

Drunken criminals will be fitted with new gadget to stop them boozing at home

It should help to reduce crime -- Faye Preston, Hull Live -- Hull Daily Mail -- 11 June 2018

Criminals who are more likely to commit crimes when they are drunk will be fitted with electronic tags which will alert police when they drink.

For the first time in Hull, the so-called 'sobriety tags' will be available as a form of punishment for people who become violent or commit other crimes after drinking.

Similar to the electronic 'curfew tag', which stops offenders from leaving the house at specific times, the sobriety tag will alert the offender's case managers if they drink.

It had been rolled out as a pilot scheme in York, Grimsby and Lincolnshire but will not be rolled out in Hull.

Becky Bailey, project manager for Humberside, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company pilot, said: "There's a cohort of offenders who are more likely to commit crime when they are under the influence of alcohol, creating more victims and harm to individuals and themselves.

"In the pilot scheme 70 offenders have been sentenced to the Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement for a range of offences including theft, drink driving and violent offences.

"To date the compliance rate has been around 90 per cent and offenders who have completed the requirement say it has had a positive impact upon their lives and helped them to reduce their use of alcohol."

It is estimated alcohol plays a part in 25 per cent of all offences reported and up to 40 per cent of domestic abuse offences in the Humberside, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire force areas.

The Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement (AAMR) Pilot was first launched in June 2017. The pilot, funded by the Police and Crime Commissioners for Humberside, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire, involves utilising electronic 'sobriety tags' as part of community based sentences.

Magistrates and Crown courts can impose sobriety tag as part of a community sentence or suspended sentence order if there is evidence the offending was linked to drinking and offenders can be ordered to wear the tag around their ankle for up to 120 days.



Man drinking alcohol

It works by detecting the presence of alcohol in an offender's system by taking readings from the skin. If alcohol is detected, the offender can potentially be returned to court in breach of their sentence.

However, they cannot be used as punishment for alcoholics or people who have certain medical conditions.

Martin Davies, chief executive of HLNy CRC, said: "The sobriety tagging initiative is an innovative approach to tackling alcohol-related crime and an opportunity to make a big difference to communities across Humberside, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire by reducing the risk of further alcohol related offences."

Humberside Police and Crime Commissioner Keith Hunter said: "The trial of sobriety tags in the Humberside Police area was carried out at Grimsby Court and has proved very successful.

"One offender was featured on the regional news speaking about how the tag had made him think about, and change his behaviour for the better

"I am pleased to see the plans to roll out the scheme across all courts in our area and my office will monitor the results moving forward."

Amit Sethi, EU head of operations for SCRAM systems, said: "Removing alcohol from the equation can make all the difference for both the offenders and the community at large.

"We look forward to continuing to support the Humberside, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire CRC and its innovative approach to addressing alcohol-related offences."