



Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership

working together to make communities safer

Community Safety Partnership Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024

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Foreword

The Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership Strategic Plan sets out a clear vision of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to tackle crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and drug and alcohol misuse, and increase perceptions about safety and well-being in our communities.

Our vision will be achieved through a strong collaboration of agencies. We will work alongside our communities to tackle some of the most complex and persistent problems arising, in order to ensure that the communities of Bedford Borough remain a safe place for all, where a high quality of life can be enjoyed.

This plan was developed to address the significant challenges in terms of emerging threats and risks faced by the CSP. These include increasing attention to the criminal exploitation of vulnerable people, modern day slavery and serious youth violence. These threats to safety are now firmly within the sights of partners, alongside other important issues such as Child Sexual Exploitation, Domestic Abuse and Serious Sexual Offences.

During the same period, the CSP and partner agencies have continued to face reductions in budget and resources, adding to the challenge of delivering more service with less resource.

This plan, which was originally developed to cover the period 2020-2023, has been refreshed and extended for an additional year. This gives partner agencies the opportunity to embed responsibilities to meet the new Serious Violence Duty by 2024. The strategic priorities for the Bedford Borough CSP have been reviewed through the 2022 Strategic Assessment and analysis of current data and intelligence. These sources have allowed us to focus on the three priority areas which cause the most concern to both local residents and agencies. The plan sets out how we will address core community safety issues.

Success in addressing the three priorities requires the trust and confidence of the public in our agencies, for this reason there is a strong theme of engagement running throughout the partnership aims. Partnership working, community engagement and empowerment will continue to be the key to tackling crime, disorder and the local priorities identified as strategic issues for the CSP.

John Murphy
Chief Superintendent, Bedfordshire Police
Chair of the Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Vision

The vision of the Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is:

“Tackling crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse and increasing perceptions about safety and well-being in our communities.”

1.2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the priority areas of action for the CSP and its partner agencies by:

- Introducing *Strategic Community Safety Priorities* for the CSP based on the results of the 2019 and 2022 CSP Strategic Assessments.
- Describing what the CSP’s strategic aims and priorities are over the period 2020-2024.

1.3. Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) was formed in response to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as a statutory requirement. Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership is a joint partnership of five responsible authorities – **Bedford Borough Council, Bedfordshire Police, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Offender Management Services** and **Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group** – who work together to tackle the crimes and anti-social behaviour that affect our communities.

Every CSP in England is required to produce a Strategic Plan. This Plan covers the period **April 2020 to March 2024** and establishes the key strategic aims and priority issues of the CSP for the period. As well as establishing a strategic plan, the CSP also has a statutory obligation to undertake an annual Crime and Disorder ‘Strategic Assessment’ (SA), this will continue to be carried out annually to inform the progress of the Plan, the work of partners and effective delivery of community safety work.



1.4. Profile of Bedford Borough

Bedford is mixed 'urban and rural' Borough, the rural area covers 476 sq km and includes the county town of Bedford, the adjacent urban area of Kempston, and 45 rural parishes comprises the remainder of the Borough. The population is concentrated in the urban area, with almost two-thirds (63%) living in Bedford and Kempston.

According to ONS data, the Borough has a population of 185,761 (2021 Census) which has grown by approximately 17.8% since 2011. Much of that growth has occurred in the rural parishes bordering the urban area where there have been several major residential developments, including the large new community of Wixams.

There are an estimated 74,650 households in the Borough in 2021(ONS Census).

The older population is projected to increase at a much higher rate. Between 2018 and 2043 the 65+ population is projected to rise by 61% and the 85+ population by 93%

Long term, the population of the Borough is projected to reach 196,146 in 2043; this would represent a 14.2% increase between 2018 and 2043.

The Borough has a diverse population. The 2021 Census reported that 34.9% of the population was from ethnic minority groups (non-'White British') compared to 26.5% nationally. The number of residents from ethnic minority backgrounds has increased by 21,554, between 2011 and 2021.

Ethnic minority groups are concentrated in the urban areas of Bedford and Kempston, with particularly large communities in Queens Park (78%) and Cauldwell (67%) wards. The proportions of residents from ethnic minority groups are higher among younger age groups.

