# Former teacher’s repeated internet ban breaches at public libraries spark custodial sentence



## Former Teacher and Child Sex Offender Denied Bail for Breaching Internet Ban

In a troubling case highlighting ongoing concerns about the monitoring of sex offenders, a former teacher and convicted child sex offender has been ordered to remain in custody after breaching a court-imposed ban on internet access. Andrew George Tinsley, who has already been convicted for possessing indecent images, was found to have accessed public library computers across Northern Ireland, flouting the restrictions of his Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO). A High Court judgment emphasised the severity of Tinsley's violations, stating that his actions were both deliberate and repeated.

Tinsley, aged 48, was originally convicted in June 2021 for possessing voyeuristic and indecent images. As part of his sentencing, he was prohibited from using computers or accessing the internet without prior approval. Despite this clear order, between November 2022 and February 2023, Tinsley was recorded visiting libraries in various towns, including Armagh, Ballynahinch, Banbridge, and Belfast. Although he claimed these visits were sanctioned by his designated risk manager, this assertion was firmly rejected by the DRM in court proceedings. The judge noted that this breach of trust not only violated legal terms but also posed a potential risk to public safety, resulting in a custodial sentence that extends until at least June 2026.

This case is not unique. Previous incidents reveal a concerning pattern of registered sex offenders exploiting public libraries to access prohibited material. For instance, in 2008, John George Kennedy Reid was sentenced to a year in prison for viewing child abuse images at Belfast Central Library. His actions, observed by library staff, led to a guilty plea on multiple charges related to the possession of indecent images. Similar cases have emerged elsewhere, such as that of Keith Edward Skillen from Whitehaven, who was jailed for 16 months for using social media at a library, violating a Sexual Harm Prevention Order.

The implications of these breaches resonate beyond individual cases. Concerns around the adequacy of monitoring systems in place at public libraries have surfaced, especially as they serve as crucial community resources. In one notable instance, a registered sex offender disrupted the children’s section of a library in Wisconsin, prompting police intervention and highlighting the challenges libraries face in ensuring safety, particularly in areas frequented by vulnerable populations.

The courts and law enforcement agencies are being called to address these recurring issues more effectively. As libraries continue to play an essential role in community engagement, it is crucial for authorities to implement stricter measures that prevent access to internet resources by individuals with a history of sexual offences. The ongoing situation surrounding Tinsley illustrates a significant gap in public safety measures, directly affecting not only the individuals involved but also the wider community that relies on these essential spaces for education and engagement.

In summary, the case of Andrew George Tinsley underscores the pressing need for reinforcing safeguards around internet access for convicted offenders, particularly in public spaces where children and other vulnerable individuals may be present. The judiciary's response serves as a necessary reminder of the ongoing efforts to balance rehabilitation with community safety.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/courts/former-teacher-and-child-sex-offender-refused-bail-after-using-public-libraries-to-flout-internet-ban/a858436677.html), [[2]](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/paedophile-jailed-for-repeatedly-going-to-libraries-across-ni-to-use-internet/a298173786.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/paedophile-jailed-for-repeatedly-going-to-libraries-across-ni-to-use-internet/a298173786.html), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-68855353)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-15376139), [[5]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-cumbria-60348829), [[6]](https://www.cbs58.com/news/registered-sex-offenders-causes-disruption-in-childrens-section-of-brookfield-public-library)
* Paragraph 4 – [[7]](https://www.wave3.com/story/19685390/police-convicted-sex-offender-viewed-at-child-porn-on-library-computer/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/courts/former-teacher-and-child-sex-offender-refused-bail-after-using-public-libraries-to-flout-internet-ban/a858436677.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/paedophile-jailed-for-repeatedly-going-to-libraries-across-ni-to-use-internet/a298173786.html> - Andrew George Tinsley, a former Co Down car salesman, was sentenced to a year in prison for repeatedly breaching his Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO) by accessing computers in public libraries across Northern Ireland. Convicted in June 2021 for possessing voyeuristic and indecent images, Tinsley was prohibited from using computers or the internet without prior approval. Between November 2022 and February 2023, he visited libraries in Armagh, Ballynahinch, Banbridge, Belfast, Lisburn, Lurgan, Newry, and Portadown to use their computers, actions he claimed were approved by his designated risk manager, a claim the DRM denied. The court emphasized the deliberate and repeated nature of his breaches, leading to his imprisonment and continued SOPO until June 2026.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-68855353> - Andrew George Tinsley, 48, was jailed for one year after breaching a Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO) by accessing public library computers. Convicted in June 2021 for possessing indecent images, Tinsley was prohibited from using computers or the internet without prior approval. Between November 2022 and February 2023, he visited libraries in Armagh, Ballynahinch, Banbridge, Belfast, Lisburn, Lurgan, Newry, and Portadown to use their computers. Tinsley claimed he had prior approval from his designated risk manager, but this was denied. The court described his actions as repeated and deliberate flouting of a court order, resulting in his imprisonment and continued SOPO until June 2026.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-15376139> - John George Kennedy Reid, 40, was sentenced to one year in prison for viewing nearly 400 images of child abuse on a computer at Belfast Central Library. Previously convicted in 2006 for similar offenses, Reid accessed the library's computer in February 2008, where staff observed him viewing inappropriate content. He was arrested and later pleaded guilty to 33 charges of possessing indecent images of children. In addition to his prison sentence, Reid was placed on the police sex offenders' register for the next 10 years, highlighting the ongoing issue of sex offenders using public library computers to access illicit material.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-cumbria-60348829> - Keith Edward Skillen, 59, from Whitehaven, was jailed for 16 months after breaching a court order by using social media on a library computer. Previously convicted for attempting to cause or incite a child to engage in sexual activity and for possessing and distributing indecent images of children, Skillen was prohibited from accessing the internet. In 2021, he accessed Facebook and Instagram at Whitehaven Library, violating his Sexual Harm Prevention Order. The court noted that Skillen used the library computer because his home devices were monitored, and his actions were considered an aggravating feature in his sentencing.
6. <https://www.cbs58.com/news/registered-sex-offenders-causes-disruption-in-childrens-section-of-brookfield-public-library> - In November 2018, a registered sex offender caused disruption in the children's section of the Brookfield Public Library in Wisconsin. The individual, without accompanying children, entered the children's department and refused to move to the adult section when asked. Library staff discovered he was a registered sex offender convicted in 1997 for sexual assault of a child. Police escorted him out and banned him from using the library's internet for three months. This incident underscores the challenges libraries face in monitoring and preventing access by individuals with a history of sexual offenses, especially in areas frequented by children.
7. <https://www.wave3.com/story/19685390/police-convicted-sex-offender-viewed-at-child-porn-on-library-computer/> - In October 2012, Mark L. Brown, a Louisville man already on Kentucky's Sex Offender Registry, was arrested for viewing child pornography on a public library computer. Observed at the Bon Air branch of the Louisville Public Library, Brown was found looking at explicit images of adolescents from a thumb drive he inserted into the computer. Previously convicted in 2004 for sodomy charges while employed as a teaching assistant, Brown faced charges of possessing matter portraying a sexual performance by a minor. This case highlights the ongoing issue of convicted sex offenders attempting to access illicit material through public library resources.