

## Sobriety tags scheme launched in Spalding to reduce alcohol-related crime

By Jeremy Ransome, Monday 12 June 2017

### **A pilot scheme to reduce alcohol-related offences is being launched in Spalding.**

The scheme, which will also run in Boston, Louth and Skegness, will use alcohol monitoring technology, also known as 'sobriety tags', to tackle alcohol misuse and associated offending.

It has been launched by The Humber, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire Community Rehabilitation Company (HLNY CRC) and funded by police and crime commissioners from the three areas.

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 are committed by offenders who are under the influence of alcohol, with a cost to the taxpayer of between £billion and £13 billion per year.

HLNY CRC is responsible for supervising offenders and ensuring they comply with their sentence and the orders of the court. Head of operations Amy Gilbert 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.

"Sobriety tagging technology has already been tested, and so now using these tags whilst also delivering rehabilitative interventions in this pilot will allow HLNY CRC to assess how it can reduce re-offending and reduce the number of victims being created."

Magistrates and crown courts in the pilot sites will be able to impose an Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement (AAMR) as part of a community sentences or suspended sentences order imposed on offenders who commit violent and other crimes while under the influence of alcohol, in a bid to prevent them from reoffending.

They will be required to wear an electronic 'sobriety tag' around their ankle. This technology accurately detects the presence of alcohol in an offender's system, which can then be used to alert probation services and potentially return the person to court.



*Sobriety tag being fitted*

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

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."

Martin Davies, chief executive of HLNy CRC, said: "The sobriety tagging initiative is a very innovative approach to tackling alcohol-related crime and an opportunity to make a very big difference to communities across Lincolnshire by preventing some very serious crimes from happening."

During the period offenders are tagged, they will be assessed by HLNy CRC which will provide a range of services to help people change their behaviour.

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