

BCJB Board Meeting

19th September 2023

Teams Meeting

Name	Organisation
Festus Akinbusoye (FA)	Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner (Chair)
Dave Collins (DCS)	Luton Borough Council
Doug Charlton (DCN)	Probation Service
Francoise Julian (FJ)	Bedfordshire OPCC, Criminal Justice Projects & BCJB Mgr
Gemma McCormack (GM)	Bedfordshire OPCC
Ian Dalgarno (ID)	Bedfordshire Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Kerry White (KW)	HMCTS on behalf of Ian Miller
Matt Thompson (MT)	Hertfordshire Police
Nick Titchener (NT)	Defence – Lawtons Law
Susan Childerhouse (SC)	Central Bedfordshire
Simon Hardcastle (SH)	NHS
Zara Brown (ZB)	Bedfordshire Police
Alysha Patel (AP)	Bedfordshire Police
Pat Jennings (PJ)	Bedford Borough Council
Layla Allen (LA)	Citizens Advice
Sarah Burgess (SB)	HMCTS
Rose- Marie Franton (RMF)	CPS

Item No.	Topic
1.	<p>Welcome, Introduction and apologies:</p> <p>FA welcomed everyone to the meeting, introductions were made and apologies noted.</p> <p>Apologies received from Ian Miller, HMCTS</p>
2.	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting and Action Log:</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting were discussed and agreed as an accurate record. FA confirmed that these minutes will now be published on the website and FJ will provide a summarised version which will be available to the public.</p> <p>The following actions were discussed;</p> <p>22/23-28 – Duncan Young will be providing an answer and this action will be carried forward.</p> <p>FJ confirmed that the action plan is going well and the majority of the work has been</p>



	<p>completed everything else is in amber, at various stages of completion.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>HMCTS and BCJB Workstream Highlight Reports:</p> <p>HMCTS:</p> <p>KW reported on the crown court recovery update and the action plan has been circulated ahead of this meeting. Bedfordshire Hall is still being used but this is limited as are still awaiting decisions on funding. Luton Court 6 has CVP installed to enable Jury trial hearings and this will give an additional court from the 6th November.</p> <p>Still struggling with judiciary availability but staffing is fully up to date. There has been an increase in workload receipts but we are still struggling to get defence advocates in the hearings. Regular meetings have been put in place regarding effective trials, these meetings include those who provide advocates.</p> <p>Bail trials are listed into March 2025, 990 cases outstanding, 276 are custody cases and 120 estimated custody time limited cases. Next year we hope to be in a better position. October and November this year will be difficult and will have to take some bail cases out. We are still struggling with defence representation and advocates.</p> <p>Going forward the extra court in Luton Magistrates will make a good difference.</p> <p>Action: ZB asked regarding the 5 PTPH around RASSO cases, KW confirmed that conversations have taken place with the CPS as these cases are a priority. KW will pick this up with the listing officer and provide ZB with the details.</p> <p>FA queried where this will leave the victims and requested assurance for the Board, that the victims, despite the absence of a prosecutor or cases not being ready for trial, are being supported. ZB to action with Witness Care.</p> <p>RMF responding, updated that she was aware of the 5 RASSO cases mentioned by ZB above that the CPS were dealing to ensure no adjournment for victims and witnesses.</p> <p>Action: The issue of hearings without advocates is a concern across the CPS estate and up and down England and Wales. RMF asked KW to provide her with contact details of judges she could contact for more joined up working between the CPS and HMCTS. KW agreed to share Judge Simon's details with RMF.</p> <p>FA asked regarding the common platform roll out. KW advised that it is fully rolled out with business as usual and there continues to be fixes and improvement to the system.</p> <p>BCJB Workstreams:</p> <p>Victim and Witness Engagement Board:</p> <p>ZB shared that the board is due to take place on Friday, in future it will be held</p>

before this meeting takes place. A series of meetings have taken place on how we can look at victims and witnesses through a different lense. We are looking at how we track and monitor victims engagement through the Force and provide qualitative data on what the victim is telling us throughout their journey. ZB will provide a further update at the next Board meeting.

FA shared that there will be certain things that are outside of our control such as staff shortages etc but the quality of care and support at times of crises for victims is something that should be within our control. FA thanked ZB for the work that she is doing with partners on this.

ZB advised that there is another piece of work where we will start to look at file quality and the improvements we are seeing in Bedfordshire around that progress as there is no lag in the process.

FA asked what is happening with the redaction tool that Bedfordshire have started implementing and the compliance rate, are we seeing any impacts on this? ZB confirmed we are seeing improvement and minor issues are being picked up, this is also no longer impacting on Officers time to manually redact issues. ZB will provide an update at the next meeting.

