

 **Bedfordshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner**

Making the money work

Hello everybody,

As we enter a New Year, it's only natural to look back on 2019, which proved to be a quite exceptional 12 months of achievement for Bedfordshire Police, delivered by officers and staff who put outstanding effort into their service and the protection of the public. A round-up of the year tells me that more than 100 people linked to Organised Crime Groups have been arrested and record numbers of weapons taken off the streets as the Force has continued to crackdown on serious violence, drug crime and the exploitation of the vulnerable throughout 2019.

Offenders linked to such Organised Crime Groups in Bedfordshire were sentenced to more than 200 years in prison in the first nine months of 2019 alone. Over the same period, Bedfordshire Police disrupted their groups by arresting 101 people and charging 34. The Force seized more than five kilos of Class A and two kilos of Class B drugs, as well as six firearms.

Bedfordshire Police ended the year with a surge in the number of weapons being taken off the county's streets. Our property team has destroyed approximately 400 firearms over the past two months (seized in investigations or handed in over the past 18 months) and has destroyed close to 5000 bladed weapons over the same period.

Since November, Bedfordshire Police has come down hard on gangs and serious youth violence; first in the south of the county, with more than a dozen warrants. They have also charged more than 10 key individuals since October after a focus on Bedford drugs gangs. The Force also safeguarded 11 women and arrested eight after targeting Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery in suspected brothels or premises believed to be linked to Organised Crime Groups.

This is just the tip of the iceberg, but when the Policing Minister and Security Minister ask me what 'more' they get for 'more' money, the Force is making it ever easier for me to demonstrate precisely what more it has been able to deliver.

This is a year in which Bedfordshire Police worked ever more closely with its partners in local authorities, the Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Public Health England, the Clinical Commissioning Groups, ambulance service and mental health services. We now have drugs, serious organised crime and gang mapping to inform all of our delivery and meet regularly to plan and coordinate activity. We have also jointly created the brand new Violence Exploitation Reduction Unit with such partners, based at the former Houghton Regis police station. I am one of few PCCs in the country to have won funding for such a unit as only 18 have been created with new Home Office money. Bedfordshire Police could not have a more fitting police

lead for the VERU than Assistant Chief Constable Jackie Sebire, who is – deservedly – the national lead for Serious Violence policing. I look forward to the unit making a tangible difference in 2020.

It may be easy to write of how proud I am of Bedfordshire Police and the journey they have come on with me since I took up my role in May 2016, but it is no less true for that. The job of Bedfordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner has been the most important of my life and it is entirely clear from these outstanding results that our officers and staff feel the same way about their own roles.

Wishing you all a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. I look forward to seeing you in 2020.

Yours
Kathryn



Kathryn Holloway
Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire



News from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Network of leaders from across Bedfordshire working to end violence and exploitation of young people showcases the work of new ground-breaking unit to the Home Office.

Police and youth leaders behind Bedfordshire's new Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit (VERU) have unveiled their plans to Home Office visitors after an £880,000 grant to help them end youth violence in the county.

Roseann Taylor, whose son Azaan Kaleem was stabbed to death in Luton last year, was among those to give presentations to Government officials on Wednesday as part of a visit organised by the new VERU partnership team.

The VERU is creating a network of different agencies, projects and community groups to tackle the root causes of violence to put an end to young people being exploited into committing crime, carrying knives and becoming involved in gangs.

The officials were given a tour of the A&E department at Luton & Dunstable Hospital, where they were told about the impact of gun and knife crime on their services. They also heard from a young person who has accessed a number of services in the county voicing what young people themselves would like to see made available to help others who are at risk.

Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner Kathryn Holloway and Bedfordshire Police Assistant Chief Constable Jackie Sebire, the national police lead for serious youth violence, also gave presentations during Wednesday's event. The £880,000 fund to create the VERU has been awarded by the Home Office to the PCC and is run by her office. ACC Sebire takes responsibility for police involvement with the unit and its set up.

The PCC told the Home Office team: "What makes Bedfordshire different is that we genuinely had all the ducks in a row with partners who just needed the funding to release staff and come together to look at the problem of serious youth violence as one of exploitation of young people, grooming them into gangs and creating fear which drives many to carry knives. The Youth Offending Service have been talking about this for almost two years and the lead of the VERU, Kimberley Lamb, and I have been talking about the impact of adverse childhood experiences on those who are 10 and under for longer. We now have the chance to address this thanks to your funding and we couldn't be more grateful."

ACC Sebire said: "It's fantastic to see months of hard work and planning starting to come to fruition. We have a really ambitious vision for our VERU and I know professionals and grassroots groups across Bedfordshire are all pulling together to make it a success.

