



House of Commons  
Committee of Public Accounts

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# Transforming electronic monitoring services

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**Twenty-First Report of Session  
2022–23**

*Report, together with formal minutes relating  
to the report*

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## Summary

HM Prison & Probation Service's (HMPPS) transformation programme for electronic monitoring ('tagging') has failed to transform the service as intended. HMPPS launched the programme to improve efficiency and increase the usefulness of tagging for police and probation services, but after significant setbacks and delays the failure has cost taxpayers dear. Its high-risk and over-complicated delivery model, poor oversight of suppliers, overambitious timetable and light-touch scrutiny from the Ministry of Justice all contributed to its failure to introduce a new case management system, which underpinned the intended benefits and transformation. These avoidable mistakes wasted £98 million of taxpayers' money and left the tagging service reliant on legacy systems that needed urgent remedial action, costing a further £9.8 million.

It is unacceptable that, despite our previous recommendations, the Ministry and HMPPS still do not have sufficient data to understand the outcomes of tagging and that police forces and the Probation Service continue to lack timely access to the high-quality data they need to monitor offenders and keep the public safe. The Ministry and HMPPS still do not know what works and for who, and whether tagging reduces reoffending. HMPPS has committed to improving access to data and evaluating its new tagging expansion projects, but appears unambitious about the level of insight that it expects to achieve.

Despite the lack of evaluation, government is pressing ahead with its £1.2 billion programme to expand tagging to another 10,000 people in the next three years. It has harnessed innovative technology to deliver new projects—such as in its alcohol monitoring scheme and acquisitive crime pilot—where early progress has yielded some encouraging results. However, although HMPPS has identified lessons from the failure of its transformation programme, there remain serious risks associated with its expansion of tagging and the need to procure new contracts by early 2024. Given the long history of poor performance in this area, we remain unconvinced that it is sufficiently well-equipped to handle emerging problems and will continue to monitor developments for the foreseeable future.

## Introduction

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Electronic monitoring ('tagging') allows the police, courts, probation and immigration services to monitor offenders' locations and compliance with court orders, and act if offenders breach their requirements. HM Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS), an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (the Ministry) is responsible for tagging. It delivers the service through four suppliers, including Capita which runs the live service and G4S which supplies tags. As at March 2022, around 15,300 offenders were tagged.

In 2011, HMPPS launched a transformation programme to improve efficiency and capability in tagging, mainly by introducing new technology such as a new case management system called Gemini and new GPS tags. However, after significant setbacks and delays, HMPPS reset its transformation programme and restarted it in June 2017, expecting to transform services by the end of 2018. After further delays, in May 2021 HMPPS suspended development of Gemini and a linked user portal for stakeholders to access information, before terminating the contract for Gemini in December 2021 and closing the programme in March 2022. This resulted in £98 million of losses to the taxpayer.

HMPPS is expanding its use of tagging and expects to increase the number of people who are tagged by around 10,000 over the next three years. Between 2021–22 and 2030–31, it expects to spend £1.2 billion on an enhanced electronic monitoring service, extending tagging to wider groups of offenders. It has launched three new tagging expansion projects, with further schemes planned. It is also reprocurring the contracts to run the service.

## Conclusions and recommendations

1. **HMPPS's failure to transform tagging services has wasted £98 million of taxpayers' money.** By the end of 2020–21, HMPPS had spent around £157 million on its tagging transformation programme. Both its and its supplier's (Capita) failure to deliver the new case management system, Gemini, wasted £98 million. Although the Ministry claims that terminating Gemini was the optimal value for money decision in 2021, we are deeply concerned about the scale of these losses. HMPPS adopted a high-risk and complex delivery model for the programme, but did not appreciate the inherent complexity of contracting with four different suppliers, resulting in severe delays. It has been similarly over-ambitious in its development of Gemini, where its pursuit of a bespoke technical solution introduced complexity and inflexibility, and limited innovation. It did not intervene early enough to resolve integration issues. There was weak governance in the programme and the Ministry took a light-touch approach to scrutiny, despite persistent delays and risks. HMPPS and the Ministry have since reformed their approaches to overseeing major projects and programmes, including introducing new thresholds to inform when risks and issues should be escalated for review.

**Recommendation:** *As part of its Treasury Minute response, the Ministry should explain how its new controls, governance framework, and risk tolerances which set time and cost thresholds for when issues should be escalated, will prevent future significant losses to the taxpayer across its portfolio of major projects and programmes.*

2. **HMPPS remains reliant on outdated technology which puts the tagging service at risk of failing.** Due to the prolonged delays in the programme, HMPPS is relying on legacy technology and will have to use its current case management system until at least 2024, which will cost £9.8 million for remediation work and licensing costs. As HMPPS has been using its current system since 2012, many of its applications are no longer supported by manufacturers and have severe risks, with outdated hardware and software. The telephone system Capita uses in the live service has failed six times since May 2021. HMPPS asserts that there have not been any undetected breaches by offenders, as it recovers data after an outage. But this clearly remains a significant risk until it replaces the system. HMPPS is updating and replacing systems to ensure they are stable and scalable as the number of people fitted with tags rises. It opted not to simulate additional tagging volumes on its existing systems to see how well they can cope with caseload increases, but asserts that it will improve resilience by moving the system to the cloud.

