



 **Bedfordshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner**

Making the money work

Hello everyone,

As you may have seen in the media, I have agreed to stay as the county's PCC for a further year after the PCC elections were suspended for 12 months due to the coronavirus but I have said I will do so as a Caretaker PCC since there will be no democratic mandate for any PCC after May 7, when elections were due to have taken place.

In March I released my End of Term Report to detail the transformation of the Force since becoming your PCC in May 2016.

Some of the key highlights included; in February 2020, Bedfordshire Police was graded "Good" in all possible areas by the police watchdog Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services - for all of efficiency, effectiveness, leadership, legitimacy and keeping people safe. The Force's Inspector, HMI Matt Parr, said he was "very impressed" and now considers the Force to be "well run" and "well led" telling ITV: "Two or three years ago Bedfordshire Police was languishing with some pretty poor grades from (the) Inspectorate: they've absolutely turned it around. I think we don't often say this but genuine credit to both the former and current Chief Constable and to the Police and Crime Commissioner who's presided over a big turnaround."

As you know I have robustly campaigned for better funding for Bedfordshire Police throughout the last four years and have achieved more additional funding from Central Government over my term than at any time in the past 20 years, including reworking the criteria for a Policing Special Grant to bring £4.571m to the Force in 2019-20, **with a second Special Grant of £3m now assigned to me with £2.2m paid within the week. This is a very substantial win at a time when the Policing Minister, Kit Malthouse, had been warning all forces that he was reverting to the previous criteria for such grants so that they cover events outside business as usual in policing that take place on a single day.** In the last financial year, the Home Office also awarded me a further £1.36m for an uplift in policing relating to serious youth violence, a grant of £880,000 to set up a Violence Exploitation Reduction Unit to tackle the root causes of such gang, gun and knife crime and has invited a bid for a further £880,000 for this year.

The report marked the end of my fourth year in the role and also pointed to other achievements of which I am most proud including the introduction of the Signpost Victim Care Support Hub (on website signpostforbedfordshire.com and freephone 0800 0282 887, six days a week) which the watchdog considered "notable practise" to be shared with all other forces. Signpost aims to contact victims of recorded crime in Bedfordshire within 24 hours by letter or phone. The Signpost service continues to

operate despite the Coronavirus but messages are now left for our victim care coordinators who return them promptly from home (having been equipped with new IT and phones by my office to allow them to do so).

The 'Direction for Bedfordshire' service was started by me last year, linking those exiting Bedford Prison and the Criminal Justice system with local support services including accommodation, health services and help to reconnect with estranged families. Direction is also backed by a website - [DirectionforBedfordshire.co.uk](https://www.directionforbedfordshire.co.uk) - and freephone call centre advisors on freephone 0800 917 5579, which is run by charity Youturn Futures which works with formerly prolific offenders who are trying to turn their lives around.

In February, I achieved my ambition to open a centre outside a hospital setting for the first time in Bedfordshire for the victims of sexual crimes, with age appropriate areas for children, teenagers and adults, which was immediately declared the new gold standard for such centres by the NHS regional lead for the East of England.

I had intended to step down after a series of achievements of which I am more proud than any in my 38 year career but when the postponement of the election was announced, without any consultation, I was not prepared to be bounced into a decision over staying or going which is why I have waited until now to declare my intentions to you, having properly considered the implications.

I have, of course, consulted the politically independent Chair of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel who hold me to account, Paul Cain. He tells me he is wholly in favour of my decision and the reasons I am giving for it and, not only that, tells me he is "delighted" that I am staying.

As a Caretaker PCC, I will ensure that:-

- * All possible assistance that can be provided to communities by my office will be delivered, which will now include a £60,000 fund to provide alternative accommodation for victims of Domestic Abuse, which is expected to rise due to enforced home isolation as a result of the coronavirus, Covid-19.

