

RoadPeace review of the year: What we have achieved in 2015

During 2015, RoadPeace has continued to provide much needed support, information and advocacy for victims of road crashes and their families. And we have continued to campaign for justice and for safer streets, with some significant successes. We are grateful to all those who have made these achievements possible – our members, supporters and fundraisers, our volunteers, staff and trustees, and our corporate partners (Bolt Burdon Kemp, Brigade Electronics, CFG Law, Irwin Mitchell LLP, Metcalfes, Slater and Gordon, Withy King) and grant-making organisations (The 1970 Trust, The Ian Cadbury Charitable Trust, A K and M M Hanton Trust, The Marmot Trust, Polden Puckham).



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“I don't know where I would be if RoadPeace was not there to support me through this.”

Bereaved mother



Victims and families more able to cope

The sudden and traumatic experience of a road death or serious injury can be devastating and isolating. RoadPeace provides helpline support and connects victims through a befriending network, a resilience building programme and local support groups.

“When you feel alone and cut off from the rest of society, it’s nice to know RoadPeace is always there to catch us when we fall.”

Bereaved partner

Resilience Building Programme

RoadPeace ran its first Resilience Building Programme in Northamptonshire in February, as part of services commissioned through Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner. Participants said they valued meeting other families through the programme and also indicated a decrease in trauma symptoms, in particular those relating to avoidance and re-experience.

“The facilitators were so reassuring and encouraged me to get back into activities I never thought I could enjoy without X.”

Bereaved partner

In September 2015, we successfully delivered another Resilience Building Programme in London. Participants reported that they most valued being listened to and sharing experiences. They felt being part of a group normalised their feelings and reactions. They also found learning different techniques to cope with their grief helpful.

“Meeting other parents in the same situation has helped me tremendously. Before this programme I felt very isolated and alone.”

Bereaved mother

New telephone support service

RoadPeace introduced an ongoing telephone support service for all victims of road crashes in Northamptonshire. It consisted of six structured support sessions provided by a trained RoadPeace

volunteer. Many victims reported that this was an invaluable service for those who could not leave their home to attend a local group.

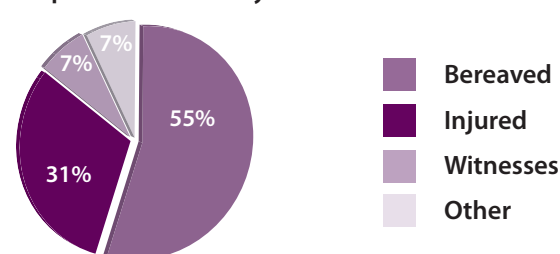
“It was a great support to speak to a RoadPeace volunteer. It really does help you to cope with the everyday reminders following such a horrific event.”

Witness whose son was badly injured in a crash

Helpline

In 2015 we supported 168 victims through our helpline.

Helpline Calls January – December 2015



Befrienders

We have supported 68 bereaved or seriously injured victims through our befriender network. To meet a high demand we recruited 10 new befrienders. We also introduced peer group supervision sessions so befrienders could meet and learn from one another as well as help us continually improve the service.

“This support from like-minded people, who all share a common, tragic connection, makes you feel less alone on your grief journey.”

Bereaved partner

Local Groups

There were bi-monthly meetings for the bereaved in London, Northamptonshire, Liverpool, Newcastle and Bristol, providing a vital source of peer support.

“Great to be able to come to a place where you feel comfortable. It’s a place where you can take your mask off and be yourself.”

Bereaved partner, Northamptonshire Local Group

Victims and families better informed

Those bereaved or seriously injured by a road crash are all too often re-traumatised by their experience of the criminal and civil justice systems. RoadPeace provides information and advice to support victims to navigate this confusing territory they have suddenly been thrown into.

“I wish I had come to RoadPeace sooner. I would be in a much better place.”

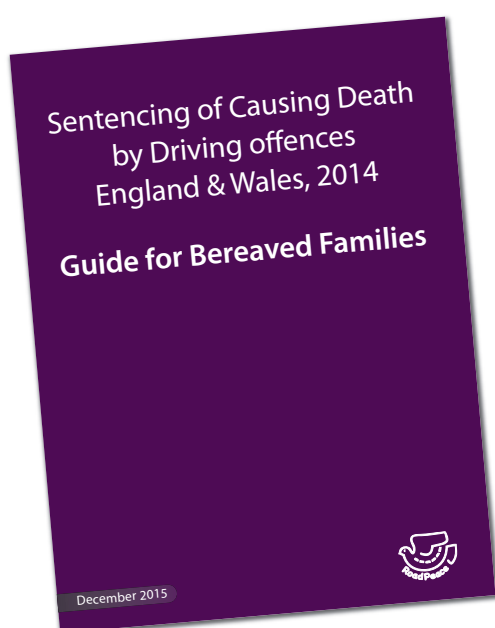
Bereaved father

National guides

We updated our core guides on road death investigation and criminal prosecution to give the bereaved the most recent information on the legal procedures which follow a road death. This includes the new right to review a police decision not to charge.

