



How to help your constituents after road death or serious injury

A guide for MPs

Prepared by:

RoadPeace

The national charity for road crash victims



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Charity No: 1087192

Dedicated to all those killed or seriously injured in road crashes - with special thanks to the bereaved family members and injured victims who have contributed to this guide.

In Loving Memory Of

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Alice Williams	Lorraine Barrow
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Introduction

Howard Jones, CEO

Dear Member of Parliament,

If you have not yet been contacted by a constituent affected by a road death or serious injury you are the exception. In reported road collisions in Great Britain in 2024, 1,602 people were killed and 27,865 were seriously injured*. In no other circumstance would society tolerate a toll of 4 needless deaths and 76 needless serious injuries per day; we want to work with you to change this.

The victims of road crashes are too often dismissed – their trauma swept away as an ‘accident’. If justice is achieved, it is often slow, fraught with difficulty and layered challenges, all resulting in re-traumatising the victim. When lessons appear to have been learned the myth is betrayed - we continue allowing carnage on our roads. Crash victims frequently report a postcode lottery of support, a lack of information and a response that does not consider ‘road crime as real crime’. Victims appear to not be legitimised until charges are pressed (which can be more than a year later), compounding victim blaming and further confusing investigation timelines. To this will be added court delays, bewilderment at the outcome of the criminal justice system or inquest hearings, and difficulty accessing civil compensation and crucial interim payments.

So many exemplary people work within post-crash care. This includes outstanding members of police forces who go above and beyond, prosecutors who are determined to secure a conviction, solicitors on our Legal Panel whose first aim is to support the needs of victims, and

organisations, such as RoadPeace, which are there for crash victims in their time of need.

However, we must not forget that our aim is Vision Zero – a future when post-crash care is not needed, because death and serious injury on our roads has been eradicated.

Since joining RoadPeace as CEO I have been inspired and motivated by the courage, bravery, determination and resilience of our community - our ‘RoadPeace Family’. Each day we speak to those who have been through unimaginable trauma yet are putting their all into preventing others from experiencing the same. I cannot find adequate words for all that they do; their commitment and support for others says it all.

I would like to thank Sarah Coombes MP for her outstanding support of our charity, and our Legal Panel members Brian Barr and CFG (with special recognition to Emma Dugdale) for helping to make this guide possible. Finally, I would like to thank all those who have shared their personal experiences and photos to help illustrate the information provided, they are the heart of RoadPeace.

We hope that the pages that follow provide a useful insight into the experiences of crash victims and the challenges they face, as well as the support we can provide. I, my team, our volunteers and our ‘RoadPeace Family’ need your help and are ready to work with you.

Howard Jones
CEO, RoadPeace

*Source: DfT Reported road casualties
Great Britain, annual report: 2024

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Sarah Coombes, MP for West Bromwich

Within weeks of being elected, I was contacted by a constituent whose mother had been killed trying to cross the busy A-road outside her house. What is devastating is that her granddaughter had written to our Council the year before asking for a crossing to be installed on that very stretch of road. Crossing a road - even on a busy A-road - should be safe. Yet, this story is just one of many, repeated up and down the country. Thousands of people are killed or seriously injured on our roads every year. It needs to stop. And we have a role to play.

As MPs, we wear many different hats: whether it's scrutinising and voting on key legislation in Parliament, taking up important campaigns on the issues that matter to us and our constituents, or dealing with thousands of pieces of casework that land in our inbox every year. Many of us have experiences from previous jobs that have prepared us for these roles - from public speaking, working under pressure or a familiarity with intensely political environments.

But one aspect I don't think many MPs can be prepared for is how to support someone whose life has been changed forever because of a road crash. Stories like the one above cut to the heart of what being an MP is about: how we can support constituents through some of their darkest times and help them to find justice too. This would not be possible without an organisation like RoadPeace.



They've also been a lifeline for people such as my constituent, Diane Gall, whose husband, Martyn, was killed in 2020 by a driver who was on her phone. That dangerous and selfish decision has meant that in a split-second Diane's life was turned upside-down. I cannot even imagine the pain and anguish that Diane and her family have been through, picking up the pieces of a life that has been irrevocably changed by the decision of one driver.

Now Diane dedicates her spare time campaigning for other victims, and she is just one of many in the charity who do the same.

Diane is also amongst the hundreds of people who have been supported over the years by RoadPeace, whether it's by attending their support groups or receiving legal support in the aftermath of a crash. This guide for MPs sets out the services you can signpost to constituents, as well as laying out their campaign asks to make our roads safer. There are practical tips, as well as moving testimonies from victims and their families. It makes for powerful reading.

I encourage you to take the time to look through the guide and share it with your office too. The more we listen to the experiences and stories of constituents who have been affected by the growing epidemic of road death and serious injury, the more effectively we can use our role to act on their behalf and campaign for better victims' rights.

Whether it's helping a constituent navigate the justice system, seek bereavement support or find a support group, RoadPeace offers an invaluable resource for those who have been affected by road crashes. They are advocating for a world where road danger is not tolerated and where victims receive justice and compassion. I believe it's our role as MPs to help make sure all our constituents can live peaceful, safe lives. By supporting RoadPeace you will help bring us closer to that vision.

Jack Dromey



When Life Suddenly Changes

Clare O'Neill (Halifax)

The last morning of my real life was a Saturday. I took my children, Alice (9) and Joseph (6), to town for an early dentist appointment, before heading up the hill to their primary school for the start of the summer fete. We pressed the button at the crossing directly behind the school, and the cars in the near lane came to a full stop. I was holding Joseph's hand in one of mine and our coats and shopping in the other. Alice was happily walking two steps in front of me, ready for cake and games.



It was a four-lane road. As Alice took one step into the second narrow lane, the green man shining overhead, a driver overtook the stationary cars that masked him from our view and whisked her away from me, in a second. Forever. Two years on, part of me is still frozen on that spot. Alice experienced a catastrophic brain injury when she was cast off from the black Corsa. She was no longer able to breathe on her own. He was travelling at 50mph in a 30mph area. The light had been red for seven seconds.

RoadPeace says, "road death is not a normal death," and it's a comfort to have that understood. It was so strangely sudden. Over the following months I wanted to beg him to spare her, but it was far too late. I was immobilised with grief, but I was also deeply shocked, alternating desperately between guilt and rage, terrified of all cars and mistrustful of strangers. I felt alienated from people who would sympathise with my grief but flinch at my anger. I have PTSD and must go back into my personal war zone every day.

As time moves on, I am still angry with that stupid, selfish man, who is now serving 8 years and 4 months in jail.

However, I can see a wider context. I see that he is far from unusual in his driving habits. I see a culture where road crime is not considered real crime; where offenders are excused wholesale with the term 'road accident'. Where convenience is prioritised over fatality 'statistics'. Where councils demand to see a death before putting safety measures in place.

I experienced a failing, backlogged justice system that did not acknowledge that there had been an injustice for almost two years. Meanwhile, the anonymous killer was at large in my community, in possession of a full driving licence. My child's unlawful killing was not reported in any broadsheet media, presumably because it is so tediously common.

RoadPeace sees these things too, and I feel stronger because we are together.

My bright and beautiful Alice, my gentle, sweet baby, who deserved the world, was brutally killed midstride. It could have been anyone. It should not have been possible.



What I would like MPs to know

There are people of all ages in your constituency who have been traumatised and suddenly bereaved by road crashes. I have been amazed by how many people, hearing my experience, have shared that their mother or their brother was killed by a driver, or that they have personally been injured. Please stand by their side, and do anything you can to stop other lives being destroyed. We have been helped by two excellent MPs, first Holly Lynch, then Kate Dearden, in Halifax. They have truly listened to us and advocated for us. It means so much to have their support, and we do not take it for granted.

Pictured: Clare O'Neill at a memorial for crash victims in Leeds
Pictured: Alice Williams

**Kate Theedom
(Leicester West)
National Injured Group
Coordinator**



I experienced bereavement through the loss of my brother from road death in 1991 and experienced serious injury in a car crash in 2020.

I sustained life-changing injuries in my crash and five and a half years on am recovering from my 8th operation as a direct result of my injuries. From the start I was aware that I was in a vulnerable and complex situation: unable to walk temporarily, living alone and needing support in my home when discharged from hospital. I was also aware that I was in paid employment, had family support, including my son living nearby, and am articulate and able to navigate complex situations – but many people will be in situations that can make it much more challenging to manage for all sorts of reasons. We are plunged into a world of police investigations, personal injury claims, rehabilitation and recovery. Big decisions may have to be made, and who is there to support you?

I felt that I was on a journey of discovery, which seemed odd considering how many people set out on the same journey every day. From the very start, I knew that the information that would have been most useful to me and my family was not readily available – support can come almost by chance; for example I was given very useful information about solicitors by an occupational therapist in hospital. At these times we need a system where people are available to help us navigate this new world we are in.

What I would like MPs to know

Now that I volunteer with RoadPeace and jointly run a group for those injured in road collisions, I can see that those facing the complexities of physical and emotional recovery whilst navigating the law, criminal proceedings, a different type of life, employment issues and so on, would greatly benefit from a knowledgeable advocate, someone to explain and support through each part of the process. RoadPeace are there, and are a lifeline to many people, but cannot provide all that is needed when someone is at their most vulnerable and facing so much. Through volunteering with RoadPeace, I have met people who following their crashes have felt forced to run their own investigations, for example reaching out to shops for CCTV footage because after several months the police had still not done so.

I would like to see a coordinated process of care navigation from the start; information and support that is automatically available from hospitals and the police or whoever we might come into contact with at this time when we are most vulnerable. I would like an experienced advocate for road crash victims and their families and/or their personal support network.



