

COMPLAINTS



Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Bedfordshire

The vast majority of interactions between the police and the public are positive. Unfortunately, sometimes you may feel that the service you receive is not up to the standard which you would expect.





COMPLAINTS AGAINST BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE FORCE

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and their Office are unable to investigate complaints against Bedfordshire Police or individual members of staff. This falls into the operational management of Bedfordshire Police Force. Individual complaints should therefore be directed in the first instance to Bedfordshire Police.

Bedfordshire Police deal with all complaints against police officers below the rank of Chief Constable, all police staff and Special Constabulary. For minor matters that can be resolved quickly and simply, a supervisor can usually deal with your complaint. More serious matters, however, are referred to the Professional Standards Department (PSD), who will oversee the process. Some matters, due to their seriousness, are referred to the Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC).



Bedfordshire Police Force Customer Support Team can be contacted at:

-  Email: customersupport@beds.police.uk
-  Web: <https://beta.beds.police.uk/fo/feedback/tc/thanks-and-complaints/>
-  Telephone: 101 and ask to be transferred to the Customer Support Team.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

The PCC has a statutory duty to deal with complaints against the personal conduct of the Chief Constable, which should be made in writing.

When the Chief Constable has not had any personal involvement into a case or dealings with the complainant and delegates such responsibilities to others within the organisation, a Chief Constable complaint cannot be recorded.

The IOPC statutory guidance states 'A.7 There will be times where a complaint names the chief officer or acting chief officer, but the complaint is actually about something where authority has been delegated to another officer or staff member within the force. Where the local policing body receives a complaint for which is it is not the appropriate authority, they must forward the complaint to the appropriate authority.'

Therefore, where it is immediately clear that the Chief Constable or Acting Chief Officer has had no involvement, the local policing body must take the steps to inform the complainant that they are not the appropriate authority and that the complaint must be passed to the police to review.

Complaints made regarding the personal conduct of the Chief Constable should be sent via post or email to the following:

-  PCC@beds.police.uk
-  OPCC, Bridgebury House, Bedfordshire Police HQ, Woburn Road, Kempston, Bedford, MK43 9AX

INDEPENDENT OFFICE OF POLICE CONDUCT (IOPC)

Some matters, due to their seriousness, are referred to the IOPC. The IOPC oversees the police complaints system in England and Wales. They investigate the most serious matters, including deaths following police contact, and set the standards by which the police should handle complaints.

Further information can be found on the IOPC website: <http://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/>



COMPLAINTS REFORM - REVIEWS



The Policing and Crime Act 2017 and supporting regulations made significant changes to the police complaints and disciplinary systems.

The legislation introduced a number of changes to existing legislation (such as the Police Reform Act 2002) which are designed to achieve a more customer-focused complaints system. This, in part, has impacted on the way complaints against Bedfordshire Police are handled.

Reviews were previously known as appeals and dealt with by Bedfordshire Police Professional Standards Department or the IOPC.

From the 1st February 2020, the OPCC is the relevant review body in most cases apart from those complaints or conduct matters listed below which the IOPC are responsible for reviewing where they relate to:

- Any incident or circumstance in or in consequence of which a person has died or suffered serious injury
- A serious sexual assault or offence
- Serious corruption
- Criminal offence or behaviour which is liable to lead to disciplinary proceedings

A review offers the opportunity to consider whether the complaint outcome is reasonable and proportionate but not the handling of the incident leading to the complaint. Each review will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If the reviewer concludes that the outcome was not reasonable and proportionate, the review should be upheld i.e the service provided by the police was not acceptable the OPCC will, where appropriate, make recommendation to the Chief Constable of Bedfordshire Police.

REQUESTING A COMPLAINT REVIEW:



Complainants will have been advised by PSD in their complaint outcome letter if they have the right of review and who is the appropriate review body (either the OPCC or IOPC). The review can only be against the outcome of a formal complaint, i.e a complaint that has been recorded under the legislation. The right of review does not apply to an informal complaint i.e one that has not been recorded.

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The timeframe for requesting a review is 28 days from the date of the letter concluding the complaint. Before a complaint can be reviewed by the OPCC, it has to be formally recorded by PSD under Schedule 3 of the Police Reform Act 2002.

This is different to having an expression of dissatisfaction dealt with/logged by the Force through their Customer Support team and which has not been recorded under Schedule 3.

HOW TO MAKE THE REQUEST FOR A REVIEW

Should the complainant wish to request a review, then an application for a review must be in writing and state the following:

- the details of the complaint;
- the date on which the complaint was made;
- the name of the force or local policing body whose decision is the subject of the application;
- the date on which the complainant was provided with the details about their right of review at the conclusion of the investigation or other handling of their complaint.
- the complaint reference number on the outcome letter from PSD.

Alternatively, [a review form can be downloaded and completed](#).

Please note only the complainant or someone acting on their behalf (with their written consent) can make an application for a review.



CONTACT:

Email:

Bedfordshireopccreviews@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk

In writing:

Office of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Bridgebury House, Bedfordshire Police Headquarters, Woburn Road, Kempston, Bedfordshire, MK43 9AX

COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER (PCC)

All complaints about the conduct of the PCC will initially be dealt with by Bedford Borough Council's Monitoring Officer (who is also the Police and Crime Panel's Monitoring Officer).

The Police and Crime Panel (PCP) for Bedfordshire is responsible for handling complaints against the PCC. A complaint form is available on the PCP webpages. This may be submitted electronically, or alternatively downloaded for completion. A hard copy of the form may be obtained by telephoning (01234) 228256.

Forms submitted through the PCPs webpages will automatically be forwarded to the Council's Monitoring Officer. Hard copies of the complaint form should be sent to:

Monitoring Officer
Bedford Borough Council
Borough Hall
Cauldwell Street
Bedford
MK42 9AP

Email: bedspcp@bedford.gov.uk

The PCP complaints policy is available at the following link:

http://www.bedford.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/beds_police__crime_panel.aspx

IF YOU REQUIRE FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:



PCC@beds.police.uk



01234 842064



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Road, Kempston, Bedford,
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