



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2009-03787

**Keyword:** Complaints/Discipline

**Subject:** MEMBERSHIP OF THE BRITISH NATIONAL PARTY

### Request and Answer:

This is to inform you that the Police Service of Northern Ireland has now completed its search for the information you requested. The decision has been taken to disclose the located information to you in full.

### Question

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:-

1. Donating to the British National Party?
2. Subscribing to a British National Party publication?
3. Purchasing goods from the British National Party?
4. Signing a petition in favour of the British National Party?
5. Signing a nomination form for a British National Party candidate?

### Answer

The Police Regulations 2003 that apply to the English and Welsh Forces do not apply to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The PSNI is governed by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (Conduct) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 – regulation 2. This can be viewed at [www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk). The standards set out in these Regulations are replicated into the PSNI Code of Ethical Standards Required of Police Officers. The current PSNI Code of Ethics may be viewed by visiting the website [www.psni.police.uk/code\\_of\\_ethics\\_2008](http://www.psni.police.uk/code_of_ethics_2008)

Article 1.6 of the Code of Ethics 'Professional Duty' states that Police Officers shall not take any active part in politics.

In addition Regulation 6 of the Police Service of Northern Ireland Regulations 2005 states a member shall at all times abstain from any activity which is likely to interfere with the impartial discharge of his duties or which is likely to give rise to the impression amongst members of the public that it may so interfere and in particular a member shall not take any active part in politics.

This information can be viewed on [www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk)

Our current directions regarding Political Activity states that the PSNI will not tolerate the expression of support by Police Officers for any political party or political cause that advocates racism, or that promotes intolerance, hatred or unlawful discrimination.

The current Regulations and Directions do not specify the BNP but are applicable to any political party or political cause. Each case would be treated on an individual basis.

The regulations and directions are simply the standard of professional behaviour that all employees have to adhere to. Staff take up employment with the Police Service fully in the knowledge that there are 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.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact the Freedom of Information Team on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this email.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing [foi@psni.pnn.police.uk](mailto:foi@psni.pnn.police.uk).

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out, however the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ [www.psnipolice.uk](http://www.psnipolice.uk) .

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.