Pictured: Kate Theedom
Pictured: Richard Theedom

INTRUSION

SHOCK

SCREAMING

PAIN

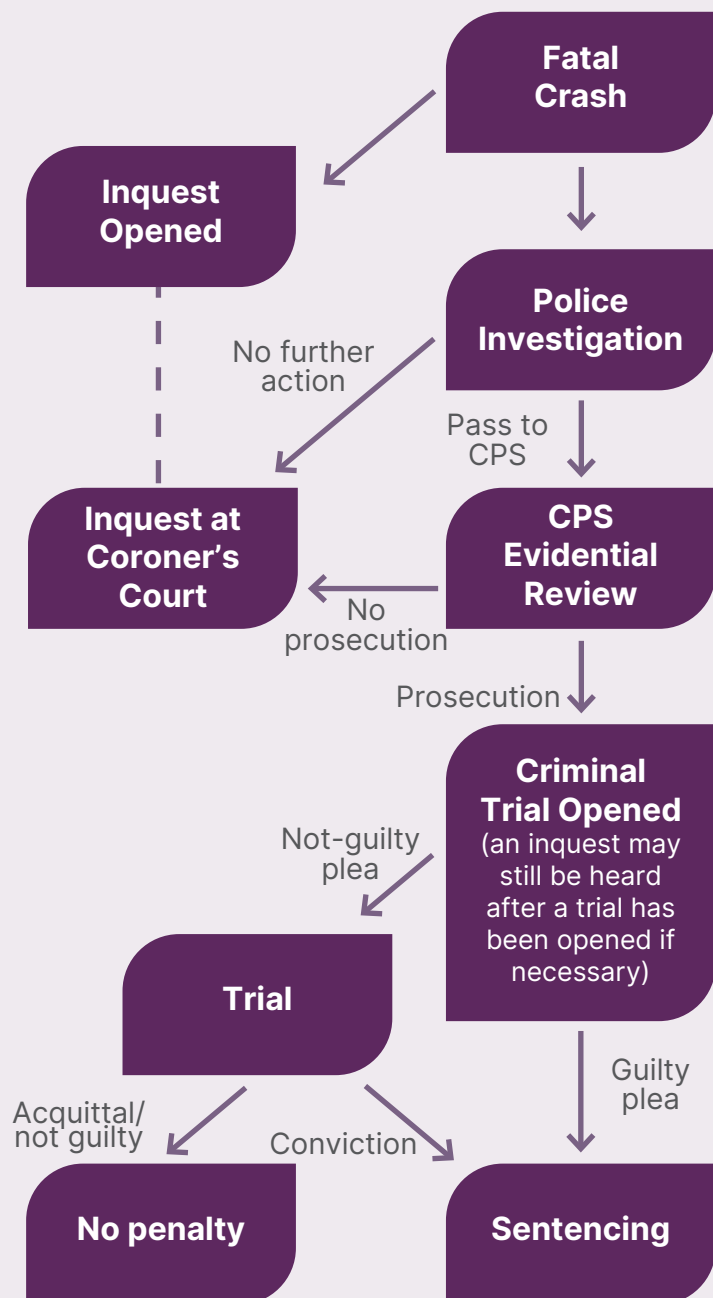
TRAUMA

CHAOS

FEAR

What Happens After a Road Death or Serious Injury

Fatal Crash Process



These pages are intended as a reference to assist MPs and their staff when dealing with casework. The below is a general overview of what should be expected following a road death or serious injury, though no one case is ever exactly the same as another.

The immediate aftermath

First, police will tend to the person who has been killed or seriously injured (but medics are the lead agency when present) and secure the scene. In the case of a fatal collision, there will be a Forensic Collision Investigator. In the case of a serious collision, the Forensic Investigation Team are usually only involved where the injuries are life-changing (classified as permanent disability, loss of limb or loss of independent living). Where a minor injury collision has occurred, there is unlikely to be an in-depth investigation. However, it is important to note that each force will have its own remits as to who is involved in the investigation, so this will vary (depending on the size of the force and the resources available).

A full examination of the collision site should take place, with evidence gathered and uninjured drivers and witnesses spoken to. An officer will be appointed as the Road Policing Lead Investigator (RPLI) and they will be responsible for initial key decisions regarding the direction of the investigation. Vehicles and electronic devices (including those of the victim) are likely to be seized and examined, and may not be released until the criminal justice process completes. Uninjured drivers should be tested for both drink and drugs – if these screening tests are positive, blood tests will then need to be carried out.

Testing injured drivers will depend on the permission of a doctor, and there may be complications*, medical treatment will take priority.

A driver may be arrested under suspicion of causing a death or serious injury by dangerous or careless driving (depending on whether Code G of PACE, Police and Criminal Evidence Act) is fulfilled, but is most likely to be released under investigation. Very few drivers suspected of causing a collision will have bail conditions; there usually needs to be previous convictions or evidence that the driver is likely to reoffend for this to be considered. The police cannot impose interim driving disqualifications. At this stage, it is not unusual for interviews with drivers or witnesses to be brief. Police are unlikely to have evidence to challenge any account a driver provides; they also have to consider that the defence could argue a driver was traumatised and didn't know what was being asked of them. In some injury collisions, the driver, victim and witnesses may be contacted by post with questionnaire type forms.

While the above is taking place, police act to identify the person killed or seriously injured and inform their next of kin. The delivery of this news should be done sensitively and in-person, but this is not always the case. With a serious injury, police will try to blue-light family members to the hospital if medical professionals confirm the injured is likely to die.

Where a collision has taken place at a business premises such as a farm, other agencies such as the Health and Safety Executive may become involved.

Family Liaison Officers (usually road death only)

In the case of a road death, the police will appoint a Family Liaison Officer (FLO) who will become the main point of contact for the family. Some police forces have dedicated FLOs (who undertake this role full-time), while FLOs in other police forces undertake this role in addition to other operational duties.**

The FLO usually asks to communicate predominately with one person from the family, although sometimes this can be difficult (for example where parents are divorced or family members have fallen out). The FLO should also provide information on support services, though this will vary based both on the individual FLO's knowledge and whether the Mayor or Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has commissioned any specific support for crash victims.

The FLO will usually accompany a family member to identify their loved one – some families are allowed to touch their loved one and say goodbye, but if there are forensic considerations this may not be possible. In some cases, where injuries are so extreme, identification may have to take place through different means.

In the case of a serious injury, a FLO is not usually appointed, although there can be some discretion around this (for example where a serious injury is thought likely to become fatal). The Investigating Officer will normally be the main point of contact for the injured victim and their family or carers. However, again, this can vary by police force.

Social media and press releases

Police will issue social media and press releases, they will try to speak to the family or victim before doing this, but this may not always be possible e.g. where passers-by have posted videos/photos online. The family or injured victim do not have to consent to being named within any press release – but this does not mean the press will not find out their details (there are many occasions where the press have taken the victim's name from flowers left at the scene, or found photos on social media, the police have no power over this). Other emergency services have no restrictions as to what information they release and are not obligated to check the details with the police before doing so; this can sometimes lead to misinformation or inappropriate detail being shared.

Post-mortem (road death only)

The FLO should talk the family through the requirements of the coroner. A post-mortem (including a full forensic or Home Office post-mortem) might be required. It can be very difficult for a family to understand this as in most cases, the cause of death is obviously as a result of the collision. However, should criminal charges be brought, this will need to be evidenced in a court of law, and so a post-mortem is essential. In some cases, the defence may attempt to request a second post-mortem,* whether this is granted is the coroner's decision. CT (computed tomography) post-mortem might be a possibility.

The inquest process (road death only)

This is formal procedure. The coroner will open an inquest – it is then usually suspended while the police investigation takes place. If there is a causing death by charge, there is not usually an inquest hearing (rather the coroner accepts the findings of the criminal court and closes the inquest after proceedings have completed).

Where charges are not brought, there will be an inquest hearing. Inquests do not apportion blame, but seek to establish who has died, when, where and how.

However, it is advisable for families to have legal representation at inquests – particularly where they have specific questions they would like answered. Some firms on the RoadPeace Legal Panel may agree to provide this representation pro-bono.

Instructing a lawyer

There can be a reluctance to discuss bereavement damages or civil compensation as no amount of money can ever make up for the loss of a loved one, or the lifelong impact of serious injuries. However, road death and serious injury have drastic financial implications. The choice of the right personal injury lawyer is vital, as an inexperienced or insensitive lawyer can exacerbate the trauma already felt. RoadPeace signpost to firms who have been vetted and approved to join our Legal Panel.

Civil claims must be commenced within 3 years of the death (not always the same date as the collision) or serious injury. In some cases, lawyers can help to secure interim payments to cover immediate bills, vital rehab and therapy.

Where the driver involved in the collision is uninsured or untraced the claim has to go to the Motor Insurers' Bureau (MIB).

66 Brian Barr

"If you or a family member has been injured in a road traffic collision due to someone else's negligence, you may be eligible to make a compensation claim. With over half a century combined experience, our team has garnered an unparalleled reputation in respect of our expertise handling the complexities of this area of law. Our understanding of disability, chronic pain, and serious injury is second to none, and we have a deep commitment to both our clients and broader road safety initiatives. It is vital that you look for a personal injury lawyer with specific expertise in this area in order to build a strong case and secure you the compensation you deserve."

