

# News story: Police get funding boost to fight organised crime in Bedfordshire

Bedfordshire police will receive a £4.6 million funding boost to fight organised crime and gang violence.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid has approved a special grant application from Bedfordshire police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Kathryn Holloway.

The additional funding will support the force to disrupt gang activity in and around towns in the force area.

This gang activity includes high-harm crimes, such as gun violence, county lines drug operations, and child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Minister for Policing and the Fire Service Nick Hurd said:

We are determined to crack down on serious violence and gang activity, which threaten the fabric of our communities.

This funding will help Bedfordshire police in their operations to dismantle criminal gangs and protect the public.

We recognise the changing demands that the police are facing and remain committed to providing them with the support they need.

PCCs can apply for special grant funding to alleviate the burden of police forces dealing with unexpected events or exceptional demand within their areas.

HMICFRS, the independent police inspectorate, assessed the special grant application from Bedfordshire's PCC and found the costs to be reasonable and proportionate.

In its 2016 PEEL inspection of the force, HMICFRS concluded that the volume and complexity of crimes faced by Bedfordshire Police in some places – for example, Luton – was comparable to that of a London borough.

Bedfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner Kathryn Holloway said:

I've fought all year to land the argument that the nature of the gang, gun and knife issues we face represent precisely that extraordinary challenge for Bedfordshire Police.

This will cover the entire cost of Op Boson, the force's specialist response to gang, gun and knife crime, which has placed an

unprecedented strain on us over the past two years, together with the spend on this area calculated for this financial year.

Special grants are in addition to the police funding settlement, which is increasing funding by £460 million in 2018 to 2019, including money raised from the Council Tax precept. This includes an increase of £2.9 million for Bedfordshire police.

The government is also ensuring police have the powers they need to get weapons off our streets and is putting a strong focus on early intervention to ensure young people don't get drawn into a life of crime.

In April, the government published a new Serious Violence Strategy. The strategy sets out an ambitious programme of 61 commitments to tackle serious violence, in particular recent increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide.

The Home Secretary recently launched the £200 million Youth Endowment Fund, which will provide support and focus on those young people most at risk of violence.

The government has also announced a consultation on a proposed new statutory duty to underpin a public health approach to tackling the issue of serious violence and launched an independent review into drugs misuse – a key driver in the rise of violent crime.