



**effective practice**

Where we see our standards delivered well, in practice.



Her Majesty's  
Inspectorate of  
Probation

AN HM INSPECTORATE OF PROBATION EFFECTIVE PRACTICE GUIDE



Image credit: HM Prison & Probation service

# Effective practice guide

## Electronic monitoring delivered well

Based on: A thematic inspection of the use of electronic monitoring as a tool for the Probation Service in reducing reoffending and managing risk

**January 2022**

# Acknowledgements

This effective practice guide is based on information sourced while undertaking the thematic inspection *The use of electronic monitoring as a tool for the Probation Service in reducing reoffending and managing risk*. The inspection was led by HM Inspector Shellie Adams, supported by a team of inspectors and operations, research, communications and corporate staff. Penal Reform Solutions (a company that facilitates organisational growth through research-informed bespoke projects) undertook interviews with people on probation, who shared valuable insights about their experience of electronic monitoring. The manager responsible for this inspection programme is Helen Davies.

In collaboration with Tammie Burroughs, effective practice lead, Shellie Adams has drawn out key takeaways to support effective practice (where we see our standards delivered well in practice). These are presented in this guide to support the continuous development of practitioners and managers.

We would like to thank all those who participated in any way in this inspection; without their help and cooperation, the inspection and effective practice guide would not have been possible.

Please note that throughout the report the names in the practice examples have been changed to protect the individuals' identities.

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# Introduction

## About this guide

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation has a duty to identify and disseminate effective practice.<sup>1</sup>

We assure the quality of youth offending and probation provision and test its effectiveness. Critically, we make recommendations designed to highlight and disseminate best practice, challenge poor performance and encourage probation services to improve.

This effective practice guide provides an overview of electronic monitoring currently used in probation services and highlights key takeaways, which, when implemented, will equate to our standards being delivered well in practice. It is designed to assist providers to improve this area of their work with people on probation.

I am grateful to all the areas that participated in this thematic inspection.

We publish these guides to complement our reports and the standards against which we inspect youth offending and probation. I hope this guide will be of interest to everyone working in the probation service seeking to improve their practice. We welcome feedback on this and our other guides, to ensure that they are as useful as possible to future readers.



**Justin Russell**

HM Chief Inspector of Probation

## Finding your way



Tools for practitioners



Useful links

## Contact us



We would love to hear what you think of this guide. Please find current contact details via the [HM Inspectorate of Probation Effective Practice page](#).

<sup>1</sup> **For adult services** – Section 7 of the *Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000*, as amended by the *Offender Management Act (2007)*, section 12(3)(a). **For youth services** – inspection and reporting on youth offending teams is established under section 39 of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*.

# Background

This guide complements HM Inspectorate of Probation’s thematic inspection *The use of electronic monitoring as a tool for the Probation Service in reducing reoffending and managing risk* and can be used to reflect on and develop practice in relation to electronic monitoring.

The evidence and key takeaways are drawn from the fieldwork in Wales, Yorkshire and the Humber, South Central, London, North West and East Midlands.

Specifically, it focuses on:



Home detention curfew (HDC),  
curfew,



location monitoring, and  
alcohol abstinence monitoring requirement.

The table below shows the **three types of electronically monitored tag available**: radio frequency, global positioning system (GPS) and alcohol abstinence monitoring tags. It is worth noting that, while this guide relates to electronic tags, curfews and exclusion zones can be made without electronic devices.

The table lists the sentence and requirement types that can have electronic monitoring applied, with details of which technology can be used. This does not include current pilot availability, which varies by region. Tags are usually fitted to the wearer’s ankle and communicate data via GPS or a base station at the wearer’s home address.

	Radio frequency	GPS	Alcohol abstinence monitoring tag
<b>Community orders – regardless of offence or sentence type</b>			
Curfew	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b> – only if combined with location monitoring requirement	<b>No</b>
Exclusion zones	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b> – has to be a specific GPS monitored exclusion zone requirement for breach data to be received	<b>No</b>
Monitor attendance at mandatory appointments	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b> – using location monitoring	<b>No</b>
Monitor an offender’s whereabouts – location monitoring	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b> – using location monitoring	<b>No</b>
Alcohol monitoring requirement	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Home detention curfew – regardless of offence or sentence type</b>			
Curfew	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b> – only if combined with location monitoring requirement	<b>No</b>
Exclusion zones	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b> – has to be a specific GPS monitored exclusion zone requirement for breach data to be received	<b>No</b>
Monitor attendance at mandatory appointments	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b> – using location monitoring	<b>No</b>
Monitor an offender’s whereabouts – location monitoring	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b> – using location monitoring	<b>No</b>
Alcohol monitoring requirement	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Parole Board release for life-sentence, IPP and EDS cases only</b>			
Curfew	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes</b> – only if combined with location monitoring requirement	<b>No</b>
Exclusion zones	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b> – has to be a specific GPS monitored exclusion zone requirement for breach data to be received	<b>No</b>
Monitor attendance at mandatory appointments	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b> – using location monitoring	<b>No</b>
Monitor an offender’s whereabouts – location	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b> – using location monitoring	<b>No</b>
Alcohol monitoring requirement	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>