**Recommendation:** *To provide assurance that the risk of system failure will not materialise, HMPPS should explain the following in its Treasury Minute response:*

- *what progress it has made in delivering planned remediation work on its case management system;*
- *how well its systems are coping with caseload increases; and*
- *how it will ensure that future digital contracts will factor in routine IT upgrades and maintenance.*

3. **HMPPS has failed to provide police forces and the Probation Service with timely access to the tagging information they need to effectively supervise offenders and protect the public.** HMPPS expected Gemini and the user portal to enhance probation officers' supervision of offenders and improve public protection by providing: a single version of case management records; improved management information and reporting capabilities; and crucially, access to historical and real-time maps of offenders' movements by using GPS tags. Without this system, police and probation officers cannot access real-time data and have to submit manual requests for location data, which limits the value of using GPS tracking. However, HMPPS's acquisitive crime pilot—which involves comparing data from GPS tags against the locations of alleged crimes submitted by the police—has enabled probation officers to have real-time access to location data for the 650 offenders in the pilot. HMPPS has received requests from the police for direct access to its system, but it has so far not provided this due to data protection considerations.

**Recommendation:** *Before starting future contracts in January 2024, HMPPS should explore how it can provide police forces and other law enforcement agencies with real-time access to location monitoring data across all GPS tagging cohorts—taking account of data protection considerations—and update us on its plans.*

4. **It is unacceptable that HMPPS still does not know if or how tagging reduces reoffending, and it has been too slow to improve data.** Despite our previous recommendations, HMPPS still does not know the impact of tagging. The Ministry recognises that evaluation of the transformation programme was not as strong as it should have been. HMPPS has now strengthened its analytical capacity, and has committed to evaluating its expansion programme, although it will need to rely on higher numbers of tagged offenders to better understand differences in outcomes between tagged offenders and control groups if it is to build a rich evidence base. It recognises the importance of establishing links to reoffending, but accepts it has previously missed opportunities to develop this understanding. There is variable use of tagging between courts. Going forward, better evidence on what works in tagging will help improve magistrates' and judges' understanding of the sentencing options available. Linked to this, HMPPS has not improved persistent issues with data availability and quality, such as the lack of data on offenders' protected characteristics. It does not know whether ethnic minority offenders are over- or under-represented in tagging services but has committed to collect better data in future contracts.

**Recommendation:** *Within one year, HMPPS should publish a comprehensive plan outlining what it has achieved so far and remaining work required in:*

- *improving data collection and analysis in tagging services;*
  - *monitoring the delivery of benefits in its expansion programme; and*
  - *building the evidence base for the impact of tagging on reoffending and offenders' diversion from prison.*
5. **HMPPS's innovative use of technology in its expansion projects has yielded some encouraging early results.** HMPPS has achieved some initial positive results from using new technology in its alcohol monitoring scheme and acquisitive crime



project. For example, offenders have had high short-term sobriety rates while being tagged, although HMPPS did not explain how it will be able to monitor longer-term abstinence or whether the scheme reduces alcohol-fuelled offending. HMPPS's acquisitive crime project has helped to secure 30 charges for theft, burglary or robbery and it claims that participating police forces value the scheme. However, HMPPS's early experience in delivering non-fitted monitoring devices for Foreign National Offenders was much less positive, as the system was discovered not to be compliant with cyber security standards. It has created an £18.5 million innovation fund which will help it explore further tagging options, including a possible drugs tag. In order to ensure that HMPPS protects taxpayers' interests, we expect it to rigorously apply learning from its experience of developing and using new technology as it continues to expand tagging services.

**Recommendation:** *In its Treasury Minute response, HMPPS should explain how it will apply lessons from its tagging expansion projects to future schemes, including the forthcoming project for tagging domestic abusers.*

6. **HMPPS's poor track record in its transformation programme does not inspire confidence that it will be well-equipped to handle risks in its £1.2 billion expansion programme.** HMPPS is re-procuring contracts to run the electronic monitoring service. It is attempting to apply lessons and reduce delivery risks, for example by using off-the-shelf systems and limiting the number of suppliers in the new model. However, there are inherent delivery risks to reprocuring a changing service where the number of tagged people is increasing. In addition, it will still face challenges in integrating the work of its suppliers, particularly given its tight timeframes to put new contracts in place by early 2024. It expects suppliers to integrate their systems in six months, but HMPPS has not yet started its testing work so does not know how difficult this would be. HMPPS intends to outsource the role of systems integrator again, something which it tried and failed to do before. There are significant risks with this approach, including the risk of conflicts of interest and unclear accountability due to dependencies between future suppliers' work.

