



RoadPeace, The National Charity for Road Crash Victims

**Support in the
West Mercia Region**

Helpline Number: 0800 160 1069

Helpline Email: helpline@roadpeace.org

Supported by



Registered Charity 1087192

Can you tell me about RoadPeace?

RoadPeace is the national charity for road crash victims, we provide support services and information to people bereaved through or seriously injured in road crashes. Thanks to funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner, in the West Mercia region, we can also support those who are witness to a serious crash. 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 by ensuring not only that the trauma caused is acknowledged, but properly addressed by all relevant agencies.

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. Brigitte was utterly shocked that a culpable death such as her son's was considered and treated as irrelevant simply because the killer was a driver.

"At the time, there was a total absence of any type of support for people bereaved or injured through a road crash. And there was no justice. Despite the fact that year after year for almost 100 years, thousands suffered in this way, RoadPeace was the first ever UK charity for this huge victim group and our helpline the first helpline for any UK victims."

Brigitte, RoadPeace Founder

Can RoadPeace help me?

In West Mercia, we can offer support and information if you are over the age of 18, and have been bereaved through, seriously injured in or have been witness to, a road crash. All of our services are free and accessed via our helpline, where our Support Services Coordinator or our West Mercia Road Victim Care Coordinator will talk through your circumstances and the options available to you.

Why does RoadPeace support matter?

Being bereaved through or seriously injured in a road-crash is sudden, unexpected, traumatic and violent. You will have been going about your normal, everyday life, only to have it changed forever, with no warning. Those who have been affected in this way tell us they experience a range of emotions, which they often feel people around them cannot even begin to imagine. On top of this, you may have to go through the criminal and civil justice systems, or an inquest. Being able to fully understand what is happening, while coping with your grief or injuries, is immensely difficult.

At RoadPeace, we are often described as 'the family you never wanted but are glad to have'. We champion peer support, and will link you with others in a similar situation, who can help to reassure you that your emotions are valid, reduce feelings of isolation, and inform you as you face each challenge.

"I was outwardly functioning, but inside I felt tortured. I couldn't stop thinking about my brother. It was only when I found RoadPeace, that I was able to be honest about how much I was struggling. I felt supported and heard immediately."

Lucy, RoadPeace West Mercia Coordinator

How do I contact RoadPeace?

Our national helpline can be reached Monday-Friday from 10am-4pm (excluding Bank Holidays). Outside of these hours, a voicemail can be left. Alternatively, you can email the helpline or complete our online form – it is useful if you can provide us with your telephone number and a sense of when would be a good time to call you.

We understand that making initial contact can be very nerve-wracking, if you prefer you can ask your Family Liaison Officer, GP or other health professional to make a referral on your behalf. We will always ensure that we respond to you within a maximum of 5 working days.

Helpline

☎ 0800 160 1069

✉ helpline@roadpeace.org

➤ roadpeace.org/self-referral-form/

➤ roadpeace.org/resources-for-professionals/



RoadPeace founder Brigitte Chaudhry MBE, pictured with RoadPeace staff and trustees.

When should I contact RoadPeace?

This varies for each person and there is no set rule. We can talk to you whether the collision occurred yesterday or 50 years ago. Some people want support straight away, others need to take time to think about this – it is about what feels most comfortable for you. With the exception of the Resilience Building Programme, there is no time limit or restriction on receiving any of our services.

What services do RoadPeace provide?

We offer a mix of national and regional support services which are summarised in this leaflet. Some people find they prefer a particular service and so only take that up, others access a mix of services such as attending a group and having a befriender. In time, you may want to take part in activities or campaign, and we can help with this too.

Helpline

Our helpline is open Monday - Friday, 10am-4pm (excluding Bank Holidays). Outside of these hours, a voicemail service operates. You can choose to call, email or submit an online form. On contacting us, you will speak with our Support Services Coordinator or West Mercia Road Victim Care Coordinator, they will treat you with sensitivity and compassion. They will ask you for some details and then talk through how we can support you and the information we can provide you with.