- * The Bedfordshire Police Partnership Trust which the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) now oversees, which runs the Bobby Van service which delivers free home security advice and lower cost crime prevention devices to the most vulnerable, will deliver emergency parcels to particularly vulnerable and isolated elderly people who have been the victim of crime (This scheme is the brainchild of the OPCC Chief of Staff, Clare Kelly, who has secured a pledge from supermarket chain Lidl to provide access to essential food, personal hygiene and cleaning items and has linked with the Fire Service and local ambassador schemes to set the service up.)

- * Grants commissioning for Victim Support and Community Safety continues and all grants so far will be subject to ongoing scrutiny to ensure they deliver as promised and within the year.

- * The last £240k of grant funding will now open for bids as I had kept money back for her successor to allocate after May.

- * My governance and scrutiny of policing continues unabated but will be remotely delivered - including, in my case, at least weekly teleconferences with the Chief and Deputy Chief Constables, and all the existing meetings I preside over or attend.

* I will continue to oversee the £122.1m budget that I have secured for Bedfordshire Police for the year - plus the £3m Special Grant - and I will set the police share of council tax - the police precept - for the next year.

* Bedfordshire will continue to be represented by me at the national Counter Terror Strategic Collaboration Board.

* I will continue to report to the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel who hold me to account.

* The OPCC will continue to chair the Bedfordshire Criminal Justice Board and Victims Board remotely.

* The build of replacement custody facilities at Kempston police HQ will continue, dependent on Coronavirus arrangements.

* The process to finalise outline planning permission for the defunct Greyfriars Police Station in Bedford will continue, as long as the planning committee sits or is able to make decisions, and the sale will be considered against the prevailing economic position.

* A refurbishment programme to improve officer and staff working facilities, led by me personally, will resume as soon as practically possible.

Anyone wishing to offer to assist with the content of emergency parcels during the current emergency should contact my office PCC@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk.

I wish you and your loved ones all the very best and ask you to support the Government's direction of staying at home in order to stay safe as far as practically possible. Key workers across all sectors have my support and your respect, I am sure, for their quite outstanding devotion to duty in supporting us all.

Yours
Kathryn



Kathryn Holloway
Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire

News from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner



Bedfordshire PCC wins £3m in second Special Grant for Bedfordshire Police

Bedfordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, Kathryn Holloway, has won a second unique Special Grant from the Home Office to fight gang, gun and knife crime and fill a hole in the cash-strapped force's finances - just a day after agreeing to stay for a further year as a Caretaker PCC after elections were postponed for a year as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Commissioner Holloway had persuaded Government that the rules for Special Grants in policing needed to be changed to allow forces like Bedfordshire Police to qualify, despite previous criteria which meant that such grants only covered spending in the service that lay outside 'business as usual' which took place on a single day. Having done so, PCC Holloway received her first Special Grant last year of £4.571m to cover the unprecedented costs of fighting gang, gun and knife crime in the county over a three year period. She has now been awarded a further £3m for the Force to also assist with these costs in 2020-21.

"Only yesterday I launched my publication to mark the end of my fourth year and what should have been the end of my term, before the PCC election was delayed by Government by a year to May 2021. I have set aside my own plans to stay until then as I believe that only someone who has been chosen by the people of this county should be a Caretaker PCC but, as you can imagine, it gives me huge pleasure that the Grant I've fought so hard for has indeed come in and I'm going to be able to deliver on its promise.

"Everybody told me at first that the rules would not be changed and that this wouldn't be possible. I'm of course delighted that the Home Office recognised that Bedfordshire Police required extra assistance and that the Special Grant was absolutely deserved to help to bring serious youth violence under control and it's working; the extra money last year enabled the Force to double its specialist response to gang, gun and knife crime - known as Op Boson - with a second unit created for the north of the county to mirror that in the south. Between them they have been responsible for enforcement leading to more than 150 years in prison terms and knife admissions to our hospitals have finally plateaued.