**Recommendation:** *HMPPS should write to the Committee in 2023, once the procurement of new contracts to run electronic monitoring is complete, on how it is handling risks in the programme. As part of this, it should explain how it will oversee suppliers' work effectively and ensure clear lines of responsibility and accountability between the integrator and its other suppliers in the programme.*

# 1 HM Prison & Probation Service's tagging transformation programme

1. On the basis of a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, we took evidence from the Ministry of Justice (the Ministry) and HM Prison & Probation Service (HMPPS) on HMPPS's electronic monitoring ('tagging') transformation programme.<sup>1</sup>

2. Tagging allows the police, courts, probation and immigration services to monitor offenders' locations and compliance with court orders, and act if offenders breach their requirements. There are three main types of tags: radio frequency tags which monitor whether offenders have remained at home during their curfew period; combined radio frequency and global positioning system (GPS) tags which track offenders' locations and movements; and alcohol monitoring tags which monitor alcohol concentrations in offenders' sweat. HMPPS, an executive agency of the Ministry, is responsible for tagging. It delivers the service through four suppliers, including Capita which runs the live service and G4S which supplies tags. As at March 2022, around 15,300 people were tagged.<sup>2</sup>

3. In June 2011, HMPPS launched a tagging transformation programme to improve efficiency and capability in tagging, mainly by introducing new technology such as a new case management system called Gemini and new GPS tags. It changed the way services would be delivered by procuring services from four different suppliers under a 'tower' delivery model. It planned for each supplier to be responsible for a different element of the national programme. We examined the Ministry's and HMPPS's management of the programme in 2017. We concluded that the programme had been a "catastrophic waste of public money which had failed to deliver the intended benefits". The Ministry's selection of a high-risk approach to procure the new electronic tags, and its poor management of both the programme and potential suppliers, exacerbated these problems. We recommended that the Ministry should have a full understanding of the deliverability of its future programmes.<sup>3</sup>

4. HMPPS reset its transformation programme and restarted it in June 2017. Crucial to achieving transformation was a new case management system ('Gemini') and user portal. However, after further setbacks and delays, HMPPS suspended development of Gemini in May 2021, before terminating its contract with its supplier, Capita, in December 2021. The failure of these projects has cost taxpayers £98 million and means that HMPPS will have to continue using legacy systems until 2024 at an additional cost of £9.8 million to make it fit for use.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, HMPPS launched a tagging expansion programme in 2020. In 2020 and 2021, it launched three new tagging projects—alcohol monitoring, acquisitive crime and Home Office Immigration Enforcement—and is procuring new contracts to run the tagging services from early 2024.<sup>5</sup>

1 C&AG's Report, *Electronic monitoring – a progress update*, Session 2022–23, HC 62, 8 June 2022

2 C&AG's Report, para 1.1, Figure 1

3 Committee of Public Accounts, *Offender-monitoring tags*, Fifteenth Report of Session 2017–19, HC 458, 15 January 2018

4 Committee of Public Accounts, *Offender-monitoring tags*, Fifteenth Report of Session 2017–19, HC 458, 15 January 2018; C&AG's Report, para 1.4 and 2.23

5 C&AG's Report, para 4.2 and 4.16

## Losses to the taxpayer

5. By the end of 2020–21, HMPPS had spent around £157 million on its tagging transformation programme. We questioned the Ministry and HMPPS on why they had wasted £98 million of taxpayers’ money on developing Gemini. We noted that this loss came at a time when the Ministry was facing significant financial pressures across its portfolio.<sup>6</sup> The Ministry told us that terminating Gemini was the optimal value for money decision at the time of the decision in December 2021, and if it had terminated at the previous review point in 2019–20, the scale of losses would have been similar.<sup>7</sup> HMPPS said that while it believed its ‘tower’ delivery model was entered into for the right reasons, it recognised that the delivery model it chose was complex and it was ambitious to deliver a transformative programme this way. The NAO found that both HMPPS and Capita contributed to severe delays in developing Gemini. HMPPS recognised that it had probably not addressed issues early enough with Capita’s performance in remedying defects, and there were questions for HMPPS on whether it spotted early enough that Capita was not taking action. HMPPS also admitted there was insufficient audit and assurance in the programme. For example, HMPPS did not check what Capita had delivered on the user portal project against the specifications in the contract and admits this is something which should have happened.<sup>8</sup>

6. The Ministry told us that it had obtained the maximum payout of £32 million for damages under the terms of its contract with Capita, and told us that it considered this indicated that Capita bears a lot of responsibility for the failure of the project. However, as the integrator for the programme, it was HMPPS’s responsibility to ensure the coherence of suppliers’ work, obtain assurance on feasibility and resolve integration issues.<sup>9</sup> HMPPS also told us that the Ministry and Capita did not fully understand how complex the programme would be and when this became clearer, this resulted in changes to the specification and delays to timescales. For example, if HMPPS and Capita had achieved the final planned launch date of February 2021, this would have resulted in a 29-month delay against HMPPS’s assumptions in its 2017 business case.<sup>10</sup>

7. The Ministry and HMPPS told us that they have learnt lessons from pursuing technology which have to be developed from scratch. HMPPS took a detailed and prescriptive approach to setting requirements for Gemini. This introduced complexity and inflexibility, and limited innovation in the programme.<sup>11</sup> The Ministry told us that at the outset of the programme, government tended to prefer “bespoke and better” technology. Following a review of the programme in 2016, it opted to buy hardware off-the-shelf and is now also pursuing off-the-shelf hardware and software in its expansion programme. It explained that given how technology had now moved on and the range of products which were now available on the market, it would not be sensible to pursue bespoke solutions.<sup>12</sup>

## Governance and scrutiny

8. Witnesses admitted there should have been stronger governance and more scrutiny of the programme from the Ministry of Justice. In late 2019, HMPPS prepared an

