



BCJB Board Meeting

19th December 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 (BCJB Manager)
Gemma McCormack (GM)	Bedfordshire OPCC (Minutes)
Ian Dalgarno (ID)	Bedfordshire Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Kerry White (KW)	HMCTS on behalf of Ian Miller
Matt Thompson (MT)	Hertfordshire Police
Kate Somarakis (KS)	HMCTS Magistrates
Susan Childerhouse (SC)	Central Bedfordshire
Tony Hirst (TH)	HMCTS Magistrates Courts
Zara Brown (ZB)	Bedfordshire Police
Adewale Abitoye (AA)	BCJB Data Scientist
Pat Jennings (PJ)	Bedfordshire YoT
Ian Miller (IM)	HMCTS Crown Courts
Nicola Bayliss (NB)	Bedfordshire Office of the Police Crime Commissioner
Rose- Marie Franton (RMF)	Crown Prosecution Service
Dinh Padicala (DP)	East London Foundation Trust
Amelia Hammond (AH)	Ministry of Justice
Richard Vaughan (RV)	Youth Justice Board
Lucy Smart (LS)	Ministry of Justice (Guest)
Adam Palmer (AP)	Defence
Jolene Jefferson (JJ)	Ministry of Justice (Guest)
Ella Thomas (ET)	Associate of Police Crime Commissioners
Jessie Clark (JC)	Ministry of Justice

Item No.	Topic
1.	<p>Welcome, Introduction & Apologies:</p> <p>FA welcomed everyone to the meeting, the minutes of the previous meeting were discussed and agreed as an accurate record.</p>
2.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting & Action Log:</p> <p>FJ went through the Action log and confirmed that the majority of actions are either complete or ongoing. The main action items for the Board's attention are as follows;</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 22/23-22 HMICRFS joint mental health thematic: There has been a good response from the Police but FJ will be in touch with relevant Partners to discuss their sections in the New Year. – 22/23-33 Children in the CJS - YoT: BCJB to explore the potential for a multi-agency transitions hub. FJ to add to the BCJB forward plan for a more detailed discussion. DCS to provide some additional information about the Transitions to Adulthood intervention in Newham for 18-25 year olds. To be carried forward in 2024. – 23/24-05 Disproportionality: FJ met with MT and the BCJB data lead. This work will be incorporated into the actions relating to Disproportionality presented by Youth Offending in Sept-23, exploring internal agency audits using the Avon and Somerset project template. <p>Update: This work is being progressed by FJ; There will be a horizon scan on what is happening across the partnership in terms of internal audits identifying areas of disproportionality. Outcomes to be discussed at the next meeting.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>HMCTS and BCJB Workstream Highlight Reports:</p> <p>1. HMCTS</p> <p>IM reported on quarter 3 activity in the Crown Court.</p> <p>A lot of change with court recovery, sitting at the maximum, over the last two months receipts have started to reduce and the figures are coming down slowly.</p> <p>Courts are listing now into July 2025 due to changes in better case management where we are fixing instead of having the warned list. We have Judges and recorders so that is no longer an issue at this time.</p> <p>The Crown Court is quite steady at the moment.</p> <p>FA asked for an update regarding challenges with recorders which led to issues with sittings and what are the factors driving up improvement?</p> <p>IM advised that regarding the recorders, the courts now have the Judges they need contributing to improvement and better case management is another factor. One of the Court Judges is looking at what cases can be heard via Cloud Video Platform¹ to improve flexibility.</p> <p>Concerning the Magistrates Courts; KS shared that common platform², is working quite well. The Magistrates are trying to ensure that the CPS are getting copies of the better case management forms so that they can prepare the trials. No national issues have been identified with the system. Bedfordshire has now been moved across to Common Platform, this process is proving to be working quite quickly.</p>

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-join-a-cloud-video-platform-cvp-hearing/how-to-join-cloud-video-platform-cvp-for-a-video-hearing>

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hmcts-common-platform-view-or-manage-a-case>

The only agencies that are not on Common Platform are Local Authorities and Probation.

FA asked if this is delivering efficiencies for the users and the public? TH shared the original benefits projection for Common Platform are having to be revised but mainly this was due to over ambitiousness of expectations and the error rates. These are not system flaws they are human error scenarios and are looking at what safeguards can be put in. There is an ongoing review on a financial and headcount point of view. On a work point of view it is starting to deliver what was expected.

2. BCJB Workstreams Chairs Report

I) Victims & Witnesses

ZB advised that the board is being reviewed, looking at a more detailed alignment with the Victims Code of Practice. We are revisiting the delivery plan and the attendance of the board as this needs to be more streamlined across the system. At the last Board we could see that there was some really good compliance from our victims code of practice with our Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Team who hit 100% for our contact with victims which is really pleasing to see. This is being tracked through VCOP compliance.