"This means that, flying in the face of solved crime rates across policing, the Op Boson units have achieved between 80 and 90% success in relation to these terrible crimes.

“That’s not all the first Special Grant helped to achieve; as well as vast amounts of Class A drugs, cash and weapons being recovered, I was able to continue to support record recruitment of the 160 PCs I promised last year as well as an additional 18 to cover those who fall out of training (plus a further 18 through the national uplift).

If I hadn’t won the grant, recruitment would have had to stop dead to divert funds to pay for the policing of gangs, guns and knife crime,” said the PCC.

Commissioner Holloway pointed to the double benefits that will also arise from this year’s Special Grant, of which the first £2.2m will be paid within the week.

“Without this new Special Grant for £3m, we would not have been able to continue the fight against youth violence at this level. We couldn't have maintained two of these units, however overwhelmingly successful, without a £2m hole in the Bedfordshire Police budget. As it is, Op Boson’s successes across the county will continue; some very dangerous people will be put away and drugs gangs will continue to be dismantled and I will prove all that to the Policing Minister Kit Malthouse in an end of year report once we reach the end of March as he needs to know what ‘more’ he gets for ‘more’ investment, when looking back over the first year of Special Grant support.

“Not only that but I will be able to recruit 156 PCs this year - 100 to replace leavers, 20 as I’d promised as brand new posts and 36 more as our share of the national uplift; Covid-19 permitting of course.

“This means that this is now an excellent time to apply to join policing in Bedfordshire as you can put in an application whether or not you are able to travel,” said the Commissioner.

Chief Constable Garry Forsyth said: “This is excellent news for the force and the law-abiding citizens and communities of Bedfordshire, it will enable us to continue our focus on guns, gangs and knife crime with our excellent Boson teams leading the way in tackling these determined criminals. Whilst it ensures that we continue to grow our workforce to meet the increasingly complex and serious challenges faced by policing today, we know that until the funding formula is revised we will not be able to meet the current and future levels of demand in the way that the Commissioner, myself, all my officers and staff and importantly the public would like.”

However, PCC Holloway pointed to her concern over warnings that the Special Grant process may not be able to be accessed in the same way in future years. “PCCs and Chiefs have been warned by the Minister that he intends such Special Grants to return to their original purpose to cover events occurring on a single day, such as a terror event or call on policing to protect the US president or recent NATO conference at Watford. I feel strongly that the people of this country and county want the money they invest in our policing, either through general taxation or the local precept, to be spent on their own protection.

“I’m very grateful for both Special Grants which I won because the Home Office Police Funding team is fully aware that, until the whole national funding pot and the way it is divided among forces is reviewed, Bedfordshire Police simply does not have the resources from either Central Government or the council taxpayer to meet its extraordinary level of demand. That’s clearly recognised at the centre and these two Special Grants mean it can never again be argued that the reverse is true,” she said. The ongoing precarious financial position of the Force and its limited front line - despite 18 extra officers last year and 36 this financial year as a share of the 20,000

strong national uplift - to deal with such serious and violent crime on its patch, is the reason why Bedfordshire Police was also recognised among the 18 forces in most urgent need for a further £1.36m grant to increase visible policing against serious violence in 2019-20.

“This built on the Op Boson work with phenomenal successes, especially from the purchase of earlier forensics, to allow very dangerous people to be charged within the required time frame and put away for a long time. It also meant that we could pay for enhanced data analysis to produce a product to precisely target emerging gang, gun and knife crime hotspots and paid for the Op Sparkler patrols, flooding such areas in a very targeted way and using stop and search and other tactics to crackdown on those responsible. This is now recognised as a national blueprint for success,” said PCC Holloway.

Bedfordshire’s Assistant Chief Constable, Dr Jackie Sebire, the national lead for serious violence, is responsible for the county’s operational response to such violence and the Op Boson and Op Sparkler patrol outcomes.

