

BCJB Board Meeting

13th December 2022
Teams Meeting

Name	Organisation
Alysha Patel (AP)	Bedfordshire OPCC (Restorative Justice)
Cara Gavin (CG)	Bedfordshire OPCC (Early Intervention, Reducing Reoffending)
Clive Harper (CH)	Courts & Tribunal Services
Colin Moone (CM)	Luton Borough Council (Housing)
Dee Perkins (DP)	Bedfordshire Police (Crime & PPU Command)
Dinh Padicala (DnP)	East London Foundation Trust (Mental Health)
Doug Charlton (DC)	Probation Service
Emma Harwood (EH)	Legal Aid Agency
Festus Akinbusoye (FA)	Bedfordshire OPCC Police and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Francoise Julian (FJ)	Bedfordshire OPCC (Criminal Justice & Victims, BCJB Manager)
Gemma McCormack (GM)	Bedfordshire OPCC (taking minutes)
Ian Miller (IM)	Courts & Tribunal Services (HMCTS)
Jaswant Narwal (JN)	Crown Prosecution Service
Kate Somarkis (KS)	Courts & Tribunal Services
Lorna Carver (LC)	Central Bedfordshire
Matthew Thomsson (MT)	Beds, Herts and Cambs AOJ
Nick Titchener (NT)	Defence – Lawtons Law
Pat Jennings (PJ)	Bedfordshire Youth Offending & Probation Service
Sarah Pacey (SP)	Luton Borough Council (Public Health)
Sharn Basra (SB)	Bedfordshire Police
Simon Hardcastle (SH)	NHS Bedfordshire Luton & MK (Commissioning)
Simon Powell (SP)	Bedfordshire OPCC
Simon Smith (SS)	Courts & Tribunal Services
Tony Hirst (TH)	Courts & Tribunal Service (HMCTS)

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1.	<p>Welcome, Introductions and Apologies:</p> <p>FA welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.</p> <p>FA advised that PJ Butler will be leaving Bedford Prison at the end of this month and everyone wished him well.</p> <p>FA informed the Board that at the Police and Crime Panel Confirmation Meeting held yesterday, Trevor Rodenhurst was successful as the preferred candidate for Chief Constable at Bedfordshire Police and will officially be starting in role on the 4th January 2023.</p> <p>SB informed the Board that the standing attendees from Bedfordshire Police will be the ACC and DCS - Head of Crime/Public Protection.</p> <p>FJ introduced herself as the new Criminal Justice Project Manager for Bedfordshire OPCC and provided the Board with a brief outline of her work background, particularly in relation to Boards in Bedfordshire. FJ thanked the Chairs of the workstreams and other Board members for taking the time to meet with her.</p> <p>FJ stated that the main theme that came from her meetings with CJB partners related to accountability and what that should look like for the Board. It is important that we get the right balance. Partners were asked to note that the Government is looking for a whole systems approach in the Criminal Justice System at a local level. This will mean having difficult conversations together at times but it is important that we have the confidence and right space to have those conversations. We as a Board, need to have an agreement on what we want that to look like in future.</p> <p>JN responding stated that it was important to note that there are member agencies, not accountable to the OPCC to maintain independence from the elected office and the integrity of the CJS. JN asked for it to be noted that the CPS will work closely and effectively with the CJB in line with this principle.</p> <p>FJ agreed with JN and reiterated the importance that the BCJB partnership agree on what accountability should look like.</p> <p>Partners were asked to note a change to the previous agenda format, which in future will include a 10-minute closed section at the end of the meeting for unrecorded discussions between partner agencies, to facilitate open dialogue and progress effective partnership working.</p> <p>FJ welcomed representation from Health Commissioning, Mental Health and Housing colleagues at the meeting. Having their input at the Board will be</p>