"I really believe this is the key vehicle through which we can have a transformative impact on the lives of our young people, reduce violence and prevent them from being criminally exploited."

The PCC and Assistant Chief Constable were joined by key partners involved in the VERU including Luton Youth Offending Service, Bedford Community Safety

Partnership, Mary Seacole Housing Association and alternative education providers, with representatives explaining the work they are doing in this area and how the VERU can help.

The PCC told an official who asked how long VERUs would need to be funded before they became 'business as usual': "The genuine answer is at least 25 years as only by funding this work for a generation until the next children have been born will you know whether it has been able to break the cycle of violence.

The Bedfordshire VERU is one of 18 similar units being funded by the Home Office across the country. Bedfordshire's is the only one to have the word 'exploitation' in its title and to make this a feature of its approach since victims and offenders are a constantly inter-changeable group among young people involved in serious violence.

The Home Office is awarding some £400,000 to approximately 35 different projects across the county which can divert young people away from criminality.

Full details of these projects will be announced in the coming weeks, once the grants have been finalised.

The VERU will also be delivering its own work, creating a long term and sustainable system to address and respond to these issues.

Kimberley Lamb, head of the VERU, said: "I was really pleased to showcase all the fantastic work of the VERU and our partners to the Home Office. I truly believe that the VERU is on the cusp of starting something genuinely transformational for the lives of young people across the county. The hard work starts now though and I really hope that everyone can support us over the coming months."



PCC explains grant priorities for year ahead at network Annual Partnership Day event

Bedfordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, Kathryn Holloway invited over 100 partners from across Bedfordshire to learn of the priorities of her £1.6m grant fund and share their own work with one another at her annual Partners' Conference.

The Commissioner explained to the audience at Cranfield University (on Tuesday 11 December 2019) that her focus for grants would be on early intervention for 10-13-year-olds to divert them away from gang membership and knife carrying, including an emphasis on out of school activities, plus the rehabilitation of repeat offenders responsible for a rise in Domestic Abuse countywide over the recent past.

"I need organisations to ask young people themselves what they would actually want to do outside school and make the range of activities wider than simply sports. I've been hugely impressed by one Bedford charity which has already consulted pupils in one middle school where more than forty languages are spoken, in an area which is a hotspot for gang grooming and recruitment, and which has had some answers they didn't expect including children asking for Pilates and Yoga classes.

"We need everything from football teams to drama classes to cookery as well. This has to be provided countywide, which means several organisations getting together at

locations across Bedfordshire and, realistically, the local authorities will also need to be involved as I haven't got the funds to do this on my own.

"Where Domestic Abuse is concerned, we have to be honest: what organisations have been offering by way of providing services has created duplication in some areas and gaps in others but, even more importantly, it's not working where repeat offenders are concerned and they're the very ones who are responsible for the greatest rise in this crime," PCC Holloway told the audience.

The PCC then handed over the stage to 26 partners for quick fire presentations to give them a platform to share their work and network.

"We gave over the event to presenters showcasing projects such as the new Family Drug and Alcohol Courts which bring a parent with addiction together for regular meetings with a judge and a rehabilitation programme proven to have a 50% better chance of getting them away from that addiction and keeping families together five years on to the creators of an app which monitors phone content in real time to warn children of its dangers to Reactive8 who work for me in Bedford Prison on both sides of the door around release to help change the mind-set of prisoners to Luton All Women's Centre's work around harmful practises such as Female Genital Mutilation in hard to reach communities.

"It was a whistle stop tour of the best work I am able to fund now and the opportunities to link this into other organisations who may not otherwise be aware of these ground breaking projects and the quite incredible partners who are delivering it," said Commissioner Holloway.

The PCC stressed that, to qualify for her grants, she needed to see more than one organisation working together, that they must deliver services across the whole county for fair access and that more than one body needs to be involved in the funding to build in greater sustainability.

She also confirmed that she will not be spending the entire grant allocation of £1.6m but keeping back £300k for spending by whoever is PCC after the May 2020 election.

Almost all of her commissioned services for 2019 - 2020 were in attendance, along with other local organisations from Bedfordshire and some national and international bodies including supporters of the United Nations Secretary-General's Campaign 'UNiTE by 2030' which is designed to end violence against women and girls.

The UN's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign that takes place each year. It started on 25 November with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, running to its 10 Human Rights Day on 10 December. For this, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner invited a local group of residents to bring their UN-inspired art installation to help spread the message of the campaign. The 'Our House' Art Installation is a small house featuring a range of survivor's stories with the theme #LookAtMeNow

OPCC Chief Executive, Clare Kelly, said "We will also be hearing today about campaigns running to support male victims of domestic violence and organisations who want to work across all of Bedfordshire so victims do not receive a postcode lottery service."

