



RoadPeace, The National Charity for Road Crash Victims

**Support in the
West Midlands Region**

Helpline Number: 0800 160 1069

Helpline Email: helpline@roadpeace.org

Supported by



**Transport for
West Midlands**

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. 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?

We can offer support and information if you are over the age of 18, and have been bereaved through, seriously injured in, or are caring for someone seriously injured in a road crash. All of our services are free and accessed via our helpline, where our Support Services 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, whether he had suffered, when we would finally know the findings of the investigation. 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 Midlands 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 at any time, 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/

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 who will treat you with sensitivity and compassion. The Support Services Coordinator will ask you for some details and then talk through how we can support you and the information we can provide you with.

"I'd felt so alone trying to find help for my mother after my stepdad was killed in a collision with a lorry. Finding RoadPeace brought so much comfort, we began to find the strength to feel that although life would always be different, we could live again."

Natty, Birmingham



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

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.

“Loneliness immediately overtook me following the death of my brother. Friends and extended family sadly disappeared from my life, the few that remained struggled with what to say or, even worse, said nothing. The siblings group helped me feel valued and connected me to a network of people who understood exactly how I felt at such a crucial time.”

Rachael, Staffordshire

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.

“As befrienders, we can offer empathy and friendship, we are people who have trod the same dark path you now find yourself on.”

Colin, Walsall

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.

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

Paige, Wednesbury

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 Support Services 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 Midlands region, we work with CFG Law and Slater and Gordon, and can signpost you directly to specialist solicitors at these firms.





Members of the West Midlands Group gather at the National Memorial Arboretum

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.

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.





Members of the West Midlands Group following the ceremony in which they were awarded the KAVS.

Can you tell me about the RoadPeace West Midlands Group?

Our RoadPeace West Midlands 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 Midlands 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 group facilitator, Lesley, whose husband was killed in a road crash. The work of our group was recognised with the King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS), the group equivalent of an MBE.

Online Meetings

Our group meet on zoom each month, alternating between a Wednesday evening and Sunday morning. If you'd like to try attending a meeting, our Support Services 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 the coordinator or facilitator feel there is a safeguarding concern.

Face-to-Face Meetings

Our face-to-face meetings are held once every 3 months, 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.

"The meetings are, for me, a safe place where I can let my emotions out, without fear of being judged. You can ask questions about things you don't understand and receive comfort and support. The love that you feel from others cannot be measured."

Mandy, Wolverhampton



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 Midlands and West Mercia 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.

***“Sharing our loss with others gives us
the strength to carry on.”***

Elwyn and Diane, Staffordshire

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. Our group 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.

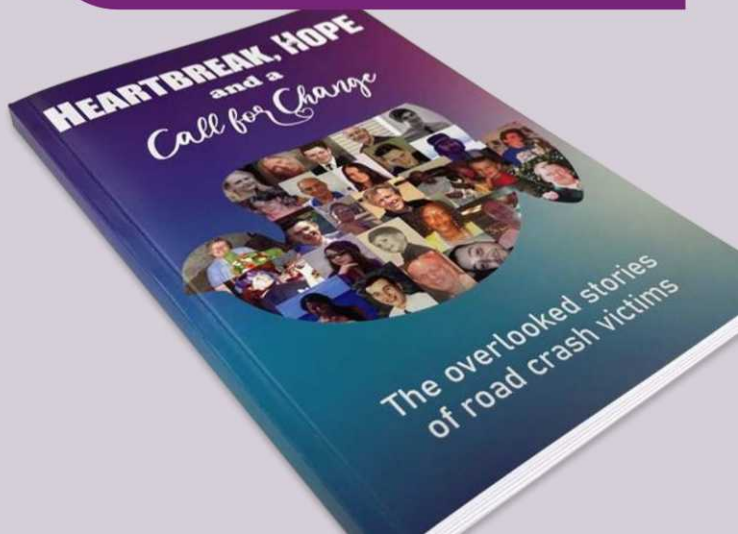
You can download the anthology at the below link or request a hard-copy (free of charge):

▶ 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.

"My world was devastated by the sudden and violent death of my partner. My daughter contacted RoadPeace, and they not only changed my life but saved it. Being a part of projects like the anthology, to raise awareness and change attitudes, has allowed me to channel my grief in a positive way."

Diane, Birmingham





This is brilliant, I find it so helpful to talk with others who have been bereaved, while walking together, enjoying nature and the outdoors."

Roger, Walsall

Group members gather after completing a walk from Kings Norton to Birmingham City Centre.

Walk and Talk

Each summer, we 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.



Artwork produced in collaboration with the Birmingham Youth Justice Service.

Calling for Change and Partnership Working

Our group members can choose to take part in projects to call for change, and we collaborate with a number of partners to achieve this.

Through working with the Birmingham Youth Justice Service, we try and help educate young people who have been involved in driving-related crimes, as to the devastation their actions could cause. Sometimes, we respond to letters from the young people, or meet with them in-person (after significant preparation work). We also undertook an artwork project with the Birmingham Youth Justice Service, which is currently being displayed in different areas across the Midlands region.

You can read more about this work at the below link:

▶ www.info.cfglaw.co.uk/peace-in-the-park/



Group members at the Houses of Parliament.

Our group have also worked with the organisation Action Vision Zero, to call for legislative change in regard to drivers who fail to remain at the scene of a collision. We created a campaign called Remain and Report, and held a parliamentary reception to raise awareness of our key calls:

1. Charges that are fit for purpose
2. A reasonable maximum reporting time
3. Licence suspension for the sake of safety
4. Appropriate terminology

You can read more about our campaign here:

► www.roadpeace.org/campaigning-for-change-remain-and-report/

Finally...

We are part of the West Midlands Road Safety Partnership and worked with Transport for West Midlands on a video campaign, which aims to raise awareness of the horrific impact of dangerous driving and create behaviour change.

► www.tfwm.org.uk/campaigns/road-safety/



Supported by:

**Transport for
West Midlands**

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