

THE STATES OF DELIBERATION
of the
ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

REQUÊTE

Cannabis: establishment of cross-Committee
 working group to examine regulatory options

The States are asked to decide:-

Whether, after consideration of the Requête entitled 'Cannabis: establishment of a cross Committee working group to examine regulatory options' dated 19th January, 2026 they are of the opinion:-

1. To agree in principle that the Bailiwick of Guernsey should properly examine the feasibility risks, and potential benefits of introducing a legal, government-regulated cannabis access framework, beginning with consideration of a time-limited pilot programme, informed by international best practice, including regulated pilot schemes currently operating in Switzerland and the European Union.
2. To establish a multi-Committee working group, comprising:
 - one member appointed by the Committee *for* Home Affairs;
 - one member appointed by the Committee *for* Health & Social Care;
 - one member appointed by the Policy & Resources Committee;
 - one member appointed by the Committee *for* Economic Development;
 - one member appointed by the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture;

with the Committee *for* Home Affairs acting as the lead committee, in recognition of its existing responsibilities in respect of licensing, and regulatory administration.

3. To require that the working group:
 - engage with local stakeholders, including (but not limited to) the States of Alderney, the cannabis industry, medical professionals, public health experts, third-sector organisations, law enforcement, and individuals with lived experience;
 - consult with local and external experts in cannabis regulation, harm reduction, public health, licensing, and compliance;

- examine comparative models from other jurisdictions where regulated cannabis access has been implemented or piloted, with regard to public health outcomes, youth protection, crime reduction, economic impacts, and regulatory cost;
- consider options for licensing taxation, supply controls, quality assurance, advertising restrictions, age limits, and enforcement within a Guernsey context; and
- assess the potential economic, social, health, and criminal justice implications of moving from prohibition to a regulated legal market.

4. To instruct the working group to report back to the States no later than December 2027, with:

- Clear policy options;
- a recommended model for a regulated cannabis regime, including whether and how a pilot programme should be implemented;
- an outline of the legislative and regulatory changes that would be required;
- an assessment of costs, risk, and mitigations; and
- a proposed implementation timetable, should the States resolve to proceed.

5. To direct the Policy & Resources Committee to identify and make available such appropriate administrative and policy support resources as are necessary to enable the effective operation of the cross-Committee working group, within existing budgets wherever possible, and to report any material resource implications alongside the working group's final report.

Rule 4(1) Information

- a) The propositions contribute to the States' objectives and policy plans by ensuring the Island's approach to cannabis remains evidence based, just, proportionate and maintains health and wellbeing.
- b) In preparing the propositions there has been no consultation.
- c) The propositions have been submitted to His Majesty's Procureur for advice on any legal or constitutional implications.
- d) There are no financial implications to the States of carrying the proposal into effect as all costs are expected to be accommodated within existing budgets.
- e) Drafting advice has been sought from the States' Greffier.

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Cannabis establishment of a cross-Committee
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THE HUMBLE PETITION of the undersigned Members of the States of Deliberation
SHEWETH THAT:

1. Public interest and democratic context

- 1.1. The legal status and regulation of cannabis have been recurring issues in public debate in Guernsey for at least the last three general elections. The matter has featured in election manifestos, public meetings, correspondence to States Members, and routine engagement between elected representatives and the public.
- 1.2. Regardless of individual views on cannabis, it is evident that a significant proportion of the electorate expects the States to provide clarity, leadership, and an evidence-based position on this issue. The continued absence of a structured review risks leaving the Island in a position of unresolved policy drift.

2. Previous States direction

- 2.1. During the previous States term, the States resolved, through the Government Work Plan, that work should be undertaken to explore options for changing the legal status of cannabis. That work was not completed and was subsequently paused following changes in committees at the start of the current term.
- 2.2. This REQUÊTE does not seek to pre-empt the outcome of that earlier direction. Rather, it seeks to ensure that the intent of the States at that time, namely, that the issue should be examined in a structured and informed way, is properly revisited and progressed, so that the matter is either resolved or conclusively addressed on the basis of evidence.

3. The current medicinal cannabis framework

- 3.1. Since 2020, Guernsey has operated a private medicinal cannabis prescribing regime. While the original intention was to allow patients with genuine clinical

need to access cannabis legally, the practical operation of the system has given rise to a number of concerns.

