



# FORGOTTEN VICTIMS



**Post-crash care for families  
affected by tragedies on our roads:**  
a daily national disaster requiring urgent  
national strategy and funding

A report by



National Road  
Victim Service

## Preface

**Mary Williams** OBE



25 years ago, people affected by road death and serious injury in the UK were very unlikely to be offered any level of emotional support or help with practical or procedural issues. Police forces did their very best in trying circumstances, often producing leaflets for road crash victims about grief (that were, at police forces' own admission, woefully inadequately written and presented) that they handed out when delivering the "knock on the door". Many well-meaning police officers tried to deliver emotional support themselves, with no training in helping people traumatically bereaved, and with no support for their own welfare.

When Brake was founded in 1995, the charity quickly recognised that the first step must be to provide a standardised, 'base line' of care for every bereaved family (and often these families suffer a serious injury in the same crash too), regardless of where they lived, and in partnership with the police. We considered what could be provided as quickly as possible, as cheaply as possible, to help all victims as much as possible, to a high standard, with hardly any funding.

A decision was taken by the charity that the first step was to consult widely within criminal justice agencies, bereavement specialists and fellow NGOs to prepare a pack of information, objectively written, using plain English, that would give families the facts they needed at this terrible time and signpost them to sources of further help. This information was presented in a resilient, hard-bound folder that gave the pack, and the tragedy itself, deserving status and covered all issues ranging from coping with traumatic grief to claiming compensation.

Police immediately welcomed what became widely known as "the Brake support pack", and the charity, thanks to corporate donations initially, employed two members of staff. A member of staff ensured that police officers across the UK had the right levels of stock in the right police stations and were distributing the Brake pack empathetically at the time of death. Another member of staff was responsible for regular updates to the pack, again in consultation, and including creating different versions for the different countries of the UK. They also received calls from bereaved families wanting further help, usually emotional support and help with a practical or procedural challenge.

The quality and value of the service, and its standardised national impact, was immediately recognised by the Home Office which began to fund the charity's provision of the support pack and subsequently a helpline too.

From there, the charity was able to grow and develop its National Road Victim Service. The support pack continues to be delivered immediately to all families in all cases involving a fatality, including different versions for the different countries of the UK and translations. We also provide an accredited national helpline, giving vital support and advocacy to families (and professionals working alongside them). This helpline works to protocolled standards and delivers support in about half the UK's fatal crashes. We also assist families bereaved by a crash outside the UK thanks to funding from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The charity also provides a professional development service for police 'family liaison officers' including on-site training, an annual conference and an awards programme. The charity is currently developing an online learning hub for family liaison officers.



In 2020, however, we face a crisis for road crash victims, particularly in England and Wales. For the past five years, the charity has been working to retain our comparatively small levels of England and Wales funding from the Ministry of Justice (which took over funding from the Home Office), which part-funds our helpline and pack. Funding for “victims of crime” has been devolved to Police and Crime Commissioners but funding for road crash victims “falls down the cracks” because road crash victims are not all defined as crime victims, despite road deaths often involving a crime, and always involving a criminal investigation.

Around half PCCs are now funding Brake’s pack and helpline, demonstrating commitment to our work, but these are small grants and donations that are insufficient to sustain the service, and funding must be obtained at higher levels.

Meanwhile funding from statutory agencies for our work in Scotland (Scottish Government), our work in Northern Ireland (Police Service Northern Ireland) and our work supporting UK citizens bereaved abroad (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) continues, for which the charity is most grateful, along with additional corporate funding; but there is a deficit in funding.

At the same time, Brake has an ambitious but necessary strategy of service expansion. Crucially, this expansion includes provision of Independent Road Victim Advocates (IRVAs) based in communities (a Brake National Road Victim Service which has started in Warwickshire in 2020 thanks to PCC funding in that county). Only a very small minority of other police force areas in the UK have face-to-face support services for road crash victims (7 out of 43 to Brake’s current knowledge). These other services are locally operated by other agencies and work in different ways to each other and to

different standards not assessed by the National Road Victim Service. There are learnings we can all take from each other but for too long, families have been without a standardised face-to-face service on the ground that is integrated into the National Road Victim Service alongside the “Brake support pack” and helpline. Achieving such a service nationwide will cost significantly more than the funding we are fighting to retain – about £3 million a year.

**Perhaps the most pertinent point made in this report is the levels of funding provided, centrally, by the Ministry of Justice to victims of homicide. People bereaved by road death are as devastated as people bereaved by murder. Yet funds given by the Ministry of Justice for care of road crash victims has been only 1.3% of the amount given to care for homicide victims (the latter receiving face to face support through a service funded at a level above £3 million a year).**

I urge government, corporate funders and grant aiders to read this report, which outlines the current situation in detail, and find the mechanisms to fund quality care of road crash victims. We will happily put you in touch with families and police family liaison officers across the length and breadth of the UK who will tell you the life-saving value of this important work and the quality contribution of our National Road Victim Service in partnership with the police.

This report is produced for a simple reason; to raise awareness and funding. Thank you for reading on and then helping.

## A daily disaster in the UK

A national disaster is happening every day on UK roads. On average, five people die on roads (approximately 90% in England and Wales); about 150 a month.<sup>1</sup> Up to ten times as many people are seriously injured, often in crashes that also involve death, meaning families are both bereaved and affected by injury, with some injuries grave and life-changing, such as paralysis, head injury, limb loss.

Yet, because the deaths happen so frequently, in different crashes, in different places, they are rarely reported in the national news and therefore understandably forgotten as a political priority.

**Brake has often made the point that if 150 people were killed in a plane crash every month it would make the front pages, there would be a national outcry and action taken to stop the causes and support victims.**

Road crashes involving death and serious injury devastate families, friends and communities. They are as devastating as any other kind of sudden and violent tragedy, such as deaths from homicide or terrorist attacks.

Most of us are loved by a wide network of family members and close friends. For every death and serious injury on the road, therefore, a far larger number of people are bereaved.

**It is reasonable to say that for every five deaths a day, more than 100 people are also, daily, facing the horrific reality that someone they love has been killed on the road. Many more are affected by serious injury.**

## A horrific way to be bereaved

Road deaths are horrific. People of all ages die including children and young people, parents, partners and grandparents. Deaths involve catastrophic internal injuries and head injuries. Emergency services describe the horror of mangled and broken bodies.

People bereaved by road crashes have their lives changed forever, often when they receive a dreaded police officer's knock on the door. It is also common for people bereaved by road death to have been in the crash, watched their loved ones die horrendously, and have suffered serious injuries themselves.

Some deaths happen later, in hospital, after the best efforts of surgeons to save people with terrible injuries have failed and families have spent tortuous time hoping for the best and fearing the worst. Often, when families are asked to identify their loved one, their body bears little resemblance to how they appeared in life, due to the violence of their death. Families may have suffered multiple bereavements in the crash, been injured as well as bereaved, or may also be caring for someone injured.



## Traumatic shock and grief

Similar to people bereaved by homicide or terrorist attack, people bereaved by road death suffer traumatic shock as well as grief. Combined, this is an extremely challenging type of complex grief.

The first six weeks following a sudden, violent bereavement through a road crash is often described as the 'shock period' when bereaved people need immediate, close and consistent help to assure their safety and support. During both the early and ongoing stages of traumatic bereavement, these people typically suffer a wide range of extreme, and often scary and shocking, emotions and physical reactions affecting their mental and physical health at any time and that are draining. They may feel unable to do anything, or even leave their home.