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6 Q 90

7 Q 17

8 Qq 21, 26; C&AG’s report, para 3

9 Q 20; C&AG’s report, para 3.4

10 Q 22; C&AG’s report, para 2.4

11 C&AG’s report, para 3.4

12 Q 78

‘addendum’ to its business case for the programme, as Capita’s delays in developing Gemini would require a further extension to its interim contract. Although this approach to extending the programme complied with rules in place at the time, the NAO found that this approach required more limited support and less challenge than if the programme had been formally reconsidered through a revised business case.<sup>13</sup> HMPPS told us that as the changes fell within the scope of the business case and the then Senior Responsible Owner’s delegated authority, the programme team asked the Ministry’s investment committee “only to note the decision”.<sup>14</sup> It also told us that had the programme pursued a termination of Capita’s contract at that point, this would have involved more detailed governance and scrutiny. HMPPS told us that it believed that its decision to extend the programme was right, as changes it made to its systems and moving them to the cloud enabled its plans to expand tagging services over the previous 18 months.<sup>15</sup>

9. Both the Ministry and HMPPS told us that they had learnt lessons from weaknesses in governance and scrutiny in the programme. The Ministry explained that a lack of scrutiny can be the nature of big departments with a small corporate centre and multiple agencies. Often project teams did not know at what point issues should be escalated as tolerances had not been explicitly agreed. The Ministry told us that recent work in both the Ministry and HMPPS had improved governance, risk controls and thresholds for escalation. The Ministry explained that it had introduced additional governance for its portfolio of major projects and programmes with a whole-life cost of at least £30 million. This additional governance included a delivery board and thresholds on affordability, delivery timetables, benefits slippage and risks and issues.<sup>16</sup>

## The consequences of relying on legacy systems

10. HMPPS intended Gemini to replace the current case management system (‘Integrity’) which had been in use since 2012 and must now be relied on until 2024. The NAO found that many of its applications were no longer supported by manufacturers and had severe risks, including outdated and vulnerable hardware and software.<sup>17</sup> We asked HMPPS how it knew whether the system could cope with an additional 10,000 tagged offenders without failing. It explained that although it opted not to test the system through simulated increases, it had commissioned external reviews which provided it with confidence that the system can cope. HMPPS’ ongoing reliance on Integrity will cost a further £9.8 million, comprising £5 million for urgent remedial work and £4.8 million in licensing costs. HMPPS was not aware of the level of obsolescence in Integrity, because Capita held the contract for the system, but HMPPS has now taken on the Integrity contract directly with G4S. HMPPS told us that its new approach provided better visibility of the system and gave it the ability to make changes. It explained that by running the contract directly it expected to reduce Integrity’s contract costs by around £6 million before it retires the system.<sup>18</sup>

11. The telephone system Capita uses in the live service for its operations—including contacting offenders—has been in place since 2005. Since May 2021, there have been six

13 Q 24; C&AG’s report, paras 3.6–3.7

14 Q 36

15 Qq 33, 36

16 Qq 24, 37–38

17 C&AG’s report, paras 2.22–2.23

18 Qq 53–55; C&AG’s report, para 2.23

major system failures and HMPPS told us that on one occasion the system was down for six hours overnight. HMPPS explained that it had contingency plans in place to deal with system failures and that it was not aware of an occasion when an offender had committed a serious offence while systems have been down, as all data are recovered when the system is available again.<sup>19</sup>

## Insights for police forces and the Probation Service

12. HMPPS's failure to deliver Gemini also means that police forces and the Probation Service lack timely access to tagging data to investigate crime, supervise offenders and protect the public.<sup>20</sup> HMPPS expected Gemini and the user portal to provide a range of benefits for stakeholders, including: a single version of case management records; improved management information and reporting; and access to historical and real-time maps of offenders' movements for offenders wearing GPS tags. Without Gemini, police and probation officers cannot access data in real-time across all offenders on GPS tags and have to submit manual requests for location data.<sup>21</sup>

13. We asked why government was not exploring mobile phone GPS technology or identity scanning software, such as fingerprint scanning used by banks. HMPPS explained that the challenge of using mobile phones in tagging is that they would not be solely used for this purpose, and that phones could be linked to servers offshore with potential data security implications. However, HMPPS has harnessed data from GPS location data in its acquisitive crime pilot which covers a cohort of around 650 offenders convicted for theft, burglary or robbery offences. The pilot uses data on alleged crimes from police and overlays location data to produce matches where offenders have been in a defined proximity. HMPPS told us that while the offenders' probation officers can access data in real-time, the challenge was to match this capability for the rest of the GPS caseload. It told us that it had received a large number of requests from police for direct access to its system. HMPPS believed it could see operational benefits for the police if it provided direct access but it had so far not done so due to data protection considerations which it told us it wanted to step through carefully.<sup>22</sup>

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19 Qq 48, 52; C&AG's report, para 2.22

