

STATES OF JERSEY



FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR LOCAL DISASTERS

Lodged au Greffe on 27th June 2023
by Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter
Earliest date for debate: 18th July 2023

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

that financial support should be made available to support Islanders who are affected by local disasters, and, in order to achieve that aim, to request the Minister for Treasury and Resources –

- (a) to bring forward a proposition to establish this financial support, with the proposed terms of the support to be established by the Minister in consultation with the Council of Ministers and relevant Stakeholders; and
- (b) to ensure that provision is made for the delivery of this financial support in the next Government Plan.

DEPUTY L.J. FARNHAM OF ST. MARY, ST. OUVEN AND ST. PETER

REPORT

The aim of this Proposition is to strengthen Jersey's resilience to unforeseen events by establishing a government emergency fund to assist islanders who have been impacted by local disaster, major incident, or emergency.

On 10th December 2022, an [explosion destroyed a block of flats in St Helier](#), Jersey in the Channel Islands. Ten people were killed in the explosion, which occurred just before 4 a.m.

The incident happened less than 48 hours after another multiple fatality in Jersey when a [freight ship collided with and sank a local trawler](#) off the island's west coast with three lives lost.

In January of this year many households were evacuated after torrential rain [flooded numerous properties in the Grands Vaux area](#). Many islanders remained displaced from their homes for extended periods of time while extensive repairs were carried out. Some islanders lost everything.

Whilst the island always pulls together to help those in need, and not withstanding our strong overall financial position and significant cash reserves, when it comes to financial support following unforeseen events and tragedies, we tend to lack structure and continuity.

A government emergency fund can provide the following benefits –

- (a) **Rapid Response:** A government emergency fund can provide rapid response to major incidents, natural disasters, public health emergencies, and other crises that require immediate action.
- (b) **Support for Vulnerable Populations:** Government emergency funds can provide support for vulnerable communities, such as low-income families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities, who may be disproportionately affected by emergencies.
- (c) **Funding for Disaster Relief:** Government emergency funds can provide funding for relief efforts, including search and rescue operations, temporary housing, food and water supplies, medical assistance and other necessities.
- (d) **Prevention and Preparedness:** Government emergency funds can also support prevention and preparedness efforts, including public education campaigns, infrastructure improvements, and emergency planning initiatives.
- (e) **Better Financial Planning:** A government emergency fund can help plan government finances more effectively, as funds can be allocated for other financial objectives with emergency funds already in place.
- (f) **Flexibility:** A government emergency fund would provide the flexibility to handle unexpected expenses for major incidents and emergencies, without having to rely on breaching long-term strategic reserves and investments or acquiring new debt.
- (g) **Long-Term Savings:** If not utilised, a government emergency fund can serve as a foundation for long-term savings and can be added to over time.
- (h) **Restoration of Normality:** A government emergency fund can help provide peace of mind and restore normality to affected communities expeditiously by providing resources for rebuilding damaged infrastructure, restoring essential services, and supporting community-based recovery efforts.

Financial and manpower implications

It is considered that there would be a broadly neutral financial impact as this proposition seeks to ringfence existing funds for the purpose of disaster relief.

Further information:

[Emergency planning: roles of responder groups \(gov.je\)](#)

“By law, Jersey must have an Emergencies Council in place. The Council is made up of people from across the States of Jersey, and has the overall responsibility for responding to emergencies. See the Jersey Law website for details of the Emergency Powers and Planning (Jersey) Law 1990, and for further information relating to the Emergencies Council and how Jersey responds to emergencies.”

[Community Risk Register \(gov.je\)](#)

[OO.92/2023](#) Deputy S.G. Luce of the Chief Minister regarding the strengthening of Jersey’s resilience to unforeseen events

Appendix 1

This appendix contains an example of how a UK based organisation approaches disaster funding and does not constitute a suggested plan for the fund being proposed.

National Emergences Trust (NET)

A UK based trust that launches appeals following emergencies to raise funds and provide support to those affected. The NET is the main agent of funding in emergencies in the UK. Below are some bullet points on what they do and how they allocate funds:

- Collaborate with local funding partners to make sure funds are raised fast and allocated fairly.
- Each appeal has a new set of 'allocation criteria' set for it to determine how best funds should be allocated.
- The funds are then allocated in two ways:
 - (i) Charitable gifts for survivors and loved one (aimed at spending whenever needed as the need is not often immediately clear)
 - (ii) Grants for charities and voluntary organisations
 - a. Their established funding priorities are:
 - b. Fund locally
 - c. Fund fairly
 - d. Fund without delay
- An Appeal is "activated" after considering which of the following criteria the event encompasses:
 - a. National Significance (e.g., a terrorist attack, major fire, or natural disaster)
 - b. Unmet needs (created from the event)
 - c. Public Support (When there is reason to believe a public appeal would work, for example when the public is starting to donate via individual platforms)
 - d. Right thing to do (a Board of Trustees agrees that it's the right thing to do)
- See: [Allocation Grant and Gift Distribution](#) for more details on their allocation policy and the rules governing who can receive a fund and in what way.
- Donations can be used for physical Rehab, mental Health Support, bereavement Support, and financial assistance.
- The Trust have both the Equity Scrutiny Group to scrutinise funding partnerships and the Survivors Advisory Forum to give first-hand insight into survivors needs. There are several other groups and committees the Trust relies on and found [here](#) alongside further detail on the Equity Scrutiny Group and the Survivors Advisory Forum