



## Deputy

### Description

## Deputymaking decisions that touch our lives every day

<https://youtu.be/tJLLX-NMlcA>

[< back to list of Roles](#)

### What does the States of Deliberation do?

#### The States

The States of Deliberation is made up of 38 Guernsey Deputies, plus two representatives from Alderney.

It is Guernsey's government and parliament where decisions are made about how the island is run. It does this by agreeing policies, passing any legislation required to reinforce those policies and then making sure those policies and laws are implemented.

### What does a Deputy do?

#### Role of a Deputy

There is no official job description for a People's Deputy – each States member is free to interpret the role as they see fit.

Generally speaking, there are three main parts to the role:

**States meetings:** A Deputy attends meetings of the States of Deliberation to debate and vote on the way the island is run (policy) and the laws we all obey (legislation). Meetings are held every three

weeks in term time and are scheduled for up to three days, depending on the agenda, or four days for the Budget debate.

To prepare for a States meeting, Deputies can read the papers for individual items as they are submitted and [published on the States website](#). Six weeks before the meeting, all of the papers are assembled into a document called a Billet d'Etat which Deputies can opt to receive electronically or in hard copy.

Deputies may also be invited to background presentations by the relevant States committees or local interest groups in the weeks before the debate and may also engage in their own research and questioning.

If they plan to speak in a particular debate, Deputies generally prepare their speech in advance. Deputies may also consider placing an amendment to try to alter what's being proposed or a 'sursis' to delay a debate.

Deputies can also initiate policy changes themselves through a process called a requête.

**Committee work:** At the beginning of the States term, Deputies are elected by their colleagues onto committees that focus on a particular part of government eg Health and Social Care, Environment and Infrastructure or Overseas Aid. The States officers that support that particular committee organise the meetings and prepare papers for members to read in advance.

With the support of officers, committees develop the policies that are put to the States for approval. Policies may take years of hard work to come to fruition. And they then need to be implemented.

Committee members may join sub-committees or take on specific individual responsibilities. For example, they may be the liaison point with members of another committee. Or they may be appointed to serve on other related boards – for example, there is a member of the Committee for Education, Sport and Culture on the board of the Guille-Allès Library.

**Constituents cases:** Members of the public can ask a Deputy to help to resolve individual issues. This may involve research, writing on behalf of the constituents to States committees or attending meetings with the constituent.

## What else does a Deputy do?

**Questions:** Individual Deputies can scrutinise the work of any States committee. They can ask pre-notified questions of committee Presidents at the beginning of a States meeting. Or they can ask questions in writing for a written reply.

**Parish liaison:** Historically, Deputies have been invited to meet monthly with their local parish Douzaine to discuss the matters in upcoming Billets – although this has fallen away as a result of the recent move to [Island Wide Voting](#).

Members of the public may call or email any Deputy to discuss any issue at any time using the contact

details on the [gov.gg website](http://gov.gg) and in the phonebook.

**Community awareness:** Deputies are often invited to attend or present at meetings of charities, interest groups, clubs and others to learn about local issues.

## How do you get elected?

The next general election in Guernsey will be in June 2025.

### Districts

Until 2016, States members were elected by the people who were registered to vote in a specific district but from 2020 Deputies are elected by the whole of the electorate on an island-wide basis.

### Eligibility

To be [eligible to be a Deputy](#) you must be at least 18 years old, on the electoral roll, and have lived in Guernsey for the previous two years or for periods adding up to at least five years in total. You must not have received a prison sentence of more than six months in the previous five years.

### Nominations

Prospective candidates need to be proposed and seconded by people who are on the electoral roll in Guernsey. Nomination forms are available prior to the election at the Bailiff's Chambers and the various Douzaines. The nomination window lasts just four days.

### Campaign expenses

There is a £500 grant from the States towards campaign expenses. The States also produces a booklet containing a two-page manifesto for every candidate wishing to be included which is delivered to all homes on the electoral roll. Candidates details and their manifestos are also featured on a States Election website, together with a short video introduction.

Candidates can spend up to £6,000 on their campaign. Expenses include the design and printing of manifestos, plus envelope stuffing and postage, website costs and any advertising. Half of the £6000 allowance can be assigned to a political party or association, if relevant.

Candidates do not have to spend as much as the spending limit but must not spend more than this amount.

## What skills do you need?

### Skills

The job of Deputy is what you make it. There is no one way to do it.

Here are the thoughts of one ex-Deputy:

[Michelle Le Clerc](#): "I think one of the really important skills is the ability to be able to read and digest

the papers that you get at committee level (and they can get quite technical), and the Billet. You don't need to be an accountant but you need to be able to understand some budgets and be able to look at the accounts”.

## What support or training is there?

### Support

There are no two ways about it, there is very little admin support for Deputies. Unlike MPs, Deputies do not have an office or any staff. They arrange their own diary, answer their own calls, do their own research.

States members given a States laptop and mobile phone for secure access to the States IT system. This is returned at the end of the term of office. States IT Support help with any technical issues with this equipment.

There is an allowance for basic admin costs – printer ink, phone calls, transport etc – already built into the salary so Deputies can't claim extra for those. However, if they are sent off-island on States business they can claim travel expenses.

Deputies are not employed by the States, they **are self-employed**. That means there is no official HR function for Deputies.

Committee members are supported by the relevant States officers but only in relation to organising committee meetings and producing policy papers. Even committee presidents don't have an office or any admin support.

### Training

The States Assembly and Constitution Committee has developed a comprehensive on-boarding and development programme to support Deputies after the election.