20 C&AG's report, para 7

21 C&AG's report, para 2.20. Figure 8

22 Qq 47, 80; C&AG's report, Figure 15

## 2 The evidence base for tagging

### Understanding the impact of tagging

14. In 2006, our Committee found that there was insufficient evidence available to determine whether tagging helped to reduce re-offending or promote rehabilitation. We recommended that the Home Office—which previously managed tagging services—should carry out research to establish the role that electronic monitoring could play in minimising reoffending and make the results available to courts and prisons.<sup>23</sup> In its response to our report, the Home Office committed to conduct analysis of the reconviction rates of offenders on tagging curfew orders and make its analysis available in 2007.<sup>24</sup> In its 2022 report, the NAO found that the evidence base for tagging still remained weak 16 years later. HMPPS did not assess the impact of tagging on demand for prison places or reoffending in its GPS location monitoring pilots due to limited resources. More broadly, HMPPS did not monitor its planned benefits in its transformation programme, which included involving diverting offenders from custody and modifying offenders’ behaviour.<sup>25</sup>

15. The Ministry admitted that its evaluation in the transformation programme was not as strong as it should have been and recognised that it needed to put more effort into evaluation going forward. It told us that it was extending its team of analysts in its expansion programme, from three to 17.<sup>26</sup> The Ministry told us that while there was evidence which suggested that tagging changes offenders’ behaviour while offenders were wearing tags, insights into longer-term impacts after tags are removed were limited. It committed to rigorously evaluate its current and future programmes and the extent to which tagging impacts on longer-term outcomes, including reducing reoffending, which it described as the “holy grail” of insight.<sup>27</sup> The Ministry told us it looked forward to collecting robust and world-leading evidence, but that it did not underestimate the challenge ahead. It explained that it would need to rely on higher numbers of tagged offenders to produce robust analyses, while it still needs to better understand differences in outcomes between tagged offenders and control groups.<sup>28</sup>

16. We asked HMPPS what information it shared with the judiciary to inform their sentencing choices. It explained that it had an extensive programme of engagement in place to ensure judges and magistrates were aware of available services. However, it told us that there were significant variations in the use of electronic monitoring between different courts, with differences in the use of types of tags imposed. Some courts made extensive use of radio frequency tags but do not use GPS and in others, it was the other way round. HMPPS made clear that it saw it as part of its job to ensure that sentencers, judges and magistrates have the information about what is available in their jurisdiction to make informed choices.<sup>29</sup>

23 Committee of Public Accounts, *The electronic monitoring of adult offenders*, Sixty-second Report of Session 2005–06, HC 997, 12 October 2006

24 HM Treasury, Treasury Minutes on the Fifty-eighth, Fifty-ninth, Sixty-first and the Sixty-second Reports from the Committee of Public Accounts 2005–2006, December 2006

25 C&AG’s report, paras 9 and 2.9, Figure 10

26 Q 71

27 Qq 58–59

28 Qq 59–60, 89

29 Q 62

17. The NAO found persistent issues in the quality and availability of HMPPS's data on tagging, including inefficient processes, poor-quality data, limited data capture and access, and siloed data and systems. In particular, HMPPS only captured data on offenders' age and gender.<sup>30</sup> We asked witnesses whether they intended to capture more data on protected characteristics and whether they were concerned that ethnic minority offenders may have a greater likelihood of being placed on tags or not being placed on tags. The Ministry and HMPPS committed to capturing this data in future contracts to make sure they were providing a fair and proportionate service. More generally, HMPPS acknowledged that it could make better use of the pool of data available.<sup>31</sup>

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30 C&AG's report, para 2.18

31 Qq 72, 76–77



### 3 Expanding tagging services

18. In 2020, HMPPS launched a tagging expansion programme to widen the use of tagging to different groups of offenders. As part of the programme, it aims to: develop a flexible and scalable service; build the evidence base to demonstrate the effectiveness of electronic monitoring; be “data driven”; be led by user needs and integrated within probation services; and ensure cost-effectiveness.<sup>32</sup> HMPPS expects to monitor an additional 10,000 offenders over the next few years, bringing the number of people who are tagged to around 25,000 offenders. It is delivering projects to expand the service to new types of offenders while undertaking a major re-procurement of contracts to deliver the service, with the new contracts expected to be in place by January 2024. It expects to spend £1.2 billion from 2021–22 to 2030–31, including £55 million for the re-procurement, £232 million for expansion projects and £808 million for the live service.<sup>33</sup>

#### Progress in delivering expansion projects

19. HMPPS launched alcohol monitoring services in October 2020 for offenders sentenced in the community. In November 2021 and June 2022, it extended the scheme to include those leaving prison, in Wales and in England respectively. Alcohol tags measure alcohol concentration in sweat and send an alert if the wearer has consumed alcohol. As at March 2021, 900 offenders were tagged as part of the alcohol monitoring service. HMPPS forecast that there will be around 1,900 individuals once the scheme has got into a ‘steady-state position’.<sup>34</sup> HMPPS reported high abstinence rates of around 97% so far for those offenders tagged as part of the programme, but it does not yet know if the scheme promotes longer-term sobriety or reductions in alcohol fuelled offending. We asked the Ministry and HMPPS whether they can isolate the effect of wearing a tag from the other sentence requirements that offenders must fulfil, such as undertaking unpaid work or attending programmes to address offending behaviour. The Ministry told us that it cannot attribute the effect, but will be able to perform better evaluation as case numbers grow.<sup>35</sup> An alcohol tagging order typically lasts 90 days. As part of its evaluation of alcohol monitoring, HMPPS told us that it planned to explore what is the right period for an individual to be tagged, and whether it was providing the right support to people to address their drinking and behaviour. We asked HMPPS what alternative support it provided alongside the tag, such as alcohol treatment programmes. It recognised that there was inconsistent provision for alcohol support services in England and Wales. It explained that it was reflecting on whether it should commission specific services for tagged offenders.<sup>36</sup>