- 3.2. In practice, access is determined not solely by clinical need but also by an individual's ability to obtain and sustain a private prescription. This has resulted in a two-tier system in which some individuals are able to access cannabis legally, while others, often with similar patterns of use, remain subject to criminalisation.
- 3.3. Evidence from enforcement agencies and community feedback indicates that this system has unintentionally contributed to the diversion of prescribed cannabis into the illicit market. While diversion of prescription medications is not a new issue in Guernsey, the scale of private medicinal cannabis prescribing has increased the volume of a controlled substance circulating outside formal supply channels.
- 3.4. This creates a paradoxical situation in which a legal access route, designed to reduce harm, may be inadvertently reinforcing the very illegal market it was partly intended to displace.

4. Guernsey's drug harm profile

- 4.1. Historically, Guernsey's most serious drug-related harms have not arisen from cannabis. Instead, the Island has faced persistent and grave challenges linked to diverted prescription medications, particularly benzodiazepines and opioids. Synthetic opioids, including fentanyl, have been associated with significant harm and loss of life.
- 4.2. Against that backdrop, the current approach to cannabis, which expends enforcement effort on a widely used substance while leaving supply largely in the hands of illegal markets, warrants careful examination. This Requête does not suggest equivalence between different substances, but it does recognise the need to align enforcement, public health priorities, and regulatory effort in a proportionate and evidence-based manner.

5. Criminal justice system impacts and resource considerations

- 5.1. The prohibition-based approach to cannabis carries direct and indirect costs for the criminal justice system, including policing, prosecution, court time, custodial and community sentences, and associated rehabilitation and probation services.
- 5.2. While cannabis-related offences do not generally account for the most serious harms within Guernsey's criminal justice landscape, they nevertheless require ongoing enforcement activity, including investigation, arrest, charging decisions,

and case preparation. These activities consume finite police and court resources that must be balanced against other priorities, including serious violence, sexual crimes, organised crime, safeguarding, domestic abuse and higher-risk drug-related harm.

- 5.3. In addition, individuals convicted of cannabis-related offences may enter the criminal justice system in ways that carry longer-term social and economic consequences, including impacts on employment, housing, and rehabilitation outcomes. These downstream effects can place further demands on public services beyond policing alone.
- 5.4. The absence of a regulated legal framework means that these costs are incurred without any corresponding regulatory control or fiscal offset, and without the ability to redirect enforcement activity toward more harmful criminal behaviour. In a small jurisdiction with finite enforcement and custodial capacity, questions of proportionality and prioritisation are particularly acute.
- 5.5. The proposed cross-Committee working group would therefore be expected to consider:
 - the current enforcement, prosecution, and custodial impacts associated with cannabis prohibition;
 - the opportunity costs for policing and the courts;
 - potential effects on rehabilitation and reoffending; and
 - whether alternative regulatory models in other jurisdictions have demonstrated measurable changes in criminal justice demand.

6. Why regulation merits examination

- 6.1. Cannabis is widely used in Guernsey despite prohibition. Under the current framework, its production, distribution, potency, and sale are largely controlled by the illegal market. This offers no consumer protection, no quality assurance, no age verification, and no effective safeguards.
- 6.2. A carefully designed, government-regulated framework could allow the States to take control of factors that are currently unmanaged, including access, quality, strength, and public health messaging, while enabling a clearer focus on harm reduction, youth protection, and enforcement against genuinely harmful criminal activity.

6.3. This Requête does not assume that regulation is the correct answer. It recognises, however, that continuing with the status quo without proper examination may itself carry risks and costs.

7. Purpose of this Requête

7.1. The purpose of this Requête is limited and specific:

- to provide a structured mechanism for examining whether a regulated approach could deliver better outcomes than prohibition;
- to ensure that the issue is considered across enforcement, health, social, education, economic, and fiscal perspectives;
- to revisit previous States intent in a disciplined and transparent manner; and
- to return the matter to the States with clear options, supporting evidence, and an assessment of risks.

7.2. The States are not being asked to endorse cannabis legalisation. They are being asked to endorse informed decision-making.

THESE PREMISES CONSIDERED, YOUR PETITIONERS humbly pray that the States may be pleased to resolve:

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- one member appointed by the Committee *for* Economic Development;
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4. To instruct the working group to report back to the States no later than December 2027, with:

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- an assessment of costs, risk, and mitigations; and
- a proposed implementation timetable, should the States resolve to proceed.

5. To direct the Policy & Resources Committee to identify and make available such appropriate administrative and policy support resources as are necessary to enable the effective operation of the cross-Committee working group, within existing budgets wherever possible, and to report any material resource implications alongside the working group's final report.

AND YOUR PETITIONERS WILL EVER PRAY

This 19th day of January 2026

Deputy Marc Leadbeater
Deputy Tina Bury
Deputy Andy Cameron
Deputy Aidan Matthews
Deputy Charles Parkinson
Alderney Representative Alex Snowdon
Deputy Gavin St Pier