

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL SECURITY
BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 12th JULY 2021
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 19th JULY 2021**

Question

Will the Minister state what procedures or policies apply in instances where a mistake of administration is made by officers working within her portfolio to the detriment of the customer and whether any such procedure or policy –

- (a) requires an acknowledgement to the customer of the mistake that was made; and
- (b) provides for the mistake to be corrected or rectified regardless of how long it takes for the mistake to be identified;

and if within any such procedure or policy neither of these matters are provided for, will the Minister explain why not?

Answer

Most of the portfolio held by the Minister for Social Security is administered by the Customer and Local Services (CLS) Department. Other services are supported through the Justice and Home Affairs Department. All departments strive to offer a high standard of customer service across the many services that they offer the public. In situations where this standard is not met for any reason, there are robust and consistent procedures across government that welcome feedback and complaints from customers.

The Government of Jersey Customer Feedback Policy can be found in full here

<https://www.gov.je/Government/Comments/Pages/CustomerFeedbackPolicy.aspx>

As part of this policy, all complaints are:

- listened to and logged
- assessed and investigated
- responded to with options for resolution
- dealt with as quickly as possible
- handled confidentially with no detriment to people giving feedback
- handled in accordance with the customer feedback policy

Where it is established that a mistake has been made, the department will acknowledge the mistake and take the appropriate course of action to rectify it.

If the Government of Jersey complaints process has been completed and issues have not been resolved to the customer's satisfaction, the next stage is independent external review by the States of Jersey Complaints Panel.

In the case of benefits administered by the CLS Department, there is a separate, legal right for the customer to challenge a decision that they think is wrong. This right is included in every letter from the CLS Department that communicates the award of benefit or a change to benefit entitlement.

If a benefit claimant wishes to challenge a decision about their benefits, they can first request that their decision is reviewed by a different officer. Following a second decision, there is the right of appeal to an independent tribunal.

This legal challenge can be done at the same time as a complaint, but if a person chooses not to exercise their right to challenge a decision there is in many cases a point after which they stop having the legal right to do this.