

Almost 1,000 prison leavers tagged in first year of drive to cut booze-fuelled crime

- one year since world-first launch of alcohol tagging of prison leavers in Wales
- offenders tagged for up to a year face prison for breaching drink rules
- tags tackling alcohol-fuelled crime which costs society £21 billion a year

Under the scheme, offenders released from prison are fitted with alcohol monitoring tags if their probation officer thinks they are likely to reoffend when drinking. Those who break the rules set by the Probation Service around their drinking face being sent back to jail.

The initiative was launched in Wales last November and rolled out to England in June as part of government plans to stamp out the scourge of alcohol-related crime.

Alcohol plays a part in 39 per cent of all violent crime in the UK and roughly 20 per cent of offenders supervised by the Probation Service are classed as having an alcohol problem.

Around 12,000 orders requiring offenders to wear alcohol tags are expected to be issued over the next three years, covering both prison leavers and those serving community sentences.

Prisons and Probation Minister, Damian Hinds MP, said:

When more than a third of all violent crime is fuelled by alcohol, these tags provide vital monitoring to help cut reoffending and protect our communities.

Roughly 12,000 offenders will have benefitted from these innovative tags by 2025 – helping them to make positive changes to their lives and making the streets safer.

The tags help probation officers monitor offenders' behaviour and support them to turn their backs on crime. They also provide offenders with the incentive to break bad habits as breaching their licence condition could see them back in prison.

Natasha (not her real name), aged 22, from Cardiff, has been on a tag since the beginning of September. She said:

I was nervous about being tagged but it does help. It's a physical

reminder for me not to drink.

I've been on probation before but this time I'm doing really well.
I'm sober and not getting in trouble.

An offender's licence will stipulate that the alcohol tag must be worn for a minimum of 30 days up to a maximum of one year. Those getting tagged either have a licence condition which requires them to go teetotal or have their drinking levels monitored during this time.

Judges and magistrates have handed down 5,939 alcohol tagging orders to offenders serving community sentences since October 2020.

Last year, the government launched another world-first, [using GPS tags](#) to track robbers, thieves and burglars. Around 10,000 tagging orders are expected to be made over the next three years to help stop criminals from reoffending and help police catch them if they carry on.

The move is part of the government's plan to tackle crime, expanding the use of innovative technology to protect the public and drive down reoffending. The £183 million investment over the next 3 years will nearly double the number of defendants on tags at any one time from 13,500 in 2021 to 25,000 by 2025.

Notes to editors

- Reviews are carried out every 3 months to ensure the tag is still necessary, reasonable and proportionate to the risk they pose (a legal requirement).
- The amount of time an offender is required to wear the tag is flexible and could be reintroduced after a year if deemed necessary and proportionate to the risk they pose.
- Recently published [statistics](#) show 97% compliance with alcohol bans on community orders.
- [Statistics](#) show that around 20% of offenders managed in the community by the Probation Service had alcohol assessed as a being likely to cause criminal behaviour.

Foreign Secretary speech at the Manama Dialogue in Bahrain

Your Royal Highnesses,

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to speak here today. When Britain opened our Embassy here in Bahrain, our diplomats could look directly over the waters of the Gulf and watch dhows carrying pearl divers to the northern oyster beds.

Yet today our Embassy is almost half a mile from the coast, not because it has moved, but because Bahrain has moved the sea by reclaiming land that once lay beneath the waves.

All around us, the Arabian Peninsula has experienced one of the swiftest transformations in history, wrought by the power of hydrocarbons, allowing spectacular cities to rise from empty deserts and entire countries to achieve prosperity, great prosperity, within a single lifetime.

The lesson I draw is that when our friends in the Gulf and the wider region decide to make change happen, they can reinvent themselves, and indeed reinvent their economies, with astonishing speed.

And now another transformation is beginning – and I believe it will be equally momentous and filled with opportunity – as this region remakes itself by harnessing the power of sunlight, wind and nuclear energy.

As you embark on this journey, I want to assure you that the United Kingdom will remain a steadfast friend and partner, committed to our relationships in the Middle East and North Africa for the long term, and do so by building on centuries of tradition and friendship.

Because we know that your security is our security and that any crisis here would have inevitable global repercussions.

We know that your prosperity is our prosperity, that is symbolised by the ever greater flow of trade between us, including over £44 billion between the UK and the GCC.

