



Bedfordshire PCC Commissioning and Funding Strategy

2024-2028

For an overview of services currently and previously commissioned by Bedfordshire PCC please visit: [Commissioned Services - Bedfordshire PCC](#)

This strategy is underpinned by the Commissioning and Funding Policy adopted by the Police and Crime Commissioner in October 2024 following the publication of the Police and Crime Plan.

Overarching objective

The objective is to use commissioning and the funding available to the PCC to

- support the realisation of the Police and Crime Plan
- contribute to enhancing the safety and wellbeing of the residents of Bedfordshire
- foster a sustainable voluntary and community sector within Bedfordshire who are active in supporting all victims including those in the criminal justice system, contributing to the above objectives and preventing crime

Principles

The OPCC will

- as the default, grant aid with contractual agreements
- only use competitive procurement in exceptional circumstances – see below
- fund and contract with social enterprises, charities, and voluntary and community sector organisations wherever possible
- support the development of local service provision
- encourage and support new providers
- award where appropriate three-year grants and contracts
- always act proportionately

- be transparent and ethical in all that it does
- support advocacy as well as emotional and practical support services
- encourage recipients of the funding to support social justice-

The PCC and the OPCC will continuously listen to providers, potential providers, partners and service users, and will invite innovative ideas. They will ensure opportunities are available to commission new projects and services as a result of feedback.

A Safer and Fairer Bedfordshire					
Excellence	Prevention	Tackle VAWC	Victims and the Heart	Local Policing	Tackle Serious Crime
We will ensure realisation of the Police and Crime Plan through transparent, proportionate, and relational commissioning, fostering sustainability of services.	We will collaborate with partners and learn from providers, informing approaches to tackling and reducing crime, through early intervention, prevention, a reduction in offending and reduction in repeat victimisation	We will focus on the prevention of VAWG offences, supporting the Governmental ambition to reduce VAWC offences by 50% in 10 years.	We will put victims at the heart of the criminal justice system and support victims through the commissioned service provision. Benefitting from lived experience and provider expertise, the OPCC will focus on the wellbeing of the residents in Bedfordshire.	We will work with local communities and the voluntary and charitable sector to reduce, prevent and respond to the causes of crime.	We will commission services to engage, intervene and prevent serious youth violence and organised crime.

The Commissioning Cycle

This commissioning strategy is underpinned by the ‘Commissioning Cycle.’ The Commissioning Cycle (shown below) illustrates the ongoing activity that is required to ensure that the process of commissioning retains a focus on effectiveness and efficiency.

The Commissioning and Funding Policy aims to deliver a supportive, engaging, and innovative commissioning and funding approach, ensuring the development of vibrant relationships within the voluntary and community sector to ensure that the service provision supports and facilitates advocacy, and innovative and outcome focused services.

Operating with relational commissioning, the OPCC will use the following commissioning strategy elements to deliver.

Commissioning Principles



Co-commissioning

Explore and consider opportunities to co-commission services with local partner agencies including, the NHS, Local Authorities, Probation, and the Prison Service etc, in charitable foundations and other community groups. Not only will this approach seek to benefit from shared local knowledge and expertise but also ensure that commissioned services are responding holistically to service user need, with a system-based approach as well as maximising value for money and the effective and efficient use of resources.

Co-design and Provider Engagement

When commissioning new services or re-commissioning existing services the OPCC will always engage with and consult broadly with partners, local and national subject

experts, and above all service users and potential service users so that they shape the design of services.

Furthermore, the OPCC will involve existing and potential providers spanning the public, for profit, and VCSE sectors in opportunity engagement events and activities. In this way we will seek expert views on proposed specifications and encourage a wide interest in bidding for tender opportunities.

Where appropriate, voluntary and community groups and others will be invited to offer ideas and submit proposals for the deployment of the available funds. Not all commissioned and funded activities will be subject to detailed specifications from the OPCC.

Needs and Evidence Based Commissioning

All commissioning activity will be based upon an assessment of need, supported by a quantitative and qualitative evidence base developed by collaborating with partners, providers, and voluntary and community groups, including Bedfordshire Police and where possible wider systems partners. This will ensure that commissioned services are reflective of, and specifically targeted to, the needs of the communities of Bedfordshire in response to the needs identified.

Relational commissioning and grants

The OPCC will develop relations with providers and potential providers of advocacy and other services. This will underpin a partnership approach throughout the commissioning process.

The OPCC will award grants as a default, although the grant agreements will include monitoring expectations proportionate to risk. Recipients of grants will be expected to deliver agreed outcomes.

Open and Transparent Processes

The OPCC will prioritise the use of grant funding by utilising a commissioning approach and will only use competitive tendering processes for large projects where this is in the public interest.

In cases where the contract value requires a tender process, the opportunity will be released to providers, funding opportunities will be communicated transparently via the OPCC website and on the Procurement Portal to attract providers both new and current. Details of the opportunity, including a specification of need, funding envelope and evaluation criteria will be shared openly via these channels. For transparency, evaluation processes will include inputs from independent members and/ or subject matter experts.

When competitive procurement is used the OPCC will follow relevant Cabinet Office public procurement guidance and legislation including financial thresholds and will

utilise expertise and support from the 7 Force Commercial Services team to support provider engagement.

The OPCC will use competitive dialogue-based procurement wherever appropriate.

When in the public interest a Single Tender Action may be considered, or Direct Awarding can be completed. This allows a grant to be awarded without a competitive procurement process where there is evidence that the need can only be suitably met by a single provider or where a provider is aligned to/ funded by a statutory agency.

Where evaluation of tender responses is required, this will be supported by an independent panel member and/or a subject matter expert and will consider quality, local/ community knowledge, social value, and value for money.

