



Response Date:04/09/2026

2026/902 – Declare friends with criminals

In response to your recent request for information regarding;

What happens to the serving officers who remain friends with people who have been dismissed from the job and also may have been convicted of crimes in court? Surely the serving officers should declare that they are friends with these criminals?

Serving officers and staff have a responsibility to declare the relationship with anyone who has been dismissed from the force, and/or someone who has a criminal record. This is covered in the Counter Corruption policy under notifiable associations. The relevant section is below;

4.2 Notifiable Association Procedure

NWP recognises that our Police Officers and Staff come from all backgrounds and aspects of life; representing a cross section of the community and this in itself could, occasionally, cause potential conflicts and issues.

Nationally it is recognised that police personnel can come under pressure from friendships that existed prior to and during their employment and/or family members who become involved in breaches of the law. In such circumstances there is a risk of divided loyalties and the possibility of demands for assistance at some stage.

The nature of policing means that our Police Officers and Staff have access to significant information, intelligence, powers and responsibilities in the course of their daily work. This could make us vulnerable to individuals who may wish to compromise a friendship or relationship for their personal benefit. The private life of staff can impact on their professional duties.

There is evidence indicating that organised crime groups use tactics targeting police personnel to develop relationships to gain intelligence. It is important we recognise these potential vulnerabilities and have procedures which mitigate such risks to protect our staff and the organisation.

Additionally, regulations and guidance place a responsibility on us to act in a manner which does not discredit or compromise the organisation. Police officers have a restriction on their private life as set out in Regulation 6 and Schedule 1 of the [Police Regulations 2003](#) which states:

"a member of a police force shall at all times abstain from any activity which is likely to interfere with the impartial discharge of their duties or, which is likely to give rise to the impression against members of the public that it may so interfere."

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Glan-y-Don, Bae Colwyn LL29 8AW
www.heddlugogleddcymru.police.uk

Police Headquarters,
Glan-y-Don, Colwyn Bay LL29 8AW
www.northwales.police.uk

In addition to this the [Code of Ethics](#) also applies to all of our staff and sets out that conduct and associations, at or outside of work, should not give cause for potential discredit to the Force or threaten its reputation.

It is recognised that community-based policing and periods working on specialist units can result in familiarity with persons who are not employed by NWP. This can result in relationships becoming less formal and can affect professional judgement.

4.2.1 Notifiable Association – What Does It Mean?

4.2.1.1 What is an “Association”?

For an association to be **notifiable** there must be some form of **relationship** or **qualitative connection** (i.e. more than just being in the presence of people) between you and the subject and can include an online or ‘virtual’ association. This will include:

- A friendship, relationship or intimacy;
- A family member or close relative;
- A partner or associate in an authorised business interest.

4.2.1.2 What isn’t an “Association”?

From time to time you may find yourself in the presence of people known to you and who, if a relationship existed, would be subject of notification under this procedure. The principal aim of the policy is to prevent staff being in a position where they or the organisation could be professionally compromised, it is not intended that every contact in such circumstances is subject of notification. Examples of this may include:

- Someone who you know casually or on ‘nodding terms.’
- A chance meeting with a passing acquaintance even if it’s repeated from time to time.
- Being part of a group or team environment where no other personal or social relationship exists with the person outside of the aims of the group or team (e.g. sports team, hobby group etc.).
- A family member who is **related** but there is no real **relationship** (e.g. a distant or estranged relative with no meaningful connection).

For assistance in deciding whether you have any notifiable associations please read the scenarios and examples contained in the frequently asked questions section in [Appendix B](#).

If in doubt, you **must** contact ACU for advice.

Under no circumstances should you conduct research of force systems in order to substantiate or rebut your concerns or suspicions. Inappropriate use of Force systems may constitute a disciplinary or criminal offence.