Among others, emotions can include sadness, anger and rage, shock, numbing or guilt; physical symptoms such as feeling sick, a stutter, inability to move about, etc; pervasive fear; sense of vulnerability; reconstructed memories of a crash not actually witnessed, or flashbacks of a crash witnessed; difficulty sleeping, impaired concentration, and irritability; compulsive behaviours of self-protection or compulsive need for tangible reassurance of the presence and safety of other family members; behaviours and emotions directed towards retribution if it is possible to blame someone; and, mental and behavioural avoidance of memories associated with the circumstances of the death, as well as places, people or activities that evoke a memory of the event.

Early intervention is deemed crucial to provide the required support and to reduce the likelihood, or reduce the severity, of long-term mental or physical illness. Immediate and appropriate ongoing support means people can be helped to the point that there is a reduced chance of developing debilitating psychological conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or a range of other depressive and anxiety-related conditions.<sup>2</sup>

## Practical challenges

As well as dealing with their traumatic shock and grief, people bereaved by road crashes often face the burden of a range of distressing and often immediate practical challenges. This includes immediate and pressing issues, which for many people includes visiting the scene of the crash (which may be nowhere near where they live), return of a loved one's belongings, viewing the body of their loved one/s who has / have died and visiting loved one/s seriously injured in the crash.

A common and grave practical challenge is coping with one or more serious injury in the family incurred through the crash as well as coping with the bereavement. A loved one may have suffered head injury, facial injury, internal injury, spinal injury or limb loss. They may be in an intensive care unit in hospital or some other specialist unit not near the family's home.

People bereaved by road death often face huge financial challenges, due to the loss of income from a breadwinner who has died, or loss of income because an adult cannot work due to their traumatic bereavement or because they now have responsibility for caring for a person or people who were injured. Lack of income can lead to housing difficulties or difficulties covering even the most basic costs, such as the costs of visiting a family member in hospital who was injured in the crash, or the cost of a funeral.

Families bereaved and injured by road death also may have underlying problems that are compounded following the crash. Common life challenges that can make the situation even harder include split families and addiction.

## Procedural challenges

Road crash victims are thrust into facing complex procedural challenges, that they usually have never faced before.

Many of these procedural challenges are unique to being bereaved or seriously injured in a road crash; for example, pursuing a civil claim for compensation, or being a witness in a criminal court case against a driver. The aftermath of a fatal road crash is often a victim's first experience of dealing with police and the criminal justice system, and many do not understand what to expect; or worse, may have unrealistic expectations leading to further devastation and despair.

Often people bereaved and seriously injured by road crashes have no prior experience of these procedures, and, if left unassisted, can find them confusing and distressing, further adding to their distress, at a time when many people also find it hard to remember information.

Some procedures can take months or years to conclude and take up large amounts of time.



## Unique concerns

People bereaved and seriously injured by road crashes have concerns that vary but that are often similar and are unique to being bereaved in this way, compared with other causes of sudden, violent bereavement.

For example, often, road crash victims have specific concerns relating to the criminal justice system and traffic offences. Often, they need assistance to learn about the relevant traffic laws and legal processes being invoked. They may have strong views about these processes and the penalties for traffic offenders. They may have strong views about the crash investigation itself. They often have an expressed need to air these concerns and views and be heard and listened to.

Often, road crash victims want to talk with other people affected in the same way as them, so they know they are not alone and to help normalise what they are going through.

Often, road crash victims want to 'do something'. They want to help save lives and stop injuries on roads in the future by talking, in a public forum, about their experience or about a particular cause of crashes such as drink driving or speeding. Often, road crash victims want to memorialise their loved one's death in some way, for example through a physical memorial site, or an event, and want assistance in doing this. Not all road crash victims want to do these things, but it is common.

**Without immediate and ongoing specialist support and assistance, road crash victims are much more likely to experience long-term emotional, health and practical problems which blight their lives and place a significant, and costly, burden on statutory services.<sup>3,4</sup>**



## Responsibility for care of road crash victims

It is a duty of government and various agencies to ensure that the public have safe roads that are effectively policed. Deaths and serious injuries on roads are the tragic symptom of a failure to meet this duty, placing an enormous financial burden on public services, including our emergency services, hospitals and social services, as well as affecting the productivity of businesses due to time off work.

Causation of crashes often includes a preventable 'system failure', for example a death of a cyclist on a road that has no segregated space for cycling and had a high speed limit. All road deaths result in a criminal investigation by the police and many have causes contributed to by law breaking, such as drink driving or speeding.

For these reasons, it is legitimate that statutory agencies overseeing road safety, criminal justice and health shoulder a responsibility for policy and funding to meet the significant and grave support needs of people bereaved and suffering life-changing injuries in their families as a result of a road crash. This is known as one important aspect of 'post-crash care' and is the fifth pillar of the United Nations' safe systems approach to road safety.



As noted in the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice manual:

**“** Road deaths and life changing injuries from collisions are so serious that the life-long health and wellbeing of the individuals connected are drastically affected. They have a devastating impact on families, individuals and communities.

*The unexpected loss of a loved one in tragic circumstances is an event from which those affected may never fully recover. The police service must recognise the scale of this impact and loss and provide an investigative response and **level of support** that searches for the truth **while supporting those affected in a compassionate way**. It is also important to understand that road casualties may be victims of a criminal act other than being injured parties.* **”**

## Brake's National Road Victim Service – 20 years of quality service for road crash victims

For 20 years, Brake has, and continues to deliver, an acclaimed National Road Victim Service (NRVS) that is supported by all police forces across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and providing a base-line care provision **for all people bereaved through road death**.

The NRVS is highly respected and delivered through a **nationwide police partnership**. Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) are police officers trained to support families during the police investigation into the death/s. FLOs are required, under College of Policing guidelines, to refer people bereaved by road death to Brake's NRVS within 24 hours of the crash.

As detailed in the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice (APP) for the investigation of fatal and serious injury road collisions<sup>5</sup>:

**“ FLOs should ensure that family members are **provided with the Brake support pack** Information and advice for bereaved families and friends following a death on the road in England and Wales. It should be hand **delivered within 24 hours**, and preferably at the time the family are informed of the death. **The Brake helpline, printed on the front of the pack, should be highlighted to the recipient.** ”**

Police FLOs are required to hand out an annually-reviewed (in wide consultation) **Brake pack** of information, providing advice on psychological, practical and procedural issues, to all people bereaved by road death, including a book for children as well as books for adults.

**“**

*I felt as if it was in my bones. I couldn't breathe. I felt I was drowning; and I just felt dead inside. The support I had from the Brake helpline was the best help I've had.* **”**

**Bereaved road crash victim**

The Brake pack in turn signposts to the **accredited Brake Helpline**, which provides an intrinsic part of this service, offering vital down-the-line emotional support and explanation of procedures to both bereaved and seriously injured people. The helpline officers also, crucially, undertake advocacy on victims' behalf (contacting local agencies to obtain the care and support people bereaved by road death need on the ground, for example in relation to inquests, court cases, counselling, housing assistance, assistance with addiction issues or childcare issues, and many more potential issues). The helpline officers pick up the phone and get results on behalf of callers, at a time when people bereaved by road crashes are often unable to speak up for themselves.

**Family Liaison Officers (FLOs)** and FLO coordinators believe specialist services are essential for victims of road crashes, to ensure standardised, high quality, independent support across the UK.

In surveys, FLOs value Brake's National Road Victim Service (NRVS) highly, rating its importance to their work as 9 out of 10. Brake's bereavement literature is rated as a 10.<sup>6</sup> (See Appendix 1)



In 2019, Brake began the expansion of the NRVS to include **on-the-ground Independent Road Victim Advocates**; a network of skilled professionals working exclusively to care for the welfare of road crash victims, with priority given to victims who have suffered a bereavement but also those suffering life-changing injuries in their families. The first advocate has been employed into Warwickshire police area. Their role is to help road crash victims particularly in the early weeks following the crash by providing close and expert levels of emotional and practical support with the objective of minimising the risk of long-term mental health conditions developing. The advocate then offers a 'step up / step down' service, which means that the user of the service can call the Brake helpline at any time for support, and when their support needs are significant the advocate can assist once again (for example, at the time of a court case, or an anniversary, or any other identified crisis point). This enables the advocate service to be integrated into the NRVS in an effective and also economic way, providing assistance when needed.

