

# GPS tags to hunt burglars and cut theft

- Prolific burglars and thieves automatically tagged on release from prison under new law
- GPS satellites to monitor offenders 24 hours a day for up to 12 months
- Scheme launches in six police force areas with further 13 to follow in the Autumn

With more than half of those convicted of theft and burglary reoffending within a year and almost 80% of cases resulting in no suspect being identified, this will be a vital extra source of intelligence to help police catch these persistent offenders.

Under new rules, burglars, robbers and thieves that have served a prison sentence of a year or more will be automatically fitted with a tag on release, allowing their whereabouts to be monitored by GPS satellites 24 hours a day for up to 12 months.

Police will be able to work with HM Prison and Probation Service staff to investigate whether those on the tags have been in the vicinity of recent burglaries, thefts and robberies. It could provide the crucial evidence needed to catch the perpetrators.

The intention is the tags will also act as a deterrent, protecting the public from further burglaries and thefts and forcing these career criminals to choose a more honest way of making a living. It is hoped this novel approach will reduce the estimated £4.8 billion burden such crimes place on the taxpayer every year.

Minister for Crime and Policing, Kit Malthouse MP said:

Being burgled or robbed is devastating and I understand how frustrating it is when the perpetrators can't be caught, both for the public and the police.

Tagging these prolific offenders so we know where they are 24 hours a day should be powerful persuasion to change their ways and will help police find and charge them if they don't. It's another tool helping probation staff to cut crime and keep the public safe.

National Police Chief's Council Electronic Monitoring Lead, Deputy Chief Constable Jon Stratford said:

Tagging prolific offenders provides a strong deterrent and means

officers will be able to quickly arrest and gather evidence against anyone suspected of being involved in a robbery, burglary or other theft.

This scheme will play a part in our overall work to prevent crime and keep our communities safe.

The scheme will initially launch in six police force areas (Avon and Somerset, Cheshire, Gloucestershire, Gwent, Humberside and West Midlands) on 12 April and it is estimated 250 offenders will be tagged in the first six months. It will then be extended to a further 13 areas in September.

Police officers will be able to submit any burglaries, thefts or robberies they are investigating to a dedicated unit overseen by HM Prison and Probation Service. Trained staff will then be able to check the location history of those on tags against the details of the crime, allowing police to either rule out or investigate suspects further.

The joined up nature of this work builds on the recently updated [Integrated Offender Management strategy](#), which sees police and the Probation Service working together to reduce neighbourhood crime.

This is just the latest way in which the Government is using innovative technology to cut crime and follows the launch of [sobriety tags](#) to tackle alcohol-fuelled crime in Wales, with the scheme soon to be expanded across England. Tags are also used to ensure high-risk offenders obey curfews, exclusion zones and other licence conditions, the breaching of which can result in an immediate return to prison.