She said: “We have shown that when we are provided with sufficient funding our staff are able to make a significant impact. We have devised an nationally innovative evidence strategy combined with the professionalism and dedication of our staff which we can now see the successes of.”

Both the PCC and senior leaders of Bedfordshire Police say they are fully aware that police enforcement alone cannot solve the gang, gun and knife crime problem, which can only be stamped out by dealing with root causes and diverting young people away from gang membership, gun and knife carrying and exploitation in the first place.

The PCC won a further £880,000 grant, with the help of ACC Sebire, last year which has led to the setting up of the county’s Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit bringing police, youth offending, local authority, health and charity partners together to work with communities to find solutions that will connect with their young people. This week, the PCC’s office was submitting a second bid to the Home Office for match funding to continue with the unit.

“I’ve pointed out to the Home Office, who have said they are beyond impressed with the work done so far in Bedfordshire and the speed of the progress of the VERU, that funding - as in Germany - needs to be made available for at least 10 years or we will never know whether these approaches change attitudes and behaviour in the following generation.

“I’ve also written to the Minister to make him fully aware of how vital these two Special Grants have been and future extra assistance will continue to be until the national funding formula is finally adjusted and rebalanced, as I have been promised, to continue this outstanding progress in Bedfordshire which has led to the Force being graded as ‘Good’ across the board this year by the police watchdog,” said Commissioner Holloway.

Those wishing to apply to join Bedfordshire Police can find details available on [the Bedfordshire Police website.](#)



PCC agrees to stay on as 'a Caretaker PCC' after election delay and releases her end of term report detailing the transformation of Bedfordshire Police during her four years in the role.

Bedfordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, Kathryn Holloway, is to stay as the county's PCC for a further year after elections for her successor were suspended for 12 months due to the coronavirus but has said she will do so as a Caretaker PCC since there will be no democratic mandate for any PCC after May 7, when elections were due to have taken place.

Commissioner Holloway made the announcement today (19 March 2020) as she released what had been intended as an End of Term Report to detail the transformation of the Force which she has presided over since becoming its PCC in May 2016.

Last month (7 February 2020) Bedfordshire Police was graded "Good" in all possible areas by the police watchdog Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services - for all of efficiency, effectiveness, leadership, legitimacy and keeping people safe. The Force's Inspector, HMI Matt Parr, said he was "very impressed" and now considers the Force to be "well run" and "well led", singling out the PCC for credit, telling ITV: "Two or three years ago Bedfordshire Police was languishing with some pretty poor grades from (the) Inspectorate: they've absolutely turned it around. I think we don't often say this but genuine credit to both the former and current Chief Constable and to the Police and Crime Commissioner who's presided over a big turnaround."

The Commissioner robustly campaigned for better funding for Bedfordshire Police throughout the last four years and has achieved more additional funding from Central Government over her term than at any time in the past 20 years, including reworking the criteria for a Policing Special Grant to bring £4.571m to the Force in 2019-20, with a second Special Grant promised imminently. In the last financial year, the Home Office awarded a further £1.36m for an uplift in policing relating to serious youth violence, a grant of £880,000 to set up a Violence Exploitation Reduction Unit to tackle the root causes of such gang, gun and knife crime and has invited a bid for a further £880,000 for this year.

The report to mark the end of the PCC's fourth year in her role pointed to the other achievements of which she is most proud including her introduction of the Signpost Victim Care Support Hub (on website signpostforbedfordshire.com and freephone 0800 0282 887, six days a week) which the watchdog considered "notable practise" to be shared with all other forces. Signpost aims to contact victims of recorded crime in Bedfordshire within 24 hours by letter or phone. The Signpost service continues to operate despite the coronavirus.

Commissioner Holloway became the first PCC in the country this year to fund Family Drug and Alcohol Courts in which parents with addictions commit to an intensive rehabilitation programme and meetings with a judge, in care proceedings. In practise, outside Bedfordshire, the courts have been proven by the Universities of Lancaster and Brunel to be twice as effective in ending drug and alcohol addiction for the parent and keeping families together, five years on.