An Academic Insights paper prepared by Hucklesby and Holdsworth for HM Inspectorate of Probation details the types, uses and potential benefits of electronic monitoring (Hucklesby and Holdsworth, 2020; see link below). It recognises that evidence consistently shows that a period of electronic monitoring can be **habit breaking** and **provides a structure** to wearers' lives, improving employment opportunities and family relationships.

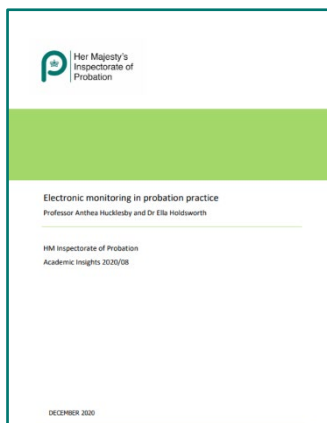
The longer-term impact of being subject to electronic monitoring, however, is still **not widely understood**, and the evidence available suggests that there is no suppression effect on reoffending beyond the period of electronic monitoring.

In earlier research, Hucklesby's study of wearers subject to electronic monitoring curfews found that **most complied** (Hucklesby, 2009). Consequently, the **role of probation practitioners is vital**, especially during periods of electronic monitoring, as this offers a potentially unique period of stability during which to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour, support change and build social capital.

This guide is designed to support practitioners managing electronically monitored requirements and to increase understanding of how those on probation view electronic monitoring.

Included in this guide are an overview of the **views of those people on probation** who engaged in the thematic inspection; a presentation to be used as a **training aid** to inform practice, explaining electronic monitoring and the thematic inspection findings in relation to service delivery; **practical key takeaways** to ensure effective holistic case supervision; and **case examples** from the thematic inspection to facilitate reflection on the management of electronically monitored requirements and conditions.

In addition, we have identified **further reading and additional resources** for those who wish to explore this topic further.



### [Academic Insights: Electronic monitoring in probation practice](#) Professor Anthea Hucklesby and Dr Ella Holdsworth.

This paper reviews current knowledge about electronic monitoring and how it works and identifies the ways in which probation staff can engage effectively with electronic monitoring and influence its use to ensure that it is deployed appropriately, ethically and to best effect.

# Learning from people on probation subject to electronic monitoring

We commissioned the services of Penal Reform Solutions (PRS), an expert lived experience organisation, to give a voice to those in the criminal justice system.



Penal Reform Solutions

They interviewed 42 people on probation who were subject to electronic monitoring, to gather their perspectives on the services that they had received.

We are grateful for the insights of these individuals, whose feedback we have used to inform our findings for the thematic report.

PRS identified **seven main themes** that emerged from this work, including:

## Communication

People on probation said that a lack of communication (between probation services, electronic monitoring and the person on probation) created practical challenges and had detrimental effects on their mental health. Effective communication provides clarity on what is being asked of the person being tagged, encourages compliance and helps to alleviate stress.



Practitioners should:

- Provide those subject to electronic monitoring with information on the device, expectations, what constitutes a breach and the consequences of non-compliance.
- In particular, clearly explain the exceptions to the curfew, such as a medical emergency, in order to prevent unnecessary harm.
- Communicate with the individual, the electronic monitoring company and all those involved in the individual's supervision. Do so with supportive authority, using the tenets of procedural justice.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Procedural justice is the degree to which someone perceives people in authority to apply processes, or make decisions about them, in a fair and just way.



## Shame

A prevalent theme was a feeling of fear and shame associated with electronic monitoring, as a punishment that was visible to others. Conversely, on reflection, participants felt it had been a positive option to keep families together and to avoid the greater 'shame' and 'hurt' that a custodial sentence would have brought. Those interviewed also stated that electronic monitoring gave them an opportunity to take back control of their lives and re-evaluate their priorities.