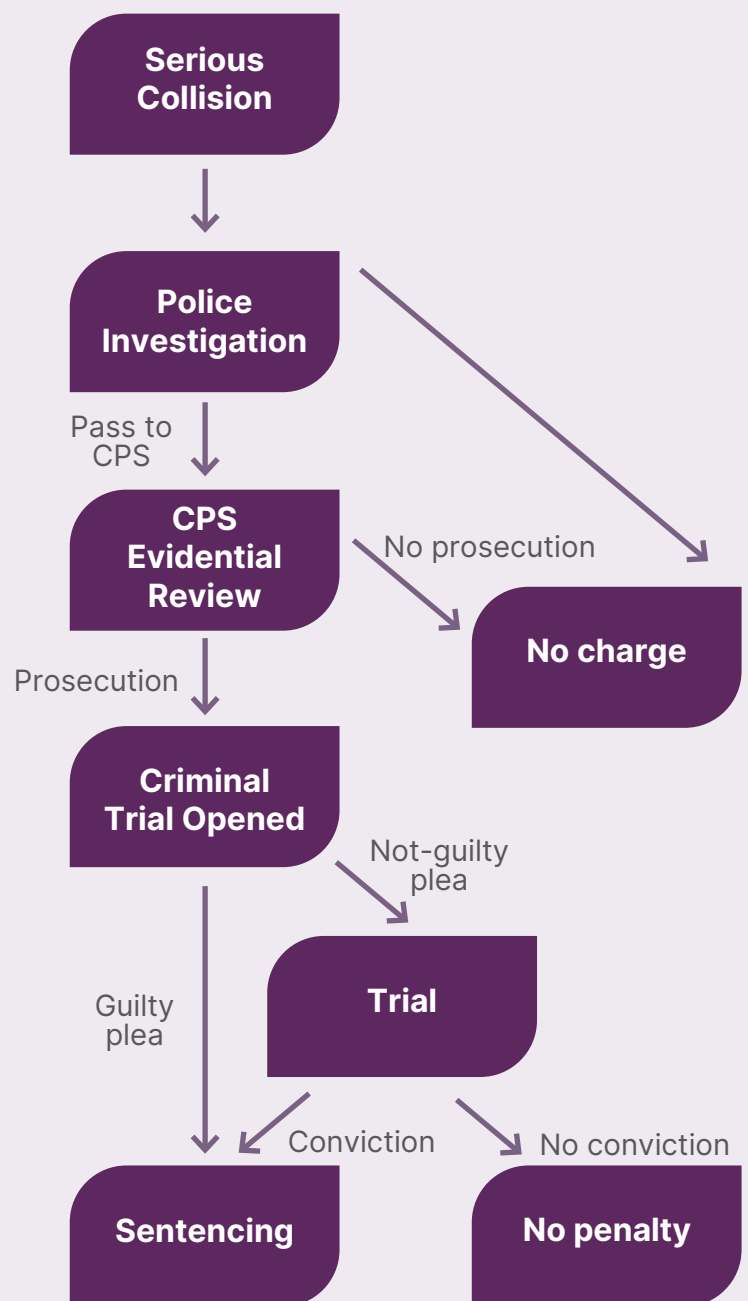
Police investigation

Each investigation will have its own complexities and timelines will vary. In some cases, it can take well over a year before the police can decide whether or not the case file should be passed to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and charges pressed. Toxicology, pathology, accessing phone records, CCTV or telematics and crash reconstruction are lengthy processes.

Grieving families and injured victims often report feeling very confused and alone during this time; the FLO or Investigating Officer should continue to keep them updated, and they should know they can ask questions at any point (if their questions cannot be answered they should be given an explanation as to why).

Traffic Management Advisors and representatives from the local authority's highways department will visit the scene to assess whether the road environment contributed to the collision or whether any modifications are needed to reduce risk. With a road death, any such findings can help to result in a coroner writing a Prevention of Future Deaths Report (PFD).

Serious Injury Collision Process



66 CFG

"As a firm working closely with people who have lost loved ones or sustained life-changing injuries in road collisions, we see the profound impact that delays in the justice system have on families. Investigations, inquests, and trials are crucial for accountability, yet court backlogs often mean families wait many years for answers. This prolonged uncertainty not only postpones justice but also delays access to the rehabilitation, financial assistance, and specialist support they urgently need. The strain of reliving traumatic events through drawn-out proceedings compounds their grief and hinders recovery. Timely justice must be understood not simply as a matter of legal efficiency, but as a vital step in enabling families to rebuild their lives. We therefore urge policymakers to prioritise reducing court delays and improving communication throughout the process, so that those most deeply affected by road collisions receive the support and certainty they deserve."

Charges

In some cases the police may decide there is not enough evidence to press charges without the need for them to pass the file to the CPS for consideration. The police have to fulfil the full code test (evidential and public interest). In cases where a suspect was identified and interviewed under caution the bereaved family or injured victim can ask for a review of the decision under the Victims' Right to Review (VRR). Each police force has its own VRR procedure.

In other cases, the police may pass the file to the CPS, who will then apply both the evidential and public interest test in deciding whether to charge. If they decide not to charge, the CPS should offer a meeting to explain their decision. Again, a review of this decision can be requested, but under the CPS's VRR scheme.

Where charges are pressed, with a road death, the CPS enhanced service for bereaved families begins, and the family should be offered a series of meetings. Sometimes, families are not made fully aware of this as the CPS rely on the FLO to communicate this offer.

Causing death by dangerous driving is an indictable only charge (must be heard in Crown Court). In 2024, 202 individuals were sentenced, 195 received a custodial sentence and the average custodial sentence length (ACSL) was just over 8 years.

Causing death by careless or inconsiderate driving is triable either-way (could be heard in Magistrates' or Crown Court). In 2024, 156 individuals were sentenced, 39 received a custodial sentence and the ACSL was nearly 18 months.

Causing serious injury by dangerous driving is triable either-way. In 2024, 380 individuals were sentenced, 227 received a custodial sentence and the ACSL was just over 2.5 years. Causing serious injury by careless or inconsiderate driving is triable either-way. In 2024, 890 were sentenced, 34 received a custodial sentence and the ACSL was just over 8 months.

Please note: Further causing death and serious injury by driving charges are available, above we have only included the most common. In some collisions the 'causing death by' or 'causing serious injury by' element may not be proven, and so other charges only may be brought such as Careless Driving or Fail to Stop.* This can be especially distressing as it is not guaranteed that the fact a death or serious injury has occurred will even be mentioned in court. Summary only charges (which can only be heard in Magistrates' Court) need to be laid within 6 months of the collision.

Charge	Sentenced (2024)	Custodial Sentence (2024)	ACSL - Months (2024)	Disqualified from Driving (2024)	Lifetime Driving Disqualification (2024)	Driving Disqualification of Over 10 Years (2024)
Causing death by dangerous driving	202	195	96.2	200	2	85
Causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs	23	19	66.3	23	0	3
Causing death by careless or inconsiderate driving	156	39	17.7	156	0	1
Causing serious injury by dangerous driving	380	227	30.3	378	0	11
Causing serious injury by careless or inconsiderate driving	890	34	8.3	871	0	1

Source: MoJ Criminal Justice Statistics: Outcomes by offence data tool

Downgrading

Where a charge of Causing death by dangerous driving or a charge of Causing serious injury by dangerous driving is pressed, there will be a risk of downgrading to Causing death by careless driving or Causing serious injury by careless driving. The CPS can accept a plea to the lesser charge or a jury can decide the defendant is guilty of the lesser charge. Dangerous driving requires the driving to have fallen 'far below' the standard of a careful and competent driver, whereas Careless driving requires the driving to have fallen 'below' the standard of a careful and competent driver (a difference of only one word).

Magistrates' Court hearings

All proceedings start in the Magistrates' Court, even where the charge is indictable only (so must go to Crown Court). Where there is a guilty plea or a defendant has been found guilty for a summary or either-way offence sentencing can be done immediately, or it can be adjourned for a separate hearing. With an either-way offence, the court can decide that the sentencing should go to Crown Court, if the court is of the opinion that they do not have sufficient sentencing powers (a custodial sentence of 12 months is the current maximum which can be given out in a Magistrates' Court). A reduction is given for a guilty plea, starting at one-third reduction for a guilty plea at the earliest opportunity. There can be different interpretations regarding what classes as the earliest opportunity. The defendant can appeal if the sentence is thought to be too harsh, but the bereaved family or injured victim cannot appeal if the sentence is thought to be too lenient.

Crown Court hearings

Generally, Crown Court hearings take longer than Magistrates' Court hearings. Trials tend to last around a week, or if there is a guilty plea, sentencing hearings may take a couple of hours. The defendant can appeal if the sentence is thought to be too harsh. Only sentences for Causing death by dangerous driving, Causing death by careless driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or Causing death by driving whilst disqualified can be appealed under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) Scheme.

Victim Personal Statements (VPS)

This tends to be the only chance for bereaved family members (or where there may be no family, close friends) or injured victims to have their voices heard (the exception being if there is a trial and a bereaved family member or injured victim is cross-examined as a witness). It allows them to explain the impact that the crash has had on them. It is advisable families and victims start thinking about VPS once charges are pressed, they should be submitted via the police before sentencing. The VPS will be made available to the defence. Those that wish to are usually able to read their statement aloud in court. However, the court may decide there are reasons why they cannot do this. VPSs should not be used to suggest particular sentences, but judges do take them into account as part of assessing the harm caused by the offending.

Restorative justice

This allows victims to meet with offenders and gives them the opportunity to ask questions, find out if genuine remorse is shown or receive an apology. However, both the victim and the offender have to consent in order for a meeting to take place.

Providing feedback

Sometimes, bereaved families or injured victims may want to provide feedback to the police, CPS or another organisation. Where they feel they have been let down, they can do this via a formal complaint. Where they feel they have been treated well, they can write a letter of commendation. However, too many who have been through the process are left with mixed feelings and valuable learning for the next family can be missed. RoadPeace facilitates listening days, and believes the police and CPS should actively seek feedback.

The Victims' Code

Under the Victims' Code bereaved family members and injured victims have rights including to be able to understand and be understood, to be referred to services that support victims and to be provided with information about the investigation and prosecution.

