

# Brake, the road safety charity Impact report | 2021

Caring for bereaved and injured road victims  
Campaigning for zero harm roads, for everyone



 **Brake**  
the road safety charity

[www.brake.org.uk](http://www.brake.org.uk)

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## Introduction

**Deaths and injuries due to road crashes are indiscriminate, violent, devastating and shockingly common. Every day on UK roads, 5 people are killed and another 24 suffer the most severe injuries. One in 10 is a child.**


Road crashes cause sudden and shocking deaths at the roadside, agonisingly slow deaths in hospital, and life-changing disabilities. Road crashes hit at the heart of families and communities, killing and maiming our children, parents, siblings and other loved ones. They spread shock waves across our schools, where we work, and where we live. They place a burden on our emergency services and economy.

Families affected by road crashes need urgent and ongoing help. This Impact Report explains how Brake helped nearly 1,000 families affected by bereavement and the most catastrophic injuries in 2021 with our standards-driven National Road Victim Service.

It also explains how we campaigned to end the carnage by advising Government, working in partnership with communities and employers, and giving road victims a voice.

Our impact is significantly growing thanks to generous donations and grants. But it is not enough. Our goal is to help 4,500 families bereaved and suffering the most catastrophic injuries, and build much stronger and louder campaigns for safe streets.

**Mary Williams OBE**, chief executive



“ Thank you for guiding me with information to make decisions and, most importantly, for taking the time to organise my referrals and treatment. I have been able to go back to work now and things are getting easier gradually. ”

Bereaved road crash victim, helped by Brake's National Road Victim Service

## Our vision

Our vision is a world with zero road harm where we can all move in a safe and healthy way, as part of our normal day.

## Our work

Since 1995, Brake has been working to stop the tragedy of road deaths and serious injuries in road crashes, make streets safe and healthy places for all, and to provide support services for road crash victims.

**Brake cares** for bereaved and injured road victims

**Brake campaigns** for zero harm roads, for everyone





## Brake cares

**Our National Road Victim Service is a quality-approved, specialist support service for families suffering bereavement or catastrophic injury due to a road crash. We care for families facing the worst trauma of their lives, from day one of the crash onwards.**

Every police force refers bereaved and injured road victims to our highly-skilled, professional caseworkers.

Our caseworkers help families cope with shock, grief, immense turmoil, practical challenges, and complex, unfamiliar procedures. We help during victims' darkest and most difficult times, to protect and restore their welfare and wellbeing.

Road crashes are indiscriminate. The National Road Victim Service recognises victims' diversity and that their needs differ. We work to identify and meet those needs, often seeking out and obtaining help on behalf of road victims from many other community organisations.

## Brake cares

### Tina's story

**My husband sadly passed away following a motorbike crash in April 2021, leaving myself and our two daughters aged 21 and 17 behind. My eldest daughter was with her Dad at the time of the collision, following behind him on her motorbike, so you will understand how horrific this was for her.**

Following the incident, we were at a total loss with where we could turn to for help, we tried the local doctors, who signposted us to a local bereavement service, but this was not what we needed at the time and there was also a waiting list.

The police left me a folder from Brake, so I called up as I really felt we had nowhere to turn. Our Brake National Road Victim Service caseworker then called and asked if we would like a visit, so we arranged this and had our meetings in the garden due to lockdown restrictions.



The help we got from our caseworker has been paramount to us, getting us through the last six months. She has been able to talk to us all, both as a family and also on a one-to-one basis.

As a Mum to two children who have lost their Dad under such horrific circumstances, it gave me the opportunity to talk to someone openly and honestly about my concerns and fears for my girls and also my own mental health, having lost my husband of 23 years.

My eldest daughter also had a number of face-to-face meetings with our caseworker and has been able to talk about her state of mind and flashbacks etc. Our caseworker is a trusted person in her life and has been a great support

for her and for the whole family in terms of 'getting us through', supporting us with a listening ear and also giving practical advice - she is very knowledgeable about the external help that is available to us and has provided help and advice about the forthcoming inquest and coroner's report.

