# Civil servants in Scotland caught streaming Netflix and visiting adult sites on government laptops



Civil servants in Scotland are at the center of a scandal involving the streaming of Netflix and accessing adult websites on government-issued laptops while working from home. This revelation raises serious questions about productivity and the prudent use of taxpayer resources, particularly as civil servants’ logins to Netflix have reached levels so high that they are described as "too high to calculate," signifying rampant misuse of work devices in a remote working environment.

In addition to Netflix, records indicate that at least 16 instances of civil servants attempting to visit Pornhub have been logged, alongside multiple attempts to access online gambling sites like Betfair and Paddy Power. These incidents come on the heels of First Minister John Swinney’s push for civil servants to return to the office for at least two days a week—a move that has drawn considerable backlash from those who have grown accustomed to remote work.

Taxpayers have every right to be furious and appalled to learn about such frivolous activities funded by their hard-earned money, especially as they face increased income tax pressures from the SNP government. Critics, including Scottish Conservative MSP Annie Wells, argue that this reflects a troubling culture within the government, where lax attitudes towards professional conduct and ethical standards appear to be the norm.

Echoing this sentiment, Benjamin Elks from the TaxPayers’ Alliance articulated a demand for accountability, insisting that such behaviour demonstrates an appalling failure by civil servants to deliver value for hard-working Scots. He called for severe repercussions, including termination for those guilty of misusing official devices. This issue, rooted in laziness and negligence, compounds the broader narrative regarding efficiency within a devolved civil service that has ballooned by over 70% since 2016, costing taxpayers more than £600 million annually.

The spiraling numbers of personnel raise further red flags about productivity and resource utilization. Some local government staff have even been reported working from overseas, raising valid concerns about their tax responsibilities and compliance with employment standards.

While the Scottish Government has established protocols for the use of its IT systems—acknowledging that accessing inappropriate materials is a disciplinary matter as outlined in their IT Code of Conduct—critics are not convinced. They argue that these measures may not be stringent enough to deter the rampant misconduct that has been uncovered.

Such distractions are hardly new; historical trends show a troubling pattern within various UK governmental departments. The 2012 scandal involving over 1,000 civil servants accessing banned websites led to hundreds of disciplinary actions. Similarly, the Department for Transport reported significant employees engaging in shopping and gambling during work hours back in 2011, highlighting the continuous issue of unethical internet usage.

The ongoing controversies surrounding the work-from-home policy further exacerbate frustrations. With pandemic restrictions lifted well over a year ago, many civil servants still prefer remote work, which adversely impacts local businesses that rely on office workers for survival. Thus, the call to bring employees back to physical workplaces is seen as essential not only to enhance productivity but also to rejuvenate local economies.

In light of these pervasive issues, the Scottish Government faces intense pressure to rein in civil service excesses and restore public trust that has been damaged by these incidents. Balancing workforce flexibility with the need for accountability and ensuring that public servants adhere to high standards of professional conduct is a challenge they can no longer afford to overlook.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14722763/Netflix-porn-gambling-websites-viewed-civil-servants-laptops-majority-continue-WFH.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/council/council-staff-tried-to-access-pornography-and-gambling-websites-3116462> - An investigation revealed that council staff, primarily working from home, attempted to access gambling, pornography, and social media sites on work computers. Between June and November 2020, the council's IT systems blocked access to content related to games, gambling, pornography, dating, and violence. The council emphasized its strict ICT acceptable use policy and stated that any identified attempts to access inappropriate sites would be investigated and could lead to disciplinary action.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-24659562> - Between June and August 2013, Devon and Cornwall Police officers and staff were blocked from accessing pornographic and gambling websites over 2,700 times. The force's computer systems prevented access to pornography nearly 700 times and gambling sites more than 2,000 times. The Deputy Chief Constable explained that the software used to monitor internet usage is designed to block and prevent access to websites suspected of containing inappropriate content, including gambling and pornography.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/hp/front/civil-servants-caught-surfing-porn-sites-6984570.html> - In 2012, over 1,000 civil servants were found accessing banned websites or misusing email, with offenses ranging from downloading pornography to installing unauthorized software. At least 700 cases were considered serious enough to warrant disciplinary action, resulting in at least seven dismissals. The figures, disclosed in response to parliamentary questions, highlighted the need for stricter scrutiny across government departments.
5. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/parliament-s-porn-habit-revealed-as-300-000-attempts-made-to-access-adult-websites-from-work-computers-in-last-year-8797386.html> - An investigation revealed that MPs, peers, and staff at the Houses of Parliament attempted to access adult websites 309,316 times over the past year. The filtering system blocked nearly 850 attempts daily. The data, obtained through a Freedom of Information request, indicated that the majority of these attempts were blocked, but the figures raised concerns about internet usage within Parliament.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2004/aug/27/uk.technology> - In 2004, the Department for Work and Pensions admitted that hundreds of civil servants had been disciplined for downloading pornographic images. Between July 2003 and March 2004, 227 staff were disciplined for accessing porn from government computers, with 16 dismissed immediately. The department emphasized that the majority of 'hits' were accidental, but those who deliberately downloaded pornographic material faced disciplinary action.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-14339415> - In 2011, the Department for Transport disclosed the 1,000 most visited websites by staff, revealing that employees were spending time on shopping, gambling, and house-hunting sites during work hours. The BBC website topped the list, but sites like Argos, Bet365, and John Lewis also featured prominently. The department emphasized that personal internet use should be restricted to official breaks and that measures were in place to prevent inappropriate use.