

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY K.M. WILSON OF ST. CLEMENT
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 19th MAY 2025
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 27th MAY 2025**

Question

“Will the Chief Minister detail what progress has been made regarding proposed changes to the Wills and Successions (Jersey) Law 1993, following the [consultation](#) which closed in September 2024, and will he advise whether consideration is being given to –

- (a) establishing the legal status of long-term partners who are neither married nor in a civil partnership, and specifically their rights in terms of purchasing property together and accessing assets of the deceased partner, and if not, why not;
- (b) changes to automatic entitlement of estranged relatives; and
- (c) the valuation and disposal of assets following a tragic event, for example a car or motorbike accident, to avoid distress amongst partners and relatives?”

Answer

These are matters within the remit of the Legislation Advisory Panel.

The consultation did not include questions related to long term partners and/or points (a) to (c). The Legislation Advisory Panel are due to discuss these matters on 29th May 2025, and will report their position to Ministers shortly thereafter.

The consultation on the 1993 Law, undertaken on behalf of the Legislation Advisory Panel in 2024, broadly related to (i) spouses and civil partners and their lifetime enjoyment of a property, (ii) gender neutrality and (iii) so-called “half-blood relations”.

19 responses were received to the consultation, including from the Law Society of Jersey’s Sub-Committee on Succession, alongside feedback from the Judicial Greffier, the Probate Registry and the Island’s Commissioner for Children and Young People. These responses were considered by the Legislation Advisory Panel in October 2024.

- (i) Overall, respondents were in favour of amending ‘dower’ to replace the traditional entitlement of the surviving spouse or civil partner to life enjoyment of one third of the immoveable property in the late spouse or civil partner’s estate with that of lifetime enjoyment of the matrimonial or civil partnership home. Nevertheless, a number of respondents expressed concerns regarding testamentary freedom and the inheritance entitlement of any children of the late spouse or civil partner.

The Panel favoured the amendment.

- (ii) Respondents were also in favour of altering the concept of the principal heir from the eldest male heir to the eldest heir regardless of gender, albeit there were questions as to the extent to which the concept of a principal heir should be maintained given most of the historic rights of a principal heir have been eroded and related narrowly to the grant of administration of the moveable estate in intestate successions where there was no surviving spouse or civil partner of the deceased (an alternative mechanism to the concept of principal heir may be preferable).

The Panel concluded that the concept of principal heir should not be abolished and should be made gender neutral.

- (iii) The question of half-blood relatives was more contentious, with many respondents maintaining that the distinction in collateral succession between whole and half-blood relatives was a robust policy.

The Panel concluded that the distinction should not be abolished.

Further technical discussions are needed with the respondents, especially the Law Society, and in the meantime, law drafting has commenced on the above changes.