We welcome regional initiatives to reinforce stability, including the historic Abraham Accords, of which the UK is a committed supporter.

And Britain is convinced that we will only be able to overcome mutual threats and seize the opportunities in front of us by cooperating ever more closely.

That's why we're negotiating a free trade agreement with the GCC, which I remind the room, is our fourth biggest export market after the EU, the US and China.

That's why we're providing development finance through British International Investment – including \$500 million to Egypt and \$250 million to Morocco so far.

That's why we're deepening our security partnerships with Jordan and Oman and strengthening our cooperation with regional finance centres against illicit money.

And that's why we want to be with you on our shared transition to green energy, ensuring that we all benefit from renewable technologies that are not

only practical, but are increasingly affordable, but also promise near total energy security.

Last year we hosted COP26 in Glasgow, then we passed the baton to Egypt for COP27 this year and we look forward to COP28 in the UAE next year.

I commend Saudi Arabia and the UAE for their plans to invest nearly \$350 billion in green energy, and also to Bahrain for its ambition to double its deployment of renewables by 2035.

I draw inspiration from the Middle East Green Initiative, which will help countries to achieve their Nationally Determined Contributions to reduce carbon emissions.

But none of our shared ambition will succeed without security – and the hard truth is that we face an ever greater array of threats.

In January of this year I was in the garden of the British Ambassador's Residence in Abu Dhabi watching explosions in the night sky as incoming Houthi rockets were intercepted and shot down overhead – and I can assure you that I gave thanks for the accuracy and efficiency of the UAE's missile defences on that evening.

Those trails of light, darting across the sky above me, were visible evidence of how Iranian-supplied weapons threaten the entire region.

Today the Iranian nuclear programme is more advanced than ever before and the regime has resorted to selling Russia the armed drones that are currently killing civilians in Ukraine.

As their people demonstrate against decades of oppression, Iran's rulers are spreading bloodshed and destruction across the region and as far away as Kyiv.

Britain is determined to work alongside our friends to counter the Iranian threat, interdict the smuggling of conventional arms, and prevent the regime from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.

Twice this year, a Royal Navy frigate operating in international waters south of Iran intercepted speedboats laden with surface-to-air missiles and engines for cruise missiles.

Had those engines reached their destination, they could have powered the type of cruise missile that bombarded Abu Dhabi on 17th January, killing three civilians – and the toll would have been even higher without the defences that I saw in action a few weeks later above the skies of Abu Dhabi.

That's why British forces are striving alongside their counterparts in this region to keep us safe and defend the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity which protect every nation.

Putin's onslaught against Ukraine amounts to a flagrant breach of the principles of sovereign and territorial integrity.

No country is immune from the turmoil he has brought to world energy markets or the damage he has caused to global food security.

Day after day, Putin's war is inflicting yet more suffering on Syrians and Yemenis, who were already enduring the privations of humanitarian emergency, and he's having an impact on ordinary Lebanese, caught up in economic crisis.

Meanwhile the horrors that he is meting out to Ukrainian civilians compare with the destruction that he and Assad wrought upon Aleppo and other Syrian cities.

Yet despite using overwhelming and pitiless force, Putin is losing.

Almost everywhere, Russian forces are in retreat and it is only a matter of time before Ukraine prevails.

And it should be dawning on other regimes, who might have been tempted to behave similarly, that most of the world is determined to ensure that aggression does not pay.

This region demonstrated its belief in sovereignty and territorial integrity when it voted at the UN General Assembly to condemn Putin's annexation of Ukrainian territory.

Just as those principles remain constant, so I fervently believe that Britain's friendships across the Middle East and North Africa will deepen and endure, as we uphold peace and security together, and as this region masters its second transformation, allowing a new world of green energy to succeed the old.

Autumn Statement and Social Mobility

In more stable times, assessing the social mobility implications of policy is a difficult challenge. In an unpredictable period, this becomes much more complex. Every area of policy has some impact or another, and there is a danger of losing focus. To address this, the Social Mobility Commission is aiming to focus on the "big ticket" items where the evidence of impact is greatest. These are the policy areas which we hope governments, now and in the future, will acknowledge as their priorities in ensuring that this country nurtures and allocates talent in the best possible ways. They are described in our Work Plan and will shortly be set out in more detail in our Strategic Plan, which will provide the wider narrative about our approach and why we believe it is relevant to the current period.