The National Road Victim Service also includes **professional development training for Police Family Liaison Officers** specialising in caring for road crash victims, to help them better assist people bereaved by road death and injured. This includes on-site training by Brake volunteers delivered in police forces as well as an annual best practice conference and other events, including an awards ceremony for outstanding FLOs. This programme is delivered by the Brake team and through a network of relevant expert speakers Brake coordinates, and is expanding in 2020 to include an online learning hub for FLOs.

## The NRVS: A quality, standardised service by a professional team

The NRVS is a quality-approved service that works to standard operating procedures and employs professionals. Its management is delivered according to a 185-page manual covering all aspects of service delivery.

The day to day management of the NRVS is overseen by the Victim Helpline and Information Manager, who in turn reports to the charity's Chief Operating Officer. This role manages four trained, experienced Helpline Officers, who undertake the work of the Brake Helpline from Brake's head office in Yorkshire, plus the service's local advocate in Warwickshire (as explained above, the charity's ambition is to have advocates across the UK).

The NRVS also employs a team of professional writers and editors, a development manager to pursue funding, and a support officer, who, in particular, liaises with FLOs and Family Liaison Coordinators (FLCs) across the UK, working to ensure that each force is stocked with Brake's support literature, and that forces are engaged with Brake's FLO training and events programme.

### A quality service supported by the police

Appendix 2 contains the findings of surveys of Police and Crime Commissioners and Family Liaison Officers in 2019 by Brake. These surveys found overwhelming support for Brake's NRVS and an understanding of the value of a national, quality, standardised service that should be retained and urgently be expanded to include face to face support.

## Feedback from road crash victims who have used Brake's NRVS support packs and helpline

Brake has a wealth of positive feedback about the support packs and helpline.

Feedback about Brake's bereavement pack and books for children is consistently high. Victims share advice and information from the pack with family members. They read and digest it when ready, often in the middle of the night when questions arise when no other support is available.

Victims tell the charity that they would not have been able to cope without the support of the helpline. They particularly value the time given to listen and provide a space to express grief, which Family Liaison Officers do not have the capacity to offer.

*“ [The helpline officer] made a huge difference in the very early days by just simply listening and letting me cry at a time when I felt I had to hold it all together for my family. She ... regularly checked in with me and left messages of support when I wasn't able to speak. The various charities she put us in touch with and packs that were sent for my daughters were amazing and I honestly don't know how I would've coped without these calls.... An invaluable service for people at a time of heartbreak, shock, trauma and utter sense of loss. ”*

*“ The pack was excellent and answered a lot of questions and gave a lot of advice. It had clearly been put together by people who understood the whole ordeal of losing someone in an RTC. ”*

*“ They [the helpline officer] listened, sympathised, encouraged and offered advice in such a way I felt instantly a weight had been shared. They made me feel that what I was doing was the right thing and that they had all the time in the world to listen to me. They didn't rush my call at all. They phoned back with extra info that they had found out and also to see how things were. The time they gave me each time is so appreciated and is exactly what people in this situation need. ”*

The helpline provides a holistic service with a single point of contact for all victims. Navigating local services can be complex and an additional burden at a traumatic time. Advocacy and timely sourcing additional support such as counselling and other specialist services is valued highly by service users.

*“ [The helpline officer] helped me find information for my teenage son who was struggling; she also found a trauma counsellor which I could access quickly she was very, very helpful and seemed genuinely concerned that I got the help I needed. ”*

*“ She found some information for me on local charities who would be able to assist me with Bereavement Counselling and sent it to me straight away. She kept in regular contact with me and always called when she said she would. She was the first person I spoke to who actually gave me useful contacts. ”*

## Brake's National Road Victim Service support packs

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*The Brake support packs are quite simply brilliant. I have never had any negative feedback about them and I have been told by families that they are really needed at certain times especially post the police investigation when FLOs exit from the family and they suddenly find themselves having to cope on their own.*”

**Family Liaison Officer, Sussex Police Force**

All Brake's NRVS support packs for people bereaved by road death are prepared to high, protocolled standards by the charity's internal team of professional editors, ensuring objectivity and accuracy, in extensive and regular external consultation with a range of professionals specialising in the topics covered. This ensures that the information is correct, up to date, easily understandable, provides victims with what they need and, importantly, is objective; it does not deliver directional advice which could, unintentionally, cause more harm than good.

### Bereavement pack for adults



Brake's bereavement pack 'Information and advice for bereaved families and friends following death on the road', is provided to every bereaved family by police following every road death (as written into the College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice)<sup>7</sup> and has been for more than a decade.<sup>8</sup> Different versions are produced for the different countries of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, reflecting different procedures that apply in those countries. Translations are also available.

**Brake provides police forces with at least two copies of its bereavement pack for distribution to families following every road death. In 2019, in England and Wales, Brake provided forces with 3,450 bereavement packs.**

The bereavement pack provides plain English information on an array of complex issues including emotional reactions, practical matters and procedures specifically relevant to families bereaved by road crashes. The pack is produced in consultation with staff within the criminal justice system at the highest level as well as senior representatives working in areas relating to inquests, medical care, funerals, prosecutions, civil claims, psychological support, etc. The design of the pack is prepared with care also, to contribute to its accessibility.

The bereavement pack guides families through the aftermath of a crash providing information on all the procedures that they may face so that they are prepared and have somewhere to look for answers.



Within the pack, there is an additional book on 'Coping with grief', which all bereaved road crash victims in the UK receive. This guide helps victims understand common emotions and feelings following a road death and provides straightforward advice on how to cope and signposts to organisations, including Brake's helpline, and also other agencies who can help, for example charities specialising in supporting children or families who have experienced the death of a child.

In addition, space is provided in the pack for insertion of information about local agencies providing counselling or support.

## Bereavement pack for children and their carers

Brake also distributes through all police forces an acclaimed picture book pack for families that include children. This pack, prepared and updated in consultation with child bereavement experts, includes a picture book for children and a guide for adults reading the book with children.

Brake also produces packs of information about injury and hospital care, supplementing, and not conflicting with, the good work of serious injury charities.

Brake's literature provides a pathway for further support for road crash victims. The contact number of Brake's Helpline is listed on the front of, and inside, the bereavement packs for adults and children, and Brake also signposts to other relevant support organisations for people with particular support needs.



## Brake's National Road Victim Service Helpline

The Brake-operated NRVS Helpline is a quality accredited, freephone, confidential support service, providing information, advocacy and emotional support.

Brake helpline

**0808 8000 401**

**Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm**

or email [helpline@brake.org.uk](mailto:helpline@brake.org.uk)



### Process

Callers access the NRVS Helpline service in a variety of ways; through referrals from police Family Liaison Officers, through self-referral from Brake's literature or website and through referrals from other professionals such as GPs, social workers and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (when the crash occurs abroad). The Helpline is open Monday-Friday 10am-4pm and trained, experienced Helpline Officers are available during these hours to answer calls and emails.

### Methodology

The NRVS Helpline is not a traditional one-call service; it operates on a case support basis, with a single point of contact (a named Helpline Officer) supporting a caller throughout the aftermath of the road crash, usually through multiple calls.