Overall compliance is 89.3% for the Force. The Gov Metric Survey for burglary, theft and robbery involving a vehicle saw 405 respondents with a satisfaction rate of 43.7%, that has been broken down into different areas and the feedback has been given to make sure that we have some increases in the satisfaction rate and to understand why the 21.23% were not satisfied. The DA survey results are showing 82 surveys currently, with 68 first attempts and 22 being completed with 87% female and 13% male. November had a results of satisfied, unsatisfied and some mixed feelings. A dashboard has been created for common themes so that feedback can be given and improvements can be made. There is a lot of work to do in this space but plans are in place for 2024.

AH asked regarding the 89.3% compliance, what are you using to come up with that figure? ZB advised it is measuring the contact on Athena, we are saying we are complying with what victims expect as per the code. This doesn't include whether we are adhering to the 12 rights code, this is a work in practice. ZB and AH to have a further discussion after this meeting.

FA asked what figure would be a realistic target? ZB advised the 89.3% is holistic across the organisation but RASSO (Rape and Serious Sexual Offences) hit 100% for victim compliance. Patrol for instance is 95.5% which is the highest it has been. There are Crime Desk Supervisors are

now in place which is making a difference for victims. Anything above 90% is good for the organisation.

II) Reducing Reoffending Workstream by Doug Charlton:

DCN provided an update;

The RRB has been working with an old strategy for a while, providing updates and it is important that moving forward this group picks up anything that is current and remains focussed, so as not to miss anything as we have a tight agenda. FJ is currently working on an updated strategy for 24/25.

A new housing protocol has been agreed on behalf of Luton Council and Probation. The next phase will be to look at getting Bedford and Central to look at signing up to the protocol.

DCN stated that as chair of the RRB, he has actioned links with the prisons in Bedford and Peterborough, where more active involvement is now moving into place. There is still a need to bring in HMP The Mount and efforts are on-going in that area.

Within IOM, there have been issues around the sourcing of short notice accommodation with supported housing, which links into Prison releases – CAS3 facility (this guarantees accommodation for those released from Prison). When an individual cannot be housed under this scheme e.g., arson conviction, it becomes difficult.

Chair spoke about the introduction of 'Early Custody Release', which will impact on Short Sentence Function, predominantly around IOM. This month HMPPS will be introducing no releases on a Friday, which we hope will improve the situation, but it is vital that we link in with LA housing to ensure that the above protocol is being embedded and followed.

The OPCC and Unitary Authorities need to be aware of the increased risk of homelessness at this time of year.

Bedfordshire partnership was the best represented area at the regional conference this month. The focus was on pathways to reducing reoffending which demonstrated a good level of opportunity for people within the IOM process and wider criminal justice system. Links are being made with the various organisations that were present.

The RRB will be asked to consider an amalgamation of both groups under the BCJB Reducing Reoffending Subgroup.

Charlotte Ball spoke about CJS drug and alcohol; additional posts have been commissioned with new funding received and looked at pathways that need development i.e. continuity of care, CSTRs and custody.

Pan Bedfordshire group has completed some mapping activity, identified gaps and looked additional funding for drug treatment workers e.g. will be picking up on CAMHS mental health.

CSTRs - low for Bedfordshire(below target), to try increase numbers. Looking to employ more drug and dependency workers, we will be co-located Probation offices, picking up those vulnerable people.

It's about all coming together – keep on top of it, it would be really helpful to maintain momentum and drive, providing governance through the RRB and CJB.

FA asked if the early release scheme is causing any additional pressures? DC advised that it is as these are all people who are coming out any way, we are well resourced to deal with this pressure. There were early teething problems with the system but this is working well now. The Prison has a very good command and control approach and we have been working well together.

III) Performance and Program Management Group:

KS advised the she is the interim chair of the PPMG. We are continuing to meet regularly and have had some good discussions to ensure we are maintaining the Board principles. There have been lots of discussions regarding the Crown Court delays and the specialist recorders. The Magistrates Court are business as usual, there are no backlogs over and above what is expected. There are 2 weekly checks to ensure there is capacity and no delays. We are looking at CPS decision to charge, finalisation of decisions and guilty pleas at first hearings.

There is a lot of work between the CPS and Police to ensure the correct charges are being identified. The CPS has been working hard to front load the evidence in their files. There is a still an issue with defence engagement overall and this needs to be looked at to improve this engagement. There have been some changes to magistrates sentencing powers but some cases are still being kept for trial to assist with the crown court.

RASSO guilt plea at first hearing for Bedfordshire was 37.5% in Quarter 2, higher in terms of performance than both the national of 27% and regional of 30.2%.