West Mercia Road Victim Care Coordinator

Thanks to funding from the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, RoadPeace have a dedicated staff team in the West Mercia region, including our West Mercia Road Victim Care Coordinator (RVCC). They will offer you 1:1 support, with no time limit, at intervals you agree. The RVCC is there if you need to talk through what you are feeling or updates about the investigation, they can advocate on your behalf, and accompany you to meetings and to court, if helpful.

"The RVCC has given me a consistent point of contact to reach out to for support, she has listened unconditionally and been a beacon of light in some of my darkest times."

Denice, Worcester

National Groups

National online groups offer a safe and supportive space to connect with others from across the country, who have had a similar experience to you. We currently offer these groups to bereaved parents (where their child of any age has had their life taken in a road traffic collision), bereaved siblings and seriously injured victims. These meetings last for 2 hours, but you do not have to stay for the whole session. Our groups are led by volunteers who have themselves been victims in this way. There are no set agendas – the meetings provide a space to explore all topics relating to your grief or injury.

"Being amongst others that understood the loss of a sibling made me realise that my grief was as important as everyone else's. So often, the extremities of losing a sibling are minimised, but being around others who acknowledged what I was feeling allowed me a space to grieve in the way I needed to."

Abbie, Ledbury

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, email, or text. If you have a befriender, they will talk to you about how often and in what form you want contact. There is sometimes a short wait for this service.

"Becoming a befriender has provided a positive way for me to channel my grief, and offer understanding to someone else in a similar situation."

Mandy, Ludlow

Resilience Building Programme

Our trauma support programme has been created for those bereaved through a road crash. Working in small groups, over 8 online sessions, we will help you to explore the effects grief might be having on both your mind and body, and suggest tools you can try using to cope with your emotions, lack of sleep and panic attacks. We run a number of courses each year but there may be a short wait for this service. Due to the nature of the course, we advise you are at least 6 months into your bereavement, and we can assist you in completing a questionnaire to ensure your suitability.

"The resilience building programme gave me the tools to navigate tough days when I felt overwhelmed."

Leanne, Kidderminster

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. Our Road Victim Care Coordinator can talk you through which guides may be useful for you, and arrange to send these

to you by email or post. We can also assist in situations where you may need an advocate, and can support you if you encounter difficulties with the various agencies you 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.

Legal Panel

The law firms we work with must sign up to a set of quality standards. Our legal panel can provide vital expertise regarding the civil justice process, and provide pro-bono support at inquests. In the West Mercia region, we work with CFG Law and Slater and Gordon, and can signpost you directly to specialist solicitors at these firms.



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 the death of 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.



Members of the West Mercia Group gather at the National Memorial Arboretum.

Remember Me Plaques

Choosing how and when to remember the person you are grieving is highly personal. It might be you feel having a memorial at the scene of the collision is very important. Or, you may prefer to have a memorial in a different location, such as a place your loved one enjoyed spending their time. There is no right or wrong way to remember. We can send you a simple 'Remember Me' memorial plaque, which was designed to highlight the terrible toll of road death and injury. The plaques will be sent to you free of charge. Please note, if you intend to place a plaque at the roadside, you may need to seek permission from the relevant highway authority.

Can you tell me about the RoadPeace West Mercia Group?

Our RoadPeace West Mercia Group is a community of family members and friends who have all been bereaved through a road crash. Within our group, there are bereaved parents, children (over 18), partners, siblings, grandparents, grandchildren (over 18), aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. Our youngest group member joined us at 18, and our oldest group members are in their 80s. Everyone within the group has their own individual grief, but we have a unifying shared experience and determination to spare others from enduring the same pain. Our dearest wish is for road death to end, so no new members join us; but until that day, we will welcome you with warmth and care.