Action: ZB will provide an update on the Victims and Witness Board, and also the redaction tool at the next meeting.

Probation:

Sufficient support is now in place in the Courts and staffing is now at full capacity. Response in terms of actions probation are taking to improve performance – DC advised the pressures was always the shortage of probation officers. Staff numbers have started to increase, 24 trainee probation officers at the moment and 16 probation service officers however they will not be fully trained until the end of 2024. We are still 17 Probation Officers down and they are the ones who deal with the complex cases in the community, this is having an impact. We have a much better structure for the new starters who are starting, they are well support and we are starting to see the benefits of this.

Prison releases are normally at 100% and we are now picking up people who are sentenced at 10 months or less.

Sentence plans can sometimes be late, this is something we are trying to improve on but this is a National picture.

Just signed an agreement with Luton in terms of housing but need to work with the other two local authorities on this as well.

DWP have been using the offices in Probation, Sure Start also come into the service and work closely with colleagues.

The Needs Analysis has been previously shared, this is useful especially when

looking at the serious violence duty.

FA congratulated DC for the great work that has been completed on accommodation for those being released from prison.

Performance and Programme Management Group:

SB talked to the report circulated ahead of this meeting, and was reporting on the quarter ending June 2023.

Pre-charge

“CPS Decision to Charge to Magistrate Court Finalised” took about 213 days, higher than both regional average (144 days) and national average (132 days).

The percentage of despatches (IDPC) Served 5 Days Before First Hearing (CPS Charged) was about 58%, lower than the Thames & Chiltern average (69%) and national average (66%).

Magistrates Court (MC)

The “Hearings per Case (Guilty Pleas) – CPS Charged” for Bedfordshire is higher than the regional and national averages but this is marginal.

The Percentage of Guilty Pleas at First Hearing – Police Charged (71%) is lower than both the Thames & Chiltern average (75%) and national average (76%).

The number of “Hearings per Case (Contest) – CPS Charged” is 5.2, higher than the regional average (4.4) and national average (4.1).

The Percentage of Cases Dropped – Police Charged was about 11%, higher than the regional average (9%) and national average (10%).

Crown Court (CC)

The “CPS Decision to Charge to CC Finalised” took about 485 days, higher than both regional average (397 days) and national average (389 days). The “Hearings per Case (Guilty Pleas)” for Bedfordshire is higher than the regional and national averages. The pattern is the same for both CPS and Police Charged.

Percentage of Guilty Pleas at First Hearing (26%) is lower than both the Thames & Chiltern average (31%) and national average (34%). The pattern is the same for both CPS and Police Charged.

The number of “Hearings per Case (Contest)” is 9.3, higher than the regional average (7.2) and national average (7.3). The pattern is the same for both CPS and Police Charged, but the Police Charged rate is about double the national rate.

The “% CC Directions Complied with on time – Police Charged” was 91%.

	<p>Though this is higher than the regional average (90%), it is lower than the national average (93%).</p> <p>NT had a discussion regarding the listing pattern in Luton Magistrates Court from October and SB advised that she will make contact after the meeting to provide this information.</p> <p>FA asked in terms of the performance figures, how does this compare nationally in terms of cases collapsing etc and what has the general trend been over the years? SB shared that work is being completed around this and all information about cracked trials comes from the CMTM forms, this could be that certain things are not being recorded correctly etc. When looking at the data there were more effective trials than it first looked on the surface. The ones that come out before they reach the trial date are the ones we need and work is going to be completed around this.</p> <p>Action: FJ to invite SB to the Performance Board meetings.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Theme – Children in the CJS:</p> <p><u>Analysis of 18-21 Year Old Custody Population by David Colins, Youth Offending</u> , see attached advised that he has been researching youth custody in relation to 18 – 21 year olds. There are two youth offending services in Bedfordshire, one covers Bedford and Central Bedfordshire and the other covers Luton.</p> <p>The cohort for analysis was taken from a period between April and July 2023 of young people either in custody or subject to post release intervention. Of a total of 48 cases, 32 were Luton cases, the remaining 16 from across Bedfordshire. Key factors associated with the history of the individuals were collated from Youth Justice and Social Care records but unfortunately this information was not available from Bedfordshire therefore the following is an analysis of only the known cases from Luton.</p> <p>The first noticeable finding is that <u>13 of the 32 (41%) were not previously known to Youth Justice in Luton</u>. Other than the obvious of the index offence being the very first committed, post 18 years of age, there could be a few reasons for this finding. For example, this could be indicative of the population ‘churn’ in Luton and it is possible that young adults moving to Luton may be known to youth justice in another area.</p> <p><u>Only 5 children were subject to transition from Youth Justice to Probation Services under the current Transition policy</u>, meaning that the majority were not subject to any statutory intervention at the point of closure from Youth Justice. <u>There is an over representation from what we would consider disadvantaged communities</u>, 24 (75%) were either from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background, 8 (25%) were care leavers.</p> <p>There’s not much of a conclusion that we can draw from the numbers in each</p>

age group but there are some interesting points:

- In the 18 and 19 year old group, only 4 of the 10 (40%) were previously known to Youth Justice Services.
- Of the 20 and 21 years old group, that number rises to 15 of 22 (68%) were previously known. This could possibly suggest that the exit plan support and signposting in place for children as they immediately leave Youth Justice Services acts as a parachute to the cliff edge.

