



FOI Reference: 794.2009

Request:

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:

I am able to confirm that your request has been processed under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI). I can also confirm that Dyfed Powys Police hold no information relevant to your request.

Police Regulations only state that it is unlawful to be a member of a political party, which includes the British National Party, therefore, it is only membership that is regulated. This does not mean that a member of the Police Service may not commit other discipline offences, 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. But this is true of any such allegation being made and is not specific to the British National Party, it is simply the standards of professional behaviour that all employees have to adhere to. Staff takes 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.

Please note that this is the third request submitted by yourself since 5th October 2009 in relation to members of Dyfed Powys Police and membership activities involving the British National Party, in view of this I feel that you have been provided with as much information on that subject as am able to disclose.

Section 14 (2) of the Freedom of Information Act states where a Public Authority has previously complied with a request for information which was made by any person, it is not obliged to comply with a subsequent identical or substantially similar request from that person unless a reasonable interval has elapsed between compliance with the previous request and the making of the current request.

As you have made 3 substantially similar requests since the 5th of October 2009 and have been provided with as much information as we are able to disclose, I wish to advise you that we may consider any further similar requests under Section 14 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 is a piece of legislation which quite rightly opens up public authorities to greater scrutiny and accountability. Police employee membership of any political party is a statutory bar, and FOIA is not the forum to debate any issues that arise with that legislation.