She has also referred us to a wonderful psychotherapist who is working with all three of us to help us with our trauma and bereavement.


Summing up, I really don't know where we would be now without the help and support we have received from Brake's National Road Victim Service, and we are very grateful for this.

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## Brake cares

### Here are some of the ways our National Road Victim Service helps families affected by road death and serious injury:

- We support people through shock, loss and major life changes, talking to them about how they are feeling and how to cope in appalling circumstances
- We help people to find care they need, to help with bereavement, injuries, disabilities, and mental health. This might mean sourcing specialist therapies and injury rehabilitation services
- We help find all kinds of practical help. This includes helping victims access support for children, and support for people with many varying challenges, such as isolation, poverty, illness, disability or language barriers
- We explain court and inquest proceedings and their outcomes, and support people to write victim impact statements and cope with media interest
- We help people organise practical matters, such as funerals, and find financial or legal help
- We advocate on behalf of victims, with their permission, to make sure their needs are met, for example speaking to GPs, employers, banks and insurance companies
- We help people find a way to memorialise someone who has died, or to campaign for road safety improvements, if they want to.



**“ This has been the hardest year of my life so far and the service that you and Brake have provided me has been beyond anything I could ever have imagined was out there. You have been caring, understanding and a comforting voice and contact when I have had nobody else. Your phone calls have been something to use as a target to get through the week. It has felt like an insurance policy covering me and has helped me push on. I honestly cannot thank you enough and I am confident in telling you that had it not been for you and the therapy you recommended me for, I would not be in a good place today. ”**

A victim's thanks, to their National Road Victim Service caseworker

## Brake cares

### Our impact in 2021, helping road victims

**Thanks to Government funding and public donations for the National Road Victim Service, we were able to support more road victims than ever before in 2021. We also worked to expand the service to reach even more victims in 2022, with more care per victim.**

Each family of road victims supported by our service is assigned a dedicated, professional caseworker. Our caseworkers have, in the past, all worked centrally, helping families by phone, video call and other digital means. However, while this approach continued in 2021, we also started our strategy of expansion to provide local caseworkers near to where road victims live, providing some of our care face to face, and providing more hours' care per family.

In 2021, following delivery of care locally by two caseworkers in North Yorkshire and Warwickshire, we started recruiting caseworkers and support staff across other regions of England and Wales, for roll out in 2022. This is a major step towards levelling up provision of road victim care for everyone who needs it, everywhere, in ways that people need it.

#### Setting standards

In 2021 we also continued to set the national standard for information for victims and professionals working with victims within their roles, such as police and GPs. We revised our victim information literature, including producing a new guide for seriously injured victims and their families. We worked with all UK police forces to support the professional development of police family liaison. This included delivering police training sessions about the National Road Victim Service. We also presented the Brake Police Family Liaison Officer Awards 2021, recognising outstanding police support for families within their policing duties.

957 

people were supported by Brake's National Road Victim Service, receiving expert care from our caseworkers.

3,500 


bereaved families and friends received Brake's acclaimed support literature, helping them to understand what happens in the first few days after a fatal crash and at other times.

524 

bereaved children received a Brake picture book, with simple, empathetic language and pictures to help them understand what happens when someone dies in a road crash and help them talk about their feelings.

155 

police officers from 30 forces got information to help them provide better support to road victim families through signing up to a new police family liaison digital hub on the Brake website.

394 

police officers from 16 forces received training from Brake about the needs of road victims and the work of the National Road Victim Service.