Mandy Gayle (Wolverhampton North East)

I had been out for a walk and seen the aftermath of a collision. A man had been covered with blankets. When we realised dad was missing I returned to the scene, frantically knocking on the doors of nearby houses, trying to find out what the person killed had looked like. It took the police 22 hours to inform us that it was dad that had been killed. My mum and dad lived in the same place, but had separate apartments. The police had taken dad's keys and went into his flat – a neighbour had explained to them that my mum lived on the second floor. Instead of going up to see her, the police left. I still can't really understand why. I felt like my brain just couldn't stop, I had so many questions. I would send so many emails to my FLO – I needed help to understand what was going on, but she wasn't very empathetic.

What I would like MPs to know

I always use the term my dad was 'killed' because that is the reality. It is not an accident, it was a crash. With other crimes, it is not called an accident, so why do people say this about what happened to my dad? The person that killed dad was 19, he will complete his custodial sentence and disqualification and likely be back on the road by the time he is 27. I think he should never be allowed to drive again.



Pictured: Mandy Gayle and her dad, Hopton

Brooke Trotter (Manchester Withington)

In May 2007 I was hit by a speeding driver who mounted the pavement and left the scene. I sustained a severe traumatic brain injury and my life completely changed that day. Even now, I live with fatigue and memory problems that limit my ability to work full time. I always need to rest in the middle of the day just to get through. The effects have not only been felt by me, but by my family and friends whose lives have also been hugely impacted. Without their support I don't know where I'd be. I don't want anyone else to suffer the same fate, which is why road safety matters so much to me. Despite the challenges, I hold onto hope — that with greater awareness, support, and safer roads, others can be spared this experience.



What I would like MPs to know

That behind every serious injury is a lifetime of challenges — medical, emotional, practical, financial, and social. Even years later, the impact does not go away, and it is felt by whole families, not just individuals. Support and understanding from government are crucial to help people rebuild their lives and live with dignity. But equally important is investment in road safety, so that fewer families ever have to endure this kind of devastation.

Pictured: Brooke Trotter

Dave Evans
(Kingswinford and
South Staffordshire)

We received the news of our son's (Simon) death on a pub car park, in front of a number of people not related to us. However, the next morning the FLO arrived and was amazing. He explained to us all of the processes and what we would have to do. He explained what would happen if the driver survived, and what would happen if he didn't. He talked to us about handling the publicity around the crash, and answered all our questions. Our FLO always replied as soon as possible, was quick and clear. He was also supportive to our oldest son, who was grieving his brother.



What I would like MPs to know

My life has changed forever, it will never be the same. Simon was 18 and living at home, he had no partner and no dependants. This meant we did not qualify for any bereavement damages. To pursue a civil claim, we would have had to prove how we were affected by Simon's death – this seems so antiquated. Because the responsible driver died, the case did not go to criminal court, at inquest, no blame can be apportioned. I feel like Simon was just one statistic, on a list of ever-growing names. Without organisations like RoadPeace, families like ours would fall through the cracks.

Pictured: Dave Evans and
his son, Simon

Ash Chukarov
(Hereford and South
Herefordshire)

I was involved in a road traffic collision through no fault of my own. The toll on my physical and mental health has been overwhelming and profound and the suffering my family has endured is immense. My son still cannot speak about the collision, even three years on. Rather than receiving the care and support I needed I was left to pursue hospital referrals and navigate the justice system myself. This compounded my trauma, leaving me feeling victimised, guilty, and abandoned. It left me questioning whether surviving was truly a blessing.



What I would like MPs to know

I don't have easy days anymore...from the moment the defendant's car collided with my body I have fought for my life, my healthcare and my rights. I lost myself and watched my family suffer. I am finding strength to see beauty in life and to be a voice for change, but still need help and support.

Pictured: Ash Chukarov

*Please see our key campaigns and issues section.

**We are aware of some forces whereby a FLO is only deployed in the case of non-culpable fatal collisions, we believe this to be unusual.

How Can RoadPeace Help?

About RoadPeace

RoadPeace is the national charity for road crash victims, we provide support services and information to those bereaved through or seriously injured in road crashes. We call for crash victims to receive justice and compassion, and we carry out campaigning work to improve the post-crash response and reduce road danger. We have an essential role in championing the rights of road crash victims. We were founded in 1992, by Brigitte Chaudhry MBE, a bereaved mother whose son was killed by a red-light offender. The offender was merely charged with the minor traffic offence of Careless driving and fined £250.

Why does support matter?

Being bereaved through or seriously injured in a road crash is sudden, unexpected, traumatic and violent. Those who have been affected in this way tell us they experience a range of emotions, which they often feel people around them cannot begin to imagine. Then, they may have to go through the criminal or civil justice systems, or an inquest hearing. Being able to fully understand what is happening, while coping with grief or injuries is immensely difficult. RoadPeace's community is often described as 'the family people never wanted but are glad to have'. We can offer support and information to those over the age of 18 and all of our services are free and accessed via our helpline.



Roger and Jean Bates (Wolverhampton South East)



"The shockwaves from a road traffic crash are like ripples on a pond. They engulf everyone they touch - families, friends, neighbours and communities. They leave many traumatised and with nowhere to go... until they reach RoadPeace, who can give them friendship and solace in an upside-down world."

Pictured: Jean and Roger Bates
Pictured: Hannah Dudding



Hannah Dudding (Cardiff North)



"When I lost my sister, Alice, I found myself desperate for support from people who truly understood what I was going through. My first call to the RoadPeace helpline was met with empathy and friendliness, and I then had a call with Lucy who runs the Siblings Group. I cannot put into words how vital the support from the siblings has been in helping me get through these first couple of years."

Helpline

Open Monday - Friday, 10am-4pm (excluding Bank Holidays). Outside of these hours, a voicemail service operates. Individuals can choose to call (0800 160 1069), email (helpline@roadpeace.org) or submit an online form through our website (www.roadpeace.org). On contacting us, they will speak with our Support Services Coordinator who will treat them with sensitivity and compassion.

Befriender Service

Our befrienders are volunteers who have experienced a road traffic bereavement or serious injury and have reached a point where they are able to help others. Befrienders have received training from us in order to be able to provide emotional support via telephone or email.



**Yvonne Bruce
(Sevenoaks)**



"Though our journey can feel lonely and at times frightening, speaking to someone who truly understood gave me strength and focus. Becoming a befriender has been my way of returning the support I received into a source of comfort for others walking the same path."

Resilience Building Programme

Our trauma support programme has been created for those bereaved. Working in small groups, over 8 online sessions, the programme explores the effects grief has on both mind and body, and suggests tools to cope with emotions, lack of sleep and panic attacks. Due to the nature of the course, we advise that individuals are at least 6 months into their bereavement, and complete a questionnaire to ensure their suitability.



**Paige Dunn
(Cardiff East)**



"With each week, the Resilience Building Programme helped me to feel less alone and ready to challenge myself."

National Groups

We currently offer national online groups for bereaved parents (where their child of any age has had their life taken), bereaved siblings and seriously injured victims. The Parents Group meets every other month and is currently facilitated by a counsellor. The Siblings Group meets every month, and is coordinated by Lucy Harrison, whose brother, Peter, was killed in 2014. The Injured Group meets every month and is co-coordinated by two women who were seriously injured, Karen McRitchie and Kate Theedom.



**Catherine Anderson
(Godalming & Ash)**

"The parents consistently show support for each other, sharing their strength and pain. There is an unspoken, unconditional feeling about the group. No member would want to be there - but ultimately, they are glad they can connect with other grieving parents. It is heartbreakingly beautiful to see."



**Janice Brown
(Stretford & Urmston)**



"When my brother was killed, I lost my past, my present and my future. Five years on, the RoadPeace Siblings Group has become a safe haven for me, a place where I can untangle my emotions as I work to unbury myself from the crumbled foundations of my life, and learn to navigate this strange 'new normal'."

Pictured: Yvonne Bruce
Pictured: Paige Dunn with her grandmother, Megan
Pictured: Janice Brown with her brother, Ronald

Information guides, casework and campaigning

We offer a number of written guides which detail topics such as the collision investigation process, making a Victim Personal Statement, sentencing, and inquests. We can assist where the bereaved or injured may need an advocate, and support them if they encounter difficulties with the various agencies they will have contact with. We always want to hear from people who feel that learning should be taken from their experience – the justice system is ever-evolving, and the response to crash victims needs improvement. We run a number of campaigns which are shaped by the experiences of those we support.



Annelies & David Nickless (St Austell & Newquay)

"Following investigations by ourselves into what happened to our son, we remain highly sceptical of the conclusions arrived at by the authorities. We were supported by RoadPeace to access an independent opinion. We felt vindicated after as this confirmed our conclusion that Joseph had been walking on the verge or near the white line when he was struck by the driver doing (at least) 70mph. This was in stark contrast to the narrative that had alleged Joseph was staggering from side to side along the middle of the carriageway."



Legal Panel

The law firms we work with must sign up to set of quality standards. Our Legal Panel can provide vital expertise regarding the civil justice process, and sometimes provide pro-bono support at inquests.



Brian Barr

"Brian Barr Solicitors specialise in representing clients with chronic pain and serious and catastrophic injuries following a road traffic collision. We are a dedicated team who are passionate about helping clients in a caring, understanding and professional manner. As experts in this area we understand how life-changing a road traffic incident can be on our client's physical and mental health, their daily life, and also their relationships with family, which is why we work tirelessly to ensure our clients receive the compensation they deserve."