Practitioners should:

- Discuss the impact of electronic monitoring, both as a form of punishment and as a way of supporting an individual's rehabilitation. Areas for discussion include how electronic monitoring can help the individual to maintain meaningful relationships; not allowing the tag to define them as an 'offender', instead focusing on the opportunities the sentence has given them- such as reinforcing a more positive identity; providing work opportunities; increasing opportunities to connect with nature compared with if they received a custodial sentence; and allowing trust to develop as the individuals can prove the actions they are taking.

## Family

Family frequently provides valuable support to people on probation, practically, emotionally and financially. For some, family plays a key role in desistance.

For those participants who were released from prison, electronic monitoring delivered an extra sense of security, providing comfort and a routine in everyday life. Nearly every participant discussed how being on their device meant that they could still be with their families.



Practitioners should:

- Enquire about family members and the level of support the individual has received from them.
- Discuss any benefits for the individual while reviewing the impact of electronic monitoring.

## Need

Some participants reported that probation staff have supported them to understand their needs, helping them in terms of their rehabilitation, and enabled them to reflect on how electronic monitoring has supported this.

Practitioners should:

- Ensure that assessments take account of the person on probation's individual circumstances and their capacity when making electronically monitored recommendations.



- Assess individual needs before and after sentencing and record how electronic monitoring will support desistance and keeping people safe.

## Relationships

Positive and meaningful relationships are important to an individual's rehabilitation. Simple acts, such as the example given by one of the participants of a practitioner researching electronic monitoring to support a court proposal, can play a vital role in building trust and strengthening positive relationships.

Practitioners should:

- Engage people on probation in relationships that are respectful, caring, enthusiastic, collaborative, motivational and that value personal autonomy.
- Actively engage people on probation in all elements of their sentence so they are meaningfully involved.
- Apply the principles of procedural justice (see the video below).



## Meaning

The theme of meaning was important for those interviewed. A number of individuals spoke about benefits for them personally of being subject to an electronic tag, although they were not consistently given the opportunity to analyse these with the practitioner. This meant that the benefits of electronic monitoring were not always acknowledged, even though we know that discussing these benefits can support change.

Illuminating the benefits of electronic monitoring and communicating them to individuals who are subject to this requirement may stimulate service users to see electronic monitoring as an opportunity for reflection and change rather than a restriction and retribution.

Practitioners should:

- Consider diversity needs, protected factors and protected characteristics to aid decision-making.
- Consider how electronic monitoring is meaningful for the individual, and discuss this and review it.



## Wellbeing

Some people on probation interviewed said that they found the vibrating of the alcohol monitoring tag disturbing. Others indicated that they were not able to be outside as much as they were used to due to the restrictions of their curfew, which impacted on their mental health.



Practitioners should:

- Have conversations about the impact of electronic monitoring, explore barriers to compliance and discuss how these may be overcome or managed.
- If people on probation share concerns regarding their mental health, discuss how to address these, make referrals as appropriate and support the individual.



This report from PRS explains their methodology and findings in full. [Read \*The use of electronic monitoring as a tool for probation in reducing reoffending and managing risk: A perspective of people on probation.\*](#)



This video, produced by HM Prison and Probation Service, elaborates on the four key principles of procedural justice, which we note would help address the communication and relationships themes. [Video \(YouTube, 4:06\): HMPPS Procedural Justice.](#)

# Understanding electronic monitoring: presentation summarising what it is and how it can be used

Our inspection found that electronic monitoring is often treated as an 'extra', rather than an **integral part of an individual's supervision**. We feel it can **complement** or **strengthen** other activity to manage a person on probation effectively.

Electronic monitoring has **significant potential** to bring value to the probation service's work. However, more work needs to be done before benefits are fully realised. While the thematic inspection has made a number of recommendations for senior leaders, it has also made operational recommendations to improve the use of electronic monitoring as an additional tool for probation practitioners in reducing reoffending and managing risk.

Central to achieving this in practice is **understanding** electronic monitoring, how it works and how it can **support** people on probation in **their desistance journey**. It must be **integrated** as a tool for supporting the management of cases. Therefore, we have prepared the following PowerPoint presentation, which can be used by electronic monitoring leads, learning and development teams, or managers in briefing staff.



