

n e w s r e l e a s e



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JPAWG6

JOINT MAJOR CRIME UNIT HAS WIDER IMPACT ON OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN BOTH FORCES

THE CREATION of a joint Major Crime Unit for Bedfordshire Police and Hertfordshire Constabulary has had a wider, positive impact on operational performance across the two forces, the Police Authorities heard recently.

The Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Major Crime Unit (B&HMCU) was established in November 2007, with the objective of improving resilience and response to major crimes, such as murder and manslaughter inquiries, across the two counties.

Both Police Authorities regularly review the Unit's progress and performance, including its record in relation to major crime inquiries, to monitor its effectiveness and efficiency. Twenty-nine sentences for life imprisonment have been handed down to convicted offenders since the unit was established, and 100 per cent of the cases that have been investigated by the unit have been solved.

But the benefits of the joint Unit go far beyond major crime investigations, as key performance indicators are now showing.

Specifically, the unit's inception has been key to enabling Bedfordshire Police to significantly improve the overall crime investigation service it delivers. Officers and staff no longer need to be released from other operational and investigative duties in order to support major crime inquiries. This means that Bedfordshire has been able to increase its capacity for crime investigation across the board, tackle the key areas of robbery and domestic burglary and target more effectively prolific and priority offenders.

The result for Bedfordshire has been a 24 per cent improvement in its rate of detecting crimes since the joint Major Crime Unit was set up in November 2007. Over the same period there was also a reduction in crime overall of 16.5 per cent.

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Hertfordshire Constabulary had tackled the problem of officers needing to be released from other duties to deal with major crime inquiries by introducing a centralised Major Crime Unit for the county a few months prior to the launch of the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Major Crime Unit. However, the unit's inception did also realise efficiencies for the county and between November 2007 and May 2009, Hertfordshire has seen a nine per cent improvement in its rate of detecting crimes and a 12 reduction of overall crime.

Chair of Bedfordshire Police Authority, Peter Conniff, commented: "Whilst other factors and activity have also contributed to the very notable improvements in tackling crime across Bedfordshire, it is clear that establishing a joint Major Crime Unit with Hertfordshire has made a significant impact on our ability to investigate other crime, thereby cracking down on offenders and policing local communities effectively."

Stuart Nagler, Chair of Hertfordshire Police Authority, added: "One of the overarching objectives of establishing the joint Major Crime Unit, as with the other collaborative ventures we have undertaken with Bedfordshire more recently, was to deliver a more efficient and resilient policing service to our communities. Whilst the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Major Crime Unit continues to exceed our expectations, I'm delighted to see the wider operational benefits that the unit is having."

The unit comprises 140 officers and police staff who investigate cases of murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, kidnap, work-related death, product contamination, fail to stop road collisions, extortion and blackmail. They also investigate historical 'cold cases'.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Library photos of Peter Conniff and Stuart Nagler are obtainable by contacting Sally Patient or Sallie Blair on the contact numbers shown below.

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