CFG

"At CFG, we know that families affected by a fatal or catastrophic injury need more than legal advice. They need specialist support delivered with compassion as well as expertise. Our role is to help families secure compensation, care, and financial support, while recognising the human impact of what they are going through. That is why our partnership with RoadPeace is so important. Alongside our legal guidance, RoadPeace provides vital emotional support, advocacy, and a community of understanding. By working together, we ensure families are supported not only through the compensation process but also in rebuilding their lives. This approach ensures people are not left to navigate the aftermath of a road collision alone, but are supported with expertise, compassion, and dignity."



Pictured: Joseph Nickless
Pictured: RoadPeace group members
working on a Garden of Remembrance

August - National Road Victim Month

The month of August is designated National Road Victim Month because of the deaths of Bridget Driscoll (the first pedestrian killed in a motor vehicle collision in Great Britain) in August 1896, and Princess Diana in August 1997. Our RoadPeace Family gather in remembrance and solidarity for a special service which involves stories of loss and hope, poetry and music. The service is always held at the National Memorial Arboretum on the second Saturday of August.

World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims

The third Sunday of each November is World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims (WDR), for many this is the most important day in the RoadPeace calendar. Various activities and Services of Remembrance take place across the country, the details of which can be found on our website.

Remember Me Plaques

We offer simple 'Remember Me' memorial plaques, designed to highlight the terrible toll of road death and injury. Where families wish to place a plaque at the roadside, they may need to seek permission from the relevant highways authority.

Pictured: RoadPeace group members gather after an annual walk
Pictured: Caroline and Dan Hunter
Pictured: Mark and Helen Saltern

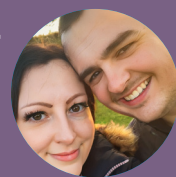


Anthology

In the aftermath of a bereavement through a road crash families can sometimes feel overwhelmed with practical information, while few people talk about the effect on emotions. The anthology (a collection of stories, poetry, artwork and photos) is designed to offer comfort and help those grieving feel less isolated.



Caroline & Dan Hunter (North Cotswolds)



"Without legal recognition our son's story often goes unheard, speaking at remembrance allowed us to find our voices, take control of our grief and ensure he will never be forgotten."

RysHaven

Mark and Helen Saltern's son, Ryan, was killed in a hit-and-run in 2019. The family were forced to move as they lived nearby Ryan's killer, who was only charged with Fail to stop. When they settled into their new home, they decided to convert the garage into free respite accommodation for those bereaved through road crashes. RoadPeace are proud to work closely with the amazing and inspirational Saltern family.

RysHaven is a self-catering studio apartment, close to local beaches, coastal paths and moorland. Ideally suited for 2 family members, but can accommodate 3 with a sofa bed. Email: ryshaven@btinternet.com



Helen & Mark Saltern (North Cornwall)



"Living with the heartache and trauma of the tragic, sudden loss of our son, Ryan, we wanted to create a positive in his memory, to reflect the kind, caring person he was. Moving house enabled us to do this. It took us 14 months to renovate and with the kind donations and support from local companies, we have created a safe space to escape, grieve and reflect."

"I don't know what to say"
by Sam Pointon

"I don't know what to say"

That's okay.
There's nothing you can say.
And sometimes saying nothing
is better than saying something.

It's better than
"they're in a better place".
Which is not said with malice.
But, their place was here.
Alive.

Saying nothing is better than
"heaven has gained an angel".
I don't care what heaven has gained.
None of us were ready.

The problem with such platitudes,
while rarely, if ever, said unkindly,
is that they come from a place of self-soothing.

You can say "forever young"
and get that little warm feeling
because you've said something.
Which has to be better than nothing.
Right?

So to you heaven may have gained an angel.
And I'm glad you can comfort yourself.
But don't for a moment think that,
without knowing me,
saying that would ever be a comfort.

It's okay to not know what to say.
Because there's nothing to be said.
I don't know what to say.
So how would you ever know?

So don't say.
Just be.
This isn't about you.
Nor is it, really,
about me.

This is about loss.
About pain.
About who we have lost
And the life they should have had.

Just sit. Listen.
It's okay to not know what to say.

*Sam Pointon (North West Essex) is a member of our Siblings Group,
and wrote this poem after her sister, Amy, was killed by a disqualified,
dangerous driver.*

Regional RoadPeace Groups

RoadPeace offer a number of regional groups, led by our extraordinary and dedicated volunteers. The groups work to ease the isolation of those bereaved or injured, reassure them that their feelings are normal and acceptable, and offer a safe space of comfort and support.



Meet Our Facilitators & Coordinators



**Dee Beesley
(Hinckley & Bosworth)
Coordinator, East
Midlands**

Dee's son, Reece, died in a road crash in 2019. After gaining support through the West Midlands Group, Dee became determined to take the East Midlands Group forward, and is championing the needs of crash victims across this region.

"I am so proud to be part of the East Midlands Group helping to support each other, but being the group coordinator is a privilege and an honour."



**Lucy Harrison
(Redditch)
Coordinator, West
Mercia & West Midlands**

Lucy's brother, Peter, was killed by a speeding driver. Lucy credits the West Midlands Group as saving her life, and is immensely proud of all the group members. In 2023, the group achieved the Kings' Award for Voluntary Service.

"The group truly are a family – we laugh together, we cry together, and we keep fighting for change together. Every single member works harder than I can put into words. True justice for our group would be the achievement of Vision Zero and an end to the needless carnage on our roads."



**Chris Taylor
(Northampton South)
Facilitator, East
Midlands**

Chris' daughter, Beccy, was killed in a road crash, aged 18. Chris is a passionate campaigner for the implementation of licensing changes to save the lives of young drivers, and the need for coroners to issue more Prevention of Future Death (PFD) reports.

"My wife, Nicole, and I, campaign to ensure those affected by road harm receive both the emotional support and justice they deserve, and action is taken until this support is no longer needed and Vision Zero is delivered."



**Lesley Bates
(Walsall & Bloxwich)
Facilitator, West
Midlands**

Lesley's husband, Tony, was killed by a driver who veered onto the wrong side of a dual carriageway. After receiving support from the group, Lesley became committed to helping others, and facilitates group meetings with profound skill and understanding.

"When lives are shattered and the pain experienced is more than can be imagined, RoadPeace support helps to slowly and gradually put us back together."

**Amanda Bean
(Dulwich & West
Norwood)
Co-Facilitator, London**

Amanda's son, Conrad, was killed in a bus crash in 2011. Amanda is working to help others who have suffered this unspeakable loss by providing compassion and a listening ear to crash victims from London.

"Our RoadPeace group gave me so much support when my son died, now I am there to provide support for others who have experienced the same pain and trauma."



**Netty Neal
(Walhamstow)
Co-Facilitator, London**

Netty's son, Connor, was a motorcyclist, killed in 2024. Netty has thrown herself into championing RoadPeace and ensuring that nobody feels isolated in their grief.

"The group is a peer support space where everyone is heard and can share with and learn from others who have had a similar experience. None of us are the same and everyone's path through grief is different and that is ok."



**Kate Uzzell
(North Somerset)
Coordinator, South
West (including Devon
and Cornwall)**

Kate's husband, Martyn, was a cyclist, killed in a collision in 2011. Kate is determined to raise awareness of RoadPeace and ensure all those that need it access support.

"In our groups it's so supportive, we share our stories and coping strategies, it's about not feeling alone and helping each other with the legal processes. I'm passionate about improving road safety for vulnerable road users, I work closely with local motorcycle groups and attend ride-outs and bike nights."

**Meryln Kendall
(Sefton Central)
Facilitator, North West**

Merlyn's husband died 3 days after a road crash, he was a pedestrian. Merlyn is a strong voice for crash victims in the North West and represents RoadPeace at regional events including at Liverpool Central Library, the Southport Flower Show and FLO conferences.

"The death of my husband left my teenage daughter and I devastated. I joined RoadPeace to be with like-minded people. I now support victims of road crashes in the North West and carry out outreach. In 2019, the group began linking with the Liverpool Football Foundation to educate teenagers on road danger. I also link with a social prescriber and hold coffee-morning fundraisers."



**Calvin Buckley
(Oldham West,
Chadderton & Royton)
Coordinator, Greater
Manchester**

Calvin's partner, Frankie, and their unborn daughter, Neeve, were killed by a dangerous driver in 2023. Calvin was shocked at the response of the justice system and has called for greater consistency and transparency around sentencing. Calvin will launch this group next year.

"I hope to create a safe place where bereaved families, the victims of road death, can come together and support each other through their grief."

Campaigns and Issues

Crash not accident

The call: For the word collision (or crash) to be used, and not accident.

The need: The term ‘accident’ implies that something could not have been helped or was inevitable. This is rarely the case with road traffic collisions and where culpability is proven victims and their families can find the term highly offensive. Referring to such collisions as accidents totally fails to acknowledge that a criminal act has taken place, and the catastrophic impact such collisions have. Further, in cases where a driver is not found culpable, the term ‘accident’ implies that there are no lessons to be learned; yet there may still be a need to improve road layout, reduce speed limits or issue a Prevention of Future Deaths (PFD) Report.

The result: Justice would be better served – with sensitive and appropriate terminology used, which is no longer underpinning a culture that accepts road traffic collisions as inevitable.

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**Lee Hubbard
(The Wrekin)**

*“Using the right words for road crash victims is critical as we grasp onto the smallest things at our time of tragedy and **a single word makes every difference**. My son did not **die in an accident**, he was **killed in a crash**. Killed by a dangerous, speeding, drunk-driver.”*



Pictured: Will Hubbard

Remain and Report

The call: The introduction of two new charges to be considered (failing to remain at the scene of a fatal collision and failing to remain at the scene of a serious injury collision), and a reduction in the maximum time allowed to report a road traffic collision from 24 hours to 2 hours.