Helpline Officers follow a Support Plan Methodology so when each initial contact is made, and throughout the support they provide, they will assess the needs of that specific caller and case. In the initial call to the Helpline, the Helpline Officer provides a safe space for the victim to discuss their experience; and carries out an initial assessment of need. The Helpline Officer then establishes a support plan to underpin the needs identified and follows this through with regular intervention support, finalising in an exit strategy which ensures a safe and supported exit from the service.

A Helpline Officer's main aim is to enable callers to cope, emotionally and practically, in the aftermath, and Helpline Officers remain in touch with a caller for as long as they need, but with clear exit strategies agreed when agreed goals are reached.

The NRVS Helpline has outcome targets for those it supports, which it regularly exceeds. These are that:

- 90% of callers supported feel more able to cope following emotional support
- 80% of callers supported will have a better understanding of practical matters after a crash
- 70% of callers supported will be able to access further support to meet their needs as a result of contact with the Helpline

Emotional support is vital, and trained Helpline Officers assist through active listening, explaining common aspects of trauma or grief and, where appropriate, they administer referrals to face-to-face counselling services that can assess and provide appropriate therapy tailored to the caller's specific symptoms and needs.

The NRVS Helpline is underpinned by the NRVS support packs (as detailed above). Helpline Officers can explain areas covered in the bereavement packs in further detail, especially complex criminal justice system procedures. Money and legal concerns also arise regularly with callers, particularly when callers are unable to continue working. Helpline Officers research appropriate funding help, legal help and liaise with organisations such as councils and mortgage companies around finances.



## Quality

The quality of the Brake NRVS Helpline service is demonstrated by its **Helplines Partnership accreditation** and its alignment with the key criteria for an effective victim support service that are identified in the Victims Commissioner's 2016 review of what works in supporting victims of crime.<sup>9</sup>

In 2019, Brake's NRVS Helpline was awarded second place in the Helplines Partnership's **Helpline of the Year Awards**. Shortlisted organisations that Brake finished above included major charities' helplines such as Marie Curie and the MS Society.



## Independent Road Victim Advocates: an urgent need in all police force areas

Brake's development of the NRVS from 2020 onwards centres around an urgent need to provide Independent Road Victim Advocates (IRVA) based in all police force areas across the UK. There is a desperate need for this service to complete an appropriate level of care for people bereaved by road death, and it requires significantly higher levels of funding than currently available.

An IRVA, provided by Brake's NRVS, is currently only available in Warwickshire thanks to funding from Warwickshire PCC. At present, there are very few other "on the ground" support workers for people bereaved by road death. See Appendix 3 for a map showing some limited local providers known to Brake.

The aim of the IRVA is to protect the well-being of people and families bereaved and/or seriously injured by a road crash. The objectives of the IRVA is to enable people bereaved by road crashes access to a specialist service of care, delivered by them in partnership with others, providing:

- a) early care (accessed as soon as possible and for the duration of the first six weeks) to:
  - cope better with their emotional and physical symptoms;
  - overcome practical and procedural challenges;
  - manage risks they face at a time of vulnerability;
- b) longer term support from the NRVS helpline and the IRVA combined, along with other providers of support as and when needed, with on-going emotional, practical, procedural and well-being issues addressed.

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*There is a severe lack of [on the ground] support services [for road crash victims]; it is a postcode lottery - support is dictated by local capabilities resulting in inconsistent support provision.<sup>10</sup>*

”

**Family liaison officer**

### Mechanism for delivery

The IRVA, posted within a police area, would be offered within 24-72 hours after a road crash bereavement, through a referral mechanism (either from a police Family Liaison Officer, another professional, or a self-referral) to the NRVS helpline. An assigned NRVS Helpline Officer will gain consent from the road crash victim to conduct a needs and risk assessment. The helpline officer will aim to identify any particularly high risks or complexities being faced by the victim, working in partnership with their FLO to do this.

The IRVA will:

- consider the findings of the needs and risk assessment and any necessary safeguarding or other actions relating to this in their early or on-going contact with the victim;
- meet the victim or victims, at a safe and confidential place of their choosing, such as their home or elsewhere, within the first week of bereavement if appropriate, or at a mutually agreed time as soon as possible;

- work with the victim to agree an evolving, user-centred support plan, to generally include holding a series of scheduled meetings within the first six weeks (described below) and any additional interventions required, and an exit strategy from these scheduled meetings;
- identify and agree outcomes the victim hopes to achieve, in line with the “outcome star” (see below);
- work to identify further emerging needs and risks as they emerge;
- work to agree next steps beyond the first six weeks. This will include:
  - a plan for the future of interchangeable, enhanced support delivered by both the Brake NRVS helpline and the IRVA, and according to the victim’s needs for down-the-line support as needed, and face-to-face support when required, for example face-to-face support during a court case. This is both effective and economic joined-up working within the NRVS;
  - referring and signposting the victim into additional services local to them, that are appropriate for them, and in agreement with them, through a support search conducted by the NRVS and through local knowledge of the IRVA, ensuring that the IRVA is not duplicating support better provided by another agency. This includes:
    - services relevant to their well-being and ability to cope and recover (including, as necessary, assessments of their mental health needs);
    - services relevant to procedures they are facing (for example the criminal justice system or civil proceedings, etc.); and
    - services relevant to their practical needs, for example housing or financial support services.

## Meetings with an IRVA: a more detailed explanation

The meetings provided between the IRVA and a road crash victim in the first six weeks are not to provide counselling. The meetings help the victim/s to:

- 1. Be informed and help them discuss, in a safe environment, the emotional and physical symptoms that they are suffering,** or are common to suffer and that they may suffer later. Through this discussion, the IRVA will help the victim/s to understand that, whilst understandably scary and worrying, symptoms that they, or their immediate family, are suffering are ‘normal’ following a bereavement in a road crash.
- 2. Develop a user-centred support plan, to help the victim/s cope on a day to day, night to night, basis, with their emotional and physical symptoms;** the outcome being that their safety and well-being is protected by these coping mechanisms. The support plan will be structured around the ‘Outcome Star’ monitoring system, which aims to help the victim, with the help of their IRVA, to achieve outcomes around the themes of; lifestyle, looking after yourself, managing symptoms, working and other activities, money, family and friends and feeling positive. The outcome star is a tried and tested method for demonstrating impact and recovery outcomes, allowing the NRVS to monitor progress of a victim over time, and providing evidence of steps taken along recovery pathways, at entry to the service, at points during service provision and at the end of support.
- 3. Enable service users to cope with immediate practical challenges** that may otherwise feel “too much to bear”, through a multi-agency approach to risk and needs planning. After a bereavement in a road crash, this could include many unfamiliar challenges, such as

## NRVS support for professionals

viewing a body, or receiving belongings of a person who has died, or visiting the scene of the crash.

### 4. Have their immediate wellbeing needs met and any safeguarding issues addressed.

This includes, for example, ensuring a victim has: somewhere to live and has the funds to feed themselves and get about; is eating and endeavouring to sleep; is not facing risky situations (for example being forced to work with dangerous machinery or drive at a time when they cannot concentrate on such tasks); is not facing a threat to their safety due to the behaviour of another person; is able to care for dependents safely if they are responsible for doing so.

### 5. Develop and agree, with consent, a safe exit strategy via a continued pathway of further support that a victim accesses, if appropriate.

This is enabled towards the end of their initial six-week support through the IRVA, ensuring a seamless move to planned support from the NRVS helpline, plus 'as necessary' face to face support from the IRVA and also other on-the-ground care workers, such as counsellors, local bereavement support groups, etc.



Brake's NRVS Helpline offers free support to professionals, such as a police officers, teachers or health workers, who are seeking advice about how to help people bereaved by road death. Brake also provides a raft of professional training tools, in the form of guidance reports, on different aspects of caring for people bereaved in such a way.

