

What is a Road Safety Hero?

Find out more about some of the amazing people who help us make safe and healthy journeys and care for people after a crash



Why do we need Road Safety Heroes?

- More than 1.3 million people die on roads every year. ¹
- Road crashes are the leading cause of death for children and young people worldwide. ²
- More than six children are killed or seriously injured on roads every day in the UK. ³
- Road crashes have a devastating effect on families and communities.
- Pollution from traffic causes respiratory illnesses and other diseases.
- Good post-crash care is essential to save lives and prevent life-changing injuries.
- Active travel such as walking and cycling is good for the nation's health and good for the planet.

The good news is that death and serious injury from road collisions and pollution are preventable, if people who design, build and use roads all share responsibility for road safety. This is known as the 'safe system' approach to road safety. ⁴



Read more about the safe system approach to road safety at www.brake.org.uk/safesystem.

What is a Road Safety Hero?

We think that everyone who helps make journeys safer and healthier or cares for people after a crash is a road safety hero.

Here are some of our heroes:

- Fire and rescue services
- Ambulance services
- Medical staff in hospitals
- Other health professionals
- Police family liaison officers
- Support services
- Road safety charities
- Road crash victims
- Parents and carers
- School crossing patrols
- Roads policing officers
- Road designers and highway engineers
- Everyone who uses roads safely to protect themselves and others.



www.brake.org.uk/road-safety-week #RoadSafetyWeek

After the
crash Road
Safety
Every road victim counts Week

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Road Safety Heroes who care for people after a crash

Fire and rescue services

Fire and rescue services get people to safety after a crash and make crash scenes safe to protect people from harm. They use special cutting and lifting equipment and techniques to rescue people trapped in vehicles. They are trained to treat injuries in emergency situations.

Ambulance services

Ambulance services get medical help to people as quickly as possible. They handle 999 calls and send ambulances to where they are needed. Paramedics provide life-saving treatment at the crash scene and trained drivers transport people to hospital if they need more treatment. Ambulance services travel by car, van, helicopter, motorbike and bicycle.

Medical staff in hospitals

Good post-crash care is essential to save lives and prevent life-changing injuries. When someone is seriously injured in a road crash, the emergency services decide which hospital to take them to. A person with very serious injuries may be taken to a Major Trauma Centre for treatment. They may be cared for in a specialist unit, for brain injury, spinal injury or burns. Some people are cared for in an intensive care unit (ICU) if they need constant, close monitoring and help to support bodily functions, such as breathing or heart rate.

Other health professionals

After they leave hospital, many seriously injured people need a lot of help from other health professionals to help them recover from their injuries or adjust to life with disabilities. They may get help from surgeons, physiotherapists, psychologists, or other therapists, for example to help them with speech or everyday activities.

Police family liaison officers

Police family liaison officers (FLOs) help families when someone is killed or seriously injured in a road crash. They provide support, comfort and information to the family, in a sensitive and compassionate manner.



Support services

Road crashes are devastating events for the people involved, their family and friends, and the wider community. Support services give emotional and practical support after a crash. They help road victims to feel able to cope, emotionally and practically, and adjust to a new reality.

Road crash victims

Some road crash victims talk publicly about their own experience of a road death or injury to raise awareness, fundraise, run road safety campaigns and help support other road victims.

Road safety charities

Road safety charities support people affected by road crashes and campaign for change so people can make safe and healthy journeys.

Road Safety Heroes who help us make safe and healthy journeys

School crossing patrols

School crossing patrols officers help children walk or ride safely to and from school. They wear a uniform, carry an official school crossing sign, and stop traffic so people can walk across the road. They are also called lollipop women or men.

Roads policing officers

Roads policing officers enforce traffic laws and ensure that anyone driving dangerously is caught and appropriately punished.

Road designers and highways engineers

Road designers create safe streets, designed for people not traffic, so everyone can make safe and healthy journeys. Safe streets have safe spaces for people to walk or cycle, away from traffic. Traffic moves at safe speeds. Highways engineers make sure our roads have well-maintained surfaces and are free from obstacles and damage.

Everyone can be a road safety hero

We all have a responsibility to use roads safely to protect ourselves and others. We can choose safe ways to travel and safe vehicles, obey road rules, travel at safe speeds and educate people about safe road use.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers can help keep young children safe by:

- Holding hands with them when walking near roads
- Crossing roads at safe places
- Riding with children on safe paths away from traffic
- Making sure children wear a cycle helmet to protect their head if they fall off
- Making sure a child is sitting in a well-fitted, appropriately sized child seat if travelling by car.

Parent and carers can also set a good example by driving at safe speeds, never using a phone while driving, always wearing a seat belt and never driving after drinking or taking drugs.

All parents and carers can help children and young people use roads safely and choose active ways to travel or public transport where possible.

1. World Health Organisation (2023) Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023. www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/safety-and-mobility/global-status-report-on-road-safety-2023
2. Ibid
3. Department for Transport (2024) Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: 2023 Annual Report and associated data sets. www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2023
4. Tingvall and Haworth, 1999. Vision Zero: An Ethical Approach to Safety and Mobility. https://www.rsearchgate.net/publication/264873849_Vision_Zero_-_An_ethical_approach_to_safety_and_mobility/link/549922a80cf2eeefc30fa409/download