[HM Inspectorate of Probation –Electronic monitoring delivered well presentation.](#)

Traditionally, electronic monitoring was **seen as a punitive measure only** and its advantages in **providing a period of stability** and **routine were not consistently recognised**. Electronic monitoring can be used in a **more personalised** and **creative way** to have a **significant impact** on **public protection** and to **promote tertiary desistance**.

This was recognised by the people on probation who were interviewed for the thematic inspection, as evidenced in the quotes below:

“

***It gives you time to think about things more thoroughly and the consequences before you act even more stupid – jail is too late.***”

“

***It complements my behaviour, I feel protected, I'm validated based on this device basically ... The only way of showing people you're good is by your actions.***”

“

***It was an opportunity to prove that I could be trusted not to go back into the area I was banned from.***”

“

*Tag gave me a second lease of life, it was the wake-up call that I needed and a chance to sort out my priorities. ”*

“

*It's the best thing that has ever happened to me as I have now stopped drinking. Prison doesn't rehabilitate, it's an easy life compared to life on the streets and this tag has addressed my problem. ”*



[Benefits of electronic monitoring infographic.](#)



[Risk and Desistance: A Blended Approach to Risk Management](#)

Hazel Kemshall | 25 June 2021

This report explores a blended approach that combines practice to manage risk with practice to enhance desistance.

# Key takeaways for practitioners: two-page guide

Protecting the public, empowering those who commit crimes to make positive changes in their lifestyle and reducing the likelihood of reoffending are the core purposes of the Probation Service. Electronic monitoring has been a tool in supporting probation services to achieve these aims for over 20 years, and yet it is only recently that its real value has begun to be properly understood, as new technologies and new ways of applying them are rolled out.

While undertaking the fieldwork, Inspectors noted a number of examples of good practice which, when implemented consistently, lead to effective electronic monitoring delivery.



You can download the [key takeaways: electronic monitoring poster](#) here.

- Before recommending curfew, consider DA and safeguarding checks, as may be perpetrator OR victim.
- Consider making curfew recommendation as a supportive measure to break cycles and patterns of behaviour – what time of day are people offending? Can the curfew times be made to disrupt this pattern?
- GPS monitoring as a requirement on a community order:
  - Can be used to increase understanding and facilitate conversation with person on probation about their movements, lifestyle and activities... good use when victim's location is unknown to perpetrator. Can monitor movements without highlighting area they are located via exclusion zone map.
  - Exclusion zone – has to explicitly state the purpose of GPS monitoring is to monitor exclusion zone!
- Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement (AAMR) shouldn't be recommended for individuals who are alcohol dependant (qualified as an alcohol audit score of 15 or above).
  
- Home Detention Curfew (HDC) – need to be informed by DA and safeguarding checks before recommending, be aware they be perpetrator OR victim
- If unsuitable address state in the risk management section of HDC form that **there are no measures which can be put in place to make address suitable**
- If recommending GPS location monitoring as part of parole release, consider when this will be most useful for monitoring the individual's movements.... Would this be better timed as and when they leave any approved premises placement – if so, say so!

Pre-sentence

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page features a winding road with yellow and grey lanes. Two yellow location pins are placed on the road. The first pin is above a teal box containing the text 'Pre-sentence'. The second pin is above another teal box containing the text 'Pre-release'.

Pre-release

- Home Detention Curfew (HDC) – need to be informed by DA and safeguarding checks before recommending, be aware they be perpetrator OR victim
- If unsuitable address state in the risk management section of HDC form that **there are no measures which can be put in place to make address suitable**
- If recommending GPS location monitoring as part of parole release, consider when this will be most useful for monitoring the individual's movements.... Would this be better timed as and when they leave any approved premises placement – if so, say so!

## Pre-release

- All tag types – ensure you return the initial risk assessment form to EMS within 24 hours of being allocated the case. This ensures EMS has your (probation practitioner) details for liaising about the case going forward
- Check the tag has been fitted! Ask the person on probation, check when you see the person on probation, ask EMS if needed.

## Commencement

- What impact will being subject to electronic monitoring have on the person you are supervising? – ask them.... Include this in the initial OASys assessment.
- Electronic monitoring is a great tool for enhancing monitoring and control... Put this in your risk management plan.
- Make completing the period on electronic monitoring a sentence plan objective.