Our group provide support to others through our meetings and activities, and we undertake a number of projects to make change and raise awareness across the West Mercia region. Some people choose to attend the support meetings only, while others take part in everything offered. Our group is coordinated and led by Lucy, whose brother was killed by a speeding, hit-and-run driver. Lucy is supported by the many other group members who dedicate time and effort to helping RoadPeace.



Members of the West Mercia Group gather with emergency services, at Hindlip.

Online Meetings

Our group meet on zoom each month, on a Wednesday evening. If you'd like to try attending a meeting, our West Mercia Road Victim Care Coordinator will arrange for Lucy to call you, so you can have a chat in advance. While it is helpful if you can join in time for the start of the meeting, this isn't mandatory, we understand that sometimes you may need to join a little later. Joining a meeting for the first time can feel intimidating and we want you to feel as comfortable as possible; you can choose to have your camera on or off, and how much or how little you say and share. Our meetings have no set agenda, we talk about all aspects of grief and the post-crash process; on occasion, we have a guest speaker. Some group members choose to come to every meeting, while others attend from time to time.

If other members of your family also want to try the group meeting, it is up to you whether you all attend together, or whether you'd like us to offer you separate groups.

Our only rules are regarding confidentiality, and respecting each other. Confidentiality will only be broken in a situation where there is a safeguarding concern.

Face-to-Face Meetings

Once every three months, our West Mercia Group join with our West Midlands Group for a face-to-face meeting. These are held on a Saturday morning, in a meeting room at St. Martin in the Bull Ring (this is in central Birmingham, located next to the Bull Ring Shopping Centre). These meetings follow the same format as the online meetings, but provide the opportunity for in-person contact, which many people greatly value. If you choose to attend an in-person meeting you will be provided with Lucy's contact number, and one of the group members will meet you at the door so that you do not have to walk in alone. Tea, coffee, water and biscuits are provided.

"Meeting with others at the online group gives me the support and space to talk freely, without fear of upsetting someone or without having to explain the brutality of road crash loss or trauma. To be with others who truly understand what I'm going through has and continues to be a massive help for my family and I."

Lee, Shifnal



The names of those remembered during WDR are displayed at St. Martin in the Bull Ring.

World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims

The third Sunday of each November is World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims (WDR). On this day, our West Mercia and West Midlands groups join together for a regional Service of Remembrance held at St. Martin in the Bull Ring.

While the service is held in a church and led by the Rector, it is not a religious service, and is open to those of all faiths or of no faith. The service lasts just over an hour, and you can choose to have your loved one's name read out and their photo displayed as part of the Act of Remembrance. Members of our group tell their stories, there are musical performances, and an address from a politician or road safety campaigner.

For many of our group members, this is the most important day in our annual calendar; as we gather to remember our loved ones, acknowledge the work of the emergency services, and call on regional politicians to act. The coming together of our RoadPeace Family offers hope and inspiration.

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

Caroline, Evesham



West Mercia group members with messages they wrote for their loved ones at Christmas time.

Coping with Christmas

In December, our group host a short Carol Service at Hindlip, in partnership with West Mercia Police. The service aims to offer hope and comfort to those who are grieving and desperately missing a loved one during the Christmas period. Stories are shared and there is a chance to remember your loved one by hanging a message for them on our special remembrance tree.

Picnic in the Park

Each summer, our group host a picnic at Worcester Woods Country Park. This is also open to the family and friends of group members. RoadPeace supply refreshments, though you can choose to bring your own. We spend an afternoon talking together, while enjoying the outdoors. Gathering face-to-face for this social time enables friendships to form and flourish.



Bereaved family members gather for a picnic at Worcester Woods Country Park.