Innovation

When responding to specifications for new services, organisations will be encouraged to explore utilising innovative approaches and practices. Within existing services, providers will be monitored on and supported in developing such practices. In doing so the OPCC will encourage a service delivery which is consistently responsive to service user need, utilising technological developments and efficiencies to respond to increasing demand levels. The OPCC will also operate in an encouraging way, working to develop, enhance and introduce new service provision to Bedfordshire, responding to needs and gaps identified through the mission boards.

Providers will be allowed and encouraged to innovate after grants and contracts have been awarded in order to achieve better outcomes. To achieve this, proportionate commissioning specifications and monitoring will be implemented.

Continuous Improvement

A culture of continuous improvement will be adopted. To achieve this, funded services will be required to seek feedback from their users and will be supported by the OPCC to incorporate this into business cases for development and change where necessary. As part of continuous improvement, services will be encouraged to horizon scan and maintain awareness of relevant legislative changes, partnership and community activities and additional funding opportunities.

Monitoring & Performance Outcomes

All commissioned services will be proportionately monitored by the OPCC and as a minimum this will take place on a quarterly basis. This will include the review of Key Performance Indicators and qualitative and quantitative measures to evidence outputs and outcomes, including user feedback to ensure positive outcomes are achieved for service users. Regular financial returns will also be required from all commissioned providers. The insights gained in the monitoring process will be fundamental in the design of future specifications, services, and innovations.

Social Value

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires Commissioners to consider broader social, economic, and environmental benefits to their area when making commissioning decisions. The OPCC will go further and will include a requirement for social value consideration in all grant and contract supported programmes. Service providers can respond to this requirement in several ways including the employment of local people or the support of charities, and in doing so create an additional social value for communities.

Community Benefit

In the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan, the Commissioning Team will ensure there is a wider community benefit from the services and providers that are commissioned or grant funded. The OPCC will encourage community benefit in a broader sense than social value, supporting a service user to engage with the services, commissioners, the wider system, and enabling them to contribute meaningfully to society.

A fairer Bedfordshire

The OPCC will encourage activity, and where relevant, equitable service provision, that promotes a fairer Bedfordshire, with all Commissioning being completed with a set of expectations. The expectations for providers to meet are as follows.

- Employers should pay the Real Living Wage.
- Employers should have a pension scheme for all employees.
- Employees must not be employed on zero-hour contracts.
- Providers will be encouraged to employ apprentices where appropriate.
- Providers will be encouraged to engage lived experience in their work, and if appropriate, employ people with lived experience including ex-offenders.
- Employers must have in place the following policies.
 - Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults
 - Data Protection
 - Data Sharing
 - Information Security
 - Privacy
 - Complaints
 - Business Continuity
 - HR (equal opportunities, vetting, recruitment, and training)
 - Health and Safety
 - Equality and Inclusion
 - Lone working
 - Environmental and Sustainability Policy
 - Whistle Blowing Policy

All recipients of funding from the OPCC will be expected to develop a plan for self-sufficiency wherever possible. The OPCC will support organisations to develop their own capacity.

Funding/Finance

The Police and Crime Commissioner has access to core funding streams from which awards can be made which contribute to the delivery of the objectives within the Police and Crime Plan.

Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Funding

Police and Crime Commissioners were given responsibility for commissioning support services for victims of crime in 2014 along with an annual grant from the Ministry of Justice. An amendment to section 56 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 and the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 allows for this.

Ministry of Justice Funding is specifically used in the specialist support of victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence, counselling services, and the support of victims of all other crime types. Services commissioned under the Ministry of Justice funding stream must be accessible to all victims of crime regardless of whether the crime has been reported to the police or how long ago the crime was committed.

Home Office (HO) Funding

Police and Crime Commissioners have opportunities to access funding via the Home Office, with previous opportunities such as funding for the Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit (VERU), Safer Streets and the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator intervention programme.

Funding via the Home Office enhances the capability of the OPCC, supporting prevention and early intervention activity.

Community Safety Fund

The PCC's Community Safety Fund is utilised to support services and collaborative efforts which align to the Police and Crime Plan 2024-2028.

Through the use of the Community Safety Fund, the OPCC will apply a flexible commissioning approach, enabling seed funding, capacity building and development of services through innovation and experimentation of projects and services which align to the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.

The OPCC will use grant agreements as default for the commissioning of services via this funding and will ensure that grant agreements are managed proportionately.

The OPCC will review other funding opportunities in addition to core governmental funding streams, and will pursue any opportunity that is relevant, appropriate, and supportive of Police and Crime Plan delivery.

Funding Awards

Funding may either be awarded via a Grant Agreement or a Contract.

Grants are defined as “contributions to a specific or broad range of activities” rather than a contractually agreed service specification. The award of a Grant enables the Commissioner to responsively award funding to providers to support immediate or emerging issues, or to conduct a short-term project or pilot. Grant Agreements will be subject to the same commissioning principles outlined within this strategy including due diligence and regular performance monitoring. The OPCC will take a supportive approach where relevant, however unsatisfactory performance will be managed.

Grants may be awarded either for a single year or for multiple years.

Contracts are put in place following a formal procurement process and legally bind a provider to delivering to an agreed service specification. They are usually awarded for multiple years and can include extension options. Where appropriate, the OPCC will use tender processes where the financial limit for the duration of the contract exceeds £214,904.00 in total contract value.

The OPCC will manage the commissioning process to determine the most effective route to commissioning, in support of outcomes, person centric provision and encouraging innovation.

[Funding Schedule](#)

The OPCC will seek to fund providers on a monthly in arrears basis to enable cashflow of funding. In line with public guidance, the OPCC will arrange for invoices to be paid within 30 days of receipt.