

Press release: Justice Secretary unveils GPS tag rollout to better protect victims

- satellite tracking to be rolled out nationwide by summer
- GPS tags to better protect victims of domestic abuse and stalking offences
- new tagging can toughen community sentences
- evaluation of pilot also published shows positive findings

Justice Secretary David Gauke today announced the national roll out of new GPS tags which will provide 24/7 location monitoring of offenders. This will help strengthen supervision, enforce exclusion zones and give victims greater peace of mind.

If a tagged domestic abuser or stalker enters a banned area or a gang member is found somewhere they should not be, this new capability will issue an automatic alert and their whereabouts will be known. Victims can now feel safer in the knowledge that any breach of an exclusion zone will result in an immediate alert. The tags also provide a tougher option for community sentences which can be used alongside requirements like alcohol or drug treatment programmes.

Justice Secretary David Gauke said:

GPS tagging will help to better protect victims and give them the reassurance that perpetrators will not be able to breach an exclusion zone without triggering an immediate alert.

I am confident that this important new technology will become a vital tool to increase public protection and strengthen options for tougher community sentences.

The GPS tags have so far been rolled out to 3 regions, the North West, Midlands and North East, with other regions due to go live in the coming months. The tags will be available across England and Wales by the summer.

The new technology is also set to be piloted in London (by the London Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime) to monitor offenders released from prison who have been convicted of knife crime offences. Offenders will have their movements checked against locations of reported crimes, in an effort to tackle violence in the capital.

DCC Jon Stratford, Gloucestershire Police, NPCC Electronic Monitoring lead:

The potential benefits of using this new technology to better

protect victims are recognised by the police service and we're working closely with the Ministry of Justice to identify a suitable joint implementation programme.

A wide range of offenders will be eligible for the new tags, including those subject to court-imposed bail, community orders and suspended sentence orders, as well as those on Home Detention Curfew and indeterminate sentenced prisoners released by the Parole Board.

Location monitoring can be used to:

- enforce an exclusion zone – an offender or individual on bail can't enter a specific location or area
- keep a given distance from a point or address, including victim's address or that of a known criminal associate
- monitor an offender's attendance at a certain activity – for example work or a rehabilitation programme
- monitor an offender's movements to support discussions with probation about an offender's lifestyle and behaviours

The tags will transmit an offender's location 24/7 to a specialist monitoring unit in Manchester and if an offender enters an excluded zone and breaches their conditions, they face being recalled to prison or returned to court.

Also published today are the [findings of an extensive evaluation](#) following a pilot involving 8 police forces, testing the delivery and usage of the GPS tags. The evaluation found that tags could have a positive impact on compliance, with the tags acting as a constant physical reminder of an offender's licence conditions. One offender who participated in the pilot of the project said:

I've walked in an exclusion zone before, not realising... that was before I had the tag on, so I wasn't really bothered about getting seen. Now, with the tag, I knew full well that if I go in to that exclusion zone, I'm going to get seen no matter what.

The pilot also found that the impact of enforcing GPS tagging on police was low and that it can potentially save police investigation time by providing vital evidence ruling suspects in and out of crimes.

The new location monitoring capabilities will be in addition to the existing curfew tagging provision already in place, which monitors offenders on licence, community sentences and those on court bail. Around 60,000 individuals are subject to these tags each year.

These measures build on a package of reforms aimed at reducing reoffending and better protecting victims, with GPS tags strengthening the supervision of offenders, so the courts will have confidence that monitoring will be strict and community sentences will be robust and effective.

Notes to editors

- Location monitoring is currently live in 3 National Probation Service regions: North West, Midlands and North East. Location monitoring will go live in the South West, South East and Wales by April 2019.
- Location monitoring will be available for: court-imposed bail, community orders, suspended sentence orders, home detention curfew cases and Parole Board cases for life sentences, IPP (imprisonment for public protection) offences and extended determinate sentences.
- For tags used for 'court imposed bail' individual Police forces can choose to roll out the service as soon as it is available in their region. Some forces are keen to proceed with GPS tagging and we will continue to work closely with those who want further information before rolling this service out.