

MAGILLIGAN PRISONERS TAKE PART IN COMPETITION

Skillbuild behind bars a first in the UK

Prisoners at Magilligan with ambitions to one day work in the construction industry have taken part in the first ever Skillbuild competition to be held in a UK prison.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service, in partnership with the North West Regional College and Skillbuild NI, hosted the competition for prisoners, allowing them to demonstrate their skills in painting and decorating, woodwork, joinery, tiling,

plastering, welding and horticulture.

More than 70 prisoners at the Co Londonderry facility took part in competition heats and were judged by Construction Industry Training Board Northern Ireland (CITB NI) representatives before a final 32 was selected and winners announced in each of the eight categories.

Magilligan Prison governor Andy Tosh said: "We are delighted to have hosted the

first ever Skillbuild competition within a prison setting. This reflects the innovative and positive work that drives us on our continuous improvement in the NI Prison Service.

"Working with our colleagues from North West Regional College we are successfully delivering learning and skills programmes that are directly linked to job opportunities within our communities, allowing our rehabilitative work to extend

beyond the prison walls and support people in our care to reintegrate back into society."

Barry Neilson, chief executive of the CITB NI, added: "To host the first ever event of this kind in a prison has been fantastic.

"I have been involved in skills competitions for over 20 years and I know that those individuals who have displayed their skills to family members and fellow students will gain confidence and self-esteem."