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	<p>essential to facilitating a whole systems approach to Criminal Justice in Bedfordshire.</p> <p>FA asked partners to note that one of the key purposes of Local Criminal Justice Boards is to seek assurance across the criminal justice system. FA highlighted that his role as PCC is to be a voice for the public in relation to the services that affects policing and if we all keep working in that spirit of partnership, we should be okay.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting and Action Log:</p> <p>Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.</p> <p>FJ informed the meeting that all minutes of previous meetings will be uploaded to the OPCC website by the end of the week.</p> <p>FJ went through the action log by exception.</p> <p>Action: FJ to arrange a meeting with MT, DP and the CPS to discuss the Beds Scorecard, which will be presented at the PPMG. In future, the BCJB will receive performance highlights from the PPMG Chair.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Performance</p> <p><u>HMCTS</u></p> <p>IM introduced Tony Hirst (TH), the new Regional Head of Crime for the South East Region. TH stated his commitment to attending the CJB whenever possible and partnership working. TH provided some information regarding his work background which includes 30 years in the Met Police and then the criminal Justice Inspectorate.</p> <p>IM provided the Board with an update regarding the Courts.</p> <p>The use of the court rooms are regularly reviewed to see what the continuation will be in Luton, Bedford, St Albans or Cambridge. The figures are the most up to date and may change in a few months following review. The custody trial limits are fine at the moment with no issues. The receipts reduced in October. We are now getting recorders and the hearings are going ahead.</p> <p>IM confirmed that subsequent to the Barrister strike and COVID, Courts are in a better place, hearings are running smoothly. The increased work has impacted admin workloads however, we are going back to hopefully what was business as usual (pre-covid).</p> <p>JN asked the Board to note that the strike related to Defence Barristers only, who were able to secure a pay increase but it didn't apply to Prosecution Barristers. The CPS are finding that with the choice for Barristers who are independent, to take up more defence work than prosecution work, there could be issues across</p>

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	<p>the country with finding prosecution barristers, which will continue until all pay disputes are resolved.</p> <p>NT advised that the resolution achieved by the criminal bar has resolved the pay increase at this stage whereby they have suspended any action. This hasn't applied to the criminal solicitors. The Board was asked to note that future strike actions would impact on cases in courts across the country.</p> <p>Action: FA to have a discussion with David Lloyd regarding Prosecution Barristers.</p> <p>BCJB Workstream Updates</p> <p><u>Victims & Witnesses Engagement Board (Force Chair)</u></p> <p>DP updated that multiagency representation at the meeting is very good across the partnership. Looking at the Force performance in terms of non-conviction rate which are victims and witnesses, we were ranked 12th nationally in September and that improved to 8th in October. When you have a look at some of the individual courts, for example in the Magistrates court – there were 26 non convictions, only 5 down to victims and witnesses.</p> <p>We haven't had any ineffective meetings taking place due to the bar strike and the Force and CPS maintain monthly discussions to deep dive; there are no areas of concern at the moment.</p> <p>A concern however is timeliness for victims who are waiting. Some comparative work looking at timeliness in Luton, St Albans and Stevenage is being completed by Kate from the Courts.</p> <p>The group is accountable for VCOP which is looked at through the Force Performance Board and this has been stable for the last few months at 83%. There is an action plan around victims' personal statement.</p> <p>KS asked the Board to note that in relation to the length of time it's taken to complete cases in Bedfordshire; one denominator unique to Bedfordshire, is the pre-sentence report pilot. The pilot relates to female offenders, 18 to 25-year-olds and those who are at risk of custody. These require full reports from Probation therefore, when having findings of guilt after trial, or changes of pleas and a pre-sentence report is ordered, it falls into that pilot. The courts then have another adjournment on top of the sentencing exercise. So those not guilty pleas and guilty pleas are taking longer to complete.</p> <p><u>Reducing Reoffending (Probation Chair)</u></p> <p>Thomas Moreton, Probation, previously chaired this group, DC informed the Board that he has replaced Tom as the Chair for the Reducing Reoffending Group and related subgroups. As DC is still in a handover period, he provided a brief</p>

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	<p>summary of actions from the Reducing Reoffending group and will provide the Board with a more detailed update at the next meeting.</p> <p><u>Performance & Programme Management Group (CPS Chair)</u></p> <p>JN informed the Board that this is a meeting which is held with Hertfordshire PCC, where they look at the performance for the two Force areas. This group is making some changes going forward to get the narrative behind the data. We are doing better in the Magistrates Court, working on getting cases down as Magistrates powers have increased recently. Generally, it is an improving picture but Luton is a very busy Magistrates Court.</p> <p>JN advised regarding the impact of strikes. CPS are not striking as they did not vote for it but legal advisors are, which means there may be an impact in the run up to Christmas.</p> <p>KS updated on industrial action by legal advisors and court associates in relation to common platform; The next industrial action is this weekend and we have put contingency arrangements in place – 24th December 2022 – 4th January 2023, remand courts sitting during this time.</p> <p>File Quality and Scorecard (action from previous meeting):</p> <p>JN and DP provided a joint File Quality Report for Quarter 2, July to September 2022.</p> <p>We have a good Police and CPS moderation Panel where we are reviewing the cases and are looking to see which were deemed compliant which is working well. The CPS and Bedfordshire Police continue to work closely on File Quality.</p> <p>DP informed the Board that whilst the CPS and Force are finding it helpful to jointly look at file quality, it is taking a lot of time to analyse and understand the performance data but we are seeing improvements as a result.</p> <p>In terms of the File Quality Assessment data, we do have the better performance across the other two Police Forces and on the September data we ranked 13th nationally out of all Forces for DGA compliance. There is really good use and take up of the File Quality Unit. DP expressed the view that she does not feel it has any benefit reporting on performance in detail to this meeting, JN and FJ concurred.</p> <p>FJ stated that apart from HMCTS, individual agency Performance reporting should be by exception at the BCJB and informed the Board that in future individual agency reports will primarily sit with the respective CJB workstreams, with the Chairs providing high level reports at the BCJB, which will provide room on the agenda for more focused discussions in future.</p>

