

Deputy making decisions that touch our lives every day

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. The States decides what kind of education our children receive, when we need a new hospital wing, how much we pay in tax, where we build new houses, who can vote, who you can marry...

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 can last 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 private members bill 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.

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-Alles 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 is likely to change as a result of the recent move to [Island Wide Voting](#).

Some parishes run parish surgeries on Saturday mornings where members of the public can meet their representatives and raise concerns in person, particularly in relation to issues in the upcoming Billet. Again, the arrangements for surgeries are likely to change as a result of 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](#) 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?

Districts

Until 2016, States members were elected by the people who were registered to vote in a specific district but from 2020 Deputies will be 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 for Election 2020 will

be available [online](#) from 10th August and at the Bailiff's Chambers and the various Douzaines. The nomination submission period lasts just four days - completed forms must be returned to the Bailiff's Secretary at the Royal Court between 9am on 1st September 2020 and 4pm on Friday 4th September 2020.

Campaign expenses

For Election2020 there will be a grant of £500 from the States towards campaign expenses. The States will also produce a booklet containing a two-page manifesto for every candidate wishing to be included which will be delivered to all homes on the electoral roll. Candidates details and their manifestos will also be featured on the States Election2020 website, together with a short video introduction.

In 2016 candidates could spend up to £2,300 of their own funds on campaign expenses. This will rise to £6,000 in 2020. Campaign expenses include the design and printing of your manifesto, plus the envelope stuffing and postage, the costs of your website and any advertising. Half of your allowance can be assigned to a political party or association, if you are affiliated to one.

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

What skills do you need?

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

Here are the thoughts of one current Deputy:

[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, you will not have an office or any staff. You will arrange your own diary, answer your own calls, do your own research.

You will be given a States tablet or laptop (your choice) so that you have secure access to the States IT system. This is returned at the end of your term of office. States IT Support will help you with any technical issues with this equipment.

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

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

If you join a committee, you will be supported by the relevant States officers but only in relation to organising committee meetings and producing policy papers. Even if you are elected President of a principal committee, you won't have an office or any admin support.

Training

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

Processing personal data

As part of your role, you may need to handle individual's personal data, particularly when supporting constituents. That means you will have to register with the Office of Data Protection as a data controller. You will

receive training and support to do this. Data protection is covered in more detail in the [‘Information for Prospective Candidates’](#) 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.

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 elected for four years. At the end of the term she or he 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 her or his 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 mothers and fathers.

However, there is no system in place to take over Deputies' other work when they are absent. Committee work will continue without you and you will 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 will be £40,521. There is no allowance towards admin costs, these are incorporated into the salary.

The salary is £54,744 if you are president of one of the main committees, rising to £71,248 for the President of Policy and Resources.

Pay is automatically adjusted annually on 1st May, based on any positive percentage change in median earnings for the previous year.

Pay scales are reviewed periodically by the Independent Pay Review Panel. The [latest 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 the next States term](#) but this will only impact the pay of the next States (2025 onwards).

Benefits

The States does not employ Deputies, you are self-employed. You will need to arrange your own health insurance and you will 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 you will be treated as self-employed and **your contribution rate will be 11%**, rather than the standard 6.6%. The total salary of £40,521 per annum 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 you will be considered as employed.

Rewards and downsides

Rewards

You will be using your skills and experience to make your island a better place for everyone.

You'll learn a lot about what happens in Guernsey and feel deeply involved. You'll meet a whole range of new people and develop lifelong friendships with colleagues.

Downsides

You 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 ruthless with your priorities to manage the workload.

Where can I find out more?

Information about Election2020

[Women in Public Life infosheets for potential candidates.](#)

Official election website - [Election2020.gg](#)

Official guidance - '[Information for Prospective Candidates](#)'

More general information

[States meeting dates and agenda items](#)

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

['Getting into Guernsey Politics'](#) – Deputy Emilie McSwiggan's personal blog.

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

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

Rules of the States

The "[Red Book](#)" - includes the rules of procedure of the States.

[States Members Code of Conduct.](#)

Governance reviews

[Governance review of the Committee for Home Affairs.](#)

[Governance review of the Committee for Health and Social Care.](#)

[Governance review of the Policy and Resources Committee.](#)

[Governance review of the Committee for Education, Culture and Sport.](#)

Scrutiny reviews

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

Corrections

This description of the role of a Deputy has been researched by Women in Public Life volunteers. If you spot an error, please do let us know by emailing hello@womeninpubliclife.gg.

Questions?

If you have a question about being a Deputy that isn't answered on this page, contact us at hello@womeninpubliclife.gg. We'll research the answer and then publish it here to help inform others who might be curious about the same thing.

Can you be a Deputy even if you have young children or other caring responsibilities?

Yes, several current Deputies have young children or are carers. States meetings are scheduled outside of the school holidays. Committee meetings take into account the availability of the members. But you will also need a good support system at home.

Outside of meetings, your time is flexible. You can read paperwork and return parishioner calls after children have gone to bed, for example.

For the first six months after birth or adoption, new parents can ask a colleague to vote on their behalf (proxy vote) so they don't have to attend States meetings.

Do you have to attend every States meeting?

Yes, you are expected to attend every meeting of the States of Deliberation – it is a fundamental part of being a Deputy and some parishioners will notice. But there is no financial or other specific penalty if you have to miss all, or part, of one.

Names are called at the beginning of each States meeting day. Deputies answer in French – “presente” or “present”. As the day progresses, votes may be made ‘de vivre voix’ (by voice) where Deputies call out ‘pour’ or ‘contre’. De vivre voix votes don't make clear to those listening on the radio, or reading Hansard afterwards, who is, or is not, present. Often a Deputy will call for the votes to be recorded individually and therefore absences are noted.

[Attendance records](#) and [results of recorded votes](#) (Excel file) are published on the States website and occasionally analysed by the media.