- ① www.roadpeace.org/resources/RP_Criminal_Prosecution_Guide_Sep_2015.PDF
- ① www.roadpeace.org/resources/RDIG__Sep_2015.pdf

We produced a new guide for the bereaved, with information on the most recent sentences given for causing a death by driving in England and Wales. Government literature only provides maximum sentences, so RoadPeace’s guide prepares families for the much lower sentences often given at court.



Local guides

With funding from the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner, RoadPeace produced customised guides on road death investigation and inquests for families bereaved by crashes in Northamptonshire. These included information on local procedures and local contact details.



Advocacy

RoadPeace continues to provide a casework service, providing information and assistance to the bereaved and injured. This included accompaniment to inquests, trials, sentencings and meetings with police and the Crown Prosecution Service. This work supports victims and helps ensure our guides and advice are based on practical experience.

“RoadPeace provided such expert and compassionate advice to me throughout our case. Without it I would have felt completely lost.”

Bereaved partner

Victims remembered and honoured

RoadPeace's remembrance activities allow families a vital space for remembering their loved one alongside others. Our services of Remembrance also gave bereaved families the opportunity to share their testimonies with local and national politicians, mayors, and representatives from the emergency services, raising awareness of the devastation of road death.

“This service provides a great deal of comfort and support to those who really need it.”

Local Mayor who attended
Liverpool service of remembrance

- Over 2,000 people have taken part in an act of remembrance organised by RoadPeace in 2015.
- Hundreds attended gatherings at the RoadPeace Wood and in Liverpool to commemorate August National Road Victim Month.
- 28 services were held across the UK to mark the World Day of Remembrance in November.
- 24 roadside memorial plaques were placed at crash sites.
- 79 memorials and tributes were added to our internet memorial site.
- 260 families were sent an anniversary card.



World Day of Remembrance

The World Day of Remembrance was first introduced in the UK by RoadPeace in 1993. It quickly spread to other European countries, before being adopted by the United Nations in 2005. It offers families and friends an opportunity to come together to remember loved ones, to give thanks to the emergency services, to highlight this unacceptable death toll, and to reflect on what can be done to prevent future deaths.

RoadPeace coordinated 28 services across the UK to mark the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims (WDR) in November. Our WDR services gained wide support from the emergency services, politicians and NGOs. Prime Minister David Cameron gave the following message of support:



“Road deaths and injuries are utterly devastating for all those affected, imposing a terrible human cost on the casualties of collisions and their families – my heart goes out to you all. The World Day of Remembrance is an opportunity to remember all those whose lives have been tragically affected by road collisions, to recognise the excellent work of our emergency services, and to reflect on how we can make our roads safer for all who use them.”

Andrew Jones MP, the Road Safety Minister, spoke at our WDR London service and talked with families and RoadPeace staff over refreshments after the service.

Campaigning for change – the voice for victims

RoadPeace is recognised for its thought leadership and expertise in traffic justice and road danger reduction. Our influence spans a diverse campaigning and NGO network as well as the police and government.

“RoadPeace has led the way in campaigning for national and international road safety programmes, including in key areas such as collision investigation, criminal prosecution and civil compensation, as well as victim services. Thanks to their efforts, justice was on the agenda of World Health Organisation’s recent international road safety conference in Brasilia.”

Jeannot Mersch, President

European Federation of Road Traffic Victims (FEVR)

Improved rights for victims

Our 2015 Parliamentary Manifesto focused on ending the discrimination of road crime victims. Our key ask was achieved when the government recently extended the definition of victim of crime to include all those injured by driving offences.



① www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/476900/code-of-practice-for-victims-of-crime.PDF

RoadPeace also succeeded in gaining the Labour Party’s support for those injured by law-breaking drivers to be treated as victims of crime.

① www.yourbritain.org.uk/uploads/editor/files/Victims_Taskforce_Report.pdf

More effective justice system

A long-standing call of RoadPeace was achieved this year with the first ever joint inspection of road death investigation and prosecution. More scrutiny is now needed for collision investigation.

① www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/cjji/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/02/CJJI_FRTI_Feb15_rpt.pdf

After lobbying by RoadPeace, Transport for London has invested in reviewing investigation and court procedures in an effort to improve the post-crash response in London.

