JUSTLY - GUERNSEY

Harmed by a States of Guernsey Department

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Justly Guide: I've Been Harmed by a States of Guernsey Department — What Can I Do?

When a public authority makes a mistake, delays a service, applies unfair treatment, or acts outside the law, it can lead to real personal, emotional, or financial harm. This guide outlines what you can do.

Step 1: Clarify What Happened

Start by clearly answering:

- What exactly occurred?
- Which department was involved?
- Was it delay, denial of service, poor handling, or misuse of power?
- What evidence or records do you have (emails, letters, meeting notes, forms)?

Write down your version of events with dates and details

Gather any paperwork or official communication

Step 2: Raise the Matter Directly

Before escalating, you should:

- Contact the specific department and ask for a review of their decision or behaviour
- Use any available complaints process (most States departments have one)
- Clearly state:
  - What went wrong
  - How it has affected you
  - What outcome or redress you are seeking

Keep all communication professional and in writing where possible.

Step 3: Escalate to the States of Guernsey Complaints Panel

If the internal department doesn't resolve the matter to your satisfaction:

- You can submit your issue to the Independent Panel for Complaints (a form of Ombudsman-like review)
- They will review whether the department:
  - Acted unfairly
  - Failed to follow its own procedures
  - Abused power or made a serious administrative error

More info at: gov.gg/complaints
You can submit in writing or online

Step 4: Explore Legal Action (if needed)

In serious cases — involving loss of money, rights, or harm to reputation — you may be able to:

- Take legal advice to pursue judicial review, negligence, or human rights breaches
- Request access to your personal data under Guernsey's data protection law
- Lodge a claim in small claims court for specific losses (if applicable)

Legal action against the States is rare but possible. Consider whether the harm justifies the effort and cost.

Step 5: Highlight Human Rights Concerns (if relevant)

If you feel the action:

- Was disproportionate
- Violated your right to privacy, property, or fair treatment
- Targeted you unfairly or continued beyond what is necessary

...then include human rights language in your complaint and documentation. Guernsey is bound by the European Convention on Human Rights (via local laws).

Refer to rights like:

- Right to a fair hearing
- Right to private/family life
- Protection from discrimination

Step 6: Consider Media or Political Escalation (Cautiously)

If all other options have failed — and your case is in the public interest:

- You can contact your Deputy (States member) for political support
- Some residents have taken concerns to the media (though this should be a last resort)

Keep your tone factual. The goal is visibility — not vengeance.

Step 7: Self-Care and Advocacy

Being harmed by a public body can be isolating.
Remember:

- You're not alone — others may have had similar experiences
- Support is available through Citizens Advice, mental health services, or advocacy groups
- You have every right to expect public bodies to serve you fairly

Summary: Your Action Checklist

1. Write a clear record of what happened
2. Contact the department and request review
3. Submit a formal complaint (States Complaints Panel)
4. Seek legal advice for serious harm or escalation
5. Reference any human rights breached

6. Explore media/political attention (if truly needed)
7. Look after your wellbeing — you deserve fair treatment