Our main areas of focus will be on education, routes to work, and economy and enterprise. Assessing the Autumn Statement in the light of these three priorities presents a mixed picture. We share the ambition to grow the

economy. Much of the debate about social mobility is focussed on relative mobility, which is the comparison between different groups, in terms of socio-economic background and access to higher level employment and income. This is an important part of the story, but far too little attention has been given to absolute mobility – which is when people move up, either in income or occupational status, compared to their parents. Arguably, this is the bigger challenge currently. Last week, the Institute of Fiscal Studies, produced a thought provoking report on intergenerational mobility, and the extent to which our younger generation, whatever their social background, are facing diminished opportunities compared to older people. Far too many people have seen their real incomes improve very little over the past decade. And there is a strong geographical aspect, which means that some parts of the country experience a disproportionate share of the problem.

The only solution to this is to grow the economy and to do so in ways which spread innovation and improved productivity across the whole of the country. We recognise that there is a strong commitment to this in the Autumn Statement, and a recognition that this requires fiscal and monetary stability, innovation and strong public services. In terms of the detail, it is too early to form judgements about how well this might work. However there are three aspects to which we would draw attention at this stage. First, is to commend the commitment to the most vulnerable. This does not, in itself, improve social mobility, as this depends on a range of other factors as well as income – but it does offer a degree of protection against opportunity diminishing for those families and their children who are most exposed to financial insecurity. We also commend the additional funding for schools, for much the same reason. It will not offset all of their pending challenges, but is likely to mitigate some of the most difficult pressures caused by rising costs. However there are two areas of substantial concern: the lack of any reference to the impact of financial pressures on early years or to further education.

It is highly unlikely that any government can meet its ambitions for a strong economy without addressing skills. From a social mobility point of view, this is about how we create and open opportunity for high skilled and well paid employment, but is also about finding some new solutions to our biggest national problem: the number of young people and adults with low levels of formal qualifications. In large part this is about addressing deficiencies in basic skills, including literacy and numeracy – as this is a major impediment to the progress of individuals, and the capacity of the economy to innovate and improve productivity.

It is encouraging that the Autumn Statement does refer to skills and acknowledges the importance of current proposals to improve the skills system. However, it is silent on the risks posed by the current economic crisis to the organisations charged with delivering these outcomes. We know that early years development is critical to developing the cognitive and non-cognitive skills which enable children to do well, and we are supportive of the reforms to post-16 education and training which seek to strengthen technical and vocational pathways – because these aim to recognise and reward the wider range of talents which people have and which the labour market

needs.

More funding is not always the answer to every problem, and is never the whole answer to every problem. How early years is delivered and how skills are taught are both extremely important areas of interest for us. Nothing can be delivered, however, without stable institutions – and there is evidence, in both early years and further education, that current funding levels are insufficient to recruit and retain high quality staff, or to secure the institutional stability needed to maintain current levels of service while things improve. We are concerned about the implications of this, both for the individuals who are affected (nearly 2 million people are enrolled at further education colleges) and the potential drag this may well have on the longer term ambition to deliver a stronger economy.

Katharine Birbalsingh OBE, Chair of the Social Mobility Commission

Alun Francis OBE, Deputy Chair of the Social Mobility Commission

Foreign Secretary to call out Iran and Russia as threats to Middle East security

- The Foreign Secretary will today [Saturday 19 November] call out Iran and Russia as threats to the security of the Middle East in a speech to global leaders in Bahrain.
- He will commit to working with partners to ensure Iran can never develop a nuclear weapon and to tackle its destabilising activity in the region.
- The Foreign Secretary will also call out Putin's invasion of Ukraine as a 'flagrant breach' of the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity which is 'heaping misery' on millions of Syrians and Yemenis by driving up food prices.

The Foreign Secretary will call out Iran and Russia as threats to the security of the Middle East in a speech at an international security conference today.

Speaking at the Manama Dialogue security conference in Bahrain, he will commit to working with partners in the region to ensure Iran never develops a nuclear weapon and highlight the impact of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine on food security across the region.

He will also highlight opportunities for cooperation on Gulf states' transition to green energy and look forward to greater trade between the Gulf and the UK following the conclusion of talks on a new Free Trade Agreement with the Gulf Co-operation Council, expected next year.

