

National Preventive Mechanism – Northern Ireland Subgroup Meeting

Minutes

Date: 10/03/2026



In attendance:

RL	Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland	Chair
ME	Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland	
BS	Independent Monitoring Boards	
JDe	Independent Monitoring Boards	
MM	Northern Ireland Policing Board Independent Custody Visiting Scheme	
JP	Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority	
WM	Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (Online)	
TL	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission	
CC	Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission	
MK	UK NPM	
JK	UK NPM	
SR	UK NPM (Online)	Minutes
MB	UK NPM (Online)	Minutes

1 Welcome and apologies

RL led a round of introductions. Apologies received from **JDu**, **NM**, **AR** and **JM**.

2 Approval of September Minutes for publication

All approved the minutes of the Subgroup meeting of 9 December and agreed to publication on the NPM's website. **SR** to publish the minutes on the NPM website.

3 Matters arising

Agreements and actions from the Subgroup meeting of 9 December 2025 were discussed, and closed, added to the agenda, or added to the actions of this meeting.

JK/JP/SR/MK met in January regarding feeding RQIA's reports into the UK NPM's reporting Dashboard.

JDe and **BS** noted that a recruitment drive for the IMBNI started on 9 March, with some interest noted. There was a discussion regarding IMB members' terms, noting extension from six to nine (or ten) years, and ability to return to post after a break. IMBNI volunteers are not currently permitted to return after a nine-year term. This differs from IMB terms in England and Wales, and also ICV volunteers. Concerns about sustainability of monitoring were raised, noting a critical level of active volunteers. A meeting between IMBs and the DOJ is planned for April.

ACTION: All Subgroup members to share IMBNI recruitment on social media.

ACTION: **RL/MK/JK** to raise in meeting with Permanent Secretary Hugh Widdis on 11 March

4 Subgroup member updates – Q & A

MM updated the group on the issue of ICV access to records, noting that things were moving positively but that some updates are still pending. **MM** also discussed the new E-Learning platform created by ICVA, which includes an induction module on the NPM. Schemes can also propose training modules that might be more relevant locally.

WM updated the group on RQIA's State of the Nation report which is currently in the process of quality assurance and peer review. Inconsistencies noted in SAI reporting relate to long-term issues in the level of investigation, and inconsistent regional timeframes.

JP noted that RQIA continue to publish inspection reports of children's services, adopting an approach to reporting that safeguards children's anonymity.

JK updated the group on Dr Shalev's solitary confinement work and what the final output of the work will be, noting that the "Phase 1" report will be internal, while the "Phase 2" report will be authored by Dr Shalev, with UK NPM sign-off. Recommendations will be broad and not directed to specific services. Dr Shalev plans to visit Belfast in the w/b 23 March.

BS and **JDe** gave an update on UK NPM preventive training roll-out for IMBs, which started in December with an additional session held on 9 March with 14 people attending. Module 1 delivery complete with Module 2 to take place at the IMB AGM.

CC updated on NIHRC scrutiny of the Sentencing Bill, in early stages before the Northern Ireland Assembly. Implications of the legislation are not consistently understood, particularly regarding implementation of safeguarding and support.

JDe discussed the use of body scanners in prisons, with IMBNI findings showing that complaints to the IMBs relating to the use of body scanners are very low. An independent report was commissioned by NIPS regarding x-ray body scanners. IMB have fed into this.

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Data on deaths and serious adverse incidents in detention

RL noted that an updated information-sharing agreement is now in place between CJI and PSNI which will enable CJI to receive data on deaths in police custody in future. Work to identify data on SAIs will be shared has been delayed while waiting for the signed ISA but is now progressing. Reporting on deaths post-release will not be possible from the PSNI. CJI will also take forward arrangements for information sharing with the JJC. **ME** has enquired about data in court custody. There are no formal reporting and no electronic systems on which to record data. **RL** to continue to monitor through inspections and see if data can be gathered in future.