The need: The current charge of Fail to stop applies to all collision severities where a driver has fled the scene. At present, a driver leaving the scene of a minor damage-only collision (for example a broken wing mirror) faces the same charge as a driver leaving the scene of a crash where they know someone has been seriously or fatally injured. We agree that failing to remain at the scene after hitting another vehicle, or infrastructure such as post box or bus stop, is not ethical or legal and should result in a penalty. However, knowingly leaving someone who could die is completely different and involves a callous disregard for the lives of others.

Further, Fail to stop is a summary offence, heard in Magistrates’ Court and not viewed as very serious. Summary charges must be laid within six months of a crash. Collision investigation is complex, and police may not be able to complete this in this time. Summary offences will be considered low priority, and for the police, justifying resources for the investigation can be difficult.

Where there is no evidence that the standard of driving caused the collision, only that a driver fled the scene, Fail to stop could be the only charge laid.

In this case there is no guarantee that the fatality or serious injury will even be mentioned in court. Where a driver is suspected of causing the crash, they will be prosecuted accordingly, for example for Causing death by dangerous driving. The fact the driver left the scene will become an aggravating factor, rather than a standalone charge. Yet, leaving the scene of a collision is a separate and conscious act, increasing the level of criminality, and should be prosecuted as such.

The current maximum time allowed to report a road traffic collision was set in the 1988 Road Traffic Act (Section 10). This states that drivers should report a collision as soon as practicable, but within a maximum of 24 hours. Over three decades later, we are now in a different era; the advancement of the internet and widespread use of mobile phones mean it is impossible to imagine a situation whereby 24 hours could be deemed a reasonable timeframe. However, the problem is far more serious than legislation that has simply failed to keep up with the times. Rather, this legislation is now providing an alarming incentive for impaired drivers to leave the scene of a fatal or serious collision.

The 24-hour time limit allows drink drivers to sober up, and for others, including those unlicensed or uninsured, to take legal advice, and then hand themselves in. In the case of drink/drug drivers, they may leave the scene and then claim they took alcohol/drugs after the collision, as a response to the shock. These drivers may claim they were unaware they had hit another vehicle or a person, and only realised after hearing news reports that someone had been killed or injured.

The police might suspect the driver was impaired, but proving this becomes progressively harder with delay. These drivers may only be able to be convicted of Fail to stop, and will be highly unlikely to receive a custodial sentence. Whereas, had they remained at the scene, they could have been drink and drug tested immediately – and would have been charged with a more serious offence.

The result: Justice would be better served – with leaving the scene of a fatal or serious collision treated with the gravity it deserves and a loophole allowing impaired drivers to evade a more serious punishment would be greatly reduced.

RoadPeace wishes to acknowledge Action Vision Zero and Amy Aeron-Thomas in helping us to develop this campaign.



**Steve Booth
(Leicester West)**



"I was at a bus stop with my wife, Annette; she was a few feet away from me. Suddenly, a speeding, impaired driver came tearing down the road, causing one collision, then reversing at speed and fatally hitting Annette. The driver then fled. While in our case the driver was thankfully found and prosecuted for Causing death by dangerous driving, the act of driving away simply was not viewed with the cowardice and contempt it deserved."

Pictured: Steve Booth with his wife, Annette

Bereavement Damages

The call: For a review of and reform to bereavement damages in England and Wales.

The need: Bereavement damages are a type of compensation under the Fatal Accidents Act 1976. These damages are intended to compensate the bereaved loved ones and provide them with financial support. In England and Wales, these damages are a fixed, statutory amount of £15,120. While no price can be put on a life, this is an insultingly low amount which would provide minimal assistance in today's world.

Not only is the amount shockingly low, but those that qualify for these damages is restricted to the surviving spouse or civil partner, a co-habiting partner (of over 2 years), parents (where the person killed was "legitimate", unmarried and under 18), the mother (where the person killed was "illegitimate, unmarried and under 18). The amount of £15,120 will be split between all those who qualify, they do not receive this amount each.

The terms "legitimate" and "illegitimate" are outdated and offensive, causing deep distress to parents who are already going through the worst imaginable. While the restrictions in place completely fail to recognise the profound effect the death will have had on parents (whose children are over 18), step-parents, a partner who was not co-habiting, siblings, grandparents and extended family. In a diverse society, where family make-up can look very different, these restrictions are deeply unfair.

The result: Bereavement damages which are fit for today's society and which acknowledge that bereavement has far-reaching consequences for all loved ones.

BB Brian Barr

"As specialist lawyers dealing uniquely with serious & catastrophic injury, CRPS, fibromyalgia, chronic pain, and brain injury litigation, clients often switch solicitors and come to Brian Barr. We have the expertise to tackle complex cases that other firms shy away from. Whether it is due to a lack of understanding or expertise, or your expected settlement is unlikely to cover your long-term care costs and lifestyle changes, it is important to know that switching is not only possible, it is straightforward to transfer your claim to the experts at Brian Barr Solicitors."

BB CFG

"At CFG we see all too often how the law fails to properly recognise the depth of families' loss. Parents, siblings and partners are left feeling excluded or awarded a sum that feels tokenistic and unjust. Families deserve compassion and acknowledgement, not outdated restrictions that add to their grief. While no sum can ever reflect the value of a life, bereavement damages should at least provide fair recognition and meaningful support. That is why we continue to call for reform and have petitioned for change, so the law reflects today's families and offers dignity, fairness and justice to those left behind."

Interim licence suspension and lifetime disqualifications

The call: Those arrested on suspicion of any driving offence with a mandatory disqualification should have their licences automatically suspended, and those convicted of Causing death by dangerous driving should receive a lifetime disqualification.

The need: At present, those arrested on suspicion of a driving offence, even a very serious offence such as Causing death by dangerous driving, are usually allowed to continue driving until they are convicted. Such drivers can be back on our roads the day after the collision, despite clear evidence of law-breaking. This often comes as a shock to grieving families, injured victims and wider society – who all wrongly assume such drivers would not be allowed to continue driving. Interim driving bans are possible, but rarely used. These tend only to be imposed on repeat offenders, or once a defendant has pleaded guilty. The investigation of road traffic collisions is complex, and the criminal justice system is slow – it is very often 18 months or more, before a first court hearing. Not only is this incredibly traumatic for those bereaved, adjusting to living with serious injuries, or caring for someone with serious injuries – it is a risk to the safety of others.

We ask that those arrested on suspicion of committing any driving offence which carries a mandatory disqualification have their licences suspended immediately.

‘Innocent until proven guilty’ is a vital human rights principle, which we fully support. Sadly, it is also an argument often deployed against immediate driving licence suspensions. Yet, driving is not a legal right, but a licensed activity, subject to conditions.

In 2024, only 2 individuals (of 202 convicted for Causing death by dangerous driving) were given a lifetime disqualification, this is less than 1%.* Moreover, only 85 of these 202 drivers received a disqualification of over 10 years (just 42%). Given the limited capacity in prisons and the proposed changes to criminal sentencing being legislated for in the government’s Sentencing Bill, the need for lengthier and lifetime driving disqualifications seems more important than ever to ensure that those who cause death by dangerous driving are sufficiently penalised for the harm they cause.

The result: Drivers who kill or seriously injure would be taken off our roads more quickly and for longer – providing better protection to society and a greater sense of justice for victims.



Sonia Gandham
(Kingswinford & South
Staffordshire)



“To see the person responsible for my brother’s death driving days after the collision was nothing short of traumatising. Those responsible for taking lives on the road should be deprived of the privilege of driving, just as grieving families are deprived of the presence of their loved ones.”

Source: MoJ Criminal Justice Statistics:
Outcomes by offence data tool

Pictured: Arjun Gandham

Progressive licencing

The call: For the introduction of a progressive licensing system to protect young and newly qualified drivers.

The need: In 2024, young car drivers aged 17 to 24 remained significantly overrepresented in road collisions in Great Britain. Approximately 20% of all killed or seriously injured (KSI) casualties from collisions involving cars were in collisions which involved a young car driver. Young male drivers in this age group were four times more likely to be killed or seriously injured compared with all drivers aged 25 and over. Young drivers made up 15% of all car driver fatalities and 18% of serious injuries.*

Evidence shows that the presence of peer-aged passengers significantly increases the risk of fatal collisions for newly qualified drivers, underlining the role of peer influence. Young drivers are more likely to risk-take, but lack experience in terms of judgement and hazard perception.

Collisions are also more frequent during evening and night-time hours, indicating specific time interventions could be effective.

These statistics underscore the urgent need for Progressive Licensing, a structured and phased approach to driver education.

Key components could include:

- Extended learning periods: allowing young drivers to gain experience in lower-risk conditions before obtaining full driving privileges
- Passenger restrictions: limiting the number of peer-aged passengers young drivers can carry for a set time limit after gaining their licence
- Night-time driving limitations: restricting driving during high-risk hours
- Reducing the drink-drive limit
- Positive incentives: rewarding safe driving behaviours to encourage responsible progression

The result: An expected significant reduction in the number of young drivers killed and seriously injured.



**Leanne Vaughan
(Wyre Forest)**



"Our current driving laws failed to protect my beloved 17-year-old daughter, who was killed as a passenger in her boyfriend's car. He was newly-qualified and driving dangerously. Lily-May was not breaking any law by being a passenger. I want to work with the Government to ensure that its forthcoming Road Safety Strategy reflects the evidence and saves lives. I truly believe that if there had been a law preventing newly-qualified drivers from carrying young passengers for six months, Lily-May would still be alive. Until that awful day, I did not realise that one of the greatest risks to teenage girls is simply being a passenger in a young male driver's car."

*Source: DfT Reported road casualties in Great Britain: young driver factsheet, 2024

Pictured: Lily-May Vaughan

Safe Sight: A Campaign by the Cunningham Family

Marie Cunningham was a devoted mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. On 30th November 2021, Marie was assisting her friend to cross the road. Both women were then struck by a car driven by Glyn Jones – they received catastrophic injuries and died in hospital the same day.

