



## **THE CHIEF MINISTER**

**A General Election will be held on Wednesday 3 September 2025, if more than 12 valid nominations are received by no later than 12 noon on Nomination Day, Wednesday, 20 August 2025. This year's Election will be the second under a ministerial system of Government.**

**Leading up to the General Election we will provide information on how the Ministerial Government works.**

**This week's focus is on the role of the Chief Minister.**

### **Who is responsible for selecting a Chief Minister?**

Following the General Election, the 12 candidates elected will form the Legislative Council. At the first meeting of the Legislative Council held after the General Election, the 12 Elected Members will, by secret ballot, elect a Chief Minister from among them, and the Governor must then officially appoint the person so elected as Chief Minister.

### **How are the Ministers appointed?**

The first job for the Chief Minister is to select four Elected Members of Legislative Council, who have consented to their nomination, to serve as Ministers. The Governor then officially appoints the Ministers to their respective portfolios. The Governor must follow the recommendation of the Chief Minister on these appointments.

The Chief Minister can recommend to the Governor the revocation of an appointment of a Minister. The Governor has to then revoke the appointment.

The Chief Minister and Ministers will together set out publicly their vision and main policies for their four-year term of office. It is expected this Vision Statement (or some may call it a Manifesto Statement) would be prepared soon after they are in office.

### **What departments and function of Government will the Chief Minister be responsible for?**

The Chief Minister will recommend to the Governor the allocation among the Ministers (including the Chief Minister if they so desire) of the Treasury and other portfolios giving responsibility for functions of government. The Chief Minister will have responsibility for any functions of government in respect of which no allocation of a portfolio to a minister has been made. This process excludes any functions of government which under the Constitution or other law are the responsibilities of other persons. This would for example, exclude most of the Governor's special responsibilities under the Constitution.

A Minister who has the responsibility for a portfolio, exercises general direction and policy control over that portfolio, in accordance with the policies of the Government as determined by the Executive Council.

Along with the Ministers, the Chief Minister will have direct political responsibility and accountability for all strategic policies and services delivered by their portfolio. This includes strategic allocation of resources within the portfolio, as well as responsibility and accountability for all policies and services delivered. They will also be expected to account to Legislative Council for the effective use of public funds spent in their portfolios to deliver on policy outcomes. Ministers however, are not accounting officers, that is a responsibility that falls to members of the public service - usually the Portfolio Director.

### **Who reports to the Chief Minister?**

The four Ministers will report to the Chief Minister who will have oversight of their performance. Neither the Chief Minister nor Ministers will manage any public servants as this is the role of the Head of the Public Service or Portfolio Director and their senior officers within Government.

### **Will the Chief Minister be responsible for the operational activity of their Portfolio?**

No. The operational delivery of policies and public services are the responsibility of public officials. The Chief Minister and Ministers have political responsibility not line management responsibility of officials. This is to ensure that an impartial public service, free from political influence, is maintained as required by the Constitution.

### **Can a Chief Minister dismiss a Public Service Director?**

No, Portfolio Directors report to the Head of the Public Service who is responsible for the performance of all senior officers.

### **What relationship does the Chief Minister have with Public Service Directors?**

Unless the Chief Minister is allocated their portfolio, they will not have a direct relationship with a Director. The Minister with the allocated portfolio will exercise general direction and policy control over the portfolio and will work closely with the Portfolio Director and Senior Management team. The Portfolio Director will, in turn, act as chief policy adviser to that Minister on matters within the portfolio's responsibility.

### **Can a Chief Minister be dismissed?**

The only way that a Chief Minister can be removed from their office (outside their own decision is):

1. If a motion of no confidence in the Chief Minister is carried in Legislative Council
2. If a motion of confidence in the Chief Minister is lost in Legislative Council.

The Chief Minister could also choose to step down from their position for a variety of reasons by tendering their resignation to the Governor.

### **Where is the Chief Minister based?**

The Chief Minister will be based at the Castle but will also work from an office within their respective portfolio (if relevant).

### **How is a Chief Minister held accountable for their decisions?**

The Chief Minister is ultimately accountable to Legislative Council.

The Chief Minister is also be held accountable through a number of mechanisms including:

1. Select (scrutiny) Committees set up under the Constitution.
2. Keeping the Governor informed of activities of Government as required under the Constitution
3. The Ministers' Question Time
4. Questions in Legislative Council including those on behalf of constituents
5. Debates in Legislative Council
6. The Ministerial Code of Conduct.

### **Does the Chief Minister chair Executive Council Meetings?**

No. Executive Council meetings are chaired by the Governor but the Chief Minister provides the collective advice of Ministers to the Governor following discussion on matters presented at Executive Council.

The Chief Minister is able to meet with their Ministers when they choose. The Constitution expressly states that they can do so in order to decide what advice to tender to the Governor at a meeting of the Executive Council.

**In our next issue we will look at the role of the Executive Council. These Information Releases are also available online at:**

**<https://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/government/public-information/elections/>**

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