

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY R.J. WARD OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 25th FEBRUARY 2020**

Question

Given the Jersey Better Life Index 2019 reported very low levels of confidence in government in Jersey, what action will the Council of Ministers take to address this situation?

Answer

It is important to note that the findings of the 2019 index are not as clear cut as the question initially makes out.

The 2019 [Better Life Index](#) published on the 14th February 2020 cites, on page 11, the [Jersey Opinion and Lifestyle Survey 2018](#) to gather a figure on trust in Government.

The 2018 Survey asked over 1,000 adults selected at random; “do you have confidence in the following institutions?” Government, Judicial system and courts, media and charities. Of these institutions, the Government ranked lowest with 28% of respondents declaring their confidence.

The [2019 Jersey Opinion and Lifestyle Survey](#) asked a similar question, requesting respondents to give a score out of 10 to indicate their trust in; charities, the States of Jersey Police, their parish, Statistics Jersey, the judicial system and courts, people in Jersey, the honorary police, local media, government departments and the States Assembly.

The findings of this survey, detailed on page 56 of the report, found that local media, government departments and the States Assembly were the three institutions with the lowest scores.

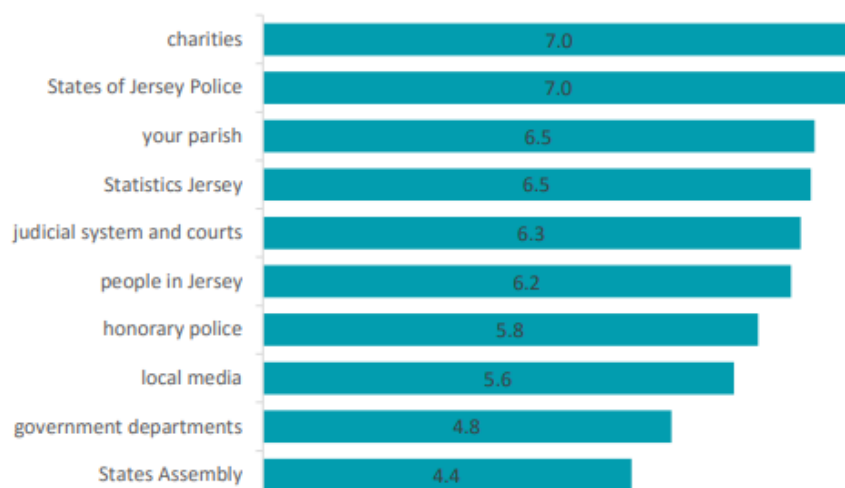
Trust in Jersey institutions

A series of questions asked how much people trusted: other people in Jersey; and a range of different civic or other community institutions.

Figure 9.6 Average (mean) score of how much adults consider that other people in Jersey can be trusted (1 = most people are untrustworthy, 10 = everyone can be trusted)



Figure 9.7 Average (mean) score of how much people trust the following institutions (1 = do not trust at all; 10 = trust completely)



- Jersey charities and the States of Jersey Police were scored as the most trustworthy institutions with mean average scores of 7.0
- the States Assembly was the least trusted institution with a mean average score of 4.4

[\(Source, page 56. Jersey Opinion and Lifestyle Survey 2019\)](#)

Global research into people's attitudes to professions shows that politicians and government ministers are among the least trusted in all the countries surveyed. This data indicates that a lack of trust in politicians is not unique to Jersey¹.

The Council of Ministers as the Government of Jersey is committed to providing opportunities for islanders to engage with local politics and the government. Since the introduction of electronic petitions in 2018, members of the public have found them a popular way to interact directly with government.

The [2019 Jersey Opinion and Lifestyle Survey](#) found that 34% of adults in Jersey signed an e-petition last year, an increase from 2018 and 11% higher than the corresponding UK figure². Additionally, the 2019 Survey also found that one-in-five Islanders had voiced an opinion to a politician or government official, in the last 12 months.

The better life index measures civic engagement by the simple measure of voter turnout. It is worth noting that a number of countries listed in the index use compulsory voting, including: Australia, Luxembourg, Belgium and Brazil.

¹ [IPSOS – 2019 Global trust in professions](#)
[IPSOS MORI 2017 poll](#)

² "Getting Involved" National Council for Voluntary Organisations. (2017) p.47

Additionally, the diverse backgrounds of Jersey's population have also been found to influence voter turnout. As a [study from 2018](#) found; six in ten of those who were born and live in Jersey, or born elsewhere in the British Isles and live in Jersey say they voted in the Jersey general election (57% and 63% respectively), compared to one in six of those who were born in Portugal or Madeira (17%) and half of those born outside of Europe (46%).

Last year the Government organised dozens of public meetings and consultations to enable islanders to have their say on significant policy issues, including the Government Plan, the Jersey Care Model, and Jersey's future immigration system. The Government Communications team also engaged with Islanders directly using social media, with 5,834 posts in 2019.

Jersey's Government provides vital services for Islanders: employing more than 6,500 people who teach our children, deliver vital hospital services, maintain our roads, sewers and sea defences, and keep our Island and our borders safe. Their hard work is invaluable in making Jersey such a good place to live and the services they provide are highly valued by those who use them.

Through the changes we are making to the culture of government and delivery of improved services, we hope to increase public confidence in the Government and continue the progress we've made in civic engagement.

The Government is committed to improving its service to customers and this includes way it gathers, handles, and manages complaints, compliments and comments about the many services it delivers. A new Government-wide customer feedback policy was developed last year and came into effect on 30 September and we are encouraging customers to share their feedback about government services, good and bad to ensure we learn and improve. Our new approach to feedback is part of the Government's overall commitment to putting customers at the heart of its services.

The Council of Ministers recognises that steps to increase both civic engagement and public confidence in the Government and States Assembly are needed. One significant issue is that Islanders do not understand the roles, functions or even workloads of States Members (as individuals) or indeed as Ministers or members of Scrutiny. The Chief Minister has already initiated some informal discussions with the Chair of PPC, about improving this deficit in such understanding. Additionally, the Government will continue to support the States Greffe and PPC in its efforts to increase electoral turnout as part of that process.