

## **Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement (AAMR)**

The Mayor of London successfully lobbied for legislation to allow for the introduction of a new sentencing power, the Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement (AAMR) to tackle the significant problem of alcohol related violence.

This new sentencing power allows courts to impose a requirement that an offender abstain from alcohol for a fixed time period (recommended to be between 90-120 days); and be regularly tested to ensure compliance; as part of any community sentence order. If the test is breached, there is a quick and coherent process of apprehension – speedy reappearance at the magistrate’s court and an immediate sanction.

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) stipulates that this approach must be piloted before it can be rolled out.

### **MOPAC compulsory sobriety pilot.**

As part of the work to reduce the volumes of alcohol related offending, MOPAC will run a ‘proof of concept’ pilot scheme to test enforced abstinence as a requirement of community orders.

The pilot will be undertaken using new provisions in the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act 2012 which provide courts with a power to impose an Alcohol Abstinence and Monitoring Requirement (AAMR).

The pilot will test how widely magistrates use AAMR; the technical processes within the criminal justice system; the effectiveness of electronic monitoring; compliance with and breaches of the order; and the associated costs of compulsory sobriety.

The monitoring of abstinence will be through transdermal tags and not breathalysers.

### **The pilot will:**

Deliver a compulsory sobriety ‘proof of concept’ pilot which will trial the effectiveness of the Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement (AAMR).

The pilot will run in four South London Boroughs. (Croydon, Sutton, Southwark & Lambeth); for up to 12 months starting in June 2014.

The pilot will provide clarity as to:

- How the magistrates will use the sanction and whether or not the sanction proves to be an effective tool for the courts.
- What would be the expected compliance rate of the AAMR order.
- The effectiveness of ‘transdermal tags’ in monitoring alcohol abstinence.
- Programme design – processes and protocols which will lead to the effective use of the Alcohol Abstinence Monitoring Requirement (AAMR).

- Some early information around reoffending (It would take up to 18 months to have this data and would be for a small cohort).

The pilot will be aimed at a specific cohort of offenders; those convicted of alcohol-related offences stemming from the night time economy; repeat drink driving offenders and to those convicted of alcohol-related violence offences. However ultimately it would be for the judiciary to decide who receives this sanction.

### **Progress to date**

Significant progress has been made to date and we are on course to be ready to go live with the pilot in the spring 2014.

### Stakeholder Engagement

- MOPAC officers have secured the support and buy-in from key partners including the MPS, London Probation Trust, Home Office, HMCTs and MOJ. Commander Mak Chisty (lead for licencing) and Commander Simon Letchford (Area South lead) have been fully briefed and are supportive of the pilot.
- A Programme Board and Local Implementation Group have been set up and will be meeting frequently over the next few months in the run up to the pilot going live.

### Development of a specification

- MOPAC have finalised the AAMR functional specification including process maps which went out to potential bidders for procurement on the 1 April 2014.

### Procurement

- Procurement of the transdermal tags (alcohol bracelets) and the accompanying offender management is due to complete in May 2014.

### Pilot Readiness

- MOPAC are currently in the process of recruiting a Senior Probation Officer, who will take on the role of an AAMR Project Manager, to support the local implementation and delivery of the pilot. The post will ensure full time and specialist probation support on the pilot to help ensure the AAMR is being used consistently and effectively.
- MOPAC officers are currently developing a wider mobilisation plan for the pilot; this will be supported by guidance for key delivery partners.
- MOPAC will be hosting training events for stakeholders, in particular for the courts. This will be critical to ensuring local readiness and the successful implementation of the pilot.

### Evaluation

The evaluation specification has been developed and is supported by a draft Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) which has also been signed off by the Programme Board. The objectives of the evaluation will be to:

- critically describe and assess the implementation, process and impact of the pilot (in particular the performance of the monitoring equipment and impact on offenders; the compliance rate of the order and the way in which the magistrates use the sanction);
- assess the technical performance of transdermal devices;
- examine the views of offenders, victims, and key criminal justice agencies on the AAMR;
- assess (so far as possible) the impact of the pilot on offenders, victims and the relevant criminal justice agencies (Probation, HMCTS, MPS);
- examine costs (and cost-effectiveness) of AAMR.

### **How it works**

AAMR in London will work as a requirement of a community sentence.

There will be a rigorous testing regime involving transdermal tags. A positive test for alcohol would be in breach of the order.

The alcohol testing process would mean that the breach evidence would be available to the court immediately. The magistrate would then determine a further sanction. Possible options could include extension of length of the compulsory sobriety or attendance at brief intervention sessions, among others.

For further information on the sobriety pilot, please contact Naomi Simpson Programme Manager (Substance Misuse and South Area Team) [naomi.simpson@mopac.london.gov.uk](mailto:naomi.simpson@mopac.london.gov.uk)