The 'Open Mic' sessions at the event, where organisations showcased their work included PCC-funded organisations and visitors:

Family Drug and Alcohol Courts (FDAC) - where judges and support workers work with parents to combat addiction and keep their children in care proceedings

ACES - describing a booklet for schools and youth groups designed to mitigate the effects of adverse early childhood experiences

Safetonet - with their mobile phone app to protect children from harmful content

UNSEEN - the charity working to combat Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery

Reactiv8 - working with prisoners before and after release to help them to change their own views of themselves

Direction for Bedfordshire - the PCC-funded service providing a website and support staff to assist prisoners on release - <https://directionforbedfordshire.co.uk/> - Contact number 01582 721010

Luton All Womens Centre - on working with communities where harmful practises like FGM take place

Bedfordshire Police Organised Crime Tactical Advisor - giving information to partners about known Organised Crime Groups

Anne Frank's Trust - working in schools to combat hate crime

Families First - working with both male and female victims of domestic abuse

Counselling Foundation - offering one to one support

FACES - supporting families in Bedford and devising out of school activities

Wicketz - gang and crime diversion through cricket

Mary Seacole - offering housing support to young people

Revive Project - Somali community groups who are based at two locations in Luton who support young people and their parents with varying issues. The organisations are keen to support their young with early intervention initiatives.

Neighbourhood Watch - helping police to keep neighbourhoods safe and pass on crime intelligence for action

Bedford Open Door - counselling young people

Att10tive - youth work and positive role modelling

Kooth - XenZone is a provider of online mental health services for children, young people and adults. Kooth, from XenZone, is an online counselling and emotional well-being platform for children and young people, accessible through mobile, tablet and desktop and free at the point of use.

Signpost Victim Support Hub - a service set up by the PCC to help all those requiring support following a crime.

Victoria Marlin from Signpost explained how other partners can get involved with Signpost; 'The Signpost Hub provides free and confidential support to anyone affected by crime. We refer the residents of Bedfordshire to specialised services which are appropriate for them. The Hub has been up and running for well over 18 months now and we are currently conducting a review where we are seeking to ensure our service remains current and meets the needs of victims precisely. Continuous improvement has to be the only way ahead when designing services for victims and we need your feedback and involvement in referrals for that.'

<https://www.signpostforbedfordshire.com/> - Freephone number: 0800 0282 887

More information on applying to the PCC's Grant Fund can be found at <https://www.bedfordshire.pcc.police.uk/> in the Campaigns & Funding section under the heading PCC's Grant Fund, alternatively it can be accessed at: <https://www.bedfordshire.pcc.police.uk/bedfordshire-pcc-grants-funding>

Applications close on 10 January 2020.



Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) Scheme

The Police and Crime Commissioner has a statutory duty to maintain an Independent Custody Visiting Scheme for Bedfordshire. Independent custody visiting is a well-established system whereby volunteers attend police stations to check on the treatment of detainees, the conditions in which they are held and that their rights and entitlements are being observed. The scheme offers protection and confidentiality to detainees and the police and provides reassurance to the wider community.

Beds OPCC has recruited four new ICVs which will begin training soon. We are still recruiting in Bedfordshire so if you are interested in becoming an ICV, please visit the Police and Crime Commissioner Website to complete an application form - <https://www.bedfordshire.pcc.police.uk/independent-custody-visiting-bedfordshire>

ICV Quarter two data (July - Sept) 2019/2020

Total number of detainees through custody	Number of ICV visits	Total number of detainees in custody at time of ICV visits	Total number of detainees unavailable*	Number of detainees observed**	Total number of detainees visited***
2211	18	111	29	72	72

*for the number of detainees unavailable – detainees were either in interview, asleep, intoxicated or too high risk to be seen.

ICVs have reported on the following:

- Identifying detainees which need additional support within custody and asking the ‘critical’ questions to whether or not Appropriate Adults have been contacted or whether a Mental Health Assessment was required.
- Reported that staff were helpful
- Asking detainees whether or not they needed to notify family/friends of their detention
- That they welcomed a new ICV Translation pack
- ICVs are ensuring that female detainees are being allocated a female officer and hygiene pack is provided.
- A Report was sent to the estates department after an ICV visit regarding one toilet being out of order
- ICVs assuring that CCTV footage within custody is working and being reviewed
- ICVs attended Luton Custody Suite for a stakeholder visit on the 14th November – to ensure that an Independent person was available and questions were asked surrounding the scheme
- The OPCC are still trying to recruit more ICVs via social media and Community Voluntary Service (CVS). ICVs have also attended IAG meetings to promote the scheme



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