20. HMPPS launched an acquisitive crime pilot in April 2021 to impose location monitoring on prison leavers convicted for theft, burglary or robbery offences. The 19 police forces participating in the pilot send data on alleged acquisitive offenders to HMPPS’s system, which compares this with GPS location data to assist forces’ investigation of crime when there has been a match.<sup>37</sup> HMPPS told us that the pilot had helped the police to secure 30 charges for acquisitive offences and that the police forces value the scheme. It told us that it was early days for the pilot, but it was testing whether the scheme was leading

32 C&AG’s report, Figure 5

33 Q 54; C&AG’s report, para 4.1

34 Q 67, 69; C&AG’s report, Figure 15

35 Q 61

36 Qq 68–69

37 C&AG’s report, Figure 15 and para 4.7



to longer-term changes in offenders' behaviour. It explained that it planned to evaluate the scheme over the next three years and will not extend it further until it has evidence that it is working.<sup>38</sup> We noted that HMPPS had achieved better capability in the pilot for a smaller upgrade compared to its £98 million investment in the Gemini case management system. HMPPS believed that the technology used in the pilot is better than the planned functionality that the Gemini case management system and user portal were designed for originally. It told us this was the first time that it has been leveraging the power of location data from GPS tags and that it sees future opportunities to use the data more broadly.<sup>39</sup>

21. HMPPS launched its Home Office Immigration Enforcement project, on behalf of the Home Office, in August 2021. This project extended the use of tagging using GPS tags to Foreign National Offenders who are subject to deportation proceedings. HMPPS rolled out standard fitted tags on schedule, but both it and G4S faced challenges in developing non-fitted devices: removable watches which capture facial recognition scans. Eleven months after HMPPS decided to pursue G4S's solution, the Ministry of Justice's Security Function advised that the device should no longer be pursued as the operating system was not compliant with cyber security standards.<sup>40</sup> HMPPS told us that the Home Office's original requirement for facial recognition technology significantly narrowed the available market and that the only potentially viable solution was an option available from G4S. HMPPS explained that once it learnt that the operating system was out of date, it, the Home Office and G4S agreed that the device could not be updated due to high costs. It told us that the Home Office has now opted to pursue devices which capture fingerprints instead, which has opened up more options in the market. HMPPS expected the new device to be available from September 2022.<sup>41</sup>

22. Given its poor experience of developing bespoke technology in its transformation programme, HMPPS told us that it was "very cautious" about commissioning further novel solutions. For example, while tags which monitor multiple drugs at the same time are currently unavailable on the market, it wanted to explore advances in drug testing and how this could be applied in the criminal justice system. HMPPS told us that it had created an £18.5 million innovation fund to explore how the market may be able to help develop tagging services in the future, including possible drug monitoring. In the meantime, it explained that it had started piloting tagging for other groups including domestic abuse perpetrators. It planned to roll out the use of GPS devices for high-risk domestic abuse offenders in 2023.<sup>42</sup>

## Re-procuring contracts

23. In parallel with managing its expansion projects, HMPPS is undertaking a re-procurement for its contracts with companies to run the tagging services. HMPPS has relied on Capita's 'bridge' contract throughout its transformation programme. This was only intended to be a temporary arrangement until HMPPS launched its new service through Gemini. HMPPS has extended Capita's contract to its maximum period, so new

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38 Qq 58–59

39 Qq 47, 72

40 C&AG's report, paras 4.9–4.10, Figure 15

41 Q 65

42 Qq 72, 75

contracts must be in place by January 2024 to ensure continuity of services. It expected to award contracts in summer 2023, marking the start of a transition period between suppliers.<sup>43</sup>

24. HMPPS told us it had learnt lessons from its transformation programme and was applying these to its re-procurement of its contracts to deliver tagging services. In addition to pursuing off-the-shelf systems, it told us that it had decided to limit the number of suppliers in its new model to two. As part of the new model, one supplier will provide field and monitoring services while the other will provide tags and other hardware.<sup>44</sup> The Ministry told us that it considered whether it should contract with a single supplier, but believed this would concentrate the market too much. It recognised that, by definition, having two suppliers introduces some element of complexity.<sup>45</sup> HMPPS hopes to mitigate future integration risks by:

- ensuring potential suppliers demonstrate they have proven technology in place; and
- taking a phased approach to confirming future system requirements.

