

Breaches of home curfews on the rise

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The number of criminals breaching home detention curfews rose last year, with more than one in five offenders now being recalled to jail.

Research by the Scottish Conservatives has revealed, of the 1434 individuals granted the early releases from prison, 300 breached the order.

That compares to 241 in 2016/17 and 222 the year before that, the Scottish Prison Service figures revealed.

It follows reports today that 15 offenders who breached curfew orders, despite being recalled, have now been on the run for five years or more.

In one case, the Daily Mail reported, a criminal has been unlawfully at large for more than a decade.

The SNP government has been under increasing pressure on the monitoring of offenders after the jailing of killer James Wright, who murdered father-of-three Craig McClelland last year.

At the time of the attack, he'd been unlawfully at large for six months, having breached the terms of his release from prison for previous convictions.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:

“The fact an increasing number of criminals are breaching home detention curfews suggests these decisions are being taken too lightly.

“Now more than a fifth of these offenders breach the terms of their release, which suggests they should never have been set free in the first place.

“If sentences were of sufficient length, and the rehabilitation infrastructure vastly improved, the integration of these individuals would be far more successful.

“But what we see now is a soft-touch approach from the SNP government which is spreading right across the justice system.

“Not only are more criminals breaching these orders, but some who are can get away with this for years on end.

“That risks public safety, and is a gross insult to victims of crime who've already gone through enough.”