



## BEDFORDSHIRE CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### **Purpose and vision**

The Bedfordshire Criminal Justice Board (“the Board”) will enable improved communication, cooperation and collaboration between partners to provide fair, efficient and effective criminal justice services in Bedfordshire to provide the best possible service to victims of crime and witnesses.

***“We will support each other in delivering against the national Strategy and local plans to support Victims and Witnesses, reduce offending and reoffending and increase public confidence in the Criminal Justice System” (CJS).***

#### **Administrative Arrangements<sup>1</sup>**

Local Criminal Justice Board’s (LCJB’s) provide a unique opportunity for partners to work together in the common interest to improve the CJS in the local area. The Bedfordshire Criminal Justice Board will:

- Hold quarterly meetings (as a minimum).
- Be supported by effective sub-groups, where necessary, to drive activity on behalf of the LCJB.
- Be governed by a Terms of Reference which will be reviewed every annually by the Chair and Members (or more regularly should that be required).
- Agree a Business Plan or formal ‘Action Plan’ setting out the LCJB’s strategic priorities, how it will meet its priorities and how it will measure its success.
- Produce minutes of each meeting and ensure they are an accurate reflection of the discussion and agreed actions.
- Publish minutes of BCJB on the OPCC website once approved by the Board.

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<sup>1</sup> National Guidance for Criminal Justice Boards – Para. 5



## Membership<sup>2</sup>

To be fully effective, LCJBs should include membership at a senior level from all CJS partners. The Bedfordshire Criminal Justice Board will be comprised of local decision makers including:

Bedfordshire Office of the Police Crime Commissioner (Chair)

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Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue

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Bedfordshire Police

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Citizens Advice Bureau

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Crown Prosecution Service

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Defence

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Department of Work & Pensions

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East London Foundation Trust (Mental Health Service)

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Hertfordshire Police

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HM Courts & Tribunal Service (Crown Court & Magistrates)

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HMP Bedford

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Integrated Care, Bedfordshire Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK)

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Local Authorities (Bedford, Central Bedfordshire & Luton)

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Probation Service

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Public Health Commissioners (Drug & Alcohol)

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Victim Support

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Youth Offending

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Invitations to attend BCJB meetings by representatives from other relevant groups will be made by exception, where relevant topics are to be discussed and these additional partners could add value to the discussions and decision-making. Visitors at meetings will not be able to cast a vote. The OPCC cannot meet any expenses in respect of visitors' attendance.

The core members of the BCJB will have the power to co-opt any partner to the Board on a temporary or permanent basis where his/ her work impacts on that of the Board, and the co-optee must be proposed and seconded by two

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<sup>2</sup> National Guidance for Criminal Justice Boards, Para. 6-8



core member of the Board and elected as a member, for either a temporary or permanent period of time, by a majority of the core membership.

The Police and Crime Commissioner's place on the Board is for the current term of their office.

## **Expectations of Members<sup>3</sup>**

LCJB members must actively engage in board meetings and help to facilitate a collaborative approach to the local CJS. Members are expected to:

- Attend Board meetings with authority to speak on behalf of their organisation
- Where a Board member is unable to attend, he or she will delegate attendance, participation and executive powers to a senior executive member of staff, as appropriate.
- Provide expected reports by no later than 10 days prior to the respective meeting
- Share data and analysis as appropriate and necessary to enable the LCJB to fulfil its role
- Drive actions between meetings
- Refer, on behalf of their organisation, emerging local CJS issues to the LCJB for discussion
- Work with local, regional and national counterparts as necessary to identify and overcome barriers to improving the delivery of justice
- Be accountable, to the Board, for any work done in LCJB sub-groups
- Champion the work of the LCJB within their organisation

**At all times, members must respect policing, prosecutorial and judicial independence and decision-making.**

### Meetings

BCJB meetings will take place every three months, in accordance with the financial year calendar. Meetings will be held virtually via Teams or at venues provided by members of the Board. Arrangements will be made prior to the start of the financial year and calendar invitations sent by the OPCC.

A Board meeting will be quorate<sup>3</sup> where four or more core members are present.

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<sup>3</sup> National Guidance for Criminal Justice Boards – Para. 9-10



Chief Officers or their nominated deputies will have full voting rights. For a decision to be made there must be a majority of the Board in favour of the proposal. The Chair will not have a casting vote.