It believed suppliers will be able to integrate their systems in six months, but this remains untested at this early stage of the procurement.<sup>46</sup>

25. We questioned HMPPS on what it saw as the biggest risks in the expansion programme. HMPPS told us that it is challenging reprocurring the service as it is changing and as the number of tagged people is increasing. It explained that it has been managing this in different ways, such as getting its expansion projects into live service ahead of the re-procurement, ensuring there are dedicated resources in place and introducing a “change freeze” to ensure there will be no major changes as it switches over to its new suppliers.<sup>47</sup>

26. Earlier in its transformation programme, HMPPS outsourced the role of systems and services integrator to Capita, which involved pulling together suppliers’ work to deliver an end-to-end tagging service.<sup>48</sup> In 2017, we examined earlier progress in the programme. We found that this arrangement failed as, in part, the Ministry did not have sufficient transparency of the services being delivered in other parts of the programme. We recommended that the Ministry should ensure that it puts the right skills in place to properly oversee future projects from their outset and keeps them there, particularly those being delivered by private contractors.<sup>49</sup> In its response to our report, the Department said it was building a centralised model for its Project Delivery staff which would ensure that it has skilled resources in place for its priority projects.<sup>50</sup> Following a dispute with Capita and financial settlement, HMPPS took on the integrator role when it restarted

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43 C&AG’s report, para 4.16

44 Qq 22, 73; C&AG’s report, Figure 17

45 Q 88

46 C&AG’s report, paras 4.19 and 4.21

47 Q 83

48 Comptroller and Auditor General, *The new generation electronic monitoring programme*, Session 2017–2019, HC 242, 12 July 2017, para 10

49 Committee of Public Accounts, *Offender-monitoring tags*, Fifteenth Report of Session 2017–19, 24 January 2018, HC 458, para 2.

50 HM Treasury, Treasury Minutes, Government Response to the Committee of Public Accounts on the Twelfth to the Nineteenth reports from Session 2017–19, March 2018

its transformation programme in 2017. The NAO found that there were shortcomings in HMPPS's performance as integrator and it did not intervene early enough to resolve cross-supplier integration issues.<sup>51</sup>

27. In early 2022, HMPPS decided to outsource this role again in its re-procurement and transition to the new service. The NAO outlined areas where HMPPS will need to be prepared to manage risks with this approach, including:

- Parties having different interpretations of what the integrator role involves and where accountability sits if problems arise;
- The integrator having no contractual oversight of the other supplier; and
- The potential for real or perceived conflicts of interest, given that its field services supplier will be responsible for delivering substantial work while integrating others' work.<sup>52</sup>

28. We asked HMPPS whether it will be prepared to step in to handle any problems arising from this approach. It told us that it was ready to step in and had strengthened its governance and is holding regular meetings with potential suppliers.<sup>53</sup>

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51 C&AG's report, para 10

52 C&AG's report, paras 15 and 4.21

53 Q 23

## Formal minutes

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**Thursday 22 September 2022**

Members present:

Dame Meg Hillier

Olivia Blake

Dan Carden

Sir Geoffrey-Clifton Brown

Mr Louie French

Peter Grant

Kate Green

Sarah Olney

### ***Transforming electronic monitoring services***

Draft Report (*Transforming electronic monitoring services*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

*Ordered*, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 28 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Introduction agreed to.

Conclusions and recommendations agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the Report be the Twenty-first of the Committee to the House.

*Ordered*, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

*Ordered*, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

### **Adjournment**

Adjourned till Thursday 13 October at 9:30am

## Witnesses

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The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

### Monday 20 June 2022

**Antonia Romeo**, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice; **James McEwen**, Chief Operating Officer, Ministry of Justice; **Dr Jo Farrar**, Chief Executive Officer, HMPPS; **Jim Barton**, SRO, HMPPS.

[Q1-92](#)

## Published written evidence

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The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

EMP numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies ([EMP0001](#))

## List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

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All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

### Session 2022–23

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy Annual Report and Accounts 2020–21	HC 59
2nd	Lessons from implementing IR35 reforms	HC 60
3rd	The future of the Advanced Gas-cooled Reactors	HC 118
4th	Use of evaluation and modelling in government	HC 254
5th	Local economic growth	HC 252
6th	Department of Health and Social Care 2020–21 Annual Report and Accounts	HC 253
7th	Armoured Vehicles: the Ajax programme	HC 259
8th	Financial sustainability of the higher education sector in England	HC 257
9th	Child Maintenance	HC 255
10th	Restoration and Renewal of Parliament	HC 49
11th	The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine programme in England	HC 258
12th	Management of PPE contracts	HC 260
13th	Secure training centres and secure schools	HC 30
14th	Investigation into the British Steel Pension Scheme	HC 251
15th	The Police Uplift Programme	HC 261
16th	Managing cross-border travel during the COVID-19 pandemic	HC 29
17th	Government's contracts with Randox Laboratories Ltd	HC 28
18th	Government actions to combat waste crime	HC 33
19th	Regulating after EU Exit	HC 32
20th	Whole of Government Accounts 2019–20	HC 31
1st Special Report	Sixth Annual Report of the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts	HC 50

### Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Low emission cars	HC 186
2nd	BBC strategic financial management	HC 187
3rd	COVID-19: Support for children's education	HC 240