As priority, the NRVS provides in-force training of police Family Liaison Officers through FLO 'input training' sessions and administers a popular and routinely over-subscribed national conference on road crash victim support, attended by FLOs from many forces.

Brake runs more than one input session a month around the country for FLOs who focus on road death cases. Some forces join together to host the sessions. These sessions are attended by both new and existing FLOs and are delivered by a Brake volunteer who has experienced bereavement due to a road crash and is trained, monitored and evaluated by Brake.

The sessions provide an opportunity for FLOs to learn about the volunteer's experience whilst highlighting learning points and advice for FLOs in relation to use of the NRVS. It is a helpful addition to police training and feedback is overwhelmingly positive.

Brake also delivers an annual training conference for FLOs which is routinely attended by forces and is developing additional training opportunities around the UK. The conference includes practical case studies and best practice advice relating to care FLOs can provide, and how to take care of their own welfare.

In 2018, Brake inaugurated an annual awards programme for FLOs, recognising excellence and achievement within the profession and encouraging continuing professional development. This programme is proving a great success, giving FLOs who work with road crash victims the status and thanks they deserve.



## Costs and inadequate funding for the NRVS support packs and helpline in 2020

The basic cost of running the Brake National Road Victim Service, in its current format (with the cost of the IRVA in Warwickshire excluded) is, for the whole UK, just **£440,000 a year**.<sup>11</sup>

This equates **to a cost of only £250 per death** for a national, standardised quality service.

This is value for money by any standards; however it is crucial to remember it is a base line service that does not include the funds needed to expand the service to provide Independent Road Victim Advocates in all areas.

However, this basic cost is not being met, either from statutory sources or otherwise, and **statutory funding has reduced**.

Until April 2020, a minority of the cost of funding the NRVS bereavement literature and the helpline (for England and Wales), **but the largest single amount of funding, was met by the Ministry of Justice (£90,000)**; and this had been the case for a decade, with funding provided before that from the Home Office. Despite various assurances given to the charity that this funding would increase, this funding has now ended with no single replacement found as yet.

There is additional and smaller, but important, on-going statutory support for the service in Scotland provided by the Scottish Government and in Northern Ireland by Police Service of Northern Ireland.

The charity has also worked hard and successfully to undertake fundraising from people and corporations to meet a proportion of its funding shortfall, but has also, for the past three years, **had to utilise some of its precious reserves to fund the provision of the NRVS**.

The decision was made to dip into the charity's reserves because:

- a) it was vital to continue the development of our quality service (with management and processes to ensure we could be accredited by the Helplines Partnership and then became award winning) and
- b) it was understood from numerous conversations with civil servants that the value and quality of the NRVS was recognised to such a degree that the government would consider funding the service at higher, more appropriate levels.

Applications were submitted accordingly at the request of civil servants. This has so far not been successful however; and, to preserve the integrity of the charity, the charity's reserves can be dipped into no longer without threatening the charity.

Brake's estimated income for the National Road Victim Service in 2020, taking into account received and expected corporate sponsorship and statutory funding, including piecemeal income from Police and Crime Commissioners (see below) is c. **£270k**.

This leaves an **estimated c. £170k shortfall in service funding to meet our £440,000 costs in 2020 for the existing service**.

**This cannot be met through Brake reserves and must be found for 2020 and beyond to ensure sustainability of the baseline service.**

## The change in funding mechanisms from MOJ to PCC and the current reduction in funding this is causing

The ending of the statutory MOJ funding in April 2020 for the NRVS in England and Wales was unrelated to the service and its value. The reason was due to a policy decision to devolve funding of victim services (with the exception of homicide) from the MOJ to regionally-located Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), of which there are 43, who commission local services for victims. In 2018/19, following **local** applications from Brake, the funding of the NRVS started to be supplemented to a small degree by small donations and grants from about **half of PCCs**, demonstrating significant PCC support of the service, but not to a level that replaced the MOJ funding.

PCCs have two streams of funding, which may be available to fund the NRVS but these are highly dependent on the OPCC's criteria and priorities; a victims fund (which is ringfenced for "victims of crime" and which derives from the MOJ), and a communities fund, which derives from Proceeds of Crime Act Grants (POCA). PCCs set their own individual funding priorities, pots, criteria and reporting processes, and they all differ.

**So far, about £40,000 of funding has been secured for 2020 from PCCs with a similar amount hoped for through further applications. However, the value of this is lower due to the fundraising and reporting costs associated, which have to be met through time-intensive staffing.** Obtaining these small donations and grants from PCCs, which are meant for locally-run services, requires Brake to employ a paid officer just to undertake the labour-intensive work applying to PCCs and reporting back to PCCs in relation to small amounts gained from different pots for a national service.

Funds from PCCs are unreliable and unsustainable without central direction to fund the NRVS annually. As an example, West Midlands PCC's "victim fund" is run with criteria saying it is unlikely to fund for two years in a row. It funded Brake's NRVS to a small degree in 2019, but not in 2020.

**Put simply, the regional devolution of funding does not work in relation to funding a sustained, national service such as the NRVS that forces rely upon, unless there is a missive given centrally that PCCs should fund that national service, and a mechanism set in place for this funding to be easily given. By contrast, the MOJ has retained central funding of the national Homicide Service, which makes sense.**

*Crucially, efforts to obtain statutory funding in England and Wales both from the MOJ nationally and PCCs locally are hampered because people bereaved by road death are variably not defined by the MOJ and PCCs as "victims of crime" (see overleaf).*

## The problem of the definition of “victim of crime” and the comparison with homicide

The Victims’ Commissioner has made the point that being bereaved by road death is as traumatic and grave as being bereaved by homicide. Yet the MOJ perspective is that people bereaved by road death are not always “victims of crime” and therefore the support and care of these victims is not, strictly speaking, the responsibility of the MOJ. It follows through that individual PCC policies may also not easily identify that people bereaved by road death are eligible for services for victims of crime.

**Brake disagrees strongly with this perspective for the following reasons:**

- Bereavement by road death, while unique in many ways and requiring a specialist service, is as severe as bereavement by homicide. Both victim groups deserve the same level of funding of care.



- There is always a police investigation, often lengthy, into a road death and in the immediate aftermath of a road death, when early intervention is crucial, it is not possible to determine whether a crime has occurred as the investigation has not yet taken place. As noted in the College of Policing’s APP:

**“** *The RP (road policing) lead investigator must begin a road death investigation by adopting the mindset of unlawful killing, until the contrary is proved substantially.*<sup>13</sup> **”**

- If no other government department (for example, transport or health) accepts responsibility for care of bereaved road crash victims, they fall through the cracks of statutory funded support in a way that is inhumane and discriminatory compared with being bereaved by homicide or indeed affected by lower crime.

**“** *I was shocked beyond belief that no face to face support was available to me after my mother and partner were killed in separate road crashes, but, conversely, I received a phone call offering face to face support when my car had its wheels nicked.* **”**

- Whether, following a road death, illegalities are subsequently proven under criminal law or not, people bereaved by road death frequently look for truth and justice and recompense through the criminal justice system and processes such as inquests and civil claims that can take years to conclude and are frequently complex.



## Required levels of funding to expand the NRVS into a comprehensive service with IRVA

The Ministry of Justice provides a very significant £3.4m funding per year for a 'national homicide service'<sup>14</sup> which means homicide victims can receive face to face support from professional carers based in communities, similar to the Brake NRVS IRVA service currently provided in Warwickshire.

Fewer people are bereaved by murder than by road death; however, Brake has calculated, based on the costs of delivering the IRVA service in Warwickshire, that it would be possible to scale up the IRVA service within the NRVS nationwide for around £3m<sup>15</sup> per year.

The scaling up of the service would save money through a centralised management approach, and the imbedding of the service into the existing NRVS provision of helpline and support packs and our existing manual and standards.