Youth disproportionality, violence against women and women going through the criminal justice system, file quality and RASSO cases will continue to be looked at in 2024.



	<p>FA shared that during one of his first meetings as chair, file quality was one of the worst in the country so is very pleased to hear that this has improved.</p> <p>RMF agreed that file quality has improved. There has been an improvement in GDPR redactions due to the new tool. In relation to RASSO, operation Soteria is working its magic and there is a national model in place now. As a result of that the CPS are looking at the quality of advice that is being given back in return and ensure it is in a timely manner. We are trying to ensure that we are giving quality but the timeliness may be slipping slightly due to this. We are also looking at what is early advice and what is a charging decision as this is more considered. We are ensuring that our Lawyers know the difference between the two and treat these differently.</p> <p>ZB thanked RMF and her team as a lot of structures have now been put in place. ZB put in some KPI's and thankfully this has enabled a structured lead to each pillar and are working closely with the RASSO team. We need to keep going as we have a long way to go in ensuring the public and victims that Bedfordshire take this type of crime very seriously.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>BCJB Business Items:</p> <p>Annual Report:</p> <p>FJ has tabled the Annual Report for 2022/2023 and a Terms of Reference. The purpose of the report is to capture some of the work that has been completed. Some meaningful projects were picking up during 2023/2024 report will capture a lot of the work that has been completed. FJ asked all for comments in relation to the report and if there is anything that can be added.</p> <p>The National guidance for Criminal Justice Board has been included in the Terms of Reference and it is important that the Victims Code is also incorporated going forward.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Theme: Victims & Witnesses:</p> <p>Victims & Prisoners Bill:</p> <p>LS went through the presentation of the Victims and Prisoners Bill.</p> <p>FA asked what is the difference locally between the Victims Commissioner and the Police and Crime Commissioner for the voice of the victims?</p> <p>AH advised the bill places a new duty on PCC's to keep compliance under review locally. That is a duty once the Bill has been passed. The Victims Commissioner has a duty to keep compliance under review but this will be Nationally. It may be something we look into regarding guidance for PCC's going forward.</p>

FA thanked the MoJ for the update and agreed that we all look forward to the update on when this goes through Parliament.

LS went through the Code Compliance Framework presentation.

MT asked regarding the metrics, is any work being done regarding that it can be automated through systems? AH advised that a lot of conversations have taken place about how this can work with Police systems. It is something we are keen to explore but will not be immediately available due to the time it takes to update systems.

DC asked regarding the collection of the data and also the delivery of service, is there going to be additional funding that comes with this compliance? AH advised that the Impact Assessment set out funding for Police and Crime Commissioners to take on the new duty to monitor this information locally. This funding is for PCC's to have up to 2 Analyst locally, it is already a duty for co-compliance to be monitored and we will keep under review whether new funding was required but we are continuing to explore this Nationally. We are working with the Youth Justice Team and other bodies Nationally on what other funding may be required.

Presentation to be attached.

Restorative Justice:

NB introduced herself as the Restorative Justice Co-Ordinator who is covering the post whilst Alysha Patel is on maternity leave.

Restorative Justice is the safe, facilitated communication between those harmed by a crime/incident and those who were responsible. Those harmed can ask questions, explain the impact, and gain closure from what happened. Those responsible have the opportunity to apologise, take responsibility and discuss how they can make amends. It is voluntary for all involved and can be a direct process (face to face meeting) or indirect process (through letter, recordings, messages). No offence type is excluded as we want every victim/survivor to be able to be empowered to decide for themselves whether RJ is right for them. By providing them information on how to contact our service to self-refer or making the referral on their behalf, the only guarantee being made is that an RJ practitioner will look into their enquiry. Referrals can be initiated by either party.

85% victim satisfaction

78% of victims would recommend the process

33% reduction in reoffending

49% reduction in PTSD symptoms

£1 spent on RJ, saves criminal justice agencies £8

Recent statistics show that only 5.5% of victims can recall being told about RJ, despite it being in the Victim's Code that EVERY victim of crime should be



	<p>informed about RJ services in their area, by the police, nationally this isn't happening. Victims/survivors are being deprived of making the choice for themselves, further disempowering them and possibly keeping them from something that could help them move forward.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>AOB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The PCC thanked all partners for participating in the Board's first AGM. The PCC apologised that we didn't have enough time to cover the agenda in full to give partners a break prior to the AGM which will be recorded for the public. – FJ advised that there are some papers that have been circulated for information ahead of the next meeting. <p>Partnership working will be the theme for the next meeting.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Date of Next Meeting:</p> <p>Monday, 15 July 2024 at 1000 – 1200.</p>