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	<p>FA noted the efforts taken by the Force and CPS to have more engagement and thanked the CPS and Force for the improving picture in Bedfordshire.</p> <p>SB informed the Board that the Force Exec have service visits where they visit different teams and recently met with the File Quality Team and some of the Investigators. Some of their concerns relate to how data is reported for example, contested cases which are overturned, does not show when reporting. JN acknowledged this and highlighted the fact that Forces and the CPS have started to further develop relationships and are talking about some of these key issues to improve data quality and reporting. This is a work in progress but is moving in the right direction.</p>
4.	<p>Theme: HMICFRS MH Joint Thematic by Jaswant Narwall, CPS</p> <p><u>Crown Prosecution Service</u></p> <p>JN led on a discussion relating to the number of cases that were being diverted due to a defendant's mental health issues, which is being flagged as an area of concern in the CPS. JN shared this is not for a decision but for the Board, to consider whether there is further work we need to do in relation to this.</p> <p>The CPS have a Mental Health Policy which has been in place for a while, but this has been reviewed and refreshed and it is now called 'CPS Defendants Fairness for all Strategy'¹ which sets out our commitment to suspects and those who haven't been charged and also defendants. This is work that has been completed jointly with the Police and CPS.</p> <p>We want to ensure that where the defendant has very particular needs and additional needs, or they are facing particular barriers, they are able to fully engage with the criminal justice process and perhaps there are times where this hasn't always happened. The Strategy is looking at three areas, in particular mental health, youth justice and proportionality on decision making.</p> <p>There was a joint criminal justice inspection in 2021, on mental health and it concluded that there was poor support for people with mental health conditions as they went through the various stages of the criminal justice system in England and Wales. A lot of engagement was carried out across Stakeholders and Government and there was an National Action Plan that set out priorities. We looked at all of the priorities and have broken down some of the mental health deliverables that we want to follow through as a result of that inspection.</p> <p>One of the most significant developments is the mental health and neuro developmental checklists, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire are not going to be part of the pilot but Thames Valley will be. The checklist is developed so that we have</p>

¹ <https://www.cps.gov.uk/publication/cps-defendants-fairness-all-strategy-2025>;
<https://www.cps.gov.uk/publication/defendants-strategy-action-plan-2022-2023>

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	<p>much better improved with more in-depth information as prosecutors when we are making case management decisions throughout the case itself. On the system we have a flag that flags up where we believe defendants do have issues. Through this programme there will be local working groups between the CPS, NHS and the Police Forces but does not include Bedfordshire at this time. Once the checklist has been piloted we will look to see if any other changes need to be made.</p> <p>JN advised there are diversion and liaison services that can be used but we need to get the right quality information to the first responders which are the Police, in order for that information to be provided to Prosecutors before we make a decision. We don't want to put defendants through the Court system if they have a mental health condition which means this has really impacted on their offending behaviour.</p> <p>JN asked the Board to consider if it would like to implement the checklist in Bedfordshire once the trial has been completed.</p> <p>DP agreed that we should be doing whatever we can to divert anyone away from the criminal justice system whether they have mental health issues or any other issues. The difficulty when it comes to defendants is how do we know that they have mental health issues, this is something we would have to ask and get consent for.</p> <p>DnP asked if the MHND checklist, asks the defender whether they have any mental health issues? JN advised this may not be the only question but it is trying to gather as much information as possible as there has to be a starting point.</p> <p>Action: DnP asked JN to send her a copy of the mental health and neuro-developmental checklist and some background.</p> <p>DnP asked if there is any value in doing an Information Sharing Agreement between the Police and Liaison and Diversion Service? FA stated that he would be surprised if this was not already in place as we already have Street Triage Nurses and Mental Health Nurses in the Force Control Room.</p> <p>JN advised that the Pilot started in the City of London, Police and Thames Valley have not got a start date yet but the CPS have started planning.</p> <p>Action: There may be some work needed relating to the timeliness of sharing mental health information, where it is shared and with whom. FJ, DP and MT will be meeting to discuss the Beds scorecard, a discussion regarding the custody suite and those coming in with mental health issues can follow, as MT has the thematic area around mental health and custody and is already linked in to TVP. FJ to consult with Health colleagues DnP and SH if required.</p>