Presentation from **ME** on use of prison data:

CJI are receiving routine data from the prison service, including information on several KPIs (use of force, deaths in detention, suicide and self-harm etc.). CJI transcribes this information into Excel. This allows for an examination of trends. **ME** led the group through some of the data received, offering examples of analysis. **The NISG should decide what it wants to use the data for, and members should think about how they can share data that they hold.**

WM noted that information from prison inspections is data-led, but there is limited analysis of the data, and questioned whether the NISG could go back to the prison service with outcomes from analysis, asking them to explain trends to better understand the causes. The NISG could develop a process, paper, or some questions that could then be sent to the prison service or trust.

The group emphasised that this analysis could be used to guide inspection and oversight activities, identify trends and raise questions with the relevant institutions.

JK presented work by the NPM Scotland Subgroup on deaths in custody data in Scotland, where data on deaths in prisons are publicly available. There was discussion over whether the NISG should create a central database.

As an initial approach, **RL** suggested looking at the data on a six-monthly basis for regular Subgroup analysis.

ACTION: RL to create a proposal paper for how the NISG interacts with the data/next steps to be discussed in the next meeting.

ACTION: All members to think about the data that they hold and how this can be used.

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NPM Northern Ireland Subgroup Workplan

6.a Personality disorder in detention

RL, WM and **JK** updated the group that the event will take place on 1 June. **RL/WM/JK** are finalising attendee invite list, and **WM** is scoping a venue. The event will comprise a half-day workshop including presentations Q&A and roundtable discussion. The aim is to identify and promote improvement in prisons' support for those with personality disorder. An event paper will recommend actions for change.

Several speakers are confirmed and invitations will be circulated as soon as the participants list is finalised.

RL will share further information when possible.

6.b Children's bail and accommodation

No further action to be taken at this time. NISG to maintain a watching brief and correspond further with officials if necessary. **JP** noted that the response from the DoJ was considerate of unintended consequences for children in care.

6.c Prisoners over tariff

MB discussed her research for the NISG, which includes examining different legal frameworks across the UK with regards to indeterminate sentences for foreign national offenders and looking at the effectiveness of rehabilitation mechanisms. **RL** explained that the aim of this work is to understand what the barriers are for prisoners in NI who wish to return to their country of origin. There was a discussion over whether the NISG should collaborate with the SSG to develop joint recommendations to improve the legislative framework (or send a letter to the Home Office) through the wider auspices of UK NPM. **MB** is liaising with SHRC to triangulate information.

ACTION: All to send comments on the research to **JK**

ACTION: JK to share **MB's** final report with the Subgroup to agree recommendation content and format.

7 NPM Northern Ireland Subgroup Terms of Reference – review

ACTION: Introduce TOR review as standing agenda item.

ACTION: Introduce Chair and Head of Secretariat updates as standing agenda items.

8 AOB

1. **RL** noted upcoming meetings with Permanent Secretaries from DoJ and DoH, and plans to discuss the UK NPM and flag main subgroup concerns in these meeting (including IMBNI recruitment, personality disorder in prisons, Justice Bill, and funding for a dedicated Secretariat Officer).

Task	Lead	Status
SR to publish minutes [from 9 December] on NPM website.	SR	Complete
All Subgroup members to share IMBNI recruitment on social media: Independent Monitoring Board seeks new members Department of Justice	All	
RL/MK/JK to raise [issue of IMBNI recruitment] in meeting with Permanent Secretary Hugh Widdis on 11 March	RL/MK/JK	
RL to create proposal paper for how the NISG interacts with the data/next steps to be discussed in the next meeting.	RL	
All members to think about the data that they hold and how this can be used.	All	
All to send comments on MB's research to JK	All	
JK to share MB's final report with the Subgroup to agree recommendation content and format.	JK	
Introduce TOR review, Chair and HoS updates as standing agenda item	JK	