank you so much for your hard work.”

“Thank you for your wonderful support to our family both your visits at our home and vital assistance at the Courts. We appreciate that very much and look forward to seeing you soon. You are doing an excellent job especially to families like us in severe homicide distress”

“A Big ‘thank you’ to T (Advocate) for getting this excellent DHR and her tenacity.”

FEEDBACK FROM CHAIRS OF STATUTORY REVIEWS

“The consequences of domestic homicide are not just metered out against each victim but the choices of perpetrators ripple on into lives forever. AAFDA provide a vital and specialist service that meets the needs of families who have had to deal with these catastrophic actions. I cannot really underestimate how much respect we have for the work that AAFDA do and we are continuously inspired by their tenacity in raising the profile of domestic homicide. We stand with them in solidarity and partnership; they have our utmost admiration and our unwavering support.”

“As a DHR Chair I would like to take the opportunity to thank AAFDA for consistently responding to DHR requests for the provision of independent professional advocacy to families of victims of domestic homicides and particularly those families who have lost loved ones who have taken their own lives as a consequence of controlling and coercive behaviour. The help a trained AAFDA Advocate gives to families in such circumstances is invaluable in guiding and supporting them through the complexities of a DHR and the traumatic experiences of learning what their loved one had suffered.”

“I know I can count on AAFDA to assist with any aspect of DHRs”

“As a new chair, clutching my AAFDA Certificate, it helped enormously to know that Frank and AAFDA staff were there with support, advice and access to a wide range of experts who are leaders in their fields. Their key messages help chairs they train to carefully consider not just systemic lessons but lessons for all the people involved, while keeping the family at the heart of the process. Thank-you for all you do.”

“As a chair, I have found that AAFDA advocates are invaluable during the domestic homicide review process. Each advocate is clearly not only an expert in this area but also has their own personal experience – this means they bring a huge amount of understanding, sensitivity and support to families. Taken together, this ensures that families receive the specialist support they deserve and are expertly guided through the often brutalising and protracted review process with compassion and warmth. “

FINANCE

Income for 2019-20 was £343K and costs were £356K. AAFDA's primary funders were: The Home Office (£100K), Esmée Fairbairn (£45K), and Henry Smith (£45K). A further £55K was generated through consultancy work. AAFDA undertakes regular strategic reviews to inform our fundraising strategy.

Reserves Policy

To ensure the long-term success of AAFDA amidst a very uncertain funding environment and to maintain provision for the families who require AAFDA services, the Trustees usually aim for reserves to be between three and six months of the following years forecast expenditure, after designated funds. We are on target to sustain reserves in this range which ensures financial resilience and complies with the Charity Commission's guidance.

Public Benefit Statement

The trustees have complied with their duty to have due regards 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.

	2019-20	2018-19
<u>Income</u>	£	£
Donations and Gift Aid	1,784	1,345
Grants	286,150	303,108
Speaking and Training Fees	54,769	47,986
Annual Conference		14,076
Total Income	<u>342,703</u>	<u>366,515</u>

<u>Revenue Expenditure</u>	£	£
Salaries and Advocate Fees	222,796	194,575
Travel and Office Supplies	38,944	42,065
Other Home Office Advocacy	45,770	46,575
Awareness Raising Costs		
Annual Conference / Peer		29,141
Support Sessions		
Other	48,906	41,636
Total Expenditure	<u>356,416</u>	<u>353,992</u>

	2019-20	2018-19
<u>Balance Sheet</u>	£	£
Fixed Assets	0	0
Total Assets less Liabilities	135,664	149,377
Unrestricted Funds	110,664	124,377
Designated Funds	25,000	25,000
Funds	<u>135,664</u>	<u>149,377</u>

Social Value

Alongside the individual stories of families who have been supported to have their experiences heard, AAFDA is creating real change in the system responding to domestic abuse. The change it creates ripples from the bottom (individual families) all the way up to national systems – informing Home Office guidelines and best practice.

AAFDA creates social value under the Social Value Calculator² theme of creating healthier, more sustainable and more resilient places and communities. We do this by meeting key outcomes for supporting people to have more control over their own lives, and outcomes around promoting mental health support and peer networks.

CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNANCE

AAFDA is an unincorporated association formed on 1 April 2008 (will become incorporated in 2021). It adopted an amended constitution on 23 July 2008 and became a registered charity on 19 September 2008.

² [Social Value Calculator \(sduhealth.org.uk\)](https://www.sduhealth.org.uk)

Governance and how AAFDA makes decisions

Our Board in 2019-20 comprised five trustees and included a local authority strategic Violence Against Women and Girls lead and expert in the criminal justice sector, a restorative justice practitioner, a safeguarding lead for a Clinical Commissioning Group and senior health advisor, a business and finance specialist, and a specialist charity lawyer.

The AAFDA Board meets at least on a quarterly basis where the CEO and Operations Manager report 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.

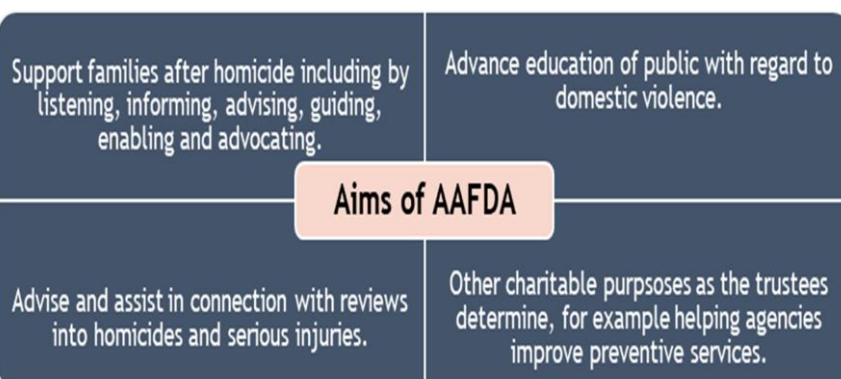
A risk management register is reviewed regularly by the CEO who raises any increases in risks, and new risks with the Board. The trustees and CEO are in regular and frequent contact by phone and e-mail.

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

Trustee Induction and Training

AAFDA's trustees are highly skilled professionals with great knowledge and experience in areas including domestic abuse, influencing public bodies and charity law. We review the composition and skills of the Board each year to ensure that AAFDA has the skills and knowledge to allow the Board to provide robust governance. 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



AAFDA DETAILS

Charity Number

1125973

Trustees in the year ending 5 April 2020

Heather Wilson

James O'Sullivan

Elizabeth Jones MBE

Samantha O'Sullivan

Becci Seaborne.

AAFDA Patrons

Dame Vera Baird QC, Victims' Commissioner

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

Address

PO Box 3636, Swindon, SN3 9BG

T: 07768 386922

W: www.aafda.org.uk

E: info@aafda.org.uk

