

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire Newsletter



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"Putting people at the heart of policing"

In the News

February 2023

- Fresh focus on vetting as force cracks down on culture
- PCC's Youth Conference 2023
- PCC backs county's Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit following successful Home Office visit
- Police Precept 2023-24
- New initiatives launch for young people to tackle violence against women and girls

Fresh focus on vetting as force cracks down on culture

Bedfordshire's Chief Constable Trevor Rodenhurst is putting additional resources into re-vetting officers and staff as part of a crackdown following high-profile cases of police abusing their position.



Mr Rodenhurst made the commitment in an open letter to the PCC, who had requested an update on vetting after a Met officer admitted multiple rapes and other serious offences against women.

The PCC has asked for information on several areas, including implementing national recommendations on vetting; the status of vetting for Bedfordshire's workforce, and what was being done to ensure complaints against officers and staff were being taken seriously.

In the letter, Mr Rodenhurst confirmed every member of the force had been initially vetted, with 93 per cent of officers having since been re-vetted. That leaves 17 still to be reviewed alongside 112 staff and seven Special Constables.

In addition, 113 officers required a higher level of vetting due to being deployed into new roles. He confirmed he had agreed to provide a further two specially trained officers into the vetting team.

PCC's Youth Conference 2023

Year 9 students for Bedford Borough, Luton Borough and Central Bedfordshire schools are invited to attend the Police and Crime Commissioner's Youth Conference 2023 from 28th February - 2nd March.

"It was a genuine safe space to learn"
2022 Student Delegate

If you have any questions or require further information, please email pccevents@beds.police.uk. Further information including how to secure tickets can be found on our website.



PCC backs county's Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit (VERU) following successful Home Office visit

Bedfordshire's specialist unit dedicated to tackling the violence and exploitation of young people showcased its work to the Home Office in January.

The PCC said: "The role of our VERU in sustaining a safer Bedfordshire is crucial, which is why I very much welcome the three year funding settlement we received from the Government in 2022. By creating opportunities and improving the lives of young people, this hugely important work is making all of us safer.

"It is vital that this work carries on and I will be pushing relentlessly for the Home Office to continue this investment into Bedfordshire."

The event heard directly from three young people who have turned their lives around as the result of the support provided by VERU funded projects.



Police Precept/Council Tax 2023-24

Part of the PCC's role is the responsibility for securing the annual budget for Bedfordshire Police. With higher costs for some everyday items and the impact of the energy crisis affecting everyone, the PCC knows that any increase for 2023-2024 for people will be hard. He also knows that you want to see more officers in our communities and our rural areas, taking more criminals off the streets and protecting our towns and villages.

The PCC has listened carefully to what local residents and community representatives have told him about what they want from their police force. In order to further support Bedfordshire Police, we will be increasing the police precept by £15 a year for an average Band D property. This equates to about 28p a week for a Band D property.

During consultation, the PCC asked if you agreed on the important areas for us to direct additional resources into and he can positively say, the majority agreed with these directions, with **54% in support of or neutral** to the rise in police precept.

On 7 February 2023, the Police and Crime Panel for Bedfordshire confirmed that they support the PCC's direction to increase the police precept.

The increase in your precept means that Bedfordshire Police can



Increase the number of police officers in our community policing teams by **TEN** extra officers, with the specific aims of providing greater visibility and reassurance especially in our market towns and villages;



Provide FOUR more dedicated data analysts to ensure that trends and patterns of criminality are picked up early and resources deployed to prevent further crimes;



Recruit SEVEN more victim engagement officers in the rape and serious sexual offences unit to support the most vulnerable of victims.



Introduce an additional FOUR staff posts following recommendations from the Priority Based Budgeting process as well as increasing provision for anticipated annual pay increases. By placing two members of staff into professional standards and two mental health nurses within the control room, these actions are again very much linked to the PCCs Police and Crime Plan ambitions.

You can also keep up to date with the PCC and his offices day to day work via Twitter, Facebook and Instagram



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If you need to contact the police please either call **999** if it is an emergency

or dial **101** if it is a nonemergency



School students across Bedfordshire are being encouraged to put their creative skills into tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG)

The design competition for students across the county is part of a flagship education programme being run by the Safer Streets VAWG project. The competition is for students to create digital art, short animation and/or a short film to highlight what is inappropriate behaviour and what it would look like from a bystander or a victim's perspective.

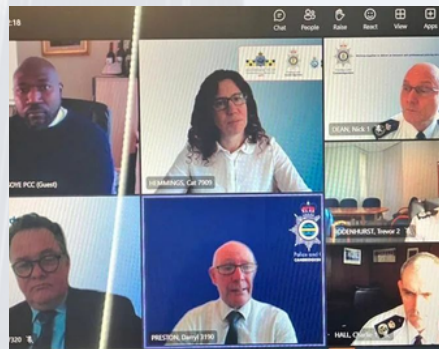
There will be prizes available to schools by category and age group and the winning entries will form part of the toolkit and future media campaigns funded by Safer Streets across Bedfordshire. Should you require further information, please email saferstreets.bedfordshire@beds.police.uk

Find out more about the Safer Streets initiative including access to support and information on how to report an incident



PCC out and about

The PCC regularly completes visits and engagements across Bedfordshire. In the previous month he has been interviewed by Beth Rigby Sky News interview programme, visited schools, attended faith groups, attended meetings online and much more.



Volunteering and other opportunities

There are a number of volunteering opportunities at the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire.



Independent Custody Visiting

Independent Custody Visitors are members of the local community who, working in pairs, call at Police Custody Suites unannounced at any time. With agreement, the visitors can speak to detainees about their treatment or conditions, and take up any issues of concern with custody staff.

Community Scrutiny Panel - Stop and Search and Use of Force

The Community Scrutiny Panel review Stop and Search and Use of Force data, outcomes and also reviews body worn footage recorded to scrutinise use of the power. Panel members attend quarterly meetings which are usually held online via Microsoft Teams on an evening.

Please view our website under the 'volunteering' section or email PCC@beds.police.uk to find out more.

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