



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

REQUEST NUMBER: F-2009- 05153

REQUEST DETAILS:

“There are restrictions placed on those working in the Police Force regarding membership of the British National Party. Does your force have any restrictions on a member of your Police Force: -

- a) Donating to the British National Party?*
- b) Subscribing to a British National Party publication?*
- c) Purchasing goods from the British National Party?*
- d) Signing a petition in favour of the British National Party?*
- e) Signing a nomination form for a British National Party candidate?”*

RESPONSE:

Police Regulations state that it is unlawful to be a member of a political party, including the BNP. Given the existing restrictions placed on those working in the Police Force regarding membership of the British National Party the Suffolk Constabulary would consider any of the activities described a) to e) inclusive as being behaviour that would be likely to bring discredit to the Police Service. This would therefore contravene the Police Conduct Regulations 2008 and the staff member would be subject of a Misconduct Investigation.

Members of Staff may commit other Offences in addition to membership of the BNP, such as discreditable conduct, dependant on the circumstances, by taking part in any of the above activities. This would be treated on a case-by-case basis and the circumstances fully investigated if it was brought to the attention of the force as being potentially inappropriate. This investigation process is not specific to the BNP, it is simply the standards of professional behaviour that all employees have to adhere to.

Staff take up employment with the police service fully aware that there may be certain restrictions placed on their private lives, these are designed to bring about greater public confidence and are based on best practice drawn from ACAS and represents a culture of continuous learning and development.