Probation and the Role of Public Relations

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**Summary:** Are the media and public relations of any relevance to those working in criminal justice? Does the wider public understand what probation is about? Can Probation Officers benefit in any way from good media and public relations handling? In light of the controversies in England around the relationship between the police and the media, is engaging with the press the road to ruin for probation? Should Probation Officers just get on with the business of working to challenge and change offenders’ behaviour and leave media and public relations to the PR industry? This paper seeks to address some of those issues.

**Keywords:** Media, criminal justice, Northern Ireland, public perceptions of probation, influencing policy.