



10 September 2021

Dear HMICFRS

I acknowledge that the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) team published on the 21 July 2021 – State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2020

Bedfordshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner welcomes the report with the document being based on inspections conducted by HMICFRS between March 2020 and March 2021. All points will be considered.

The OPCC notes that the report describes how crime patterns have changed over the last year, noting that more crime was committed online and therefore making a case for greater sanctions in the Online Safety Bill to protect vulnerable people online.

Other key points noted by the OPCC:

- HMIC said the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in policing facing an extraordinary year to which it had to react and rapidly adapt, with officers and staff making great personal sacrifices to keep their families safe whilst continuing to work. Also, the pandemic increased vulnerability in other ways, such as the lockdown leading to more calls for help from those suffering from domestic abuse and adds that some public services, including mental health, keep on failing.
- Unless the health and social care system is fixed and people can get the support they need, more people will continue to be vulnerable and enter the criminal justice system unnecessarily.
- The 'chronic' backlog in court cases has increased as a result of the pandemic - HMICIC questioned why waiting times have become inexcusably long when the number of cases going into the system is at the lowest level for decades.
- Regarding the planned recruitment of an additional 20,000 police officers by 2023, Sir Tom Winsor heightened danger that people unsuited to policing including those with extremist or racist views may be recruited.
- The quality of vetting needs to be consistently high, and Directorates of Professional Standards should be staffed by some of the best detectives.

**Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire**

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- Mention is made of ongoing issues with ESN, the replacement for PNC the Law Enforcement Data Service (LEDS) and the ANPR replacement all of which are suffering significant delays and overspends.
- Sir Tom Winsor proposed a network code that aims to enable greater efficiency and effectiveness. The idea is that the code would initially focus on police ICT but would evolve to cover other areas of policing over time.

Bedfordshire OPCC will be working with Bedfordshire Police in the consideration of all points which will be monitored through board meetings. With all recommendations from the inspections between March 2020 and March 2021 will continuously monitored through the Learning, Demand and Futures Board.

Yours Sincerely

**Festus Akinbusoye**  
Police and Crime Commissioner

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