

Criminal Justice and Courts Bill

Fact sheet: electronic monitoring following release on licence etc

Introduction

1. As part of its plans to transform rehabilitation, on 9 May 2013 the Secretary of State for Justice announced that the Government would be introducing GPS satellite tracking of offenders to monitor them more closely in the community. There have been developments in satellite tracking technology which make the equipment more robust and reliable such that we can consider its more widespread use in the management of offenders. New electronic monitoring contracts will allow us to introduce the most advanced GPS satellite tracking of offenders in the world, enabling us to keep a much closer eye on them in the community.

What is the current position?

2. The current legislation enables the discretionary use of electronic monitoring as a licence condition to monitor compliance with other conditions of a licence, such as curfew and exclusion, and to monitor whereabouts as a stand alone condition. In practice, because of the limitations of the current radio frequency technology, electronic monitoring is only used to monitor a curfew condition.

What are the proposed changes?

3. The provisions in the Bill will allow for a compulsory electronic monitoring as a licence condition for the purposes of monitoring compliance with other conditions, or for monitoring whereabouts as a stand alone condition, or both, with the flexibility to target this on specified groups of offenders and to make different provisions for different groups of offenders so that we can target resources to best effect. For example, we could provide for all burglars and sex offenders to be subject to location monitoring as a licence condition and, if necessary, make the period of the compulsory condition longer for sex offenders than burglars.
4. We are procuring new cutting edge technology that is not available elsewhere internationally. This is still being developed and will be available once the electronic monitoring competition process has closed and thorough testing is complete.
5. We are legislating now so that we are able to fully harness the potential of that new technology to assist with public protection, reducing re-offending, and crime detection as soon as it becomes available
6. The information gathered from location monitoring can not only be used to manage offenders more effectively and provide for robust enforcement of curfews and exclusion zones, but also be shared with the police to aid in the investigation of crime.