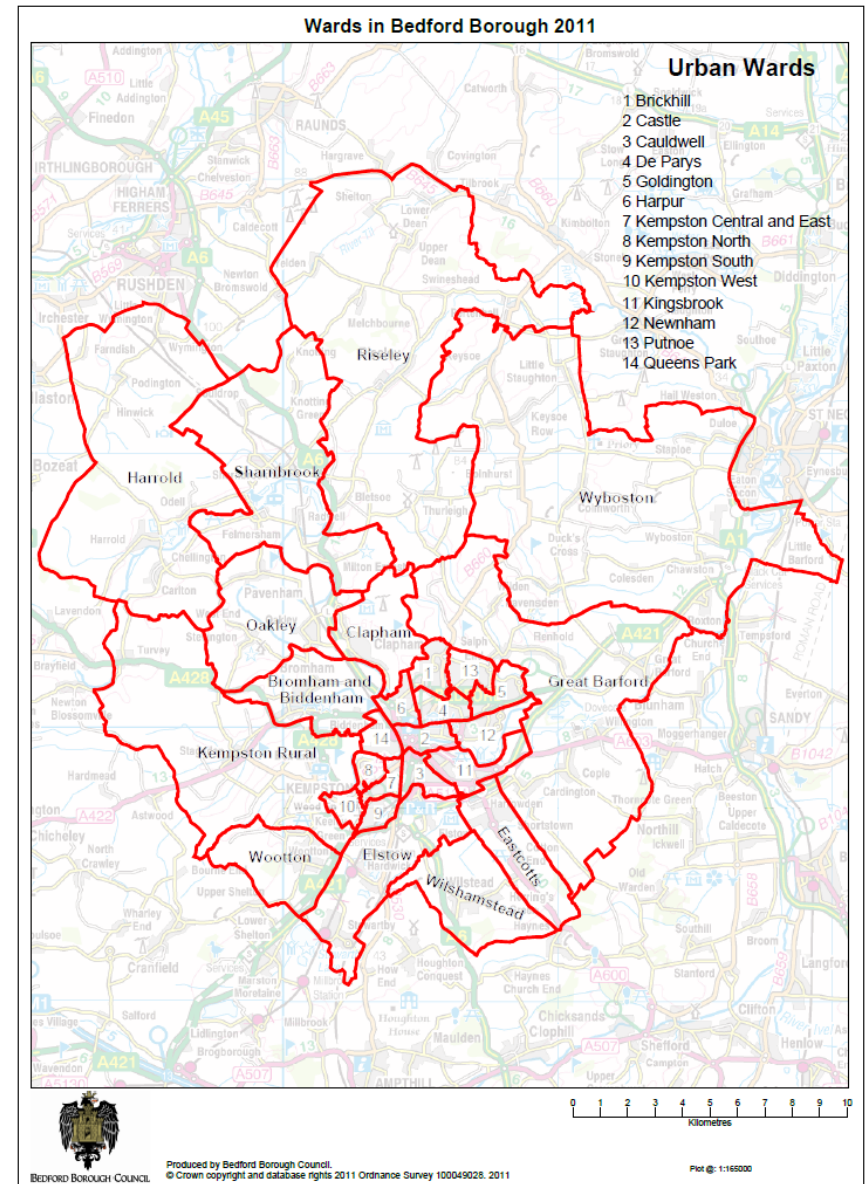
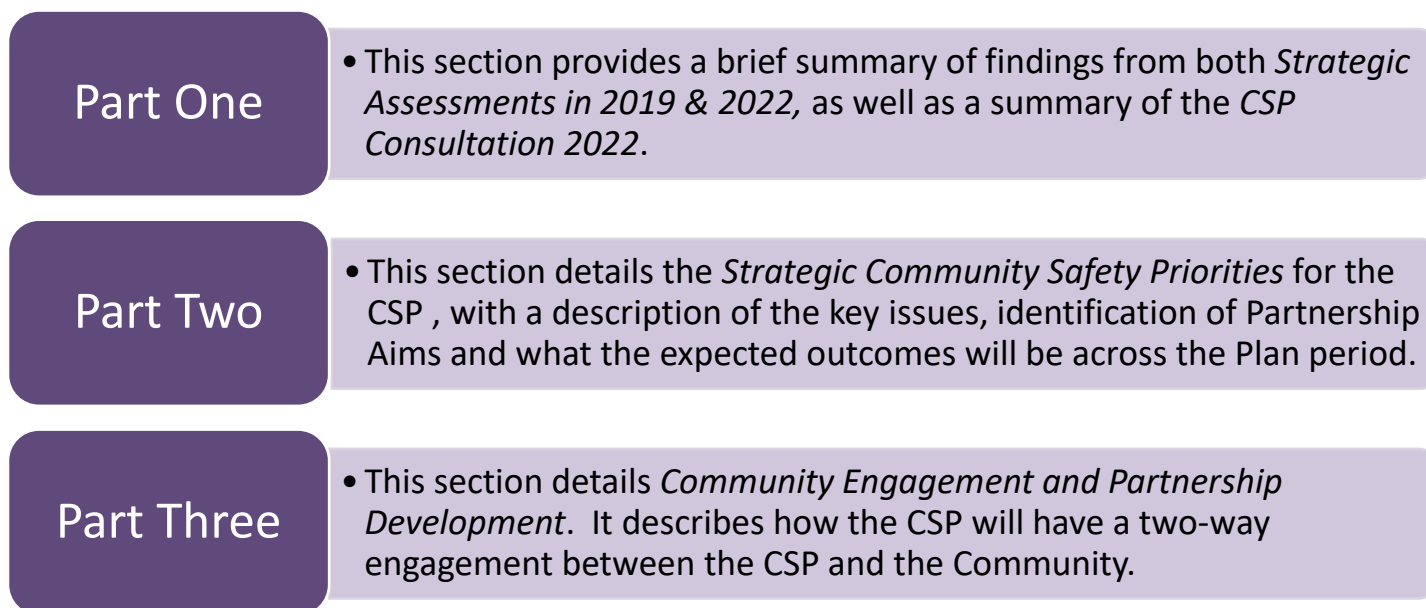