# Sudden

Help after a sudden bereavement

**In 2020 and the first three months of 2021, Brake delivered the Sudden service, as a pandemic response.**

Sudden helped people bereaved by any unexpected cause, including COVID-19. With funding from the Department of Health and Social Care and other grant aiders we were able to help almost 2,000 suddenly bereaved individuals across the UK. Sudden also helped to set the standard in bereavement care for people unexpectedly bereaved by producing and distributing guidance for bereaved people and professionals helping them, such as hospital workers, GPs and teachers. We have distributed more than 35,000 guides for suddenly bereaved adults and children and produced guidance for professionals at [www.sudden.org](http://www.sudden.org)

**“ Thank you for everything. I am so grateful that you are the person I have been supported by over these last few months. It has been lovely speaking with you and all the perspective you have wonderfully given me, lots of tools to deal with emotions and situations, and honestly realising that it's 'ok to not be ok.' It won't always be quite like that. With very best wishes and thanks for everything. ”**

A bereaved person's thanks to their Sudden caseworker







## Brake campaigns

**We research, and call for, evidence-backed Government policies and funding to achieve safe and healthy streets, responding to Government consultations and taking part in parliamentary hearings such as Select Committees.**

We work with people who can contribute to our communications and storytelling, including road victims, community campaigners, emergency services, companies, MPs, and other campaigning organisations. We develop and coordinate networks of stakeholders who support our cause and can speak up for us in the media and in alliances, with consistency and integrity.



“ Brake has given me a reason to carry on living, by helping me campaign in memory of Caitlin. This has given me a focus in my life and a feeling that I am doing something for my daughter. ”

Sharron Huddleston's daughter Caitlin was killed as a passenger in a crash on a rural road in 2017. With support from Brake, Sharron has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of the risks of driving on rural roads.

## Brake campaigns

### Our impact in 2021, campaigning for change

#### Safe Roads for All

In 2021, Brake led on the collaborative production of **Safe Roads for All**, a campaign report advising Government on its plans for a road safety strategy. This report supports many of Brake's campaigns, including the need for a road collision investigation agency, the need for increased Government expenditure on building safe space for people on foot and bicycles, a review of traffic laws, and the need for care for all road victims.

[www.saferoadsforall.org](http://www.saferoadsforall.org)



#### Campaigning in the media

Brake campaigned throughout 2021 in the media on many topics.

For example, the charity supports a zero-tolerance approach to alcohol when driving, including increased enforcement, educating drivers and reducing the drink drive limit. In December 2021, we achieved almost 200 items of media coverage during a Brake public campaign for people to not drink any alcohol at all when driving, revealing worrying data about drink-driving crashes.

Read more news in our newsroom [www.brake.org.uk/news](http://www.brake.org.uk/news)

We also launched three new episodes of our **Time to Zero In podcast** series exploring the issues, trends and innovations in road safety and healthy travel. We talked to expert guests about road crash investigation, young driver safety and supporting road crash victims. Our 2021 podcasts have been downloaded more than 1000 times.

Listen to Time to Zero In at [www.brake.org.uk/podcast](http://www.brake.org.uk/podcast)

#### Campaigning in parliament and Government

During Road Safety Week 2021, Brake helped secure a parliamentary debate about tougher sentences for hit and run drivers. We also worked with the Department for Transport on its announcement about changes to improve the law relating to the use of handheld mobile devices behind the wheel, securing extensive media coverage from a joint press release that also promoted Road Safety Week. We secured an Early Day Motion which was tabled to promote the campaign and signed by 17 MPs from across the House.

Find out more about our campaigns at [www.brake.org.uk/campaigns](http://www.brake.org.uk/campaigns)





## Our impact in 2021, engaging people in our campaigns

### Helping people learn about, and campaign for, safe and healthy journeys

Our **MyBrake** hub at [www.brake.org.uk](http://www.brake.org.uk) provides inspiration and tools to help people be safer on roads and advice on how to take action for safe roads where they live and work, such as joining speed watch groups or campaigning for 20mph limits. In 2021, 7,197 people joined our community of MyBrake champions and received free tools and guidance to help them learn about, and campaign for, safe and healthy mobility.

[www.brake.org.uk/mybrake](http://www.brake.org.uk/mybrake)

### Celebrating road safety heroes

More than 4,800 people registered to take part in **Road Safety Week 2021**, the UK's biggest road safety campaign, founded and run by Brake in collaboration with many partners, from communities to the police. The theme of the week was Road Safety Heroes. People spoke up for the work of road safety heroes who help people make safe journeys and support people after a crash. The week was featured extensively on national media, including BBC Breakfast TV and the Daily Mail and across social media. The week reached more than 22.6 million people.