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
4th	COVID-19: Local government finance	HC 239
5th	COVID-19: Government Support for Charities	HC 250
6th	Public Sector Pensions	HC 289
7th	Adult Social Care Markets	HC 252
8th	COVID 19: Culture Recovery Fund	HC 340
9th	Fraud and Error	HC 253
10th	Overview of the English rail system	HC 170
11th	Local auditor reporting on local government in England	HC 171
12th	COVID 19: Cost Tracker Update	HC 173
13th	Initial lessons from the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic	HC 175
14th	Windrush Compensation Scheme	HC 174
15th	DWP Employment support	HC 177
16th	Principles of effective regulation	HC 176
17th	High Speed 2: Progress at Summer 2021	HC 329
18th	Government's delivery through arm's-length bodies	HC 181
19th	Protecting consumers from unsafe products	HC 180
20th	Optimising the defence estate	HC 179
21st	School Funding	HC 183
22nd	Improving the performance of major defence equipment contracts	HC 185
23rd	Test and Trace update	HC 182
24th	Crossrail: A progress update	HC 184
25th	The Department for Work and Pensions' Accounts 2020–21 – Fraud and error in the benefits system	HC 633
26th	Lessons from Greensill Capital: accreditation to business support schemes	HC 169
27th	Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme	HC 635
28th	Efficiency in government	HC 636
29th	The National Law Enforcement Data Programme	HC 638
30th	Challenges in implementing digital change	HC 637
31st	Environmental Land Management Scheme	HC 639
32nd	Delivering gigabitcapable broadband	HC 743
33rd	Underpayments of the State Pension	HC 654
34th	Local Government Finance System: Overview and Challenges	HC 646
35th	The pharmacy early payment and salary advance schemes in the NHS	HC 745
36th	EU Exit: UK Border post transition	HC 746

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
37th	HMRC Performance in 2020–21	HC 641
38th	COVID-19 cost tracker update	HC 640
39th	DWP Employment Support: Kickstart Scheme	HC 655
40th	Excess votes 2020–21: Serious Fraud Office	HC 1099
41st	Achieving Net Zero: Follow up	HC 642
42nd	Financial sustainability of schools in England	HC 650
43rd	Reducing the backlog in criminal courts	HC 643
44th	NHS backlogs and waiting times in England	HC 747
45th	Progress with trade negotiations	HC 993
46th	Government preparedness for the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons for government on risk	HC 952
47th	Academies Sector Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20	HC 994
48th	HMRC's management of tax debt	HC 953
49th	Regulation of private renting	HC 996
50th	Bounce Back Loans Scheme: Follow-up	HC 951
51st	Improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system	HC 997
52nd	Ministry of Defence Equipment Plan 2021–31	HC 1164
1st Special Report	Fifth Annual Report of the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts	HC 222

### Session 2019–21

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
1st	Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities	HC 85
2nd	Defence Nuclear Infrastructure	HC 86
3rd	High Speed 2: Spring 2020 Update	HC 84
4th	EU Exit: Get ready for Brexit Campaign	HC 131
5th	University technical colleges	HC 87
6th	Excess votes 2018–19	HC 243
7th	Gambling regulation: problem gambling and protecting vulnerable people	HC 134
8th	NHS capital expenditure and financial management	HC 344
9th	Water supply and demand management	HC 378
10th	Defence capability and the Equipment Plan	HC 247
11th	Local authority investment in commercial property	HC 312
12th	Management of tax reliefs	HC 379



<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
13th	Whole of Government Response to COVID-19	HC 404
14th	Readying the NHS and social care for the COVID-19 peak	HC 405
15th	Improving the prison estate	HC 244
16th	Progress in remediating dangerous cladding	HC 406
17th	Immigration enforcement	HC 407
18th	NHS nursing workforce	HC 408
19th	Restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster	HC 549
20th	Tackling the tax gap	HC 650
21st	Government support for UK exporters	HC 679
22nd	Digital transformation in the NHS	HC 680
23rd	Delivering carrier strike	HC 684
24th	Selecting towns for the Towns Fund	HC 651
25th	Asylum accommodation and support transformation programme	HC 683
26th	Department of Work and Pensions Accounts 2019–20	HC 681
27th	Covid-19: Supply of ventilators	HC 685
28th	The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's management of the Magnox contract	HC 653
29th	Whitehall preparations for EU Exit	HC 682
30th	The production and distribution of cash	HC 654
31st	Starter Homes	HC 88
32nd	Specialist Skills in the civil service	HC 686
33rd	Covid-19: Bounce Back Loan Scheme	HC 687
34th	Covid-19: Support for jobs	HC 920
35th	Improving Broadband	HC 688
36th	HMRC performance 2019–20	HC 690
37th	Whole of Government Accounts 2018–19	HC 655
38th	Managing colleges' financial sustainability	HC 692
39th	Lessons from major projects and programmes	HC 694
40th	Achieving government's long-term environmental goals	HC 927
41st	COVID 19: the free school meals voucher scheme	HC 689
42nd	COVID-19: Government procurement and supply of Personal Protective Equipment	HC 928
43rd	COVID-19: Planning for a vaccine Part 1	HC 930
44th	Excess Votes 2019–20	HC 1205
45th	Managing flood risk	HC 931
46th	Achieving Net Zero	HC 935

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Reference</b>
47th	COVID-19: Test, track and trace (part 1)	HC 932
48th	Digital Services at the Border	HC 936
49th	COVID-19: housing people sleeping rough	HC 934
50th	Defence Equipment Plan 2020–2030	HC 693
51st	Managing the expiry of PFI contracts	HC 1114
52nd	Key challenges facing the Ministry of Justice	HC 1190
53rd	Covid 19: supporting the vulnerable during lockdown	HC 938
54th	Improving single living accommodation for service personnel	HC 940
55th	Environmental tax measures	HC 937
56th	Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund	HC 941