Figure 1 ►

1.5. Plan Structure

The CSP Plan has been designed to capture the **priorities of partners** and the wider Bedford Borough CSP based on current data and intelligence. Each **Strategic Priority** area will be supported by an **Action Plan**, which will be delivered by the Operational Delivery Group (ODG) and tasking group, with performance against the strategic priorities reported back to the Safer Thematic Board on a quarterly basis.



1.6. Equalities Impact Assessment

The Community Safety Plan aims to increase community safety for all individuals who live or work in or who visit Bedford Borough. CSP activities are evidence led, focussed on supporting victims, with the aim of improving the quality of life of victims and ensuring a smooth pathway through the Criminal Justice System. An equality assessment¹ of the Community Safety Plan has been produced to ensure that due consideration has been given to the Borough Council's statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

¹ EIA link: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/environmental-issues/community-safety/>

Part One

• Strategic Assessment Process and CSP Consultation Summary

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS

An annual Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment (SA) is produced on behalf of the Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to inform strategic planning and commissioning processes. It is part of an intelligence led process that is used to tackle crime and disorder and improve community safety. The SA considers what needs to be achieved to help improve community safety, including how communities can feel assured and confident that their concerns and fears are being addressed.

The assessment is developed using a standard risk scanning tool which allows partners to contribute recorded data, professional judgement and organisational demands into the assessment process. This process identifies those issues that present the greatest concern to the CSP and require further analysis within the assessment. The areas of interest identified in the 2019 scanning exercise can be seen in **Figure 2** ►

Each issue has been evaluated at both the national and local level; the process of analysis makes use of data from across the partnership and community to develop patterns of emerging issues and significant changes. Analysis focuses on a *victim, offender and location* (VOL) approach to ensure a clear picture of the problem is developed. Key recommendations in the assessment are used to develop priority areas of focus for the partnership

Findings in the most recent assessment, completed in 2022, has been used refresh this plan to ensure that the priorities are still relevant and make best use of valuable resources.

A full copy of the **Bedford CSP Strategic Assessment 2022** is available at <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/environmental-issues/community-safety/>



COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP CONSULTATION

The CSP Consultations are designed specifically to:

- ✓ *Understand progress in terms of tackling Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) against the previous plan period*
- ✓ *Understand what contributes to making people feel safe and unsafe*
- ✓ *Gain an understanding of people's concerns about underlying issues that impact on Crime and ASB*
- ✓ *Gain an understanding of people's awareness of new and emerging issues in the Borough*
- ✓ *Understand the issues that cause the greatest level of public concern*

By collecting and using geographic, equality and diversity monitoring data, the CSP is also able to understand the opinions of different sections of the community. Face to face engagement with the public allows the CSP to gauge levels of awareness and understanding of local issues and concerns. This exercise is also helpful in raising awareness of the CSP and in publicising services that are available.