4.2.2 What Associations **must** be Notified?

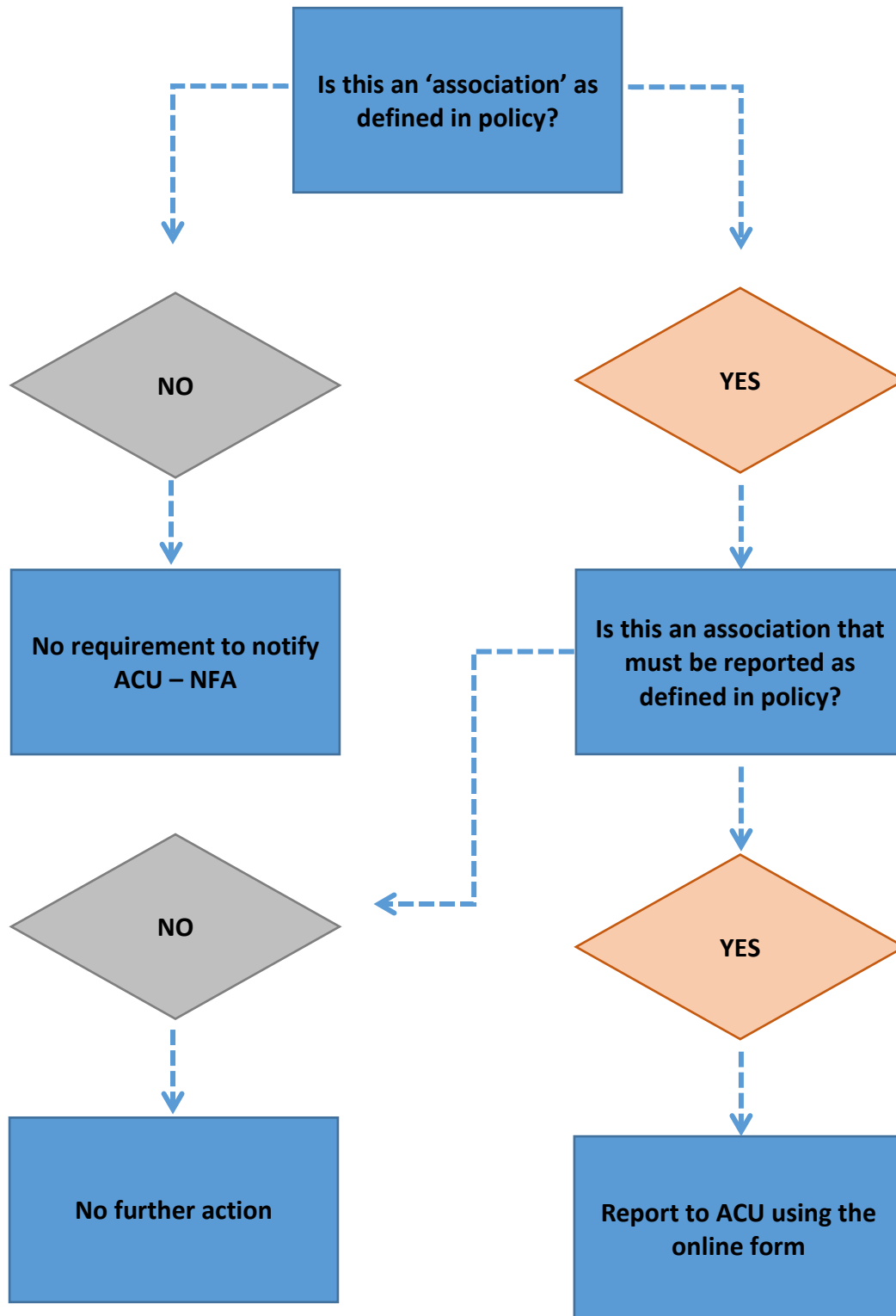
You **must** always declare an association (which could include an online or ‘virtual’ association) where you **know**, **consider** or **suspect** that the **association** is with a person who falls into any of the following categories, these examples are not exhaustive.

- a) Persons with unspent convictions.
- b) Persons charged with a criminal offence (other than minor road traffic matters or drink / driving offences) or the subject of a current criminal prosecution.
- c) Persons known to be under criminal investigation (other than minor road traffic matters or drink / driving offences) but not yet charged with an offence. This does not apply to continued association with a colleague who is suspended from duty pending a misconduct investigation.
- d) Persons subject of criminal intelligence.

- e) Persons dismissed or required to resign from a police service or other law enforcement agency for reasons of misconduct.
- e) Former police officers or other law enforcement officers who are working in a related field of employment (e.g., private investigators). Many retired or ex-police personnel take up work as private investigators or agencies with similar aims and maintain their former links and friendships with police employees. This is identified as another area of potential vulnerability that may lead to compromise.
- f) Membership or association with members of extremist groups or renowned criminal groups, gangs or organisations.
- g) Journalists or other persons employed in a media role, outside of the engagement required as part of your professional policing capacity. The Lord Leveson public enquiry identified instances where members of the media had acted unprofessionally and in some cases, unlawfully. The manipulation of personal relationships that may exist between our staff and journalists presents a potential corruption risk.
- h) Persons criminally involved in the sex industry (e.g. prostitution).
- i) Legal Representatives where there may be a conflict of interest.

4.2.3 Making a Notification

If you know, or reasonably suspect you may have a personal association with an individual, group or organisation that is, or may be considered notifiable under this policy you must submit a report to ACU using the [online form](#).



Role	Action Required
4.2.3.1 Police Officer or Staff	- Report the notifiable association to ACU at the earliest opportunity using the online form. - Submit the online form direct to ACU. - The notification report must include; - your full details, - your supervisor details (supervisors will be notified in all cases and open conversations are encouraged), - the person or group to which you are associated, - the reason why you believe the association is notifiable, please provide as much detail as possible on this point to help determine the rationale for your notification under the policy, - ongoing contact with the association including social media contact. - Make yourself available to ACU, who may speak to you as part of their research into the notification.
4.2.3.2 ACU	- Carry out appropriate and proportionate research to the circumstances reported on a case-by-case basis. - If necessary, speak to the Police Officer or Staff member who has submitted the report as part of that research. - Apply strict confidentiality during the research period. - Carry out a risk assessment on all the available information and intelligence. - Determine the outcome based on the level of risk, and advise the police officer or staff member that the association; - may continue without restriction, - may continue with conditions, - must cease (This will only be used in exceptional circumstances where all other options have been exhausted). - Send a copy of the determination to the police officer or staff member's supervisor to offer any additional support / advice and to discuss during PDR.

In cases where the imposition of conditions is deemed a necessary control measure for a continued association, you will be notified of those conditions. Your line manager will be notified of those conditions. Failure to comply with any conditions could leave you liable to disciplinary action.

It is important to understand that there is a continuing obligation on you to inform ACU of any changes that may affect the determination made on your notified association.

4.2.4 Appeals – What If I Don't Agree With The Decision?

If you do not agree with the decision, you do have the right to appeal. Your appeal must be in a written report and submitted to the Deputy Chief Constable, either directly by you or by your staff association representative and within 14 days of the decision having been made.

The report must include:

- Details of the decision and the date it was made.
- Set out, in clear and concise terms, why you disagree with any aspect or aspects of the decision.
- Be signed and dated by you.

After considering your appeal, the Deputy Chief Constable will inform all parties to the original decision of the result within 14 days. The appeal decision is final.

THIS INFORMATION HAS BEEN PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST
UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000, AND IS CORRECT AS AT 03/09/2026