### Processing personal data

As part of your role, Deputies may need to handle individual's personal data, particularly when supporting constituents. That means registering with the Office of Data Protection as a data controller. There is training and support to do this. Data protection is covered in more detail in the [Information for Prospective Candidates 2020](#) guide.

## What's the time commitment?

### States meetings

Rather than monthly, meetings of the States of Deliberation are scheduled every three weeks. That means that there are no States meetings in the school holidays.

Generally, meetings start on a Wednesday, although they can sometimes begin on a Tuesday if there is something major to be discussed, like the Budget. Meetings are scheduled to last until Friday

evening although they may end after just a day, or two days, depending on the volume of business. Or business may be carried over to a future meeting.

The morning session is from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

The afternoon session is from 2.30pm to 5.30pm.

## **Committees**

The amount of work done outside of States meetings depends on the number of committee positions a Deputy holds and their personal approach to the job. Committees usually meet on a specific day and time every two weeks. Meetings are generally two to three hours long but can be longer, depending on the committee's workload. You may also be asked to join a sub-committee.

## **Part-time? Full-time?**

For some Deputies, being a States member is a part-time role. For others it is full-time, or more. However, outside of scheduled meetings, the workload is flexible. Preparing for meetings or reading up on a constituent's issue can be done at any time and from anywhere. And you don't have to accept every invitation.

## **Term of office**

A Deputy is usually elected for four years, although the next States term has been adjusted to end in June 2025. At the end of the term a Deputy can leave the States or stand for re-election. There is no limit on the number of times a Deputy can re-stand. Most Deputies stay for one or two terms but some serve for 20 or 30 years.

It is possible for a Deputy to be elected to a senior role in their first term but it is more usual to become president of a principal committee in your second term.

It is unusual for a Deputy to step down during their four-year term but it is possible. A replacement will be elected in a by-election unless a general election is coming up.

## **Absence**

Periods of extended absence due to, for example, illness or pregnancy are allowed so long as they do not exceed twelve months.

In October 2019, Deputies agreed to allow proxy voting for new parents. For the first six months after birth or adoption, Deputies who are new parents can ask a colleague to place a vote on their behalf. This rule applies equally to both parents.

However, there is no system in place to take over Deputies' other work when they are absent. Committee work continues and an absent Deputy would need to ask a colleague to take over any outstanding constituent cases.

## **Do you get paid?**

## Salary

The total salary for a Deputy who is below pension age is £44,929 as at June 2023. There is no allowance towards admin costs, these are incorporated into the salary.

The 2023 salary is £60,700 if you are president of one of the main committees, rising to £78,999 for the President of Policy and Resources.

Pay should be automatically adjusted annually on 1st May, based on any positive percentage change in median earnings for the previous year. However, there was pay freeze in 2020 and 2021 because of Covid. [A 4.5% increase was applied from May 2022](#) and [a further 5.7% in May 2023](#).

Pay scales are reviewed periodically by the Independent Pay Review Panel. The [most recent proposals from the Panel](#) were rejected at the States meeting beginning on 25th September 2019. It is likely that there will be a [further review in this States term](#) but this will only impact the pay of the next States (2025 onwards).

## Benefits

The States does not employ Deputies, they **are self-employed**. Deputies arrange their own health insurance and only receive [statutory parental benefits](#). The States Members' Pension Scheme was closed to new members in 2012 [in return for an increase in basic salary](#). **Social Security and Income Tax** For Social Security purposes Deputies are treated as self-employed and the **contribution rate is 11%**, rather than the standard 6.6%. The total salary of £44,929 per annum (2023 figures) has an additional allowance built in to compensate for this high contribution rate. If you are over pension age, this allowance will be deducted. For Income Tax purposes Deputies are considered as employed.

## Rewards and downsides

### Rewards

Using your skills and experience to make your island a better place for everyone.

Learning a lot about what happens in Guernsey and feel deeply involved.

Meeting a whole range of new people and develop lifelong friendships with colleagues.

### Downsides

Deputies are public property – the media will write about you, constituents may call you at home at all hours and you will be discussed on social media. You'll need a thick skin. Your family members may also be affected.

Politics is an adversarial environment and becoming increasingly polarised in Guernsey, as elsewhere in the world. Most of your colleagues will be supportive but some may seek to undermine you.

Guernsey is a small island trying to run nearly all the government functions of a small country. Your role is as big or as small as you choose to make it but if you join one or more of the larger committees,

you will need to be strict about priorities to manage the workload.

## **Where can I find out more?**

<https://youtu.be/TMLgYvZJS0w><https://youtu.be/OUtEjhbUSMg>

### **Information from Election 2020**

[Women in Public Life 'Resources' section](#) – infosheets to get potential candidates up to speed.

Official election website – [Election2020.gg](http://Election2020.gg)

Official guidance – [Information for Prospective Candidates 2020](#)

### **More general information**

[States meeting dates and agenda items](#)

[At The States](#) – educational resource explaining how the States of Guernsey works.

[Gov.gg](#) – the States of Guernsey website. Especially the 'Government' section.

[Wikipedia](#) – States of Guernsey page.

### **Rules of the States**

The "[Blue Book](#)" – includes the rules of procedure of the States.

[States Members Code of Conduct.](#)

### **Scrutiny reviews**

[Archive of the Scrutiny Management Committee's public hearings and reviews.](#)

### **Download this information**

To turn all of this information about being a Deputy into a PDF, click the '*download info as PDF*' button at the bottom of this page.

### **Corrections**

This description of the role of a Deputy has been researched by Women in Public Life volunteers. If you spot an error, or have a question, please do let us know by emailing [hello@womeninpubliclife.gg](mailto:hello@womeninpubliclife.gg)

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