[www.brake.org.uk/road-safety-week](http://www.brake.org.uk/road-safety-week)



## Brake campaigns

**We inspire, inform and help people to champion our important cause in their families, schools, where they live, and at work; and campaign for change. We also enable people to volunteer and fundraise for us, so we can do more.**

## Our impact in 2021, engaging people in our campaigns

### Helping children shout out for safe and healthy journeys

On Wednesday 16 June 2021, more than 50,000 children took to the streets to shout out for safer journeys and ask adults to keep them safe on roads in **Brake's Kids Walk** with Shaun the Sheep. This important and fun event helps children aged between four and 11 shout out for safety by taking part in short, supervised walks near their school, often featured in the local media. Almost 300 schools ran special road safety-themed activities, using free resources provided by Brake.



143 pupils and 20 staff from Laxdale Primary School on the Isle of Lewis took part in Brake's Kids Walk 2021. The teachers talked about road safety in assemblies and integrated road safety learning into curriculum lessons. The children created some fantastic road safety posters and banners. Headteacher Mairi Macleod says:

**“ All of the resources provided by Brake were useful and of excellent quality. I used the assembly presentation with the whole school and class teachers used the pupil resources with their classes. These helped to raise awareness of key road safety issues with the children. ”**



### Helping organisations manage work-related road risk

In 2021, 635 fleet professionals joined Brake's **Global Fleet Champions** campaign to reduce crashes and prevent pollution caused by work vehicles, taking the total number registered up to 2,820. Our fleet champions are based in 95 countries and represent more than 7 million vehicles.

The Global Fleet Champions campaign provides free and low-cost resources and events to help any organisation that employs people who drive for work to reduce work-related road risk. In 2021 we produced resources and events on themes including managing driver speed, drug driving, and driver health and wellbeing.

Our prestigious **UK Fleet Champions Awards** celebrated the hard work and dedication of companies and organisations striving to reduce road deaths and injuries and reduce pollution caused by vehicles used for work purposes. In 2021 more than 20 organisations and three individuals were recognised and rewarded for their outstanding commitment to road safety in a digital ceremony.

[www.globalfleetchampions.org](http://www.globalfleetchampions.org)

## Our impact in 2021, engaging people in our campaigns

### Tools to inform and help people make safer journeys

In 2021, we partnered with Direct Line Group to help people learn about, and commit to making, safe and healthy journey choices with a toolkit of digital information we produced and promoted. **The Brake and Direct Line Roadmap to Safe and Healthy Journeys** contains information and guidance on vehicle choice, getting ready to travel, and how to be a responsible road user.

[www.brake.org.uk/roadmap](http://www.brake.org.uk/roadmap)

In 2021, Brake worked to help understanding of self-driving vehicles and the technologies they use. Although self-driving vehicles have the potential to reduce or even eliminate crashes where human error is a contributory factor, our research shows many people are still not sure how this could happen, and don't understand the value of technologies that are already available in some of the most modern, safest vehicles. Working with Project Endeavour, we created simple factsheets to explain the benefits of the technologies, and bust commonly held myths.

[www.brake.org.uk/self-driving-vehicles](http://www.brake.org.uk/self-driving-vehicles)

### Brake supporters shout out on social media

Brake works hard to raise our cause through social media in partnership with our supporters. In 2021, 47,000 Brake supporters followed our social media networks to share stories, raise awareness and support our work.



# A HUGE THANK YOU to all our fundraisers and volunteers who helped fund and support the charity in 2021.

**309** fabulous fundraisers took part in fundraising events and gave donations to raise vital funds to support our work. Between them, they raised a whopping £256,399. Many more volunteers gave their time to help us by promoting road safety in their communities.

## Our fundraising costs

In 2021, for every £1 donated, 90.5p was spent on charitable activities. The remaining 9.5p was invested in raising more funds.



