
STATES OF JERSEY



DIVERSITY FORUM: LEGACY REPORT

Presented to the States on 4th May 2022
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee

STATES GREFFE

REPORT

Introduction

1. The Diversity Forum was set up formally as a sub-committee of the Privileges and Procedures Committee (PPC) after the 2018 election. Its terms of reference are as follows:

The Diversity Forum is working towards the aim of the States Assembly fully reflecting the population of Jersey and representing all of the communities and interests in the Island. It aims to increase public engagement in democratic processes, particularly in relation to under-represented groups.

The Diversity Forum is a Sub-Committee of the Privileges and Procedures Committee (PPC) and will assist PPC in ensuring that the support and facilities available for States Members, and the Assembly's framework of rules, encourage the development of a diverse and inclusive Assembly. The Diversity Forum will support PPC in its work to increase the diversity of candidates standing for election, to provide them with more assistance to stand, and in identifying and addressing the principal barriers to higher election turnout across the population; and it will support the Government to achieve its aim of removing barriers and promoting inclusion and equal opportunity for all.

The Diversity Forum will take an evidence-based approach to its work, including benchmarking against international best practice.

2. The Forum is open to all members of the Assembly to join and currently comprises the following members:

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet (Chair), Senator S.Y. Mézec, Connétable R. Vibert of St. Peter, Connétable R. Buchanan of St. Ouen, Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin, Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville, Deputy K. Morel of St. Lawrence, Deputy J.H. Perchard of St. Saviour, Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier, Deputy K. Pamplin of St. Saviour and Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier

3. The Forum held 15 formal meetings and one informal meeting during this Assembly term.

Achievements

4. The Forum's principal achievements during this term have been as follows:
 - Finalisation and publication of a [gender sensitive audit](#) of the States Assembly
 - Making the Assembly's standing orders gender neutral
 - Finalisation of work to enable Members absent at the start of a sitting to be excused on the basis of 'parental responsibilities'

- Organising a successful event in the Town Hall to promote civic participation
- Successfully ensuring that States Members come within the ambit of the States' contract for wellbeing support
- Publication of a [report](#) on the diversity of recruitment to States-owned bodies and arm's length organisations
- Development of a programme of work to enhance the diversity of election candidates, for implementation by the States Greffe

Outstanding matters

5. There are a number of matters which have not been brought to a conclusion during this term which the Forum wishes to bring to the Assembly's attention, so that States Members can consider how to take them forward during the 2022-26 term. These are set out below.
6. Firstly, a number of recommendations of the gender sensitive audit are yet to be implemented. These include:
 - Introducing role descriptions for Assembly roles, an issue also raised in the recent report of the Democratic Accountability and Governance Sub-Committee
 - Ensuring that committees and panels all contain at least one man and one woman
 - Consideration of introducing a public sector equality duty
 - Provision of official sex-disaggregated data.
7. The Forum did make progress in securing agreement for two rooms in the States Building to be named after pioneering women politicians – Caroline Trachy and Ivy Forster. However, work to create and erect plaques has taken much longer than was expected, principally because of problems gaining planning permission. This should be resolved quickly in the new term.
8. During this term there were periods when the States frequently sat after 5.30pm at late notice, often with the decision being taken at 5.30pm. This posed particular challenges for Members with caring responsibilities who were sometimes put in an impossible position having to choose between those domestic responsibilities and their duties as a States Member. The Forum considered various procedural solutions, all of which had drawbacks, and concluded that it would be preferable to create a culture in which late sittings were proposed much earlier in the day. To some extent this has been achieved, in that the Assembly is usually more mindful than before of Members' caring responsibilities in discussing late sittings. However, this problem has not gone away and more formal planning of the Assembly's sittings, to avoid impromptu late finishes, would be beneficial.

9. Work to enhance the diversity of candidates standing for election and to encourage a broader cross-section of the public to vote is now underway. We encourage our successors to assess the success of these initiatives to ensure that the Greffe's resources are targeted on the most effective interventions at the 2026 election.
10. The report we published on improving the diversity of recruitment to States-owned bodies and arm's length organisations included a comprehensive action plan, based on international best practice. This won't be an easy fix and our main conclusion was that the initiative needs determined drive from government. At both officer and ministerial level there needs to be a much more sustained push for diversity initiatives such as this, with clarity about roles and responsibilities from the start of the new government. We encourage our successors to press for this because without clear leadership, real improvements to diversity will be difficult to sustain. We return to this below in setting out our overall priorities for the next States.
11. In considering the work PPC led on changing the Code of Conduct for Elected Members we commissioned research on the introduction of behaviour codes in other jurisdictions. These codes set out the behaviours expected from parliamentarians and other people who work in parliamentary buildings, in the light of various high-profile bullying and harassment cases which were not capable of being resolved using conventional parliamentary standards processes. The Forum met with the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Quebec to discuss how their system works, following a recommendation from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. This is also a complex matter which brings into focus what similar arrangements could be put in place for States staff and we encourage our successors to continue work on this.

Other issues for the next Forum to consider

12. In this section we refer to matters which are not part of the Forum's work programme during the 2018 term but which we consider should be taken up after 2022.
13. Our Chair lodged a [proposition](#) in 2018 for the Diversity Forum to be set up as a standing committee of the Assembly, with its work supported by the States Greffe. A number of questions were raised about how this proposal would work in practice and the proposition was withdrawn in favour of the Forum being established as a PPC sub-committee. This has worked reasonably well, although the necessity for all our reports and comments to be submitted to PPC before being presented has been cumbersome. However, there is nothing in Standing Orders requiring the Diversity Forum to be re-established after the election. Not only is there a risk of the Assembly not establishing a diversity committee, there is also likely to be delay as the form of the committee and its terms of reference are considered afresh by the next States. We would like to see the Diversity

Forum set up under standing orders, either as a permanent sub-committee of PPC or a standalone body.

14. The Forum has been supported throughout this term by the Greffier and staff of the States Greffe. However, it has not had its own dedicated officer. We call on the Greffier to address this in the next Assembly.
15. Our work has tended to focus on diversity in terms of gender and the national minorities present in the Island, particularly from the Portuguese and Polish communities. There are several other aspects of diversity which deserve attention in the next Assembly. In relation to disability, for example, there is now a regional Commonwealth Parliamentary Association group on disability matters which the Forum could contribute to during the next term.
16. Finally, after our last formal meeting we held a workshop with Kate Wright of the Diversity Network to discuss the diversity issues which we believe the Assembly as a whole needs to tackle after the election. Members identified five priorities:
 - Tackling violence against women. There are numerous aspects to this issue including economic inclusion for women, perceptions of the judicial system, and ensuring government works together on this matter;
 - Modelling inclusive leadership and behaviour in the States Assembly and civil service;
 - Establishing a dedicated Equalities Minister and department to
 - ensure and sustain focus on improving diversity, equality and inclusion (DE&I) across the island,
 - facilitate and scrutinise strategy and activity on D&EI matters across government departments (linking with public, private and the third sectors), and
 - build connections and engagement with under-represented groups across the Island to ensure their experiences and perspectives are understood and considered in strategy, policy and key decision making;
 - Enhancing social mobility and tackling the growing poverty gap, particularly through education policy;
 - Establishing a visual celebration of difference, such as a cultural centre/hub in Royal Square to celebrate different cultural and religious holidays, in order to provide positive opportunities for the community to network and connect across cultures.

These are matters we urge Members elected in 2022 to raise during debate on the Common Strategic Policy, which sets the agenda for the Assembly's work during the next term.