

Government announces plans to tag thousands of extra offenders

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Thousands more criminals will be tagged alongside changes to supervision that will focus probation time on the offenders who pose the greatest risk.

- Live surveillance part of £100m tagging expansion for domestic abusers & thieves
- Tougher supervision and increased monitoring for the most dangerous offenders
- Additional 1,300 probation officers to be recruited to help cut crime

Dangerous criminals will be live tracked using real-time surveillance and receive more intense supervision as part of a greater focus on the most high-risk offenders.

The biggest expansion of tagging in British history will mean thousands of extra domestic abusers, thieves and burglars across the country will face tough GPS and alcohol monitoring in a major £100 million crackdown on crime.

Frontline probation staff will also be given access to cutting-edge technology allowing instant access to the location of certain tagged offenders, which will help to identify escalating risk and allow for earlier interventions.

In a boost for victims, a £5 million pilot will introduce proximity monitoring technology that creates an alert when offenders convicted of crimes such as domestic abuse and stalking approach their victim – a key commitment from the Government's landmark strategy to end violence against women and girls.

These changes are backed by an investment in probation of up to £700 million by 2028/29, which includes the recruitment of at least 1,300 extra probation officers in the next year, and will help ensure tougher monitoring of violent offenders to better keep the public safe.

To further increase public protection and cut crime, a reinforced probation workforce will focus more of their time on prolific offenders and ramp up the face-to-face monitoring of those who pose the biggest risk to the public – such as terrorists, murderers and prolific sex offenders.

Lord Timpson, Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending, said:

This is the biggest expansion of tagging in British history and means the most dangerous offenders will now be watched more closely than ever before.

By combining new technology with a stronger probation workforce, we're making sure those who pose the biggest risk are under constant scrutiny to better protect victims and the public.

This Government has been clear that the crisis it inherited in the Probation Service has placed too great a burden on hardworking staff, with new statistics showing that, between 2023 and 2025, 31% of target probation appointments did not take place due to unmanageable workloads.

This has meant officers have been unable to pay enough attention to those offenders who pose the greatest risk.

Under the new approach, supervision will be better targeted so officers can focus their time on the most dangerous offenders, while those assessed as lower-risk will require fewer routine appointments.

These reforms will enable overworked probation staff to focus on the parts of their job that has the greatest impact on public protection and will unburden them from tasks that are less impactful when it comes to protecting the public.

A further £8 million is also being invested in new technology to reduce time-consuming admin tasks and save up to 250,000 days of valuable time every year, allowing frontline staff to spend more time monitoring offenders and keeping our streets safe.

Chief Inspector of Probation Martin Jones said:

I welcome the Government's plans for further investment in the Probation Service, and attempts to focus time and resources where they matter most.

I have been clear that urgent action is needed to support a service that is currently facing significant challenge, with too few staff, who have too little experience, managing too many cases.

We are entering a crucial period as the implementation of the Sentencing Act reforms begins. There must be a sharp focus on ensuring the Probation Service can recruit, train, and retain sufficient staff, and give them the tools and support they need - both to keep the public and victims safe, and to turn offenders' lives around.

As part of the Government's Plan for Change to make streets safer, tens of thousands more criminals will be tagged over the next three years as part of a major technology expansion.

The Government is also introducing, for the first time, a presumption that all prison leavers will be tagged on release as part of intensive supervision with the Probation Service keeping a closer eye on offenders' behaviour.

Meanwhile, a pilot that tags domestic abusers who pose a threat to a former partner, family member or their children after leaving prison will be rolled out nationally.

A report found overwhelming support for the scheme from probation staff, with 83% stating it gave victims peace of mind and more than three-quarters saying it would better protect them.

A separate pilot, in which convicted burglars and thieves are forced to wear a GPS tag so their movements can be tracked against unsolved crimes will also be rolled out across the country.

Evidence is increasingly proving the effectiveness of tags in cutting crime. Published research shows GPS and curfew tags can reduce reoffending by around 20%, and alcohol monitoring orders have compliance rates above 97%.

Notes to editors:

- The Domestic Abuse Perpetrators on Licence (DAPOL) pilot has tracked hundreds of prison

leavers who pose a threat to a former partner or their children, with the tags serving as a constant physical reminder to offenders that we are watching their every move. It is currently live in eight probation regions and will be rolled out to all twelve across England and Wales by September 2026.

- The Acquisitive Crime scheme sees burglars and thieves forced to wear a GPS tag after their release from prison. Their location data is then mapped against unsolved crimes, serving as a strong deterrent to reoffending. The pilot is currently live in 19 police force areas and will be gradually rolled out to all 43 before the end of this Parliament.
- The Government is investing £5 million to pilot proximity monitoring within this Parliament, as committed to in the Government's 10-year Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. This new technology - used to different extents internationally in Spain, the Netherlands, and Australia - enables probation to know if the offender comes within a preset distance of a victim. This represents a further powerful tool for managing risk in high-harm domestic abuse cases.
- The new Electronic Monitoring Data Insights tool will provide probation staff with quick access to electronic monitoring and behavioural information. Timely sharing of behaviour patterns - such as licence condition violations - will help staff make better decisions and support rehabilitation through earlier interventions, while easing their workload by replacing inefficient data collection processes. A small pilot will start in June 2026, and we aim to fully rollout by Autumn 2026
- The Government will further strengthen the Probation Service by recruiting an additional 1,300 trainee probation officers across 2026/27 — on top of the 2,300 already pledged to be brought in since 2024 — in a major drive to crackdown on crime.
- This will be supported by an increase in probation funding by up £700 million by 2028/29, which includes £100 million for the expansion of tagging, of which £5 million will fund the pilot of proximity monitoring.

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