

## Speech Mary Williams Annual reception 2019

Good evening. I want to start by thanking everyone - for taking the time to celebrate **all** our combined work for, and our shared vision of, a world of safe and healthy mobility.

A world where there is no need for Brake's National Road Victim Service.

Because there are no deaths. No serious injuries. This is Vision Zero.

The epidemic of road crashes remains no accident.

We know the causes - and solutions.

- Traffic-free routes for people on foot and bicycles. People and vehicles do not mix.
- Safely engineered roads with **low** speed limits where there are people.
- Safely engineered vehicles that **know** the speed limits and automatically **stop in time** for people.
- Businesses that put lives before profit; using the safest, cleanest vehicles travelling the shortest distances.
- Intelligent, resourced policing to rid our roads of illegality; from defective trucks to impaired drivers.
- Meticulous, **forensic collision investigation** collecting further evidence that can prevent future disasters. A crash happens. We find the causes. We fix the causes.

These safe system solutions recognise the frailty of people. The inevitability of mistake making; risk taking.

These safe system solutions reduce and eliminate people's potential to cause deaths and life-changing injury.

Vision Zero is not a dream. It is a goal we must strive for. Because no death or serious injury is acceptable.

The global Decade of Action for road safety is drawing to an end this year. Yet road crashes are now the biggest killer worldwide of people aged 5 to 29. Traffic pollution is a major contributor to climate change and disease.

More than 70 people are killed or seriously injured on roads in the UK daily, with many more debilitated by respiratory illnesses.

The good news is that we can all be part of the solution.

Tonight I am surrounded by road safety leaders. We find ourselves standing at the bottom of a mountain of work to do. It is an extremely challenging climb ahead. But we know the routes to take and the goal.

In Road Safety Week in November this year we calling on everyone to Step Up and be a champion for the cause. Leadership is needed more than ever. And everyone can be a leader.

I am not the first charity leader to say that leadership starts with values.

At Brake our leading value is **Doing the right thing**.

**Brake's campaigns team** works tirelessly to encourage government to **do the right thing**; to have the strategy, plans and funding to implement safe systems.

We applaud among others:

The EC decision this year to legislate tougher vehicle standards, which we know, from our Direct Line funded surveys that 9 out of 10 drivers support.

The Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy requiring local authority spending on space for people.

Highways England's investment in engineering improvements on our worst A roads.

Transport for London and the City of London who are transforming where we live and work, with 20mph limits and traffic-free zones.

Brake's **engagement team** works tirelessly to help communities join us as champions for the cause, calling for change within their spheres of influence.

Children and teachers are stepping up to be champions. Last week Brake's Kids Walk saw thousands of children taking to UK streets calling for local authority action.

Fleet managers are stepping up to be champions. Across the UK and wider, corporations are implementing policies in their organisations to save lives and stop pollution and sharing their achievements through our Global Fleet Champions programme.

Victims of road crashes and Members of Parliament are stepping up to be champions. Telling their stories in the media and working together for legislative change.

**Brake's National Road Victim Service** works tirelessly to help people bereaved and injured by road crashes during the worst time of their lives. Staffed by professional support officers providing

- Emotional support.
- Practical advice.
- They help victims' voices be heard – particularly within the criminal justice system.
- They help victims achieve the help they need when a family is torn apart. Who is going to pay the mortgage now mum has died? How can I stop the person who killed our son still illegally driving around our estate? Our support officers work tirelessly to get these questions answered.

**And finally, it is Brake's fundraising team.** Our own fundraising staff, and everyone here tonight who has raised funds or given to the charity, as individuals running, cycling, or baking cakes, or as corporate partners, is part of that team. It is a team that has a lot of fun

and raises a lot of awareness as well as the money we need. And we do, urgently, need much more money and urge you to keep on fundraising and giving.

Now, more than ever, the voice of charities is vital. It isn't my voice. It is everyone's voice, rising up to support the changes we need. And our voice needs to be much louder.

Sometimes we ask people to imagine what it feels like to receive the knock on the door and see the shadow of a police officer through the glass. Or get the phone call to go to hospital. And know that life will never be the same again.

This afternoon I was honoured to attend Brake's awards for police Family Liaison Officers, who work so closely with Brake to distribute our bereavement support literature, promote our helpline, and support families.

Every family's story is different, with different horrors, hardships and challenges. Everyone's story is an opportunity to remind ourselves to continue our fight to alleviate their suffering and to never give up the fight for zero.