Standing Agenda Items will be as follows.

- **Performance Updates** - From His Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service and the Chairs of the Board's subgroups:
- **Themed Items** - To be agreed by the BCJB Partnership
- **Partner reports by exception** – Covering what is working well in the system, issues for the attention of the Board, Horizon scanning for what is working well locally, regionally and at a national level.
- **PCC Report**
- **Updates on Emerging Legislation**

Draft formal minutes of each Board meeting will be produced within 10 working days by the Support Team and circulated to all Board members to consider. Final minutes will be provided with the papers for the following meeting at the latest. Minutes will be consistent with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## **Role of the Chair<sup>4</sup>**

Section 10 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 places a duty on PCCs and other criminal justice bodies to “provide an efficient and effective CJS for the police area”.

In March 2022, the PCC Review (Part 2), carried out by the Home Office, identified LCJBs as a critical vehicle to empower PCCs with the levers to bring together criminal justice partners to effectively tackle crime. By taking a leading role in local CJS partnership arrangements, PCCs can help CJS partners and agencies promote positive improvements to the system, seek to align priorities and address cross-cutting local criminal justice issues.

The Chair should demonstrate strong leadership and establish a collaborative forum that supports joint working and improves services across the CJS, whilst respecting the fact that they do not have the authority to manage or direct other individual agencies.

To achieve this, the Chair has the following convening responsibilities, all of which should be carried out in consultation with Board members:

- To set, implement, and review the LCJB's Terms of Reference
- To establish in consultation with CJS partners, an agreed LCJB Business Plan or formal 'Action Plan' and, where appropriate, hold

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<sup>4</sup> National Guidance for Criminal Justice Boards, Para. 11-15



partners to account for its delivery where actions are agreed collectively.

- To ensure the LCJB decides how to engage positively with relevant national programmes.
- To discuss, where appropriate, the strategic plans of individual criminal justice organisations so that inter-dependencies can be identified, and plans can be aligned
- Where appropriate, to foster discussion of decisions being taken by individual criminal justice organisations which are likely to affect the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the local CJS

## Delivery mechanism

The Board has three agreed strategic workstreams. Each workstream has a SRO from the Board who takes responsibility for feeding back on a regular basis to the Board. These workstreams will be reviewed on an annual basis or as required.

- Victims and Witnesses (includes domestic abuse, restorative justice and out-of-court disposals) (Chaired by Bedfordshire Police)
- Reducing Reoffending (Chaired by Probation)
- Pan Programme Performance Management Group (Chaired by CPS)

Each of the strategic work groups will have its own terms of reference, delivery/ improvement/ implementation plan and will identify linkages between them and with other partners' plans to ensure efficient delivery.

Board members will arrange for their own staff to provide data and written reports for this performance report.

The BCJB will look to develop collaborative arrangements with other LCJBs.

Performance analysis and/or input into themes will be agreed to be discussed at future Board meetings.

### Financial accountability

The OPCC will cover the costs of the basic administration of the BCJB going forward.

## Victims' Code<sup>5</sup>

The Victims' Code sets out a minimum level of service that criminal justice bodies must provide to victims of crime, including families bereaved by crime. The Victims Strategy assigns PCCs formal responsibility for monitoring the compliance of CJS bodies with the requirements in the Victims' Code.

<sup>5</sup> National Guidance for Criminal Justice Boards – Para. 16-17



- The BCJB will be used as a forum for identifying issues and determining effective local interventions.

## Data sharing<sup>6</sup>

Sharing data across organisations is vital to reducing crime, supporting victims and witnesses and improving criminal justice outcomes. Data is integral to partners' joint-responsibility to maintain the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the local CJS.

- The BCJB will use data to identify emerging local trends or patterns so that partners can better plan, adapt to meet challenges and drive system improvement.

## Complaints

Any complaints received will first be considered by the Chair, to ascertain whether it should be directed to a specific agency. Where this is the case, the complaint will be sent to the relevant Board member for actions. All Board members will receive a copy of the response.

Version	BCJB Sign Off (Date)
V2	19 December 2023

**END**

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<sup>6</sup> National Guidance for Criminal Justice Boards – Para. 18-19