The most recent partnership survey took place over the summer of 2022, at a number of community events and through online consultation. A total of 448 people completed the survey, from across all the Borough's 27 Wards.

The survey explored two key areas, these were:

a) "How confident are you that agencies in Bedford work together to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour?"

The proportion of those that felt 'Very Confident' or 'Fairly Confident' was 34%, a reduction from the 2019 figure of 41%.

b) "What makes your local area a safe and unsafe place?"

There was a consistent message that **positive relationships with neighbours** and **being part of an established community** has the greatest impact on people's feeling of safety. The **physical environment** was also highlighted as important, as is a **visible presence of authority**.

A much wider range of issues contribute to people feeling unsafe. Some talked about very specific concerns around **levels of speeding** or **acquisitive crime**; others talk in more general terms about **drug and alcohol issues**, the **impact of gangs and those acting in a suspicious or anti-social manner** and a **lack of visible authority**. These findings were broadly consistent with previous consultation exercises.

The complete responses to these and the other questions included in the survey, as well as the open comments provided, will be used to develop the Action Plans that address those areas of high concern. A complete copy of the **CSP Consultation 2022** report is available at

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/environmental-issues/community-safety/>

Part Two

• Strategic Community Safety Priorities for the Partnership

2. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2020-2024

By reviewing the Areas of Interest and Common Threads identified in the Strategic Assessment process alongside the feedback from our Community Survey, the Bedford CSP has developed and identified the three following Strategic Priority Areas for the Plan.

Each area has been explored to identify the **Key Issues, Partnership Aims** and **Expected Outcomes** in order to reflect the evidence and themes gathered from within the annual Strategic Assessment process and the CSP Community Consultation exercises.

To provide a clear understanding of achieving progress in these strategic priority areas, delivery regrading each priority will be managed by a corresponding **Action Plan**, reviewed and updated on an annual basis, each with specific performance objectives and milestones.

It is important to note that the specific Action Plans will seek to reduce the risks around the priorities identified by the Strategic Assessment and Public Consultation. The 'business as usual' elements of reducing crime and disorder will still take place, with these elements managed within the appropriate groups involving the appropriate partners.

The Strategic Priorities identified are:

- **PRIORITY ONE – High Harm & Violence**
- **PRIORITY TWO – Hidden Harms & Exploitation**
- **PRIORITY THREE – Building Community Confidence**



2.1. **PRIORITY ONE – High Harm & Violence**

This priority focuses on the significant impacts of violent crimes on the victims, families and the wider community, recognising the links between Domestic and Sexual Abuse alongside the new emerging patterns of Knife Crime, Youth Violence and Robbery. Whilst the volumes of all these offences have increased in recent years there is still strong evidence to suggest high levels of under reporting, therefore Partners need to work collectively to raise awareness of the issues and support that is available and to build trust amongst affected communities.

PRIORITY ONE – High Harm & Violence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knife Crime & Youth Violence • Robbery • Domestic Abuse • Serious Sexual Offences
Key Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in recorded offences of Knife Crime • High proportion of victims of Knife Crime aged 16-20 years • Increase in Severity Scores for Serious Youth Violence offences • Increase in the proportion of Robberies that involve the use of a knife or bladed article • Increasing numbers of repeat victims within police recorded data for Domestic Violence • High number of repeat cases heard at the Bedford Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) • The number of Serious Sexual Offences reported to the Police continue to increase
Partnership Aims
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase engagement with young people and families • Understand the drivers and patterns of violence • Ensure early identification of those involved in violence • Develop a place based model for high harm areas • Coordinate community led initiatives that meet local needs
Expected Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a 'youth voice' in everything that we do • Effective use of partnership powers to disrupt and enforce those that commit violence • Earlier access to support services • Reduction in harm within targeted areas • Sustainable pathways and diversions

