

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire Newsletter



January 2024

- Beds PCC secures over £200,000 to support victims of crime
- Bedfordshire pupils invited to PCC event in Westminster
- PCC supports Neighbourhood Policing week
- PCC supports new Right Care Right Person rollout in Bedfordshire
- PCC backs crackdown on retail crime
- Upcoming Event - Annual Business Conference 2024

Beds PCC secures over £200,000 to support victims of crime

Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Festus Akinbusoye has offered local organisations the opportunity to bid into over £200,000 of funding to provide support services for victims of crime in Bedfordshire.

The funding, allocated to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and Community Safety Fund (CSF), is for the provision of dedicated emotional and practical support services for these types of victims.

Crime types include domestic crime and sexual assault, and the support is to help victims cope and recover from the effects of the crimes they have experienced.

The PCC said “I am pleased to launch this year’s funding cycle. Providing individuals with dedicated specialist support following these awful crimes is vital. The harsh reality is, this is happening in Bedfordshire and providing communities with these support services will go some way towards helping their trauma.

“I am also providing funding for a prevention-based approach including ensuring Bedfordshire’s younger residents have opportunities to take part in sports activities in their spare time to deter them from making the wrong choices.

The funding opportunity closed on 22 January 2024 and bidders will be notified of outcomes by the 16 February 2024. This information will be published on our website in due course.



Bedfordshire pupils invited to PCC event in Westminster

Bedfordshire school pupils will have the chance to test their debating skills at Westminster as the counties Police and Crime Commissioner, Festus Akinbusoye, launches his third annual Schools' Debating Competition.

The finalists of this year's competition will compete in the prestigious Grand Committee Room at the Houses of Parliament in front of an impressive judging panel.

The initial rounds begin late January, with three separate debates open to schools in Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, and Luton.

Semi-finals will take place in February at Bedford Magistrates Court before the debate final in Westminster on 5th March.

Mr Akinbusoye said: "A passion of mine as Police and Crime Commissioner is to provide opportunities and support for young people across our county.

"Taking part in these parliamentary-style debates equips our young people with invaluable life skills and confidence, testing their public speaking and analytical skills as well as their ability to make an argument.

Each team will consist of two pupils from the same school, aged between 15 and 18 years old. They will be required to debate views they may not necessarily agree with, within a fixed time period. Judging is entirely impartial, while marks are awarded for debating skills and style, as well as the substance of the argument.

The contests for Luton, Bedford and Central Bedfordshire schools are due to take place on 30th January.

The semi-finals will take place on 15th February ahead of the final.

For further information please [email our office](#).



PCC supports Neighbourhood Policing week

Knife crime, shoplifting and drug dealing were among the crimes combatted by Bedfordshire Police's community officers during a national crackdown in January.

Bedfordshire Police joined constabularies around the country for the neighbourhood policing week of action. The force's northern, southern and central community teams are out and about across different communities all year around – with special operations led by community officers to coincide with the nationwide operation.

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“Communities want to see officers on the streets. More officers are now doing drop-in sessions and foot patrols and sharing their routes with the public as part of their ‘Street a Week’ initiative.

“And it doesn't stop there, just recently community officers were part of securing several arrests as part of Operation Belleville, targeting the most prolific shoplifters in Bedfordshire.

“I am grateful to the Chief Constable for delivering on our agreed priorities by tasking community police teams with this proactive, targeted enforcement across the three local authorities in Bedfordshire.

“I look forward to seeing many more successful targeted operations delivered by the community teams.”

If you experience anti-social behaviour in your neighbourhood, or if you would like to report any suspicious behaviour, [contact the police](#) or call [101](#). In case of an emergency or if the crime is still in action, call [999](#).



PCC supports new Right Care Right Person rollout in Bedfordshire

A major new initiative to ensure that health and social care incidents get the best response from the most appropriate agency has launched in Bedfordshire.

Right Care Right Person (RCRP) will ensure vulnerable people receive the specialist health support they need, that often police officers are not best placed to provide.

While some health incidents require police attendance, there are a significant number in which there is no safety risk or crime committed, with other agencies such as mental health services or social care better placed to offer this support.

In Bedfordshire over 12 months from July 2022 to June 2023, police officers attended 14,738 reports of concern for welfare and 5,666 reports relating to mental health.

Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner Festus Akinbusoye said: “This is a landmark day in Bedfordshire for a cause I have championed at the highest levels since becoming the county’s police and crime commissioner.