The service would aim to work in partnership where appropriate with existing known providers of face to face care which is exist in a small minority of areas (see Appendix 3) and set up the service elsewhere in the majority of areas where no such providers exist.

The scaled-up service would provide support for those families affected by bereavement and the worst life-changing injuries from road crashes and focus on IRVA provision during the crucial early intervention period and crisis points beyond that; and continue to deliver the NRVS support packs and helpline.

## Funding for homicide victim care compared with road crash victim care

### Funding for bereaved road crash victims

For the funding period 2019/20, Brake received a grant of £98,000 from the MoJ to fund the delivery of its support for road crash victims in England and Wales, meeting under a quarter of its costs.

This funding equated to **£60.34 of MoJ support per road death** (based on 1,624 people killed in road crashes in England & Wales in 2018)<sup>16</sup>. (This funding ended from April 2020 and is not covered by a lower level of funding from very small donations and grants from about half PCCs, which also incurs an administrative cost to the charity to obtain).

### Funding for homicide victims

The MOJ has funded the National Homicide Service £3.4m per year.<sup>17</sup>

This equals **£4,646.17 of MoJ support per homicide** (based on 732 homicides in England and Wales in 2018).<sup>18</sup>

### Comparison of funding for bereaved road crash victims and homicide victims

The funding for road crash victims from the MOJ for England and Wales, per death, in 2019, was less than 1.3% than that provided for homicide victims, or, put another way, national funding for homicide victims was **80x higher** than that for people bereaved by road death.

## Conclusions

1. The National Road Victim Service provided by Brake is a quality, accredited, award winning service valued by victims and professionals and helps the well-being of road crash victims.
2. The NRVS is particularly valued by its main professional partner; the police.
3. Initial calculations by Brake estimate that the Brake National Road Victim Service in its current format (without face-to-face support) provides an annual saving to police of £2.2m (in time saved caring for road crash victims) against a cost of the NRVS helpline and pack provision of £440,000. Other professionals in the criminal justice system and care professions - for example GPs - will benefit from additional savings.
4. Current service levels offered by the NRVS do not include face-to-face support in communities, except in Warwickshire. Other services of this kind cover a slim minority of the UK. Face-to-face support is needed to further assist the well-being of road crash victims and costs significantly more.
5. Funding for the NRVS current levels of service is less than required. A £170,000 funding gap must be filled in 2020.
6. A further £3m must be found to provide the service comprehensively including face-to-face support through Independent Road Victim Advocates.
7. There is no government department in England and Wales taking responsibility for national strategy nor access to funding to provide support for people bereaved and suffering life-changing injury in road crashes, making it impossible at present to talk to government effectively about the needs and funding gap.
8. The arrangement of PCC, devolved funding for victims of crime, with no central directive to PCCs from government to fund the NRVS, means that funding for road crash victims falls "down the cracks", particularly as road crash victims are not defined as victims of crime.
9. PCC funding for Brake's NRVS is time consuming and costly and unreliable to achieve; and only in small amounts for short periods.

## Recommendations

1. **Central government takes responsibility for the strategic necessity of care for road crash victims.** This is assigned to one department, with cross-department involvement and agreement of the necessity of need; involving the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners.
2. **The Brake provision of NRVS literature and helpline is part-funded by central government to cover the shortfall in funding for 2020 with a commitment to find this funding sustainably beyond 2020,** so this vital service is assured and the charity's future providing this service is not threatened.
3. **Funding is found through a mechanism orchestrated by government for development of the NRVS to provide face to face support in all communities for families facing bereavement and life-changing injury from road crashes,** working with existing service providers where they exist in a minority of regions. This could, for example, mean instruction from government, delivered through APCC, that PCCs must each fund, proportionally, the costs of this work as a commissioned service. Alternatively these funds should be found centrally.

## Appendix 1: The police perspective: a valued service offering value for money (summary report)

In December 2019, Brake surveyed Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) regarding the value provided by its National Road Victim Service.

FLOs value Brake's National Road Victim Service (NRVS), rating its importance to their work as 9 out of 10. Brake's bereavement literature is rated as a 10 in importance.<sup>19</sup>

Family Liaison Co-ordinators tell us that the NRVS significantly reduces FLO workload and improves outcomes for victims. Without it FLOs would need to keep their phones on all the time, and victims would become frustrated if they couldn't get hold of their FLO. They say it is likely that outcomes for victims would be worse without the support from Brake, increasing pressure on the police.

*“Brake is an integral part of the jigsaw in moving family/friends or next of kin forward to closure, healing or getting on with their lives.”<sup>20</sup>*

The FLOs and their coordinators tell us they do not have the expertise nor capacity to meet all the support needs of people bereaved victims of crashes, and it is not within their remit to do so. They rely on Brake to provide that expertise; and FLOs also access support and guidance directly from Brake.

*“The FLO's are not trained nor able to provide the pastoral care and support families need but it is crucial to their role that they have a **reliable** resource available to them to which they can direct them.”<sup>21</sup>*

The NRVS means FLOs can manage victims' support expectations by providing high quality information in the form of the Brake pack and direct victims to the helpline where they have questions or require support.

The National Road Victim Service saves statutory services money.

The NRVS's early intervention and lasting care is focussed on reducing the suffering of road crash victims and increasing their ability to cope with their situation. This frees up police time, resources and training costs. It increases victims' chance of recovery, reducing pressure (and cost) on statutory services such as health services, education and benefits.

Based on feedback from police colleagues, Brake estimates that the average saving to police services for each victim that uses the Brake helpline is a minimum of £3,000 and a total annual saving of over £2.2m.<sup>22</sup>

Like FLOs, many **Police and Crime Commissioners** believe there is a need for a dedicated national road crash victim support service, in comparison to generic victim support. The main reasons given are that it provides consistency, specialism and independent support. One PCC said they *“rely on support provided by Brake.”<sup>23</sup>*

There are significant concerns amongst PCCs at the potential loss of funding for Brake's NRVS service. Many believe there would be a gap in services without centralised, national funding for the Brake service, and value the quality of Brake's work.

*“We would see a significant gap if national funding were to be removed.”<sup>24</sup>*

Even in the small number of areas where alternative support arrangements are at least partially in place, PCCs had concerns about victims who have a crash in one area but live in another.

*“A national helpline is able to ensure there is full interoperability for individuals out of their police force area.”*

Moreover, generalised crime victim services are not in a position to provide support unless it is clear a crime has been committed.

## Appendix 2: **The police perspective: a valued service offering value for money (full report)**

Brake's National Road Victim service (NRVS) works closely with police forces across the UK to support victims through its standardised literature and helpline service. We liaise regularly with road policing teams, and family liaison officers as well as receiving funding from nearly half of all PCCs towards (a minority of) the cost of our service, through one-off, unreliable grant and donation mechanisms. This report outlines what they tell us about the situation at present, following recent surveys in 2019 by the charity.

**Family Liaison Officers (FLOs) and FLO coordinators believe specialist services are needed for victims of road crashes, to ensure standardised, high quality, independent support across the UK.**

They value Brake's National Road Victim Service (NRVS), rating its importance to their work as 9 out of 10. Brake's bereavement literature is rated as a 10.<sup>25</sup>

92% of FLOs believe there is a need for Brake's NRVS, in comparison to generic victim support.<sup>26</sup> The main reasons given are that it provides consistency, specialism and independent support, while at the same time indicating an understanding that the NRVS needs to be expanded to include face to face on the ground support as well as literature and a helpline.

