

# Probation Practice and Citizenship, Good Relations and the Emerging European Intercultural Agenda

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**Summary:** It is imperative that criminal justice agencies see the goals of wider Good Relations and delivering a service to different citizens as central to their practice. Staff seeking to build Good Relations between people from ‘different religious beliefs, political opinions and racial groups’ (NI Act 1998, Section 2) must be supported to maintain a critical distance from their personal traditions and the communities they serve if, professionally, they are to work towards a model of citizenship not partisanship. From 2003 to 2006 an across-grade development group of staff in the Probation Board for Northern Ireland considered how the service could support Good Relations. The Good Relations tasks of staff were understood to be to promote personal development and to grow an ease with meeting difference within the agency and with clients. The PBNI initiative is relevant to people and organisations, in any jurisdiction, seeking to enable citizenship and accommodate diversity. It is now time to build civic-minded organisations and public institutions that become blocks to the toleration of demeaning behaviours and establish Good Relations between our diverse citizens as an intercultural and citizenship-based necessity.

**Keywords:** Good Relations, citizenship, sectarianism, racism, organisational learning, interculturalism, equity, diversity, interdependence.