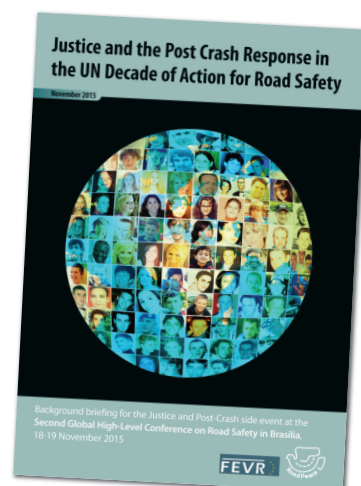
With the majority of road deaths ending up in coroners’ courts rather than criminal courts, coroners remain a priority for RoadPeace. This includes monitoring the use of the ‘Road Traffic Collision’ verdict, with the first statistics published this summer. Our analysis concluded it was only being used in half of inquests involving road deaths. And few coroners are acting to prevent future deaths, another key call for RoadPeace. We coordinated a meeting of bereavement charities and police to discuss the consultation on coroner reform and proposed key performance indicators to be used with coroners.

Safer roads worldwide

With the Global Decade of Action for Road Safety almost half over and the justice-related actions in the Global Plan lagging behind, RoadPeace organised an event at the WHO conference on road safety in Brasilia on justice and the post-crash response, alongside speakers such as the UN’s Road Safety Envoy, Luxemburg’s Transport Minister, Ireland’s Road Safety Authority’s CEO, as well as bereaved campaigners. We also prepared a background briefing that included how justice could be included in road safety programmes.

① www.roadpeace.org/resources/RP_Brasilia_Justice_briefing_2015.pdf

① www.roadpeace.org/resources/JUSTICE_AND_THE_POST_CRASH_RESPONSE_Side_event_on_18_November_2015.pdf



Campaigning for change – the voice for victims

The issue of justice and road traffic crime is regularly overlooked, both by those working to reduce road traffic casualties and those working to reduce crime. Instead of seeing the overlap and common goals, there is often a gaping hole instead. RoadPeace is working to change that, calling for a proper response by the justice system to road deaths and injuries.

“RoadPeace has consistently raised the problem of the justice system failing to treat road traffic crime or its victims seriously. This is something that matters greatly to victims and their families yet is often not seen as part of road safety. RoadPeace challenges this and campaigns for those who pose the most risk to other road users to take greater responsibility. RoadPeace’s voice for victims is one that deserves to be heard.”

David Davies, Executive Director
Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety



National

As the watchdog for the justice sector, RoadPeace collated and analysed the Ministry of Justice statistics on the prosecutions and sentences given for causing death by driving in England and Wales, 2014.

① www.roadpeace.org/resources/RoadPeace_Causing_death_by_driving_2014.pdf

We met with the Ministry of Justice to discuss our priorities for driving offences reform.

We continued to call for charging standards to be revised. Our new graphic highlights the overlap and confusion between dangerous driving and careless driving.



① www.roadpeace.org/resources/RoadPeace_Careless_Dangerous_charging_standards.pdf

Too rarely used, driving bans are a missed opportunity. Our analysis of their use in 2014 confirms they are almost exclusively used where mandatory. We collated the key evidence into a briefing on driving bans.

① www.roadpeace.org/resources/RoadPeace_Driving_bans_2014.pdf

With Department for Transport revising their road safety strategy, RoadPeace has lobbied to ensure that key justice areas are included – collision investigation, criminal prosecution, civil compensation and victims’ rights.

London

Following from our conference on ‘Road Danger Reduction and Enforcement: How the police can promote walking and cycling in London’, at the end of 2014, RoadPeace continued to lobby the police to prioritise tackling those posing risks to others. This included providing guidance on how the police should engage with pedestrians in their traffic law enforcement drives.

RoadPeace continued to make the case for civil law reform to better protect vulnerable road users with presentations on presumed liability, including for Transport for London’s Pedestrian Safety Working Group.

RoadPeace remains the only charity on Transport for London’s Fleet Operation Recognition Scheme (FORS). Cynthia Barlow, RoadPeace Chair, is a regular speaker at FORS conferences and training events. Her media work this year including being interviewed on Radio 4 and also BBC’s Crimewatch.

RoadPeace wins two awards

Archangel Award for our Chair

Cynthia Barlow, RoadPeace's Chair, was awarded the Archangel Award by RoSPA, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, at its Occupational Health & Safety Awards Gala Dinner. The event was attended by over 1,000 guests including award winners representing organisations from around the world.



“It speaks volumes about Cynthia's strong character and determination, as well as her great love of her daughter, that when faced with such unthinkable tragedy, she selflessly dedicated her life to safety and [crash] prevention through her vigorous campaigning.

Thousands of people are needlessly killed and seriously injured on our roads every year and Cynthia's contribution to reducing road danger is simply exemplary.