### **The value of the NRVS**

The FLOs and coordinators tell us they do not have the expertise or capacity to provide the support needed by victims of road crashes. They rely on Brake to provide that expertise and FLOs also access support and guidance directly from Brake. Coordinators say that victims become frustrated if they can't get hold of their FLO and it is likely that outcomes for victims would be worse without the helpline support from Brake; it would increase the pressure on the police. Moreover, generalised victims' services cannot provide support unless it is clear a crime has been committed. This can leave a gap for victims during investigations, or where no criminal prosecution is pursued.

**FLOs are clear in their support for a specialist service for road crash victims, working to national standards, that complements the service offered by the police.**

*"Road death is very **specific**. There's the victim support side, as well as the bereavement that has come from a sudden violent death."*

*"Road crash victims have **very different needs** to generic victims of crime."*

*"The FLO's are not trained nor able to provide the pastoral care and support families need but it is crucial to their role that they have a **reliable** resource available to them to which they can direct them."*

**Police value NRVS for providing a specialist, national service through the support packs and helpline.**

*"Brake's NRVS provides a support to police officers that is **second to none**."*

*"The NRVS provides a **standardized response/ service** in relation to most of the issues and emotions experienced by those affected by crashes."*

*"The packs provided by Brake are **invaluable**, they are always taken by FLO's at the first meeting."*

*"The NRVS helpline **complements and assists** in particular where an investigation will be proceeding through the magistrates/crown court and there is a prosecution in particular."*

**FLOs perceive outcomes due to the quality and independence of the Brake NRVS<sup>27</sup>**

*"If Brake support was not there, **FLOs would sink**."*

*"In our role as FLO, the victim service provided for by **Brake takes some weight off** from the family relying solely on us as support in this horrific time."*



*“The Brake service allows Next of Kin to seek **independent assistance** and advice when supporting FLO officers are not available, it can link with other resources and provide advice that may not be covered by the remit of the FLO.”*

Brake is *“An **integral part** of the jigsaw in moving family/friends or next of kin forward to closure, healing or getting on with their lives.”*

*“Brake has been there to act as a **crutch** to the healing process,” “a **non-judgemental** outside agency independent of police.”*

*“It’s **reassuring** for the family that they can talk to someone who isn’t a police officer and someone who they may feel more comfortable asking questions they feel may be foolish, not realising every other family has thought or asked the same. They provide a **bridge** between us and the family.”*

**FLOs comments indicate their understanding that the NRVS has strength in its independent and national approach ensuring standards, and that they understand the limitations in the NRVS service, in that it does not, due to lack of funding, as yet provide face to face support (other than in Warwickshire) – and that this should be remedied through expansion of the national service.**

*“I feel that there should be a **single source** of support to ensure **consistency** across the country.”*

*“In the absence of [any other] **national structure** supporting this sector of the community the service is essential to ensure appropriate signposting for support.”*

*“[Referring to face to face support lack of provision.] There is a severe lack of nationally structured support services; each Police force is expected to be aware of and be able to access local support provision, resulting in a **postcode lottery** type scenario where*

*your support is dictated by your local capabilities resulting in inconsistent support provision.”<sup>28</sup>*

## **Economic value**

Family Liaison Co-ordinators tell us that the NRVS service significantly reduces FLO workload. Without it FLOs would need to keep their phones on all the time, and rest days or annual leave would increase workload of colleagues. Instead, FLOs can manage victims support expectations by providing high quality information the form of the Brake pack and direct victims to the helpline where they have questions or require support.

**Brake estimates that the average saving to police services for every case that Brake’s helpline assists in is a minimum of c£3,000.<sup>29</sup> This saving would be even higher if a more comprehensive service could be provided with face to face support in communities.**

Using this methodology, **the NRVS return on investment in 2019 was over £2.2m.** The helpline model not only provides high quality support, it is hugely cost-effective and flexible compared with on-the-ground support. As demand for the helpline increases, the potential savings increase.

In reality, a reduction in funding for the NRVS would be unlikely to lead to additional investment in FLO support, or alternative services for victims. Without the NRVS, victims of road crashes would face a postcode lottery with a differing degree of generic victim support in the form of literature and advice, of doubtless variable quality, reliability and consistent input of consultative expertise, and overworked FLOs unable to meet their needs. Given the complexity of victims’ needs, this is likely to result in poor long-term outcomes and increased costs to other statutory services, including:

- Increased need for mental health services and medication

- Increased worklessness and reliance on benefits
- Increased school/educational interventions for children
- Drawn out legal proceedings where victims have unrealistic expectations
- Managing frustrations and complaints from victims

Brake has invested time over the past two years educating **Police and Crime Commissioners** about the work of the NRVS. The majority subsequently value Brake's work and believe there is a need for a national, specialist service to support victims of road crashes.

*"The service that Brake provides is **Invaluable**."*<sup>30</sup>

*"The benefits of a national helpline in this specialist area, such as a **consistent** service across the country no matter where individuals live, or incident occurs."*

PCCs say that Brake provides a **specialist service** victims need.

*"Provision of support for bereaved family members is considered a specialist service, similar to the requirements of the National Homicide Service, and **Brake is considered the most suitable service** to provide this effectively."*

*"We would be concerned if the **holistic and specialist** services currently provided by Brake were no longer available in the future."*

*"**Expertise and immediacy** of support by an organisation who has a detailed understanding of the needs and impact on victims as a result of a crash."*

*"The cases dealt with are **extremely complex**."*

*"Absence of a dedicated helpline to access specialist support on bereavement would be a **big loss**."*

There is also recognition of the **value of a standardised service** providing a consistent approach.

*"A service to support victims of road crime nationally is important as a **central point of expertise, consistency of service and availability**."*

*"A move away from a **nationally provisioned/managed service** would create inconsistencies in the level of service provided to families. This will create capacity and funding challenges but also lead to disparate approaches across the country."*

In June 2019, the MoJ consultation with PCC about the funding of support services for victims of road crashes raised concerns about proposed changes. Of the PCCs that responded to the consultation:<sup>31</sup>

- 100% made use of Brake packs and referred victims to the helpline
- 74% had concerns about potential gaps without the NRVS
- 37% were strongly against the devolvement of MoJ funding to local areas

There are significant concerns amongst PCCs at potential loss of funding for Brake's NRVS. Many believe there would be a gap in services without centralised, national funding for the Brake service, and value the quality of Brake's work.

*"We would see a **significant gap** if national funding were to be removed."*

*"Without the **advocacy role** provided by Brake there is the potential that victims going through the criminal justice process will not have access to necessary support."*

*“The loss of the Brake bereavement pack would be a **substantial loss** to the support of bereaved families should this no longer be available.”*

*“**There is no other local support for victims** of road crime. In the absence of a national helpline victims of road crime accidents would not have a specialist support for advice and support.”*

*“**Grave concern** about the impact of the withdrawal of the MoJ funding underpinning the current arrangements.”*

*“The PCC would not be in a position to provide the required additional resource due to other pressures on the **limited available funding**.”*

**Proposals to devolve victims’ funding to PCCs to commission local services is likely to lead to an increase in costs and reduction in quality. PCCs say:**

*“It would be **difficult to resource** and maintain a resilient and high-quality service if we were to look to commission a local service.”*

*“Devolution of funding ... would lead to a **reduction in economies of scale**, and the funding that would be allocated out is therefore unlikely to meet the need.”*

*“This would **increase costs** to the public purse without necessary providing extra services or value”*

PCCs had concerns about victims who have a crash in one area but live in another.

Some road policing units have told us they believe PCCs sometimes have limited understanding of the FLO role and how vital the Brake service is. Locally commissioned services are not always joined up with police units who work with victims, and do not always meet the complex needs of victims.

Funding for victims of road crashes currently lacks strategic coordination. A range of diverse, uncoordinated funding streams result in potential gaps for victims and underfunded services. PCCs say funding should not be limited to victims of crime as it limits who can access support.