PCC Holloway created the Direction service in 2019-20, linking those exiting Bedford Prison and the Criminal Justice system with local support services including

accommodation, health services and help to reconnect with estranged families. Her office negotiated an arrangement with the Department of Work and Pensions to offer same day benefits and employment advice to those leaving prison. Direction is also backed by a website - [DirectionforBedfordshire.co.uk](https://www.directionforbedfordshire.co.uk) - and freephone call centre advisors on freephone 0800 917 5579, which is run by charity Youturn Futures which works with formerly prolific offenders who are trying to turn their lives around.

Throughout her term, PCC Holloway has promoted the wellbeing of Bedfordshire's officers and staff including, this year, promoting an arrangement with Magistrates to view the Body Worn Video of an assault on an officer, even when an assailant pleads guilty, so that they can judge the severity of the offence for themselves, in advance of sentencing. She introduced a Targeted Healthcare Scheme to offer frontline officers a fast track to diagnosis and treatment, when facing a long wait, and free healthcare screening and a monthly health drop in advisory service, working with the world class Sports Science department of the University of Bedfordshire.

In February (2020), Commissioner Holloway achieved her ambition to open a centre outside a hospital setting for the first time in Bedfordshire for the victims of sexual crimes, with age appropriate areas for children, teenagers and adults, which was declared the new gold standard for such centres by the NHS regional lead for the East of England.

"I do not think that anyone could claim that I have sat on my hands over the last four years and I'm awaiting a second Special Grant any day, as promised in writing by both the last and current Policing Ministers. I had intended to step down after a series of achievements of which I am more proud than any in my 38 year career.

"When the postponement of the election was announced, without any consultation, I was not prepared to be bounced into a decision over staying or going which is why I have waited until now, having properly considered the implications. I do not have a full time Deputy PCC and my excellent unpaid volunteer Deputy, Justine Currell, has a full time national role in relation to Human Trafficking. I do not believe that an unelected member of my staff, however talented, and certainly no external candidate, would be an appropriate replacement as I believe in democracy and at least I have been elected by the people of this county.

"I have, therefore, decided that there is no realistic alternative but for me to abandon the new professional engagements that I had been in the process of arranging and to become a Caretaker PCC. No Commissioner will have a democratic mandate after May 7 so, coronavirus permitting, I trust they will do as I will and continue with the essential business of governance and public reassurance in these circumstances but it would be quite wrong to introduce any major change that should be approved via the ballot box.

"I have consulted the politically independent Chair of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel who hold me to account, Paul Cain. He tells me he is wholly in favour of my decision and the reasons I am giving for it.

"I am being required to serve as PCC because of the pandemic and I have no intention of pretending that it is not taking place and that alternate arrangements to those that are the norm are now required for this year. This does not mean, of course, that my office and I will not continue to deliver practical, common sense benefits to and on behalf of policing to the people of Bedfordshire," said PCC Holloway.

As a Caretaker PCC, Commissioner Holloway will ensure that:-

- * All possible assistance that can be provided to communities by her office will be delivered, which will now include a £60,000 fund to provide alternative accommodation for victims of Domestic Abuse, which is expected to rise due to enforced home isolation as a result of the coronavirus, Covid 19.

- * The Bedfordshire Police Partnership Trust which the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) now oversees, which runs the Bobby Van service which delivers free home security advice and lower cost crime prevention devices to the most vulnerable, will deliver emergency parcels to particularly vulnerable and isolated elderly people who have been the victim of crime from this afternoon (Thursday March 19 2020). (This scheme is the brainchild of the OPCC Chief of Staff, Clare Kelly, who has secured a pledge from supermarket chain Lidl to provide access to essential food, personal hygiene and cleaning items and has linked with the Fire Service and local ambassador schemes to set the service up.)

