



INSPECTION OF MAGILLIGAN PRISON

In September 2025 there was an inspection of Magilligan Prison. This booklet tells you what Inspectors found during that visit. A copy of the full Inspection Report is in the library for you to look at.



Education and
Training Inspectorate
Empowering Improvement



The Regulation and
Quality Improvement
Authority



WHAT IS A PRISON INSPECTION?

A prison inspection checks out how well services are working and what needs to be better. In this inspection we wanted to see how well people living in Magilligan Prison were being treated and cared for. We also looked at the living conditions, facilities and services.

When we inspect prisons we look at:



Leadership

Prison leaders work to deliver good results;

and the four Healthy Prisons Tests



Safety

You are held safely;



Respect

You are treated with respect;



Purposeful activity

You can take part in learning, work and activities; and



Preparation for release

You can keep in touch with family and friends, get help to stop offending and are prepared for release.



WHO DID THE INSPECTION?

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority and the Education and Training Inspectorate worked together and looked at prison standards, healthcare and learning and skills.



HOW DID WE RATE THE PRISON?

We use four ratings to decide how well the prison is performing. These are the same ratings that are used for other prison inspections in Northern Ireland and in prisons across England and Wales.

They are:



Good

Things are working well.



Reasonably good

Things are mostly working well but some things need to improve.



Not sufficiently good

Things are not working well. If nothing is done these areas will become serious concerns.



Poor

Something needs to be done immediately.



HOW DID MAGILLIGAN PRISON DO?

Magilligan Prison was working well and better than when we last visited in 2021 and 2023. There was an improvement in each of the four Healthy Prison test areas






Overall we were impressed with the Governor’s leadership and how he had driven improvements across the prison. We saw excellent staff-prisoner relationships which underpinned much of the good work being done across the prison. Levels of violence and use of force was lower than in similar prisons in England and Wales. The amount of time prisoners could spend out of their cells was among the best that Inspectors had seen in recent years.

POSITIVE PRACTICE

We saw 19 examples of notable positive practice during this visit. These are things that other prisons can learn from and included:



-  **The work of the Prisoner Safety and Support Team and the services provided by a Learning Disability Nurse and Speech and Language Therapist;**
-  **There was a clear pathway for people to progress through the prison; and**
-  **There was a good range of enrichment activities and work being done to help address trauma, get employment on release and programmes to take part in to improve self-esteem and personal responsibility.**

WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE?

Although we found that outcomes for prisoners were good against the Healthy Prisons tests that does not mean that everything was working as well as it could. We also know that some people will have had a less positive experience of their time at Magilligan Prison.

WE IDENTIFIED 11 KEY CONCERNS, FOUR OF WHICH NEEDED IMMEDIATE ATTENTION.

THE FOUR PRIORITY CONCERNS WERE:



The supply and misuse of drugs, particularly of medication not prescribed to prisoners;



The condition of many of the buildings;



The length of time people were waiting for substance misuse and addiction services; and



The lack of an overarching employability strategy.

Other areas of concern included; the underuse of body-worn video cameras, the very long waiting time to see a doctor; adult safeguarding procedures; the identification and investigation of allegations of discrimination; the lack of a learning strategy for staff to meet the needs of a rising neurodivergent population; the lack of enough accredited offending behaviour programmes and psychology resources; and public protection arrangements were not strong enough.



THE SURVEY RESULTS

Most men took part in our survey.

86
%

said that they were treated well by reception staff and 70% said they were treated well by Care and Supervision staff.

41
%

said that it was easy to obtain illicit drugs and 43% said it was easy to get medication not prescribed to them.

87
%

said most staff treated them with respect.

71
%

said they were consulted about things like food and their regime.

93
%

were able to attend religious services.

68
%

said complaints were dealt with fairly.

78
%

said they had done education and vocational or skills training.

72
%

of respondents said that their experiences at Magilligan Prison had made them less likely to offend in the future.





WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?



We hope that the Northern Ireland Prison Service will build on the good work we saw during this inspection and work closely with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and North West Regional College to address the concerns identified during this inspection.





If you would like to know anything more about us or this inspection please get in touch with:

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