## Initial sentence planning

- How is the person on probation coping with the electronic monitoring? What impact is it having? Is it supporting them in making changes, improving relationships, creating a routine? Or is it impacting negatively, getting in the way of employment, interrupting family commitments, i.e. school run? Talk to the person on probation. Check this out.
- Is the person subject to location monitoring? Are you routinely asking for mapping data from EMS? Are you discussing this movement information with the person on probation, what they're doing, where they are going?
- Is the person subject to an exclusion zone? You will only get notification of breaches of exclusion zone if the licence / court order explicitly states that the exclusion zone is electronically monitored by GPS.

## Supervision

- At the end of the period of electronic monitoring, how has the person on probation done throughout this period? Have there been any changes, improvements, or setbacks? Discuss this with the person you are working with and record this in your OASys review.
- Offer praise for completing the period on electronic monitoring. Explore what difference it will make no longer having electronic monitoring in place.
- Update the risk management plan to reflect any changes, or completion, of electronic monitoring.
- Update the sentence plan to reflect compliance and achievement, or otherwise, of the electronically monitored requirement.
- Does there need to be any follow up or signposting? For instance, those subject to an AAMR, what support is in place to reinforce any progress made throughout the requirement. Discuss this with the person on probation and record in your reviews.

## Review

# Electronic monitoring in practice: case studies and reflective questions

In this section we set out HM Inspectorate of Probation's standards and expectations for electronic monitoring. This includes case examples from the sample inspected and some reflective questions to assist you in thinking about delivering electronic monitoring effectively in the future.

## Advice to courts/prisons

**In relation to courts/prisons, we expect that:**

*The pre-sentence/pre-release information and advice provided to court/prison supports its decision-making.*

**This includes the following expectations:**

- ✓ The pre-sentence/pre-release information and advice provided to court/prisons are sufficiently analytical and personalised to the service user to inform decisions about applying electronic monitoring.
- ✓ At the pre-sentence/pre-release stage, the information and advice informing decision-making draw sufficiently on available sources of information, including information on child safeguarding and domestic abuse.
- ✓ Electronic monitoring community order requirements, licence conditions and enforcement are used appropriately and proportionately.

## Assessment

**In relation to assessment, we expect that:**

*Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the service user.*

**This includes the following expectations:**

- ✓ Assessments focus sufficiently on engaging the service user.
- ✓ They focus sufficiently on the factors linked to offending and desistance and how electronic monitoring will help to address these.
- ✓ They focus sufficiently on keeping victims and other people safe and how electronic monitoring will help to achieve this.



Please keep these in mind as you read through the case studies below and reflect on the questions.



### Effective practice example

Iris was sentenced to 10 months' custody for an offence of possession of a shotgun without a licence. She took responsibility for the offence, advising that she was given the weapon for safekeeping by a drug dealer to whom she was in debt.

Iris experienced significant physical and mental health issues, in addition to a history of substance misuse. She had previously experienced domestic abuse, resulting in all her children being removed from her care.

Before her release, a home detention curfew assessment took place and she was assessed as a suitable subject for a BASS (bail accommodation and support service) placement. This was because of the risk of domestic abuse posed to her by her then partner, should she return to her home address. Iris went on to successfully complete her period of curfew.

### Poor practice example

Kevin was a 26-year-old male, sentenced to an 18-month community order with requirements to complete the Thinking Skills Programme, a 10-day rehabilitation activity requirement and 10 weeks' curfew for an offence of assault.

At the pre-sentence stage, Kevin advised that he'd given his mother's address as the proposed curfew address. However, when Kevin was sentenced, electronic monitoring was imposed to his partner's address. This wasn't challenged. There were no checks made with either his mother or girlfriend to agree to this proposal at their address. No domestic abuse checks were completed pre-sentence, even though Kevin had previously been cautioned for a battery offence against his mother and had a history of domestic abuse against a former partner.

A further domestic abuse assault was reported and admitted post-sentence (after the period of electronic monitoring). There were still no safeguarding checks or follow-up with police.

### Poor practice example

Robert was sentenced to 36 months' custody following his conviction for dwelling burglary and grievous bodily harm offences against the same victim. He has a number of previous convictions. These are mainly for acquisitive and drug-related offences, although he has committed violent offences previously and has a history of domestic abuse police call-outs. Although police address checks were undertaken before his release to inform the home detention curfew assessment, no domestic abuse checks were carried out, and a domestic abuse event recorded on probation systems before the current index offence was not reviewed.

