

Scenario 2

Within this scenario I would welcome the Code of Ethics committee's view on how Police Officers 'off duty' leisure time may be reported and reflected in their professional capacity to discharge their duties. I would like you to consider the impact this may have, both personally and professionally on the reputation of Leicestershire Police and the confidence within our communities to impartially discharge their duties without 'fear or favour'.

Legislation/Guidance

As you are aware the officers' conduct is bound by the standards of professional behaviour and the specific standard that, Police officers behave in a manner which does not discredit the police service or undermine public confidence in it, whether on or off duty. (Police Regulations 2012). In this case I would also like to remind the panel of: Article 8 European Convention on Human Rights: - Right to respect for private and family life this states:

1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.
2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Circumstances

Constable A is a response officer, working a shift pattern that requires attending any number of incidents in a wide variety of situations; they work from a Police Station that covers both an urban and rural environment and have done so for a number of years.

As a voluntary role within the organisation and without any additional payment they assume the role of a 'Wildlife Officer'. This role is part of the rural crime strategy and the kinds of incidents he deals with can range from the use of illegal traps and pesticide or poisoning problems to offences on protected sites and endangered species. Crimes against wildlife also include deer and game poaching, badger baiting, egg collecting and the removal of wild plants from their natural habitat. He would liaise regularly with local organisations and wildlife groups including the RSPCA, RSPB and Department of the Environment. The role also involves working directly with local councils to discuss issues such as planning applications, zoo licences and dangerous wild animal licences.

In their spare time they are a member of a Hunt and often ride whilst away from work. The Hunting Act 2004 (c 37) is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom which bans the hunting of wild mammals (notably foxes, deer, hares and mink) with dogs in England and

Wales; the Act does not cover the use of dogs in the process of flushing out an unidentified wild mammal, nor does it affect drag hunting, where hounds are trained to follow an artificial scent.

The ethics committee are invited to consider the relationship of this lawful off duty activity with that of their voluntary role as a wildlife officer and their duty as a Police Constable and report their considerations in this ethical dilemma.