2.2. PRIORITY TWO – Hidden Harms & Exploitation

This priority focusses on the identification and protection of some of the most vulnerable within our communities. Whilst awareness off the risks relating to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and County Lines have increased in recent years much more work is needed to explore how these themes relate to the wider risks of Criminal Exploitation. The hidden nature of these issues means that levels of reporting for safeguarding and offences in these areas are still low, as a result the local picture and impacts requires more input from Partners to improve clarity, understanding and disruption. Partners should focus on clear and consistent messages, both internally and in the wider community, to ensure that victims are protected as early as possible

PRIORITY TWO – Hidden Harms & Exploitation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Lines • CSE and Missing • Cuckooing • Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking • Hate and Extremism 	
Key Issues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of crimes reported to Police with a confirmed CSE marker continue to increase • Increase in the proportion of Missing Episodes that have a risk marker for Gangs and County Lines • Increasing number of safeguarding referrals for Vulnerable Adults submitted using the Adult Protection Referral Form. • Increase in the number of Modern Day Slavery Offences recorded in the Borough • High proportion of respondents from CSP Survey said they had 'No Opinion' or 'Didn't Know' about levels of Modern Day Slavery in their area. • High numbers of Hate Crimes that took place in public streets and open spaces • Increasing numbers of Prevent referrals relate to individuals that have no clear confirmed ideology. They may present a range of risks and vulnerabilities, which include a risk of radicalisation, but do not have a coherent or single ideology. • Increasing numbers of submissions to the National Referral Mechanism, particularly for young people that may be linked to County Lines activity 	
Partnership Aims	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a consistent process that identifies those at risk of Criminal Exploitation • Deliver a multi-agency approach to disrupting perpetrators of Exploitation • To understand and respond to the local picture of Criminal Exploitation • Early identification of those most at risk of Exploitation • Raise awareness of 'The Signs of Exploitation' to both professionals and the community 	
Outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent recording and sharing of risks • Increase in safeguarding referrals from CSP professionals • A reduction in repeat victimisation of vulnerable adults 	

2.3. **PRIORITY THREE – Building Community Confidence**

Listening and responding to local communities is vital, it allows us to build the networks and trust that are needed to deliver other key priorities whilst delivering solutions to local issues in a quick and effective manner. It is important to acknowledge the themes that have the greatest impact on the daily life of those that live, work and visit the Borough. These issues are visible outcomes that have strong links to the issues in Priorities One and Two.

PRIORITY THREE – Building Community Confidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug misuse and distribution • Alcohol related harm and disorder • Gangs and young people • Homelessness and Begging 	
Key Issues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents to the CSP Survey raised concerns in a number of key areas that they feel contribute to levels of Crime and ASB in their community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The highest levels of concern were recorded around 'Drug Use' and 'Drug Dealing' ○ More than half felt that the 'Gangs and Groups of Young People contributed to levels of Crime and ASB in their local area ○ The most common factors that made visitors to the town centre feel unsafe were 'Alcohol', followed by 'Drugs' ○ Groups of youths in the town centre, often described as 'Gangs', also made respondents feel unsafe ○ The presence of rough sleepers and people begging in the town centre appears to be a contributing factor to visitors' perception of safety • Young people surveyed at community events suggested that concerns about knife crime, drugs and, gangs affected them and altered where they chose to spend time. Some suggested that their local park was 'A place that made them feel unsafe' • Young People attending 'Youth Voices' sessions felt there is a distinct lack of opportunities and activities for young people within the town centre area. They felt their views or opinions were not being heard or considered in the matters and issues which impacted them • In the last 12 months Incidents of Begging and Vagrancy reported to the police reduced, however begging hotspots remain a concern particularly near to ATM machines and transport hubs or car parks (particularly near to payment machines). • Bedford Borough Council recorded a positive reduction in the number of Rough Sleepers. 	
Partnership Aims	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a multi-agency communications plan that responds to community concerns • Develop a Town Centre Plan that meets the needs of residents, visitors and businesses • Explore community led initiative to deliver 'Safe Spaces' for young people and adults 	
Outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the reporting of community issues to agencies • Improved levels of community confidence in partnership processes • A clearer understanding of the requirements of 'Safe Spaces' for young people • Evidence of greater community/business involvement in local problem solving • Positive changes in the perception of safety within the Borough • Reduce levels of harm related to drug and alcohol misuse 	

Part Three

• Community Engagement and Partnership Development

3. Community Engagement

The Bedford Borough CSP is committed to making the town a safer, prosperous and more vibrant place for residents, visitors and wider communities. In order to achieve this the CSP regularly engages with our communities through traditional methods, such as attending community events and fetes, undertaking consultations, as well as by other means such as Twitter, Facebook and other social media.