Probation records clearly indicated a significant history of domestic abuse, with numerous call-outs to the police. Behaviours included violence against various partners, including breach of bail and external controls, punches to the head and body of a partner, and

forcibly dragging a partner back to a vehicle after she had tried to escape. On another occasion, he had taken a partner's phone so she could not call for help. These were not considered or recorded as part of the release assessment and Robert was subsequently released to his father's address, which is on the same street as his most recent victim/ex-partner. Appropriate safeguards were not in place at point of release and opportunities to either refuse release to this address or ensure additional safety measures via exclusion zone and GPS location monitoring were missed.



### Assessment: reflective questions

1. When making an assessment for electronic monitoring, how do you consider protected characteristics and personal circumstances?
2. When thinking about the cases above, how has curfew been used?
3. Even if there is no index offence of domestic abuse, why is it still important to undertake checks?
4. How often would you consider the imposition of a curfew as a legitimate sanction following a breach? What may be the benefits of this?
5. How effective are curfews when people on probation are in approved premises? How could you use these more effectively?
6. What additional actions could have been taken to improve the assessments in the above cases?

## Planning

**In relation to planning, we expect that:**

*Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the service user.*



**This includes the following expectations:**

- ✓ Planning focuses sufficiently on engaging the service user.
- ✓ Planning focuses sufficiently on reducing reoffending and supporting the service user's desistance, evidencing how electronic monitoring will help achieve this.
- ✓ Planning focuses sufficiently on keeping victims and other people safe, evidencing how electronic monitoring will help achieve this.

Please keep these in mind as you read through the case studies below and reflect on the questions.

## Effective practice example

Gareth was sentenced to an 18-month suspended sentence order with 20 rehabilitation activity requirement days, and an alcohol abstinence monitoring requirement (AAMR) for 120 days. His conviction was for a racially aggravated assault and criminal damage, with alcohol being an aggravating factor. Gareth has several previous convictions, including violence, domestic abuse-related violence, acquisitive offending, and a pattern of racially aggravated offences.

The benefits of the AAMR in reducing the risk of reoffending were recognised at every stage of the court and supervision process. This included the probation practitioner engaging Gareth in conversations to explore the impact of his drinking behaviour, with consistent evidence of positive reinforcement and encouragement to continue to comply with the AAMR.

There were violations reported in regard to Gareth having consumed alcohol and these notifications were received in a timely manner by his probation practitioner. On each occasion they were discussed with Gareth and the instances explored and addressed. Rather than taking enforcement action, the probation practitioner used these violations as a tool to have open and honest conversations with Gareth to support him towards change.

Gareth completed the remainder of his AAMR. He said in supervision that the positive alcohol readings really made him reflect on his alcohol use and behaviour when under the influence. He has greatly reduced his level of alcohol use, which has been maintained after completion of the AAMR requirement. There is no evidence of further offending and he has not come to the attention of the police over the seven months since sentence, which for him is a huge achievement.

## Effective practice example

Ben is subject to an IPP [indeterminate sentence for public protection] following his conviction for offences including robbery and grievous bodily harm. Ben was on licence at the time of committing these offences, following his previous conviction for robbery involving a knife, in which the victim was tied up and left for six hours. He has a long history of violence and drug-related offences, and was previously recalled following domestic abuse allegations, including false imprisonment. He was subject to a range of additional licence conditions, including trail monitoring for three months.

The use of electronic monitoring has been an integral part of the overall case management. The parole report drew on police information, as well as Probation Service risk assessments. The proposal for a trail monitoring licence condition was then linked to these risks and a clear rationale was provided, including how location data would offer an enhanced level of monitoring and control, as well as provide an indication of any current lifestyle concerns associated with his whereabouts.

The sentence plan referenced trail monitoring as a tool to explore Ben's lifestyle/activities and to identify problem/risky areas. The GPS data was reviewed on a monthly basis. This data, in the form of maps, was also discussed and shown to Ben in supervision, which

aided engagement as well as encouraging open discussions about his lifestyle and associates.



### Planning: reflective questions

1. How do you record electronic monitoring on your risk management plans for people on probation?
2. What are the different ways electronic monitoring can support and manage risk and promote desistance?
3. How do you incorporate the requirement as a whole into the sentence plan?
4. What are the benefits of including the requirement/licence condition as an objective for the person on probation to complete?
5. How do you include electronic monitoring in your contingency planning?

## Implementation and delivery

**In relation to implementation and delivery, we expect that:**

*High-quality well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging the service user.*



**This includes the following expectations:**

- ✓ The sentence/post-custody period is implemented appropriately, with a focus on engaging the service user.
- ✓ The implementation and delivery of services effectively support a reduction in offending.
- ✓ The implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of victims and the wider community.

