



REPORT ON AN UNANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF
**MAGILLIGAN
PRISON**

9 - 26 SEPTEMBER 2025

**APPENDIX 4A
PRISONER SURVEY
METHODOLOGY,
RESULTS AND ANALYSES**

MARCH 2026



Education and
Training Inspectorate
Empowering Improvement



The Regulation and
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Authority



Prisoner survey methodology,
results and analyses

Magilligan Prison

September 2025

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Prisoner survey methodology

A representative survey of prisoners is carried out at the start of every inspection, the results of which contribute to the evidence base for the inspection.

HMI Prisons researchers developed a self-completion questionnaire in November 2023 to support HMI Prisons' *Expectations*. The questionnaire consists of structured questions covering the prisoner 'journey' from reception to release together with demographic and background questions which enables comparison of responses from different sub-groups of the prisoner population. There are also three open questions at the end of the questionnaire which allow prisoners to express in their own words what they find most positive and negative about the prison. Qualitative analysis of these written comments is undertaken by HMI Prisons researchers and used by Inspectors.

Sampling

On the day of the survey a random sample is drawn by HMI Prisons researchers from a P-NOMIS prisoner population printout ordered by cell location. Using a power calculation, HMI Prisons researchers calculate the minimum sample size required to ensure that the survey findings are representative of the entire population of the establishment. The formula used in the calculation assumes a 75% response rate (65% in open establishments) and a 95% confidence interval with a 7% margin of error.

Distributing and collecting questionnaires

HMI Prisons researchers distributed and collected the questionnaires in person. A cover sheet was included with the questionnaire which explained the purpose of the survey and that participation was voluntary. Assurances were given about confidentiality, anonymity and the storage and retention of the data. Prisoners were provided with a sealable envelope for their completed questionnaire and told when researchers would return to collect it. When researchers were unable to obtain verbal consent from prisoners, returned and completed questionnaires were deemed as providing consent. The questionnaire was available in 14 languages.

Survey responses

At the time of the survey on 9 September 2025 the prisoner population at Magilligan was 497. Using the sampling method described above, questionnaires were distributed to 186 prisoners. We received a total of 160 completed questionnaires, a response rate of 86%.

The full inspection report is available on the CJI website at:

[Magilligan Prison Archives - CJI NI](#)

Prisoner survey results and analyses

Over the following pages we present the full survey results followed by numerous comparative analyses for Magilligan. For the comparator analyses, where relevant, each question was reformulated using the Chi-square test (or Fisher's exact test if there are fewer than five expected counts in a cell) into a binary 'yes/no' format and affirmative responses compared. Missing responses have been excluded from all analyses and for some questions, responses from a sub-group of the sample are reported (as indicated in the data).

Responses from Magilligan compared with those from other HMI Prisons surveys

These analyses are carried out on summary data from all survey questions. As we have been using a revised version of the questionnaire since November 2023, we do not yet have full comparator data for all questions.

- Survey responses from Magilligan in 2025 compared with survey responses from other category C prisons in England and Wales inspected since November 2023.
- Survey responses from Magilligan in 2025 compared with survey responses from Magilligan in 2021.

Comparisons between different residential locations within Magilligan 2025

- Responses of prisoners on Halward House unit compared with those from the rest of the establishment.
- Responses of prisoners on the low supervision unit (Alpha unit) compared with those from the rest of the establishment.

Comparisons between self-reported sub-populations of prisoners within Magilligan 2025

These analyses are carried out on summary data from selected survey questions only.

- Responses of Protestant prisoners compared with those of Catholic prisoners.
- Responses of prisoners aged 50 and over compared with those aged under 50.
- Responses of foreign national prisoners compared with those of UK/British nationals.
- Responses of prisoners who reported that they had a disability compared to those who did not.
- Responses of prisoners who reported that they had mental health problems compared with those who did not.
- Responses of prisoners who reported that they considered themselves to be neurodivergent compared with those who did not.
- Responses of prisoners who reported that they had been in local authority care compared with those who did not.

Please note that we only carry out within-prison comparator analysis where there is a minimum of 10 responses which must also represent at least 10% of the total response.

In the comparator analyses, statistically significant differences are indicated by shading. The probability threshold (i.e. p-value) is set at 0.01 which means that there is a 1% likelihood the statistically significant difference between the two groups is due to chance.

Results that are significantly more positive are indicated by green shading and results that are significantly more negative are indicated by blue shading.

Orange shading has been used to show a statistically significant difference in demographic or other background details.

If there is no shading, any difference between the two results is not statistically significant and may have occurred by chance.

Grey shading indicates that there are no valid comparative data for that question.

Filtered questions are indented and preceded by an explanation in italics of how the filter has been applied. In the comparator analyses, percentages for filtered questions refer to the number of respondents filtered to that question. For all other questions, percentages refer to the total number of valid responses to the question.



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**Criminal Justice Inspection
Northern Ireland**

Block 1, Knockview Buildings

Belfast BT4 3SJ

www.cjini.org



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