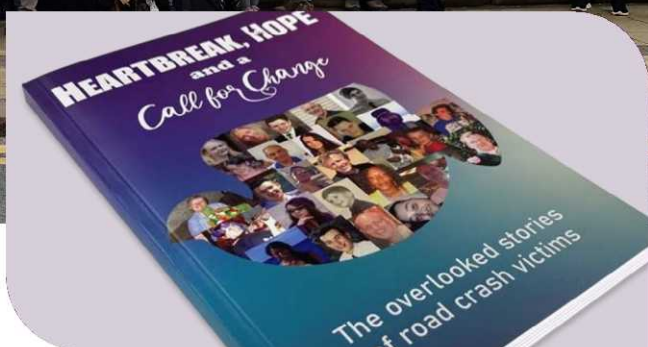
"Having an opportunity to engage with others really helped me to open up and speak about my grief in a relaxed setting. The conversation flowed organically with other bereaved men and it helped me to feel less alone."

Simon, Ledbury

West Mercia and West Midlands Group members gather after completing a walk from Kings Norton to Birmingham City Centre.

Walk and Talk

Each year, members of the West Mercia and West Midlands groups gather on a Saturday morning to complete a walk between 6-8 miles (the route taken each year varies, but we ensure it is flat). Some people find that meeting in an outdoor setting feels less intense, and they enjoy the camaraderie of supporting each other, during the day. We stop part-way through for a picnic. The walk always finishes in central Birmingham, where we hold a short vigil for crash victims, and share in refreshments. Those who are unable to take part in the walk, can meet us for the vigil. This is open to anyone whose life has been affected by a road crash, as well as friends and supporters of RoadPeace.



RoadPeace Anthology

Anthology

In the aftermath of a bereavement through a road crash you can sometimes feel overwhelmed with practical information, while few people talk about the effect on your emotions. Together with the West Midlands group, we created an anthology (a collection of our stories, poetry, artwork and photos) in the hope that you might be able to relate to what you read, and feel less alone.

You can download the anthology at the below link or request a hard-copy (free of charge):

► www.cfglaw.co.uk/blog/champions/roadpeace-anthology/

In time, you may want to contribute to the anthology; we refresh this regularly and always welcome new submissions.



Group Members with the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, after a discussion about crash investigation.

Calling for Change and Partnership Working

Together with the RoadPeace staff team, our group help to organise and take part in regular listening days, which are supported by West Mercia Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

These events provide an opportunity for those whose lives have been affected by a road crash to feedback on their experience and help to improve the services offered for those who may be future victims.

The listening days explore different topics including crash investigation, Family Liaison Officer deployment and victim support. There are many different ways to input from presenting, submitting written questions, sharing your story or simply attending and listening.

“Getting the chance to hear about the work the police do helps with understanding – and by coming together we can all try and improve the response to crash victims.”

Ange and Diana, Hereford

Get in touch

We understand that being bereaved through or seriously injured in a road crash is devastating, and that you may feel heartbroken overwhelmed, confused, frightened or angry. We cannot fix this, but we can stand with you as you process and navigate this life-changing event. We can put you in contact with others who will understand, and we can offer you support, information and advocacy.

Our helpline

can be contacted by emailing

helpline@roadpeace.org

or calling

0800 160 1069

Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm,
(except Bank Holidays). Outside of
these hours you can leave a voicemail.

or online form

► **[www.roadpeace.org/
self-referral-form/](http://www.roadpeace.org/self-referral-form/)**

Donate or fundraise

All of RoadPeace's services are free of charge, and you do not need to donate to access any of them. We do however, hugely rely on the generosity of individuals to help us to continue to provide support to those bereaved through or injured in a road crash.

If you would like to donate or fundraise, we would be very grateful. You can do this by contacting our helpline, or via the below link:

► **[www.roadpeace.org/get-involved/
donate/](http://www.roadpeace.org/get-involved/donate/)**



**When you
feel ready, we
are here for
you. You are
not alone.**

Support

Community

Information

Advocacy

Justice

Remembrance

Campaigning

Family



www.roadpeace.org