

Essential Personal Support

The Road Victims Trust provides support for the bereaved, and people otherwise affected by death, or life-changing injuries, who are resident in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

Key players in the formal processes that handle collisions, such as police, lawyers and the courts, have their individual roles to which they often attempt to add some personal support. However, the nature and pressures of their work mean that such support is usually short term and limited and, of course, they are not normally trained to provide specialist emotional and practical support in these traumatic circumstances.

The Road Victims Trust seeks to fill the gap in available specialist help by providing support for the bereaved, and people otherwise affected by collisions involving life-changing injuries, both short and long term.

The service was founded in 1995. We were the first group to respond in this way to a national working party that reported to government that there was a need to provide support to the families of road death victims.

The service is provided by a team of highly trained, highly skilled and highly committed volunteers, supported by a small professional staff. A very high quality of service was soon being delivered. HM Coroner for Bedfordshire and the Chief Constable have applauded the value and the quality of this work.

In September 2003 the Road Victims Trust became a local, independent charitable trust and is now a Registered Charity. It is non-profit making and the services are free. There is no statutory funding of the organisation. All costs are raised by grants, donations and fundraising events.

Since April 2011 the service has been extended into Hertfordshire.

The service provides much needed information and practical support. But the ethos of RVT is to offer more than this. The service is underpinned by emotional support, by human contact, by engaging with the victims at the point of crisis.

This allows the victims to feel heard, to prepare for the events to follow and to start to think through, and beyond, what has happened to them. The early contact lays the foundation so that in the future the support can be used to work through the awful pain. The support may be:

- Information provision, or, if appropriate, referral to other agencies.
- It may involve support through the inquest, any criminal trial, and past the anniversary of the collision.

In any event, RVT forms a single point of contact for the victim, through which he or she may receive / access all the information required to deal with the aftermath of the collision, the support to make choices as to how to use that information, and the personal support required for a return to full functioning.

Irrespective of culture, grief is unique to the individual and we can meet that uniqueness.