



**MAGILLIGAN
PRISON**

KEY FACTS

MAGILLIGAN PRISON

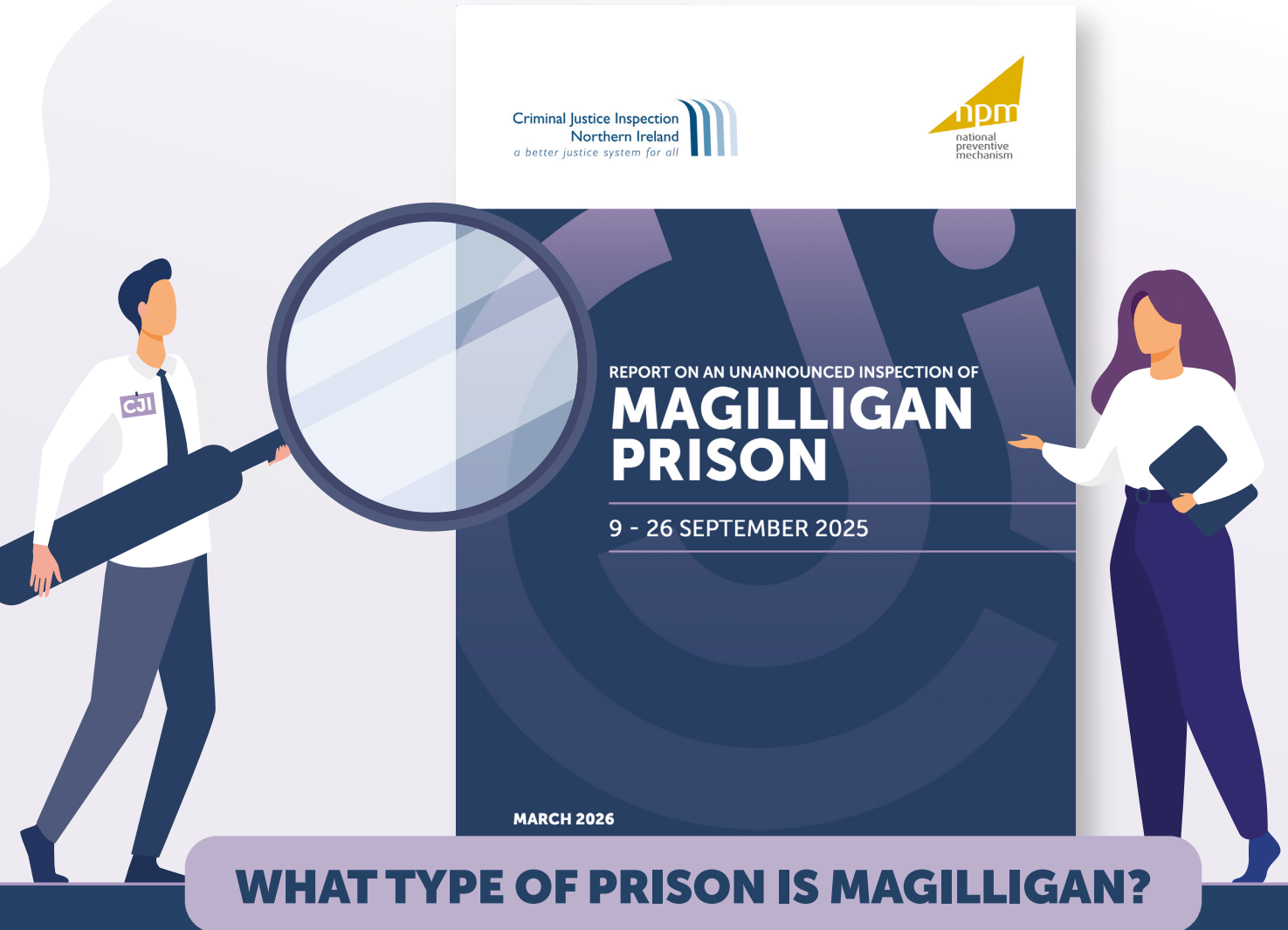


Education and
Training Inspectorate
Empowering Improvement



The Regulation and
Quality Improvement
Authority

MARCH 2026



WHAT TYPE OF PRISON IS MAGILLIGAN?

Magilligan Prison is a medium/low security prison holding male sentenced prisoners on transfer from Maghaberry Prison.

- During the inspection it held just under 500 prisoners which was close to its capacity.
- Most prisoners (31%) were serving sentences of between two and four years.
- Almost 20% of prisoners had been recalled to prison.
- 42 prisoners were released into the community each month.
- Over 80% of prisoners were involved in education, skills and work at the time of the inspection.



This inspection involved Inspectors from Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI), His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Prisons in England and Wales (HMI Prisons), the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).

CJI, HMI Prisons and the RQIA are all members of the United Kingdom National Preventive Mechanism, (UK NPM) a body of over 20 organisations that monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees, including prisoners, to safeguard them against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

WHAT WAS THE INSPECTION ABOUT AND WHAT DID IT LOOK AT?

- We assessed how well prisoners were treated and the conditions they lived in.
- We look at four areas known as the ‘Healthy Prison’ tests; Safety, Respect, Purposeful Activity and Preparation for Release.
- We surveyed staff and prisoners to find out what they thought and spoke to prison leaders and staff, representatives of partner agencies and prisoners.
- We also met with members of the Independent Monitoring Board, prison Chaplaincy team and a staff association.
- We visited prisoners’ living conditions and saw the services and facilities available and recorded what we found.
- We reviewed documentation, assessed data and sampled prisoner records including of complaints, segregation, self-harm, use of force, adjudications, personal development planning and learning.



WHAT DID INSPECTORS FIND?

We found that Magilligan Prison's performance had improved since our last full inspection in 2021 and the 2023 Independent Review of Progress.

- Outcomes for Safety, Respect, Purposeful Activity and Preparation for Release were good.
- 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. Prisoners' time out-of-cell was among the best Inspectors had seen in recent years as was how the Care and Supervision Unit was run.
- We identified 19 examples of notable positive practice; we think other prisons can learn from these.
- Impressive work was being done to support prisoners at risk of self-harm, neurodivergent prisoners and to support better communication between dads in prison and their children. There was a very good range of enrichment activities, non-accredited personal development resettlement programmes and other initiatives to address trauma and support access to employment.
- While performance was assessed as good, we also identified 11 key concerns and four of these needed immediate attention.
- These were around the supply and misuse of drugs, particularly medication not prescribed to the prisoner who had taken them; the condition of many of Magilligan Prison's buildings; the adequacy of funding of substance misuse and addiction services that did not meet the demand for support and that no overarching employability strategy for prisoners was in place. There still wasn't an agreed Adult Safeguarding Policy in place with clear processes for Magilligan and the other prisons.





WHAT 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.

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

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