

Criminals to be forced to wear 'sober tags' to stop them drinking

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Criminals in Lincolnshire are set to be forced to wear ankle bracelets that can tell whether they've been drinking in a bid to cut alcohol fuelled crime.

Police commissioner Marc Jones has paid out for pilot scheme using the 'sobriety tags', which test a person's sweat around 48 times a day to see if they've been drinking.

They will be put onto the ankles of people who have committed crimes while under the influence of alcohol.

Magistrates' and Crown Courts will be able to authorise their use by giving offenders an Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement (AAMR) as part of community or suspended sentences.

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

Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner Marc Jones said: "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.

"If we succeed, then the bottom line is we will reduce the victims of crime in the future, particularly victims of domestic abuse.

"The period in which the offender is tagged will give rehabilitation agencies a real opportunity to work with the offender and get them to recognise and change their behaviour, hopefully for good."

In Lincolnshire it is estimated that alcohol played a part in 25 per cent of all offences reported and the figures are even worse in domestic abuse cases involving alcohol, at more than 40 per cent.

Nationally, more than 50 per cent of all violent incidents nationally are committed by offenders who are under the influence of alcohol, with a cost to the taxpayer of between £8 billion and £13 billion per year.



A police ankle tag, PHOTO Angela Schmidt

Amy Gilbert, head of operations, at HLNy CRC 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 local communities damaging people's lives.

"If we can address their misuse of alcohol and work with individuals to understand how their drinking impacts on their behaviour, the decisions they make and the negative impact it has on others, then we hope this will make a real difference and reduce reoffending."

Offenders will be screened before being tagged to make sure tags are not used on people who are alcohol-dependent or have certain medical conditions.

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