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	<p>FJ provided an updated on the HMICFRS mental health recommendations action log. Whilst partners may have already provided their respective governing bodies with updates it is the role of the CJB to seek assurance regarding the successful implementation of national recommendations and new legislation at a local level.</p> <p>Action: HMICFRS MH Action log to be amended with CPS update provided today and recirculated with minutes. FJ asked relevant partners to take another look at the HMICFRS Mental Health action log which will be recirculated for their updates if this has not already been completed for assurance.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Accommodation Services and Commissioning:</p> <p>SB picked up the Agenda item on behalf of Anna Villette. SB advised this Agenda item has been raised as a result of ongoing discussions. We have around 1,200 asylum seekers in local authority accommodation which may take away some of that provision for those coming out of Prison. SB stated that he was seeking assurance from Luton Housing regarding the status in Luton relating to this concern.</p> <p>DC informed the Board that there is an accommodation provision in place for everyone coming out of prison there is a housing provision for up to 86 days. This has been in place for a while and the figures show that this is working well.</p> <p>Action: CM informed the Board that the provision in Luton at the moment is reasonable. However, from the housing service point of view, sometimes we get notifications a little too late and are having to respond quickly to those. CM and DC to meet to discuss how to close this gap</p> <p>When people come into the Borough and they have children, social services become involved, health services get involved so overall there has been an impact in Luton. We are looking at London Borough numbers for homelessness which is a high amount. Luton are looking into the different options available to try and deal with this. However, the Board was provided with assurance that this does not impact on the provisions for individuals leaving the prison system as the pathways are separate.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Restorative Justice:</p> <p>AP introduced herself as the Restorative Justice Co-Ordinator for Bedfordshire OPCC. The role is to embed restorative justice in Bedfordshire and AP also facilitates the cases as well. AP is currently meeting different Providers for input and to raise awareness. We are in the process of rebranding and in the New Year there will be more communications released about restorative justice.</p> <p>In summary, restorative justice is communication between victim and offender, it is also part of the Victims Code of Practice. There is also a lot of benefits around restorative justice, one being it reduces reoffending, it also reduces victims PTS</p>

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	<p>symptoms and gives victims a voice. It is separate to the criminal justice system and is a voluntary process.</p> <p>FA asked AP if there is much data on how well we use restorative justice in Bedfordshire? AP stated that there isn't that much data in Bedfordshire. FA noted that it would be useful to see a journey map of where we are now and where we end up in a year's time.</p> <p>AP responded that she has been visiting different teams and has been working with the Prison and is hoping to visit Probation, also AP has been working with Bedfordshire Police (Witness Care, CID and Emerald) and doing inputs there to raise awareness.</p> <p>MT shared his interest in the out of custody disposals and restorative justice, as the Force are seeing the issues with Prison capacity and potentially, across 4 Forces we are going to see an increase in people coming into the Custody Suites as a result of bail legislation.</p> <p>PJ asked AP if contact has been made with the Youth Offending Teams Victim Workers as an introduction to see what they are doing and to get some leads into other Agencies. AP confirmed she has met with them and has had some useful discussions. They are doing some work with schools as well which AP will become involved with. PJ advised they are also doing some work with the children's homes and supported lodgings which AP may want to become involved with as well.</p> <p>Action: AP to put together a restorative justice journey map to be presented at the Board in 12 months' time.</p>
7.	<p>AOB</p> <p>Action: FJ is looking into a planning meeting going forward in April, FJ will be sending out the meeting invite.</p> <p>Action: FJ asked for everyone to look at the Forward Plan and feedback any comments to FJ.</p> <p><u>Annual Public Meeting</u></p> <p>FJ informed the Board that she is looking at the possibility of a public meeting. The format which would need to be agreed by the partnership, might consist of presentations from the PCC and Chairs of the Board's workstreams. We would ask the public to write in with questions for the Board.</p> <p>FA suggested we have some more discussions around this first before anything is planned. It would be good for the public to have sight of the work being done by CJB partners and to have the opportunity to ask any questions.</p>



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	<p>PJ expressed his concern and stated that he felt a public meeting would need to be very controlled to maintain order.</p> <p>MT advised FJ to speak to her counterpart in Hertfordshire as they run a meeting where the first part is for the public and the second part is a closed meeting.</p> <p>Action: FJ assured the Board that a public meeting would be structured to provide the public with information whilst ensuring that the integrity of Board and its partners is maintained. FJ confirmed that this will be explored further before anything is planned.</p>
8.	<p>Meeting Dates</p> <p>21/03/2023 – 10am</p> <p>20/06/2023 – 10am</p> <p>19/09/2023 – 10am</p> <p>19/12/2023 – 10am</p>