More recently the partnership has explored new ways of reaching and engaging with communities, making use of new opportunities developed through the COVID-19 pandemic hosting events and community meetings using online platforms.

Moving forward partners will continue to explore new ways of reaching and engaging with communities, whilst encouraging a return to more traditional face to face networking. With a number of youth focused priorities, developing and maintaining conversations with young people is key to delivering successful outcomes.

With the inclusion of more complex, victim focussed crime reduction measures CSP partners will require a greater awareness of the potential for criminal exploitation and the need to share information more effectively. Information which may be developed into intelligence might be found within large data sets or from frontline staff across the range of partners involved in day-to-day service delivery. Raising awareness through training, team meetings and targeted conversations will allow the CSP and partners to make the best use of our resources to ensure Bedford Borough is a safe place to live, work and visit.

The task of the CSP is not only to work collaboratively with the statutory agencies specified within the associated legislation to reduce crime and disorder, but also to support the objectives of third sector agencies such as the Community Voluntary Sector, local Housing Associations and community based charitable organisations that share those common aims.

4. Further information and ways to get in touch

If you would like further information about the work of the Community Safety Partnership, or you have a specific query regarding Community Safety matters, you can get in touch in the following ways:



Visit the webpages online for the Community Safety Partnership:

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/environmental-issues/community-safety/our-role-bedford-community-safety-partnership>



Contact the Community Safety Team by email:

communitysafety@bedford.gov.uk



Contact the Community Safety Team by post:

Bedford Borough Council
Borough Hall
Cauldwell Street
Bedford
MK42 9AP



Follow the Community Safety Team on Twitter:

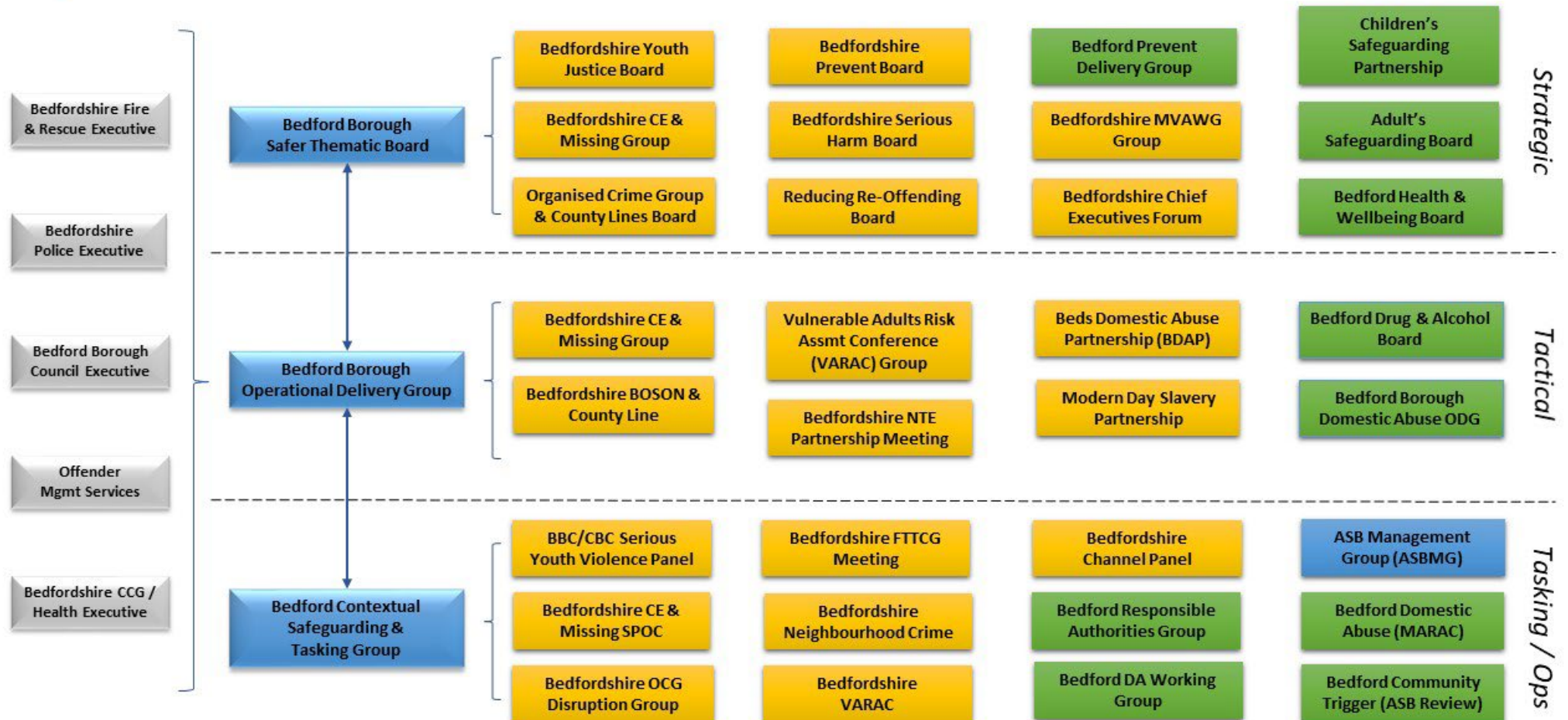
[@safer_bedford](https://twitter.com/safer_bedford)