Jones was convicted of Causing death by dangerous driving; he had been told by medical professionals on 9 occasions that his vision was not of the standard required to drive. He should have self-reported this to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and given up his licence – he chose not to.

HM Senior Coroner for Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen, Dr James Adeley, issued a Section 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths (PFD). Dr Adeley refers to a 'defective self-reporting system' and raises concerns that the UK has a lax licensing system. Because of this, the Cunningham family have developed the 'Sight Safe' campaign and are calling for:

- Learner drivers to present a proof of eyesight certificate from an ophthalmologist before taking their practical driving test
- Drivers to have an eye test every 10 years or when renewal of a photocard licence is due
- Drivers to have a compulsory eye test at the age of 70 and then every 2 years
- The development of a system or process which allows medical professionals to inform the DVLA in real time if a driver's vision is below the standard required for driving



Sue Rimaitis (St Helen's North)

"The inquest gave us some answers as to why mum was killed, however, it has also highlighted the failings of the current self-reporting system used by drivers, health care professionals and the DVLA".



Charlotte's Law: A Campaign by Claire Reynolds

Sharlotte Sky Naglis, aged 6, was hit and killed by a speeding driver in 2021. The responsible driver was in a coma for 11 weeks; his bloods were able to be taken, but couldn't be tested by the police without his consent. This caused even greater heartache to Claire, who was justifiably desperate to know the full circumstances behind her daughter's death. This awful limbo could have continued even longer, had the driver not woken after 11 weeks. Claire is campaigning to remove the legal requirement for consent to test bloods to be given by someone who is a suspect in the case of a fatal road traffic collision.



Claire Reynolds (Stoke-on-Trent North)



"During those 11 weeks it was torture, feeling that I was never going to find out why my daughter's life was taken, or if I was ever going to get justice. It took its toll on me and my family, I was in a dark place already but this just added to the pain. Having our loved ones taken from us is painful enough, we shouldn't have an extra pain added on top. Whilst you are waiting for justice you don't grieve - the grieving process comes after. It was only 11 weeks for me but for another family could be 20 years."

Pictured: Sharlotte Sky Naglis
Pictured: Marie Cunningham

Treating road crime as real crime

All too often, road death and serious injury are viewed by society as accidental, or an inevitable consequence of motorisation. This completely fails to acknowledge the reality of the sudden, violent and needless death of a loved one, or the destruction of quality of life for someone seriously injured. This also has ramifications for the response to fatal and serious road crashes – with a fraction of the resources put into investigation and prosecution, and a societal tolerance of an issue which should be viewed as unacceptable.



Amanda Cooper (South Holland and The Deepings)



"My extraordinary, deeply loved and completely blameless 20 year old daughter had her life cut short by a disqualified dangerous driver. The probation service failed catastrophically to supervise him properly and then with breathtaking insensitivity referred to her as an 'incident'."

Pictured: Amanda Cooper with a photo of her daughter, Amy

Varying information and investigation quality

During the investigation stage, the quality and frequency of information a bereaved family or injured victim will receive can vary greatly. The FLO or Investigating Officer should provide regular updates and give guidance on timelines, they should also respond to questions within a reasonable timeframe. Where they cannot answer questions, they should explain why.

Some of those we support raise concerns that drivers have not been tested for impairment, witnesses have not been spoken to, or CCTV has not been checked.



Denice Bennell (Worcester)



"Our FLO was a constant during a very difficult time. He said from day one that he would always strive to keep us informed of any updates as and when he had them, even calling to check in and advise that there had been nothing to report. He was of great support to me during the difficult VRR process, and when attending the painful trial and sentencing."

Pictured: Nick Bennell
Pictured: Elaine Gordon with her sister, Gina

Second Post-Mortems

In some instances, a defence team may request a second post-mortem following a fatal collision. Bereaved families are sometimes wrongly told that this is a legal right, it is not. While second post-mortems are considered families cannot move their loved one to a Chapel of Rest or organise a funeral, causing additional unnecessary distress. Elaine Gordon and Lucy Harrison campaigned on and researched this issue in detail, resulting in the Chief Coroner issuing an updated guidance on post-mortems (guidance no.32). In part 5 of this guidance it states: "second PM examinations in road traffic collision deaths should in practice very seldom be authorised by a coroner."



Elaine Gordon (Birmingham Northfield)



"My sister, Gina, was killed by a hit-and-run driver, who was later found and arrested by the police. This was so traumatic, but we understood that she would have a post-mortem. We then found out that she was to have a second post-mortem. I cannot put into words how horrific this felt, my sister's body had already been through so much, yet she was being subjected to another unnecessary post-mortem. This added to our trauma and grief. This meant weeks went by before we could lay her body to rest."

Sentencing - managing expectations

While the maximum custodial sentence available for Causing death by dangerous driving is life, the reality is the average custodial sentence length for this charge in 2024 was 96.2 months, or just over 8 years (please see table on page 14). There can be variation and disparity in sentencing and crash victims are often left bitterly disappointed by the criminal justice system, and struggling to understand the outcome. They are often also surprised by early guilty plea discounts, moves to open prison and early release. With the Sentencing Bill set to change the release point from custody for any offender serving a standard determinate sentence to 33% and bring in a presumption against short custodial sentences (of less than 12 months), justice for crash victims will be affected.



Bob Harrison
(Birmingham
Edgbaston)



"We were told the driver who killed my son was highly culpable, there was evidence that he had travelled at extreme speed over a prolonged distance. We left court with a sentence of 3 years and 3 months and had to go to the Court of Appeal to get this increased to 4 years and 6 months. While we as a family never wished to see the offender sentenced to life, seeing him released having served just over 2 years in custody did not feel like justice."

Inquests and Prevention of Future Death Reports (PFD)

There can wrongly be an assumption that where cases go to inquest rather than criminal court, bereaved families have less questions or need less support. This is not the case – these families still need a sense of justice, though this may be justice in a different form. All of the families and victims we work with have a unifying goal, and that is to ensure that learning is taken in order to prevent others from such heartache.

Pictured: Bob Harrison

We are fully in support of the PACTS 'Learning from Tragedy' Report.* This highlights the missed opportunities to make our roads safer due to the fact that only 3% of road fatalities have led to a PFD Report from coroners since 2013. It also highlights the inability to ensure that recommendations made as part of a PFD are carried through. The report also covers the need to learn from other transport sectors and introduce a Road Safety Investigation Branch, as was promised by the then Government in 2022. Criminal investigations focus on who should be to blame for a collision, a Road Safety Investigation Branch could do vital work exploring the causes of collisions and identifying themes and risks, moving us closer to Vision Zero.



Rachael Bown
(Stoke-on-Trent South)

"Discovering that there would be no criminal case following the death of my brother, Robert, was an incredibly difficult decision for my family and I to process. This was amplified by the lack of support given throughout the coronial process by the police. We had absolutely no idea what to expect from an inquest and remain disturbed by how the process unfolded; it felt very much like the victim was on trial under the current process with verdicts sometimes given based on assumption rather than fact. For the police and the coroner, everything is "complete" on my brother's case, however for my family and I, so many questions remain unanswered and getting access to facts, information and the root cause of his death has been a fight throughout."

"I've discovered there are many regional inconsistencies in collision investigation. One that greatly concerned me in the coronial process was the coroner's decision to call a driver to appear at the inquest as an interested person. For us, the coroner did not call the driver and therefore we will never get to hear their version of events or benefit from any form of Restorative Justice."

* <https://www.pacts.org.uk/new-pacts-report-learning-from-road-fatalities-to-save-lives/>

How Can MPs Help?

In an ideal world, the criminal, coronial and civil justice systems would be swift and fair, and the intervention of yourselves as MPs would not be necessary. However, the reality is that until Vision Zero is achieved, you have a vital role to play in assisting the victims of road crashes, fighting for an improved response from those involved in investigation, prosecution and documenting lessons learned, and pushing for legislative change.

Casework and letter writing

It is important to respond with empathy to contact from crash victims and ensure that the names of any victims are referenced correctly. Offering to write to the various authorities (police, CPS, coroner, highways) can help to generate speedier and more satisfactory responses. Crash victims often feel ignored and forgotten, so being willing to meet with them can be critical in changing this.

Responding with sensitivity

We understand that talking with those bereaved or seriously injured may be nerve-wracking and you may worry about saying the wrong thing. We advise that you:

Signposting

Every individual is different – some want to take up support immediately, others feel they do not need it, and others change their mind as time goes on. If you are contacted by a crash victim, please do mention the support available through RoadPeace. If wanted, we can arrange to send some leaflets to your constituency office. Our helpline can be contacted by telephone (0800 160 1069) between the hours of 10am-4pm, Monday to Friday or email (helpline@roadpeace.org).

Preventative rather than reactive measures

Many (not only the bereaved or injured) will campaign for changes to make local roads safer – they are often rebuffed by highways officers and councillors who will advise that there has not been any KSIs (killed or seriously injured) in a particular area. This is the wrong approach, and MPs can help push for cultural change, and for the number of near misses rather than KSIs to be explored.

Avoid	Do:
using the word “accident” – this can make it sound inevitable	use the word “crash” or “collision” instead
ignoring a bereaved family or feeling worried about talking to them about their loved one	ask a bereaved family what their loved one was like, or look at photos. Show interest in the effects on an injured victim and ask about what their life was like before
comparing road death and injury to death or injury in different circumstances	be aware that road death is different to any other death and has its own complexity
telling someone you “know how they feel”	listen to how your constituent feels and don’t presume what they might be going through
referring to criminal justice outcomes or custodial sentences as a cause for celebration or happiness	manage expectations on how quickly you may be able to get responses when sending letters on behalf of a crash victim. Provide honest but sensitive feedback on campaigns

Remembrance

Bereaved families and injured victims need the support of MPs all year around, but National Road Victim Month (NRVM - August) and World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims (WDR) are especially important times. MPs are welcome to attend RoadPeace's annual Service of Remembrance to mark NRVM, this is always held on the second Saturday of August at the

National Memorial Arboretum. WDR is always the third Sunday of November, and details of all activities taking place to mark this can be found on the RoadPeace website. If you are unable to join a service, please consider sharing a message of support and helping to highlight the key issues faced by crash victims.