## A HUGE THANK YOU to all our grant givers and corporate champions

Openreach helped fund Brake to run Road Safety Week 2021. Jon Furmston, Director for Assurance and Governance at Openreach, says: **“Making sure that everyone gets home safe every day is paramount to everything we do at Openreach. Reducing road risk is key to that and we strive to do everything we can to keep our drivers, other road users and members of the public safe when we’re out in our vehicles keeping the UK connected. We’re delighted to be supporting Road Safety Week 2021 as it’s such an important issue and look forward to celebrating all the fantastic people who are working to make our roads safer for everyone.”**

Tiger Trailers is one of Brake’s valued corporate donors. Alison Cartwright, CSR manager at Tiger Trailers, says: **“We have long been aware of the great work Brake does as a leading road safety promoter in the UK, so it’s fantastic to now be working with their team, with the end goal of keeping road users and other people safer around large vehicles.”**

Brake worked in partnership with Direct Line to create a Roadmap to Safe and Healthy Journeys, to help people learn about and commit to making safe and healthy journey choices. Lorraine Price, Head of Direct Line Motor Insurance, says: **“By providing information and tools, through the Brake and Direct Line Roadmap, we believe we can give people the knowledge and understanding to make safe and considered choices, improving roads for everyone.”**

esure funded Brake’s Kids Walk project, helping primary schoolchildren shout out for their right to make safe and healthy journeys. David McMillan, CEO at esure Group, says:

**“We believe in the importance of road safety for children everywhere. We want to be a force for good and make a real difference by focusing on better and safer driving. Brake’s Kids Walk is an important opportunity to raise awareness about road safety messages.”**

RoadHow was proud to support Brake as corporate partners in 2021. CEO Adam Ryan says: **“We don’t just want to help Brake to improve road safety and the decision making of drivers and bikers, we at RoadHow also want to support Brake to raise funds to support those affected by road crashes.”**



**A HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who supported Brake in 2021. We couldn’t do it without you!**



## Help us to help more road victims and stop the carnage

**Brake's work is funded by generous grants and by public and corporate giving. We're proud to do a lot, to high standards, with very limited resources.**

**With more funds, we can achieve so much more.**

### What we want to do

- **We want to provide more care**  
We want to provide a National Road Victim Service caseworker to all bereaved and catastrophically injured families who need us, for as long as needed, with more hours' care..
- **We want our campaigns to be louder**  
We want to campaign louder in Government and in communities, achieving the policies and investments we know can stop carnage on roads. To do this, we need a much bigger team of campaigners; to research, campaign, and engage people.

### Our funding need

We are reaching about one in five of the 4,500+ road victim families who need our help. We need much more funding to provide more hours of care per family. We are urgently seeking more funding to do this.

### How your giving helps

**£100** pays for us to distribute **ten support and information packs to bereaved families**, helping them cope with their feelings, and understand procedures, such as the police investigation and court cases.

**£63** pays for a **primary school to get a Brake's Kids Walk action pack**, full of information and activities to teach road safety basics to children.

**£573** pays for a **road victim to receive support from a National Road Victim Service caseworker**, helping them with their needs over many months and sometimes years. We often support more than one person per family.

**£25,000** pays for a part-time campaigns officer, to campaign for safe streets in Government.

### Get giving and join us!

Find out how to have fun fundraising at [www.brake.org.uk/fundraise](http://www.brake.org.uk/fundraise) or email [fundraise@brake.org.uk](mailto:fundraise@brake.org.uk)

To partner with us or sponsor an event, email [corporate@brake.org.uk](mailto:corporate@brake.org.uk)

To join MyBrake and get tools to help you make a difference, go to [www.brake.org.uk/MyBrake](http://www.brake.org.uk/MyBrake)

To give a donation of any amount, go to [www.brake.org.uk/donate](http://www.brake.org.uk/donate)





**National Road  
Victim Service**

**Sudden**  
Help after a sudden bereavement

 GLOBAL FLEET  
CHAMPIONS

**ROAD  
SAFETY  
WEEK** 



 **Brake**  
the road safety charity

[www.brake.org.uk](http://www.brake.org.uk)

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