



BEDFORDSHIRE CRIMINAL JUSTICE BOARD

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose and vision

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

We will adopt a local strategic plan and local delivery plans taking into account national strategies and regulations responses to

- expedite fair justice
- support victims and witnesses;
- reduce offending and reoffending;
- increase public confidence in the Criminal Justice System (CJS);
- facilitate collaboration between partners and problem solve collectively

Administrative Arrangements¹

Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) provide an 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 (at least two a year in person).
- 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 Board 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. These plans will be solution focussed.
- Produce minutes of each meeting and ensure they are an accurate reflection of the discussion and agreed actions.

¹ National Guidance for Criminal Justice Boards – Para. 5



- Publish papers and minutes (with exception of confidential items)

Membership²

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:

Bedfordshire Police Crime Commissioner (Chair)

Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue

Bedfordshire Police

Citizens Advice Bureau

Crown Prosecution Service

Defence Lawyer representative

East London Foundation Trust (Mental Health Service)

HM Courts & Tribunal Service (Crown Court & Magistrates)

HMP Bedford

Integrated Care, Bedfordshire Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK)

Local Authorities (Bedford, Central Bedfordshire & Luton)

Probation Service

Victim Support

Youth Offending

Member organisations will be expected to be represented by senior leaders.

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. Observers at meetings will not be able to cast a vote. The OPCC cannot meet any expenses in respect of observers' 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 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.

² National Guidance for Criminal Justice Boards, Para. 6-8



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

Expectations of Members³

LCJB members must actively engage in board meetings and help to facilitate problem solving within the 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 or member of staff or NED or political leader, as appropriate.
- Provide papers and 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 plans and 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 and more widely
- Produce an annual Bedfordshire Criminal Justice Plan with measurable targets

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. Some meetings will be held virtually via Teams and at least two meetings per year will be held in person 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 where four or more core members are present.

³ National Guidance for Criminal Justice Boards – Para. 9-10



Chief Officers, elected officials 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 has a casting vote.

Standing Agenda Items will be as follows:

Review of progress against strategic plan

- **Performance Updates** - From all members and the Chairs of the Board's subgroups with a focus on the Board's objectives
- **Themed Items** - To be agreed by the Board
- **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**
- **Report on Victims tracking progress against local and national plans**
- **Updates on Emerging Legislation**
- **Discussion and agreement on solution based plans to address contemporary issues**

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.

The Chair should demonstrate strong, inclusive 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 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

Financial accountability

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

Data sharing⁴

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.
- Members will commit to sharing data in accordance with regulations

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
V3	June 2024

END

⁴ National Guidance for Criminal Justice Boards – Para. 18-19