Please keep these in mind as you read through the case studies below and reflect on the questions.

### Poor case example

Stephen is subject to an IPP [indeterminate sentence for public protection] following his conviction for sexual assaults against unknown adult females and possession of an offensive weapon. He has several previous convictions, including violence and other sexual offences. He was previously recalled on the IPP licence following concerns about him entering his exclusion zone and engaging in behaviour thought to be a precursor to offending.

Upon re-release Stephen was subject to a range of additional licence conditions, including location monitoring and an exclusion zone. The Parole Board had indicated that the exclusion zone should be GPS monitored; however, this wasn't included in the release licence. The probation practitioner had thought that location monitoring would automatically monitor the proposed exclusion zone. This was not the case. A specific electronically monitored exclusion zone requirement was required on the licence to ensure

that notifications of any breach of exclusion zone would be received. While location monitoring data was frequently requested, the lack of electronic monitoring of the exclusion zone was not identified until five months after release, when the probation practitioner contacted electronic monitoring services to check whether there had been any breaches of the exclusion zone. A variation to the licence was then requested.

Stephen was shown to have breached the exclusion zone shortly after this additional monitoring was applied. GPS data was able to verify the nature of these breaches, confirming that he was not loitering in the area and on another occasion had driven through the exclusion zone without making any stops. A senior manager warning was issued.

Given the breaches of the exclusion zone and ongoing concerns about relationships and behaviours, a request was made to extend the location monitoring period for a further six months; however, the Public Protection Casework Section (PPCS) and the Parole Board had not received a response by the end of the tagging period, resulting in a period of approximately eight weeks when Stephen was not subject to GPS monitoring and his movements could not be verified.

### Effective practice example

Janice is a 58-year-old woman who was sentenced to a 12-month community order with 20 rehabilitation activity requirement days and a 60-day alcohol abstinence monitoring requirement after she pleaded guilty to threatening behaviour. Alcohol was a feature of her offence, where she was threatening towards a neighbour in a dispute about money. Janice had increased her alcohol intake over the period of Covid-19 lockdown. Before sentencing, she had a heart attack and attended hospital for a 10-day detox, where she achieved abstinence. The report prepared for court clearly identified the role alcohol had played in her offence and Janice was actively involved in the initial sentence planning stages. While Janice was only seen monthly, there were discussions on progress with continued abstinence and the AAMR was completed successfully.



### Implementation and delivery: reflective questions

1. How can you use electronic monitoring to build stability and achieve a routine?
2. How can your supervision sessions with people on probation build on the impact of electronic monitoring?
3. How does the use of electronic monitoring improve or negatively impact on your working relationship with the person on probation? How can this be enhanced/addressed?
4. How might being subject to electronic monitoring impact on a person on probation? Have you asked them about this?

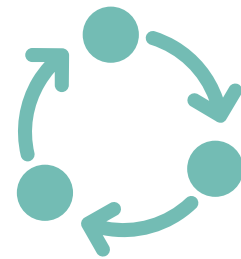
## Review and evaluation

**In relation to reviewing, we expect that:**

*Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the service user.*

*This includes the following expectations:*

- ✓ Reviewing focuses sufficiently on supporting the service user's compliance and engagement.
- ✓ Reviewing focuses sufficiently on supporting the service user's desistance and evidences whether electronic monitoring has helped achieve this.
- ✓ Reviewing focuses sufficiently on keeping victims and other people safe and evidences whether electronic monitoring has helped achieve this.



Please keep these in mind as you read through the case studies below and reflect on the questions.

### Poor case example

David pleaded guilty to a common assault against his partner and was sentenced to a community order with rehabilitation activity requirement days, unpaid work and a six-month GPS trail monitoring requirement. The pre-sentence report was clear about how the mapping data would be used to explore David's behaviour and manage risk of harm.

The probation practitioner managing this case stated that she had received no training in regard to GPS trail monitoring and was unsure how this could be used to address offending behaviour, support desistance and manage risk. In the six-month period of the tagging requirement, there were no requests for any mapping data at any point to confirm activity or location.

### Effective case example

Nick is a 37-year-old male who was made subject to an indeterminate sentence for public protection for six offences of robbery and actual bodily harm. He was re-released on licence in 2019, following an earlier recall.

