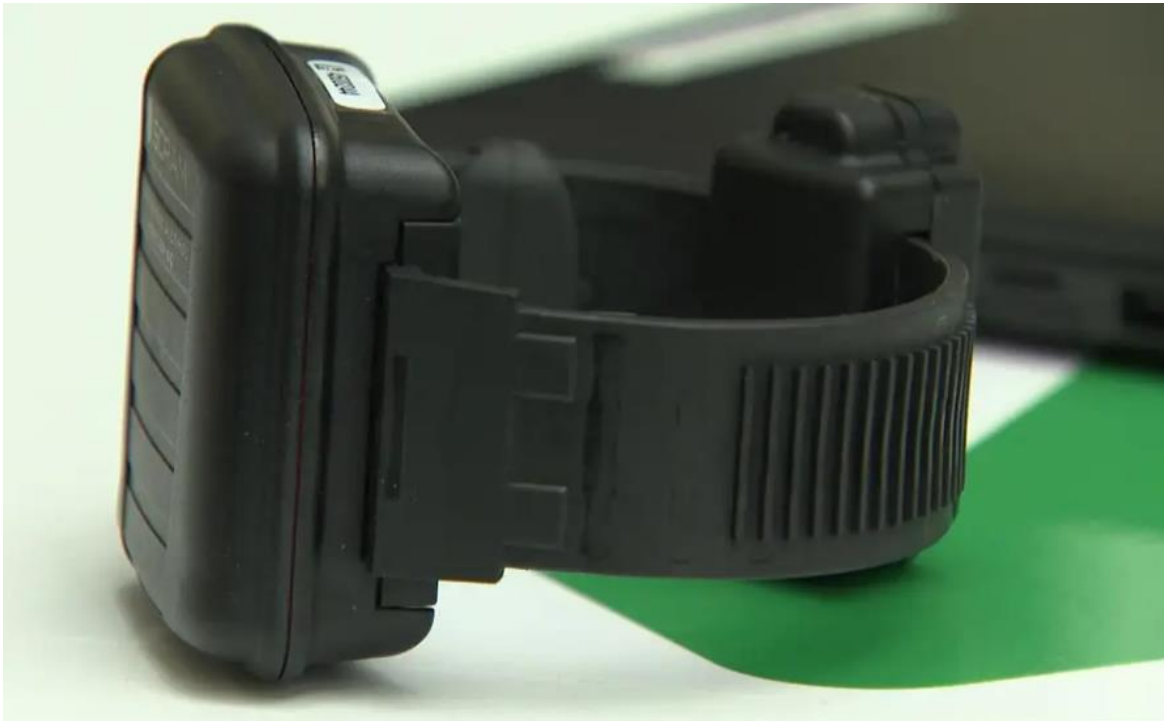


News › Crime

## 'Sobriety tags' rolled out across Wales for criminals with alcohol ban

The scheme will be rolled out in England next year.

BARNEY DAVIS | 1 day ago



Offenders can be ordered to wear the tags for up to 120 days ( *Sky News* )

**Criminals can be ordered to wear new "sobriety tags" in Wales from today in a bid to crack down on repeat alcohol-fuelled crime.**

The tags monitor offenders' sweat every 30 minutes and automatically alert the probation service if any alcohol has been consumed.

Described as "breathalysers for an ankle", the tags alert staff if the wearer tries to remove one. They can also distinguish between drinks and other types of alcohol – such as hand sanitiser or perfume.

Anyone found breaching an alcohol abstinence order, a new power allowing courts to slap offenders with drinking bans for up to 120 days, can face being hauled back to court for another punishment such as a fine, an extension of the order, or they could be sent to jail.



It can also distinguish between drinks and other types of alcohol – such as hand sanitiser or perfume (PA)

Alcohol is a factor in around 39 per cent of violent crime, including domestic violence, with the cost of alcohol-related harm stretching to over £21 billion per year, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) said.

Minister for Crime and Policing, Kit Malthouse MP said alcohol-fuelled behaviour has “blighted too many lives”.

“This proven new tool can break the self-destructive cycle that offenders end up in, helping them sober up if they choose to and the courts to punish those who don’t”, he added.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said: "Alcohol can have a devastating impact on lives and figures show it is a key factor behind far too many crimes.

"I am encouraged to see Wales at the forefront of implementing this new technology, which we believe will contribute towards lowering reoffending rates, making our streets safer and supporting those who need help.

The scheme has already been successfully piloted in London and across Humberside, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire. Offenders involved there were alcohol-free on more than 97 percent of the days they were monitored.

Offenders who wore them also reported a positive impact on their lives, wellbeing and behaviour according to the MOJ.

The tags are due to be rolled out to England in the Spring of 2021. ■