

## Hundreds of Grimsby criminals to wear sobriety tags under new scheme

By Jack Longstaff | Posted: June 13, 2017



*Sobriety tags are ankle bracelets which track alcohol levels in sweat*

Some criminals in Grimsby who commit offences whilst under the influence will be the first in the Humberside area to be made to wear tags that track alcohol levels in sweat.

Sobriety tags - ankle bracelets that help rehabilitation services prevent criminals from re-offending - have been rolled out in Grimsby as part of a pilot scheme for the whole of the Humber region.

The Humberside, Lincolnshire & North Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company, which manages up to 11,000 offenders, is responsible for administering the scheme, and say that domestic abuse offenders will be among those who could be ordered to wear them by the court.

A refusal to comply could land criminals behind bars.

The rehabilitation service in charge of the scheme, which works with the probation services at Grimsby magistrates' and crown courts, say they hope the tags will allow trained professional to intervene if offenders turn to drink after a conviction.

Amy Gilbert, community director at the Humberside, Lincolnshire & North Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company, said: "We hope to stop re-offending in the future and provide support.

"It will be piloted in Grimsby and be rolled out elsewhere."

She added that by tracking how much alcohol offenders are drinking, the rehabilitation services can provide much-needed support and advice.

Ms Gilbert also said that 250 criminals could be made to wear the tags in Grimsby over the next two years, which is how long the scheme is set to last for.

After then, other Humberside Police areas could introduce the scheme.

Courts are able to require offenders to wear the tags as part of community or suspended sentences for violent and other crimes committed while under the influence of alcohol.

If the tag detects the presence of alcohol in the system, probation services are alerted and the individual concerned could be sent back to court.

The scheme is being funded by Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner Marc Jones, as part of a wider trial taking place in the Humberside, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire policing areas.

Mr Jones said the measures would help protect victims and rehabilitate offenders as nationally, more than half of all violent incidents are committed by people under the influence of alcohol.

He said: "The pilot is really targeting those offences where violence and drink is a factor.

"Re-offending rates are much higher for people where alcohol plays a role in the offence, by tackling that we can reduce the likelihood of them re-offending."

He added that the measures would be particularly effective in tackling domestic abuse and said the Continuous Alcohol Monitoring tags, which can be worn for up to 120 days according to the manufacturers, should not be seen as a punishment, and were "about helping people change their behaviour".

A similar trial in London claimed 92 per cent of those tagged complied with the order.

Under the scheme, offenders will be screened before being tagged. The tags will not be used on people who are alcohol-dependent or have certain medical conditions, Mr Jones reassured.

The tags take an average of 48 alcohol content readings a day and a spokesman for SCRAM Systems, which makes the devices, said offenders have used condoms, chicken skin and luncheon meat in attempts to fool the device, which he said can detect if something is placed between the ankle and the unit.

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