*“The grant conditions do not allow for the support of road traffic collision victims, the funding is only intended to support victims of crime and not for RTC ‘accident’ victims.”*

*“In the many instances of a road collision causing serious injury or death which does not amount to a crime there would currently be no PCC funding pathway for this service.”*

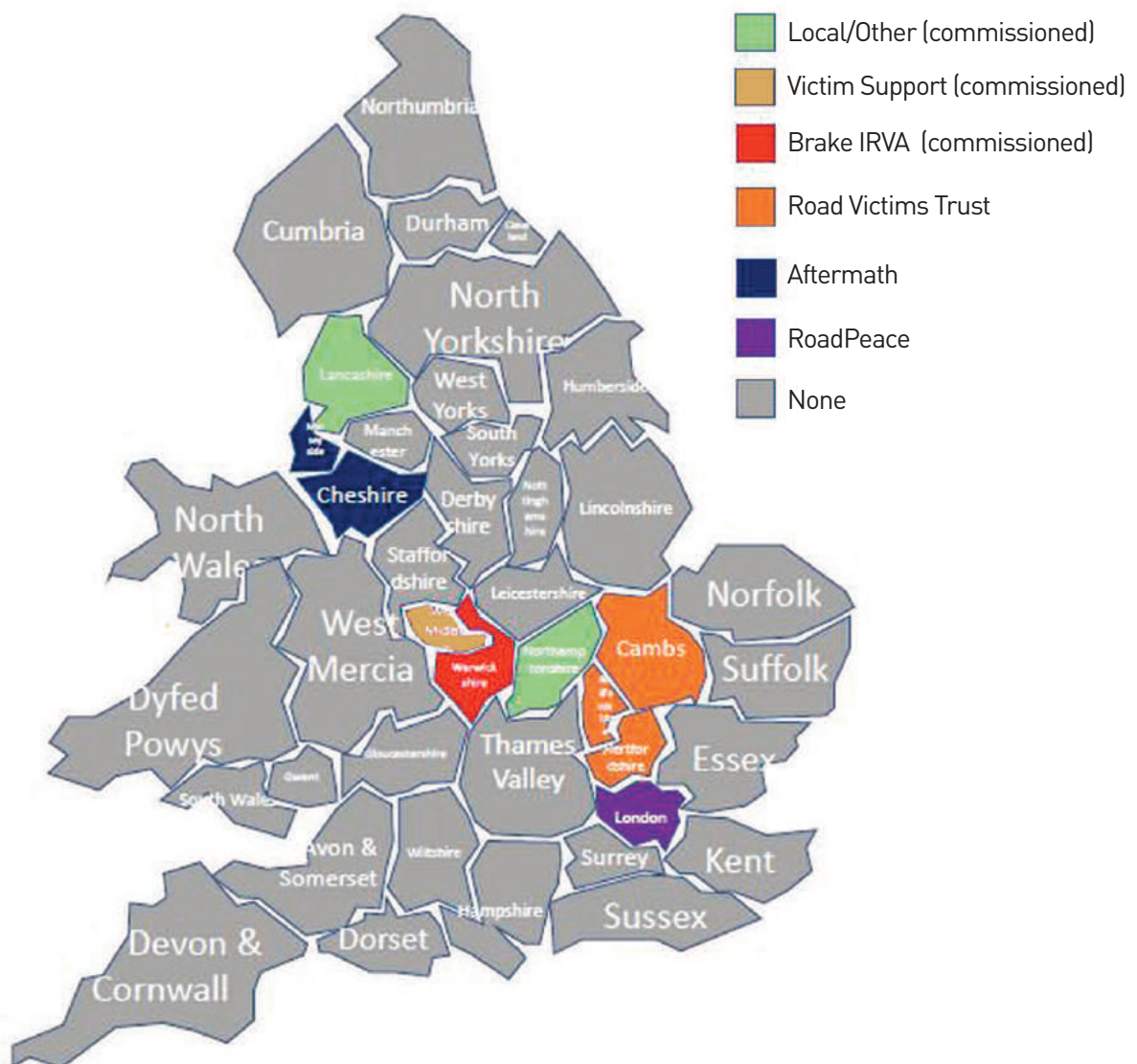
*“The funding from the PCC works best as a local supplement to the nationally provided funding Brake have had to date.”*

*“ A national helpline is able to ensure there is full interoperability for individuals out of their police force area. ”*

**PCC**

## Appendix 3: **Landscape of provision of on-the-ground face to face services** (known to Brake when surveying in 2019)

### Road Victim Services





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6. Brake's National Road Victim Service - a survey for Family Liaison Officers and Coordinators, December 2019. 27 responses gathered from at least 21 police forces. (5 responses were anonymous, so force cannot be identified).
7. <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/road-policing-2/investigating-road-deaths/>
8. [http://www.brake.org.uk/assets/docs/Help\\_for\\_victims/EW-pack-text-19-20\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.brake.org.uk/assets/docs/Help_for_victims/EW-pack-text-19-20_FINAL.pdf)
9. What works in supporting victims of crime: A rapid evidence assessment, Victims Commissioner, March 2016
10. FLO quote from the NRVS December 2019 FLO survey
11. This cost is inclusive of staff training, overheads and management costs.
12. Review into the needs of families bereaved through homicide, Victims Commissioner, July 2011
13. The APP further states that: "Road death investigations should have a: road policing intelligence strategy; witness management strategy; suspect management strategy; family liaison strategy; communication strategy; and, local community engagement and reassurance strategy."
14. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/victim-and-witness-funding-awards#national-homicide-service-for-england-and-wales>
15. The cost of delivering the IRVA service in Warwickshire is £57,000 per year in a county with 34 deaths.
16. DfT, RRCGB - RAS30034: Reported casualties by severity, road user type and country, United Kingdom
17. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/victim-and-witness-funding-awards#national-homicide-service-for-england-and-wales>
18. ONS Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2018 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingdecember2018#main-points>
19. Brake's National Road Victim Service - a survey for Family Liaison Officers and Coordinators, December 2019
20. Brake's National Road Victim Service - a survey for Family Liaison Officers and Coordinators, December 2019
21. Brake's National Road Victim Service - a survey for Family Liaison Officers and Coordinators, December 2019
22. Based on cost of police to fill support gap.
23. APPC and MoJ consultation with OPPCs, June 2019
24. APPC and MoJ consultation with OPPCs, June 2019
25. Brake's National Road Victim Service - a survey for Family Liaison Officers and Coordinators, December 2019. 27 responses gathered from at least 21 police forces. (5 responses were anonymous, so force cannot be identified).
26. Brake's National Road Victim Service - a survey for Family Liaison Officers and Coordinators, December 2019
27. Verbal consultation with FLC
28. Unless otherwise stated, quotations are taken from the December 2019 FLO survey
29. Based on officers estimating the NRVS helpline and support pack saves them about 3 days' labour a month, estimated over six months, costed at £200 a day; meaning £3,600 minus a unit cost of providing this service of c.£500.
30. Unless otherwise indicated, quotations in this section and from APPC and MoJ consultation with OPPCs, June 2019
31. APPC and MoJ consultation with OPPCs, June 2019







PCCs say that Brake provides a **specialist service** victims need.

*Provision of support for bereaved family members is considered a specialist service, similar to the requirements of the National Homicide Service, and **Brake is considered the most suitable service to provide this effectively.***



National Road  
Victim Service

## A thank you to all funders of the National Road Victim Service

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*Statutory funders for the funding period 2019/20*



PO Box 548, Huddersfield HD1 2XZ  
T: 01484 559909 E: [admin@brake.org.uk](mailto:admin@brake.org.uk)  
[@brakecharity www.brake.org.uk](https://www.brake.org.uk)

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