- * Grants commissioning for Victim Support and Community Safety continues and all grants so far will be subject to ongoing scrutiny to ensure they deliver as promised and within the year.

- * The last £240k of grant funding will now open for bids as Commissioner Holloway had kept money back for her successor to allocate after May.

- * The PCC's governance and scrutiny of policing continues unabated but will be remotely delivered - including, in PCC Holloway's case, at least weekly teleconferences with the Chief and Deputy Chief Constables, a monthly publicly minuted Strategic Governance Board with the Bedfordshire Police Executive team, bi-monthly Strategic Alliance Conferences with Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire Police, chairing quarterly conferences in relation to the region's Counter Terrorism and Serious Organised Crime policing and attending quarterly conferences with the Chiefs and PCCs of Bedfordshire's Eastern region forces, by teleconference. The OPCC will also be represented at operational performance meetings concerning the Joint Protective Services provided to Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire Police under the leadership of Bedfordshire Police (including the Major Crime Unit, Roads Policing, Firearms Policing, the Dogs Unit, forensic Scientific Services, Civil Contingencies Planning and Operational Support).

- * The PCC will continue to oversee the £122.1m budget that she has secured for Bedfordshire Police for the year and she will set the police share of council tax - the police precept - for the next year.

- * Bedfordshire will continue to be represented by Commissioner Holloway at the national Counter Terror Strategic Collaboration Board.

- * She will continue to report to the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel who hold her to account.

- * The OPCC will continue to chair the Bedfordshire Criminal Justice Board and Victims Board remotely.

- * The build of replacement custody facilities at Kempston police HQ will continue, dependent on coronavirus arrangements.

* The process to finalise outline planning permission for the defunct Greyfriars Police Station in Bedford will continue, as long as the planning committee sits or is able to make decisions, and the sale will be considered against the prevailing economic position.

* A refurbishment programme to improve officer and staff working facilities, led by the PCC personally, will resume as soon as practically possible.

Anyone wishing to offer to assist with the content of emergency parcels during the current emergency should contact Commissioner Holloway's office on .

Any organisation wishing to apply for a grant for the next year with a service to assist victim support or community safety which can be delivered under the current constraints of the coronavirus advice limiting social contact should approach the Bedfordshire OPCC on PCC@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk.

"It is in the interests of my force that I do not share either my own reaction or professional viewpoint concerning the wisdom of allowing your own people to hear first about matters impacting on their lives and futures in the news headlines at the same time as everybody else, though clearly the Crisis Management industry holds extremely clear and long established views on this," said the Commissioner.

PCC Holloway is a globally recognised Crisis Communications specialist, whose key area of expertise has been the release of public information in an emergency, especially in mass fatality events, for 17 years before taking up her current role; for example, she has twice been a keynote speaker and seminar leader at the international Business Continuity and Public Sector Resilience Industry's World Conference in Disaster Management (WCDM) in Toronto, prior to becoming the PCC of Bedfordshire.



A statement from Police and Crime Commissioner, Kathryn Holloway

I have been deeply impressed by the response of Bedfordshire Police, the services I run and commission and those that partner with my office in their response to COVID 19 - the Coronavirus.

I would like to assure the public that the contingency plans put in place by Bedfordshire Police are allowing a full service to operate. As impact on officer and staff numbers may become apparent in coming weeks, the Force is diligently preparing to offer an appropriate response and to deliver business as usual, as far as reasonably possible.

My victim support hub, Signpost, is also well structured to respond to the current situation and all staff are prepared for any changes to ensure that our most vulnerable residents in Bedfordshire continue to receive a good service.

Signpost and my own office have been involved in thorough preparations for home working if and when required.

Police service is even more essential when the country requires support at this level and although I appreciate the drive that all my police colleagues have to serve the public, they must also look after their own health and that of their loved ones.

We can do that together by adhering to the guidance set out for us by Public Health:

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<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>



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