On the threat posed by Iran, the Foreign Secretary is expected to say:

Iranian-supplied weapons threaten the entire region. Today Iran's nuclear programme is more advanced than ever before, and the regime has resorted to selling Russia the armed drones that are killing civilians in Ukraine.

As their people demonstrate against decades of oppression, Iran's rulers are spreading bloodshed and destruction as far away as Kyiv.

Britain is determined to work alongside our friends to counter the Iranian threat, interdict the smuggling of conventional arms, and prevent the regime from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.

On Putin's war in Ukraine, the Foreign Secretary is expected to say:

Putin's onslaught against Ukraine amounts to a flagrant breach of those principles [sovereignty and territorial integrity]. No country is immune from the turmoil he has brought to world energy markets or the damage he has caused to global food security.

Putin's war is inflicting yet more suffering on Syrians and Yemenis, who were already enduring the privations of humanitarian emergency, and ordinary Lebanese, caught up in economic crisis.

The Foreign Secretary will hold bilateral meetings with a range of international counterparts at the Dialogue and take part in panel events on key issues facing the Middle East, including maritime security and conflict resolution.

Following the Manama Dialogue, the Foreign Secretary will be travelling to Qatar. He is planning to meet with UK police representatives who are in-country supporting British fans to enjoy a safe and enjoyable trip, to understand more about their plans for the tournament.

While there, he will also speak at an event on global food security, hold bilateral meetings with key partners and visit UK Armed Forces stationed in Qatar, alongside attending the opening ceremony of the World Cup and the first England game.

Joint Statement from United States and

the Great Lakes Special Envoys of Belgium, France and the UK

Press release

The UK Special Envoy for the African Great Lakes, Alison Thorpe, joins the United States and the Special Envoys of Belgium and France to issue a statement about the security situation in eastern DRC.



English

The United States along with the Great Lakes Special Envoys of Belgium, France and the UK condemn in the strongest terms the continuing advance of the UN-sanctioned March 23 Movement (M23) illegal armed group in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The resumption of violence since 20 October, including in and around the towns of Rutshuru, Kiwanja, Rumangabo and Kibumba, undermines peace efforts and has caused further insecurity and significant human suffering. We call on the M23 to immediately withdraw, end any acts violating international law, and to cease hostilities.

We reiterate our support for regional diplomatic efforts, including the Nairobi and Luanda processes, that promote de-escalation and create the conditions for lasting peace in DRC. We encourage renewed dialogue through these mechanisms and for Congolese non-state armed groups to participate in the Nairobi process. All support to non-state armed actors must stop, including external support to M23. We call on countries in the region to use all means available to them to urge an immediate cessation of hostilities and immediate resumption of consultations on concrete steps to deescalate current tensions.

We reaffirm our commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries in the Great Lakes region.

Français

Les Etats-Unis et les envoyés spéciaux de la Belgique, de la France et du Royaume-Uni pour la région des Grands Lacs condamnent dans les termes les

plus vifs l'avancée continue en République démocratique du Congo (RDC) du groupe armé illégal et sanctionné par les Nations Unies intitulé Mouvement du 23 mars (M23). La reprise des violences depuis le 20 octobre, notamment dans les villes de Rutshuru, Kiwanja, Rumangabo et Kibumba et leurs alentours, sape les efforts de paix et a entraîné un accroissement de l'insécurité ainsi que de grandes souffrances humaines. Nous appelons le M23 à se retirer immédiatement, à mettre fin à toute activité violant le droit international et à cesser les hostilités.

Nous réaffirmons notre soutien en faveur des efforts diplomatiques régionaux, notamment des processus de Nairobi et de Luanda, qui promeuvent la désescalade et créent les conditions d'une paix durable en RDC. Nous encourageons la reprise du dialogue à travers ces mécanismes et incitons les groupes armés non étatiques congolais à participer au processus de Nairobi. Tout soutien à des acteurs armés non étatiques doit cesser, y compris le soutien extérieur au M23. Nous appelons les pays de la région à faire tout ce qui est en leur pouvoir pour demander une cessation immédiate des hostilités et une reprise immédiate des consultations sur des étapes concrètes permettant de faire baisser les tensions actuelles.

Nous réaffirmons notre attachement à la souveraineté et à l'intégrité territoriale des pays de la région des Grands Lacs.

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Published 18 November 2022