



# Committee *for* Employment & Social Security

## Media Release

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### Toward fairness for all: Developing Guernsey's equality and rights organisation

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The Committee *for* Employment and Social Security has hosted a workshop to engage stakeholders and begin mapping out the development of an equality and rights organisation (ERO), a statutory body that could help foster fairness and inclusion for all islanders. The States' Disability & Inclusion Strategy includes a resolution approving the establishment of an ERO in principle, with implementation dependent on an approved business plan, funding and prioritisation.

The workshop was designed to solicit input on the possible scope, functions and remit of an ERO suited to Guernsey's population. Members of the island's Equality Working Group attended the workshop, including Citizens Advice Guernsey, Liberate, Guernsey Disability Alliance and Safer. The Children's Convenor, Honorary Consul of Latvia and representatives of the Employment Relations Service, Chamber of Commerce and Law Officers of the Crown also participated. It was facilitated by Peter Woodward, who served as Convenor of Guernsey's Employment and Discrimination Tribunal for 17 years.

Kate Raleigh of Citizens Advice Guernsey said "Our *Case Analysis of Discrimination Enquiries (2015-16)* illustrates that discrimination does exist here in Guernsey. People have contacted us reporting discrimination based on gender, pregnancy, disability, race and sexual orientation, among other factors. Surprisingly this included a few complaints from islanders who said they had been discriminated against in the workplace simply because they were local."

"Each and every one of Guernsey's residents deserves to be free from discrimination in the workplace and in the community," said Deputy Emilie Yerby, who is part of the Committee's ERO Project Team. "We know that jurisdictions that have statutory equality bodies and corresponding legislation have more success in reducing

discrimination. That is why we are working to create a statutory organisation that would promote equality for all islanders, and help remedy any unfairness.”

“It’s essentially about fairness, about ensuring that everyone in our society is treated with respect,” added Deputy Michelle Le Clerc, President of the Committee. “Our work toward creating an equality body suited for Guernsey’s population is an important component of the Disability & Inclusion Strategy.”

Equality and rights organisations already exist in the UK and Ireland, and other countries.

The Disability & Inclusion Strategy is among the 23 policy priorities in the current Policy & Resource Plan.

**Ends**

## **Notes to Media**

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Deputies Yerby and Le Clerc are available for interviews on this topic.

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