In 2020, it became apparent that he was having contact with ex-partners and their children, despite licence conditions preventing this. A licence variation was requested to the Parole Board, to impose a curfew and GPS trail monitoring requirement as an alternative to recall. This was agreed.

Regular data requests were made, and maps interrogated to understand fully Nick's movements and compliance with requirements. While this did not stop ex-partners and children visiting him, the probation practitioner was able to track Nick's activities and explore these with him as part of constructive supervision of his licence conditions, thus improving risk management.

## Effective practice example

Frank pleaded guilty to offences of actual bodily harm and breach of a non-molestation order (domestic abuse related). He was sentenced to 28 months' custody. He was released with extensive licence conditions, including residence at an approved premise.

Frank initially responded reasonably well to his licence; however, he continued to be fixated on his victim and he was visiting family members who lived close to his exclusion zone. Consequently, his licence conditions were amended to include GPS trail monitoring, which would provide additional monitoring and control.

The probation practitioner liaised effectively with the GPS provider to ensure that Frank had not breached his exclusion zone. Effective work was also carried out with the victim liaison officer to ensure that the victim was kept fully informed of the changes to Frank's licence and ongoing work to keep her safe. Frank has moved to supported accommodation and has completed the Building Better Relationships programme.



## Review and evaluation: reflective questions

1. How do you review progress with electronic monitoring?
2. At what points would you contact the electronic monitoring provider for additional information?
3. What impact do you think it has if you do not discuss the requirement/licence condition with the person on probation?
4. What impact does it have if the person on probation successfully completes their period of electronic monitoring?
5. What impact does the removal of electronic monitoring have on the individual? What impact does it have on their sentence and risk management plan?
6. Do you routinely review what has changed for the person on probation?

# Conclusion: electronic monitoring

Overall, we identified that our standards are delivered effectively in relation to electronic monitoring when the following are in place:



The most appropriate form of electronic monitoring is **considered at the pre-sentence/pre-release stage**, with a **clear explanation** of what the tool would be used for and how it would **support the supervision and management** of the person on probation.



**Checks** are **made** and **information verified** to ensure the suitability of electronic monitoring at the address specified, including domestic abuse and safeguarding checks.



Probation practitioners provide a **clear rationale for the suitability** of the specified address for electronic monitoring, and this is clearly recorded and communicated to all those involved in the case supervision.



Probation practitioners **integrate management** of the electronically monitored requirement into all elements of supervision, including assessment, sentence and risk management planning, implementation, delivery and review so **sentences** are managed **holistically**.



There are proactive discussions with the person on probation at the commencement of electronic monitoring, for the duration it is active, and at the point when the tagging period ends. This encourages compliance and enables probation practitioners to monitor progress, as well as offering the chance to build on any period of stability the electronic monitoring is providing.



In the case of GPS location monitoring requirements/conditions, movement data is accessed as and when needed for the purposes of ensuring it is adding value to the management of the case.

We encourage readers to think of these as guiding principles, and to reflect on and consider how they may improve their practice as a result of reading this guide.

We would welcome feedback on this effective practice guide, including its impact and any suggested improvements.

Please send your comments and ideas to [Tammie.Burroughs@hmiprobation.gov.uk](mailto:Tammie.Burroughs@hmiprobation.gov.uk).



# Further reading and resources

## HM Inspectorate of Probation publications

**Thematic inspection:** [The use of electronic monitoring as a tool for the Probation Service in reducing reoffending and managing risk.](#)

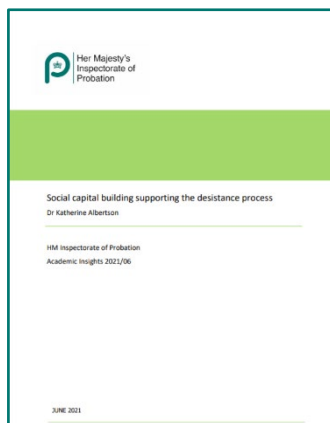
**The evidence base – probation services research page:**

[Specific types of delivery: Electronic monitoring](#) (May 2021)

[Models and principles: Procedural justice](#) (December 2020)

[Models and principles: Supervision skills](#) (December 2020).

**Academic insight papers:**



[Social capital building supporting the desistance process](#)

Dr Katherine Albertson | 18 June 2021

This report summarises the concept of social capital and how increases in the strength, range and quality of bonding, bridging and linking opportunities can be beneficial in supporting the desistance process.

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