Suggested Parliamentary Questions

Please do get in touch if you require further suggestions for written PQs or parliamentary debates.

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport:

Consultation

To confirm when the Road Safety Strategy will be published and what the consultation process will look like?

What steps she is taking to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads to zero?

Charges that are fit for purpose (hit-and-run)

Whether she will commit to publishing a consultation on updating the offence of Fail to stop in the Road Traffic Act, and if so, when?

If she will bring forward new legislative proposals to penalise offenders who fail to remain at the scene of a fatal or serious road traffic collision?

What assessment she has made of the potential merits of reducing the 24-hour time period allowed to report a road traffic collision?

Licensing

Whether she will bring forward legislative proposals to suspend driving licences immediately for those arrested on suspicion of driving offences carrying mandatory disqualification?

What steps she is taking to reduce the disproportionate number of young drivers killed in road traffic collisions?

If she will take steps to ensure that lengthier and more lifetime disqualifications are enforced?

Terminology

If she will take steps to ensure that the word 'accident' is replaced by the word 'crash' or 'collision' in any future legislation?

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice:

Bereavement Damage Reform

If he will take steps to increase the amount that can be claimed in bereavement damages in England and Wales?

If he will make an assessment of the potential merits of i.) removing the word 'illegitimate' and ii.) updating the criteria of who can receive bereavement damages in England and Wales as set out in the Fatal Accidents Act 1976?

Coronial Reform

If he will take steps to introduce a national coroner service?

What steps he is taking to ensure that a.) more Prevention of Future Death Reports are produced by coroners and b.) their recommendations are followed?

Examples of MPs Leading the Way

Sarah Coombes, MP for West Bromwich

"I first met Sarah when she was campaigning to become our local MP during the last general election. She took the time to really listen to me – especially to my story of losing my husband to road crime. I met her again when Lucy, our group coordinator, arranged a small meeting for members. I was so touched that Sarah remembered me from her doorstep campaign and genuinely cared about our stories. Sarah hasn't just listened, she's acted; bringing our voices into the room, holding community meetings and giving me the chance to speak directly to MPs and Ministers in Parliament. That means so much."

(Diane Gall)



"I had the chance to meet Sarah and tell her my story. My nephew, a young driver, was killed in a road crash in 1993. In 2019, my partner, a motorcyclist, was killed in a collision. Sarah was incredibly interested in the support I have received from RoadPeace, and listened in to one of our groups as a result. She has spoken up in debates about the Sentencing Bill, and her vocal advocacy for crash victims is providing me with great comfort."

(Diane Cash)

Wendy Morton, MP for Aldridge-Brownhills

"My ex-husband, Alan, was a cyclist, hit and killed by a driver who said he didn't see him. It completely devastated myself and my children. I felt that the response from the criminal justice system was poor – and so for me, justice has become about trying to ensure nobody else has their life taken on the same road (4 fatalities have occurred there since 2002). Wendy has backed my campaign for measures to reduce speed and improve the junction and is helping me with pushing the council to take action."

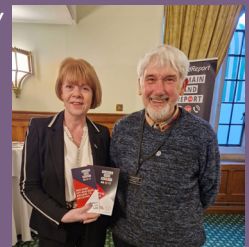
(Jayne Preston)



"I had corresponded with Wendy for a number of years about different issues, but when she found out that my wife and daughter had both been killed in a road crash, she simply could not have been kinder."

Wendy came along to support a RoadPeace event that was held in Parliament, and she has recorded thoughtful videos showing her support for us on World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. Wendy always remembers me and always says hello if I see her at community events – she even sent me a card for my 80th birthday. Sometimes it is the simplest of thoughts that go such a long way."

(Colin Roberts)



Bambos Charalambous, MP for Southgate & Wood Green

"I met Bambos at his surgery after my fiancé was killed by a driver in May 2024 and another young man was killed on the same road three months later. Despite being deep into my own devastation, I felt compelled to act, knowing another family was now where I am. I was nervous and emotional, unsure what to expect from the meeting. Bambos was kind and patient,



listening to everything I had to say connecting not only with me, but with the loss of my fiancé. He has kept his promises on everything he said in that meeting and beyond. He has consistently kept me informed on his progress and makes me feel prioritised, validated and at ease. I can't thank Bambos enough for his support, dedication and kind-hearted manner. Without him, I wouldn't have found the confidence to use my voice and feel truly heard. Thank you Bambos."

(Abi Toghill)



Pictured: Diane Gall with her husband, Martyn, and their two daughters
Pictured: Diane Gall, Diane Cash and Natty Cash meeting with Sarah Coombes MP
Pictured: Jayne Preston and Matt Preston with Wendy Morton MP
Pictured: Colin Roberts and Wendy Morton MP
Pictured: Abi Toghill and her fiancé, Mithun

Closure...? RoadPeace Volunteer

Yes yes
He's been sentenced to
Thirty-three months
In prison

Yes yes
I'm glad it's over

Yes yes
Under the influence
Of drugs
And without any regard
To anyone outside his thoughts
He drove his car into
My Rachel
And shattered
her body
And shattered
Her life
And shattered
Her future
And shattered
My life and the lives
Of her family
Forever

Yes yes
I'm glad it's over

No no
I'M NOT HAPPY
The verdict won't
Bring
My daughter
Back

No no
IT WON'T BRING
"CLOSURE"
Losing my Rachel
Has been like
Losing my legs
And my arms
And my eyes
And my hopes...

Losing my Rachel
Has hollowed out
My sensations
Has numbed
My emotions
Has cauterized
My nervous system

No no
Don't tell me
"TIME IS A GREAT HEALER"

I cannot put a plaster
On the wound of losing
My only child...

Counselling cannot remove
The scar on my consciousness
Pills can only turn me
Into a zombie
And make me unrecognisable
To the me in the mirror

No no
MOVE ON????
You think that I can now
MOVE ON????
Do you understand?
No... how could you?

There is no way that I can
"move on"
As you put it

No no
All that I can do
Is survive
Taking one step at a time

Please please
THINK before you
Say anything
To the
Recently bereaved

Thank you
Thank you

*A reflection on the language people use when talking to road crash victims,
written by a RoadPeace volunteer who wishes to remain anonymous.*

A Closing Note

Abbie Brooks (North Herefordshire)

My younger sister, Molly, who was 19 at the time, was a passenger in a vehicle that would collide with a derelict building, ending her life. We were a normal family and then everything changed. Life felt pointless. I questioned the meaning of everything.



Molly's body was 'stored' from November through to March, due to the need for an invasive Home Office post-mortem. I remember sitting down for Christmas lunch, trying to count out how many plates we needed, and then bursting into tears when I realised there was one missing. The driver received an 11-year custodial sentence, a sentence classed as a "good outcome" for a family in our situation. This seems ludicrous when I remember that he stole my sister's life. Molly was a ray of sunshine that was taken forever.

Lucy Harrison (Redditch)

My brother, Peter, was a fit and healthy 39-year-old, with everything going for him. Peter had been walking home, when he was hit by a driver doing 93mph on a 40mph road; the driver then fled the scene. My family and I went from planning for Christmas to planning for a funeral. Peter's body was unable to be released for weeks while the driver was allowed to consider a second post-mortem. The justice process took 18 months – we ended up going all the way to the Court of Appeal. The driver received a 4.5-year sentence for Causing death by dangerous driving. There isn't a day I don't miss Peter's infectious laugh and cheeky banter.



RoadPeace is so much more than a charity, or a place of support; it is our family. We are so proud to work for this incredible organisation, alongside our incredible colleagues and wonderful volunteers. It is not the life either of us planned, and it isn't what we wanted for ourselves – but it is our purpose. As we always say, this is the family we never wanted but couldn't be without. While we all join this RoadPeace Family from a place of heartbreak, it is a family that has courage, determination and inspiration and its core. Most of all, RoadPeace is about hope...hope for a world where it is finally realised that road death and serious injury can be stopped. Together, let's make this a reality.



Pictured: Abbie Brooks with her sister, Molly
Pictured: Lucy Harrison with her brother, Peter
Pictured: Members of the RoadPeace Family

About RoadPeace

RoadPeace is the UK's national charity for road crash victims, offering vital support, advocacy, and remembrance for those bereaved or seriously injured. The organisation offers a helpline, national online groups, regional groups, a befriender service, and a Resilience Building Programme to help people to cope emotionally and practically after a crash. Peer support is at the heart of RoadPeace and the charity is immensely proud of its dedicated volunteers. RoadPeace also has a Legal Panel, that can provide quality advice and assistance with civil compensation.

Alongside this, RoadPeace campaigns tirelessly for an improved response from the justice system; and seeks to challenge societal attitudes that regard road danger as inevitable. RoadPeace push for thorough investigation and appropriate prosecution and sentencing. They call for 'road crime to be treated as real crime' and call out the use of the word 'accident'.

RoadPeace also invites Acts of Remembrance through 'Remember Me' plaques, National Road Victim Month and World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. It works to ensure crash victims are acknowledged and never forgotten.

Funding and public involvement are key to RoadPeace's work. The charity relies on donations, volunteers, corporate partnerships, and campaigning support from the public to sustain its services and policy work.



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Charity No: 1087192