“While I already fund a mental health nurse in our force control room and additionally, a mental health street triage team, it simply cannot be right that police officers are often the first port of call for vulnerable people experiencing a mental health crisis.

“The public rightly want our officers out there fighting crime, while properly trained medical professionals are much better placed to provide people in situations such as mental health crisis with the care they need.

“I want to thank our county’s other public service partners for their support on this vitally important new approach. This national programme of Right Care Right Person has my full support and I will be doing everything I can to ensure its success.”

You can [find out more information about Right Care Right Person on the Bedfordshire Police website.](#)

Right Care Right Person

#RightCareRightPerson



PCC backs crackdown on retail crime

Two men have been arrested after a series of break-ins at high street shops and restaurants as Bedfordshire Police continues to take a stand against shoplifting.

The arrests are the latest results in the force's Operation Belville, with officers getting out on patrol and using tactics like CCTV to identify key suspects in Bedford.

Bedfordshire Police community policing teams are using things like information from the public to identify the top 10 suspects in different areas across the county as well as crime hotspots, gathering evidence to issue frequent offenders with Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO) designed to stop reoffending.

The force's Bedford community policing team officially launched Operation Belville at the Harpur Centre in Bedford this week, alongside Police and Crime Commissioner Festus Akinbusoye. On Monday (29 January) members of the local Neighbourhood Watch scheme met with the team to talk about cyber-crime and other major crime types.

PCC Mr Akinbusoye said: "It was very positive to have this opportunity to meet representatives from our business community, listen to updates on Operation Belville, the impact it is having in just 18 days, and the way the officers are working with the local authority.

"This is a perfect example of what partnership working and targeted enforcement can achieve. I will continue to support and advocate for local people and businesses who want to work with Bedfordshire Police in keeping our county safer."

Chief Inspector Mike Chand, from the Bedford community policing team, said: "Monday was a fantastic opportunity for me, the commissioner and other senior officers to meet with representatives from businesses in Bedford who were able to share their concerns regarding retail crime in the town.

"It was great to be able to reassure business owners that Operation Belville, our strategy to tackle the root causes and longer-term issues around retail crime in Bedford, is proving to be a huge success – but we know there is more work we need to do.

"We are determined to take this targeted approach to tackling crime and use our efforts and tactics in the best way to combat the most damaging criminal behaviour in our communities."



Attend for an exciting in person event, the Bedfordshire's Police and Crime Commissioners
Annual Business Conference 2024!



Date: Tuesday 13 February 2024



Time: 18:30-21:45

Address: The Rufus Centre, Steppingley Road, Flitwick, Bedford MK45 1AH, UK

Get together to discuss:

- The current overall picture of business crime and police plan on how to tackle crime.
- Cybercrime and how to protect your business whilst exploring new opportunities in technology and crime prevention.

Don't miss out on shaping your businesses future!

Please **contact us** for any queries

As business owners, this event will be an opportunity for you to;



- Get together to discuss business safety and business crime
- Understand the current overall picture of business crime and how the police plan to tackle this
- Understand cybercrime and how to protect your business

<https://www.bedfordshire.pcc.police.uk/>

Sign up to the Business Conference for free via Eventbrite

Take a read of what our office has been up to throughout January!



The PCC met with Cllrs. Aslam Khan, Hazel Simmons, Tom Shaw and Basit Mahmood for a visit to Luton where he met local businesses and residents during a walk around.



The PCC met with Andrew and Janina from the NSPCC to learn of their work with young people and families in Bedfordshire.



The PCC met with Town Councillors, local businesses and residents from Dunstable. From his direct engagements with the public, he got to hear the concerns residents have in relation to crime and policing, answer questions and work to find solutions with the Chief Constable.



The PCC gave an update to local representatives and Councillors representing 54 villages and towns alongside the Force to give an update on Bedfordshire Police Force's performance, recruitment, retention, crime demands and plans for the future.



The PCC's first school visit of 2024 was to Ferrars Junior School, Luton. He stated it was a pleasure to meet such bright, engaged and enthusiastic pupils, with great teaching staff too.



The PCC held his public accountability meeting with the Chief Constable and discussed recruitment, retention, public contact experience, community policing and much more. [Listen to the accountability meeting here.](#)



The PCC visited Biggleswade to meet with a local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) on foot patrols and to talk with some of the businesses on market square.



Follow [@BedsOPCC](#) to find out more on what activities the PCC and his office are doing day-to-day!



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#LightTheDarkness

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



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