Albeit a very brief and shallow analysis of the current custody population for these age groups, the cohort demonstrates that there is a clear issue in Bedfordshire where young people struggle making the transition to adulthood, particularly those children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The lack of specific support, outside of statutory interventions, for this group of young adults is worrying and the Probation Service do not have resources or capacity to deliver targeted intervention to prevent offending outside of the statutory responsibilities.

We know that early intervention approaches which have strong evidence of impact have the potential to reduce the likelihood of poor long-term outcomes for children and young adults and the cost of late Intervention continues to be expensive.

In England and Wales the spend is close to £20 billion per year on the damaging problems that affect children and young people such as domestic violence and abuse, child neglect and maltreatment, mental health problems, youth crime and exclusion from education and the labour market. While this figure is substantial, it is only the immediate fiscal so does not capture any lasting effects into adult life and sometimes into the next generation, nor the wider social and economic costs.

In 2021, MOPAC in partnership with the MoJ and the Probation Service piloted a Transitions to Adulthood Hub in Newham for 18–25-year-olds and 17-year-olds due to transition from youth justice to adult probation. This pilot cost close to £2 million and where we cannot even begin to consider that amount of funding in Bedfordshire, a partnership approach to providing staff and resources for a transition hub arrangement in Bedfordshire has to be considered and is achievable.

Action: BCJB to explore the potential for a multi-agency transitions hub. DCS to provide some additional information about the Transitions to Adulthood intervention in Newham for 18-25 year olds and FJ to add to the BCJB forward plan.

In reality the majority of the services are already being commissioned such as Health Services, Education, Training and Employment Services, Housing support, Substance misuse etc. However the focus isn't on providing a

dedicated response to proactively target, motivate and support this group. Whilst we have the Board's support with the creation of the Transition sub- group to focus on this area, we may need further support in the future to convince partners to think seriously about bringing a specific focus to this target

Disproportionality Within Youth Offending by Patrick Jennings, Youth Offending



5b. BCJB Theme -
Disproportionality & `

FA asked in Bedford and Central Bedfordshire, if there are any young people in custody at the moment. PJ advised one is currently in custody with two previously being released and they were all from Bedford. FA asked what is the difference in that there a no children in custody in Luton but there are in Bedford? PJ shared that in this recent case it was the level of crime that they had committed and there was no other option than custody for them, there is at some points where we have to say that it is a custodial offence.

ZB advised that if there is anything in public protection where they can support then do let us know.

Action: FA asked if there is a prevention strategy in Central Bedfordshire from a Local Authority perspective? SC to discuss with Community Safety colleagues and provide a response following this meeting.

DC advised there is a stop and search panel which is independently chaired where body worn cameras are reviewed. Discussions around creating a roundtable when young people can meet with Police colleagues to discuss the issues they are facing.

FA shared in his role as PCC he visits school assemblies, it is a great experience as young people are really keen to learn what it is that we do. FA asked if the CPS and Probation service would consider taking part in some school visits as well?

Action: ZB shared there is some work to do around head teacher forums and said we all have a part to play in young people growing up in society. There is a real key piece for everyone to think about and take forward in individual teams. FJ and ZB to meet to explore how to progress as an action.

FJ thanked DC and PJ for their excellent presentations. FJ spoke about the AGM and how we can make the connection with young people. FJ suggested having a meeting with ZB on how we can make this work for the Board.

5. Partnership Report by Exception:

FJ shared the Annual General Meeting will be held after the Board meeting on the 19th December 2023. There will be a business plan and annual report which



	will be circulated and finalised in October. There will be some comms pieces coming out, the meeting will be pre-recorded and there may be some questions to answer from the public.
6.	<p>AOB:</p> <p>FJ asked if there is anything anyone would like to raise on what is going well within their service areas. Any updates to be provided to FJ.</p> <p>FA asked regarding the AGM for questions to be sent in advance so that anything inappropriate can be filtered out and so that Partners have time to prepare their responses.</p>
7.	<p>Date of Next Meeting:</p> <p>19th December 2023, 10.00am – 12.00Noon</p>