She has shown that standing up for something you are passionate about can make a real difference and most importantly, save lives... We are honoured to have her as one of our winners.”
RoSPA Chief Executive, Tom Mullarkey

Global Light of Hope Award for our Justice and Advocacy Manager

Amy Aeron-Thomas was awarded a Global Light of Hope Award by the Irish Road Victims' Association. This was in recognition of the justice advocacy work done by Amy for RoadPeace, FEVR (European Federation of Road Traffic Victims) and on behalf of all road traffic victims in Europe and beyond.



“I am very grateful for this award from IRVA. It highlights the need for justice in road safety. Victims deserve thorough investigations, appropriate prosecutions and fair treatment, both in terms of support and civil compensation.”

Amy Aeron-Thomas, RoadPeace

International Road Safety Awards for FEVR and CLOCS

RoadPeace is an active member of both FEVR and CLOCS (Transport for London's Construction Logistics and Cyclist Safety programme). In November both received Prince Michael International Road Safety Awards.

FEVR received an award for its part in the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims (WDR). RoadPeace is the UK organiser of WDR services.

“I am very happy that our 20-years of work for the World Day of Remembrance have been recognised as an 'excellent, sustainable and globally acknowledged initiative'.”

Jeannot Mersch, FEVR President

TfL's CLOCS programme also received a Prince Michael award for its rapid success in improving HGV road safety. RoadPeace was invited by TfL to attend the Awards ceremony in recognition of our support for the programme. Cynthia Barlow, RoadPeace Chair and tireless campaigner for safer lorries, has been actively involved in CLOCS since its inception.

“... improving the safety of our roads is one of our key priorities... Receiving [this] award recognises the results of our efforts... and will encourage more companies to get on-board the CLOCS programme to improve road safety at a faster rate.”

Leon Daniels, Managing Director of Surface Transport at TfL

Members and supporters

Membership

We are proud to be the only membership organisation that represents road crash victims in the UK, with over a thousand members and many more supporters.

This year, with our new Chief Executive in post, we have been consulting with our members about RoadPeace's strategic direction – at our AGM, through visits to our local groups and through an online survey of our members.



Stuart Keighley and Al Laverty from Cemex did a Tour de RoadPeace from Paris to Thorpe in June, raising over £4,000

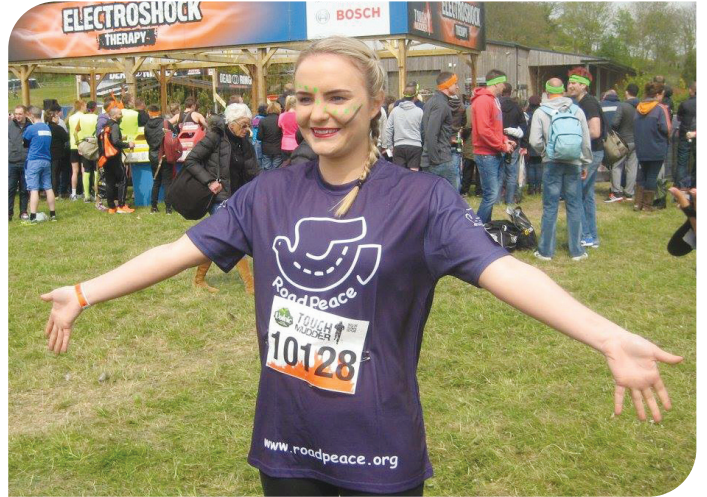
Fundraisers and supporters

Fundraising events provide a vital income stream to support our work but are also a great way to raise awareness about RoadPeace and provide a chance for communities to come together to remember a loved one.

Over 50 fundraisers took part in marathons, half marathons, obstacle courses, Tractor Runs, bike rides and much more.

“A great day out – I very much enjoyed seeing all the other RoadPeace runners, knowing we were all running for such a great cause!”

Colin Ettinger, Irwin Mitchell, Partner



Anna James did Tough Mudder in May, raising £996.25 for RoadPeace

Volunteers

RoadPeace relies on its volunteers to deliver our vital peer support services. Our community of volunteers includes:

- 27 befrienders
- Coordinators and facilitators of our local groups
- Over 25 World Day of Remembrance organisers
- Office volunteers and interns
- Hundreds of families who campaign locally and raise the profile of RoadPeace

“Befriending is such a rewarding role. Whenever I speak to someone I remember that I thought I would never recover from this trauma. But here I am on the end of the phone feeling fairly confident that they will get through it, somehow – and if I can help I will.”

Bereaved mother

Support RoadPeace

Please help us to deliver vital support to crash victims by giving a monthly or one-off gift, becoming a member or fundraising in your community or workplace. We are a small charity and wouldn't exist without the generosity of our members and supporters. We are also in need of volunteers to support our busy staff team. Contact the office or donate online – www.roadpeace.org/donate/.