Corporate Customer Feedback Procedure

Bedford Borough Council has put in place a corporate procedure to deal with compliments and complaints outside of the service area in question.

Therefore if you wish to provide feedback in this way please follow the link

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/have-your-say/complaints-and-other-feedback/>

Appendix 1*Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership Structure
March 2023*

Appendix 2

Glossary of Terms

Term	Description	Term	Description
<i>ASB</i>	Anti-Social Behaviour	<i>LRO</i>	Local Responsible Officer
<i>ASBMG</i>	Anti-Social Behaviour Management Group	<i>MARAC</i>	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
<i>BBC</i>	Bedford Borough Council	<i>MDS</i>	Modern Day Slavery
<i>BDAP</i>	Beds Domestic Abuse Partnership	<i>MHST</i>	Mental Health Street Triage
<i>CCTV</i>	Closed Circuit Television	<i>MVAWG</i>	Male Violence Against Women and Girls
<i>CE</i>	Criminal Exploitation	<i>NTE</i>	Night Time Economy
<i>CSE</i>	Child Sexual Exploitation	<i>OCG</i>	Organised Crime Groups
<i>CSP</i>	Community Safety Partnership	<i>ODG</i>	Operational Delivery Group
<i>DA</i>	Domestic Abuse	<i>OPCC</i>	Office of Police and Crime Commissioner
<i>ELFT</i>	East London NHS Foundation Trust	<i>PCSO</i>	Police Community Support Officer
<i>EVA</i>	Environmental Visual Audit	<i>PSPO</i>	Public Space Protection Order
<i>FTTCG</i>	Force Tactical Tasking Coordination Group	<i>SPOC</i>	Single Point of Contact
<i>HMO</i>	House in Multiple Occupation	<i>SSO</i>	Serious Sexual Offences
<i>ISA</i>	Information Sharing Agreement	<i>SYV</i>	Serious Youth Violence
<i>LCJB</i>	Local Criminal Justice Board	<i>YJB</i>	Youth Justice Board
<i>LSCB</i>	Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board	<i>YOS</i>	Youth Offending Service
<i>Neighbourhood Crime</i>	Is defined by the Home Office as residential burglary, vehicle related crime, theft from person and robbery.	<i>Community Trigger (ASB Review)</i>	Set out in the Crime and Policing Act, this process aims to carry out a review of partnership action that has been taken in relation to ongoing ASB on behalf of the reporter
<i>County Lines</i>	A term used when drug gangs from big cities expand their operations to smaller towns, often using violence to drive out local dealers and exploiting children and vulnerable people to sell drugs.	<i>Cuckooing</i>	Linked to County Lines, situation where drug dealers will take over a local property, normally belonging to a vulnerable person, and use it to operate their criminal activity from.