

Land  
Registry



Prepared under the  
Welsh Language Act 1993

## Welsh Language Scheme

March 2005





# Foreword by the Chief Land Registrar and Chief Executive

I am delighted to welcome you to the third edition of Land Registry's Welsh Language Scheme.

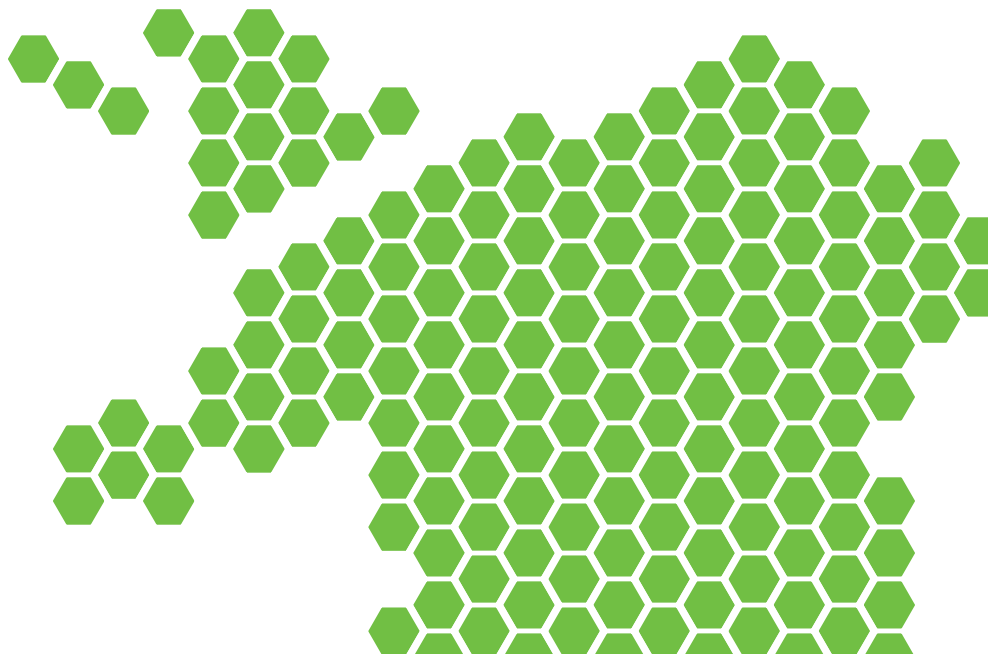
We are very proud of the progress we have made since the Welsh Language Board approved our original Welsh Language Scheme on 20 March 1998. We now have bilingual templates for registers of land in Wales; entries on the register can be made in the language of the source document; all of the forms that our customers use to do business with us are available in Welsh; and our advisory and guidance material is available bilingually. We would like to think that our commitment to providing services in Welsh was a factor in our achieving a record fifth Charter Mark in 2004.

But we need to go further. As we promote Land Registry's services to an ever wider range of customers, it is more important than ever that those customers can access our services through the medium of Welsh if they wish to do so. That is why we launched Land Register Online, our internet based service which is aimed particularly at the general public, as a fully bilingual service in October 2004. And that is why we are also committed to producing a comprehensive bilingual website in 2005. Looking ahead, we will also be taking full account of the needs of Welsh language users in designing the e-conveyancing system, which we believe will transform the way that land and property is transacted in England and Wales.

Welsh is the oldest spoken language in Europe and contributes hugely to the cultural diversity which is part and parcel of modern British life. We at Land Registry are determined to do what we can to help this beautiful language flourish still further.



Peter Collis  
Chief Land Registrar and Chief Executive





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This scheme has been prepared in accordance with Section 21(3) of the Welsh Language Act 1993.

Sequential editions were approved by the Welsh Language Board on the dates specified below:

1st edition – 20 March 1998  
2nd edition – 29 January 2002  
This edition – 4 February 2005

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Welsh Language Scheme (the scheme) sets out the requirements necessary to enable Land Registry to comply with the Welsh Language Act 1993.
- 1.2 The Welsh Language Steering Group (WLSG) was established within Land Registry upon enactment of the Welsh Language Act 1993. Its purpose is to direct, manage, and implement Land Registry's policy with regard to the Welsh Language. The WLSG is under the chairmanship of the Land Registrar, Wales Office who reports directly to Land Registry's Directing Board.
- 1.3 If members of the public have any enquiries or complaints about the operation of the scheme they should contact the Welsh Language Co-ordinator (WLC) or one of the other senior members of staff set out in the attached Annex.

# 2 Land Registry

- 2.1 Land Registry, a separate government department since 1862, was established as an executive agency of the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor in July 1990 and as a trading fund in 1993. It is responsible for the delivery of all services in connection with registration of title to land in England and Wales. It is also responsible for the registration of Land Charges and Agricultural Credits in England and Wales.
- 2.2 Land Registry's services are delivered through a network of local offices. Land Registry's Head Office is located in London. Information technology services are based in Plymouth. Land Charges and Agricultural Credits are administered from Plymouth. Business customers have electronic access to a range of online registration services through Land Registry Direct. The public has electronic access to a more limited range of registration services through Land Register Online.
- 2.3 Delivery of land registration services in Wales is the responsibility of Land Registry, Wales Office located in Llansamlet, Swansea. Land Registry, Swansea Office, located in the city centre, delivers registration services in six London boroughs.
- 2.4 The services which Land Registry, Wales Office provides to members of the public, usually through their professional representatives, include pre-completion services, applications for the first registration of land, applications to register transactions relating to registered land, and general enquiries. Disputes involving registered land can be resolved administratively by consent or by referral to the Adjudicator to HM Land Registry who may hear the matter himself or may direct one of the parties to commence court proceedings.

# 3 The Welsh Language Scheme

- 3.1 Land Registry has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales it

will treat the English and Welsh languages on a basis of equality whenever reasonable and practicable. This scheme sets out how Land Registry will give effect to that principle when providing services to the public in Wales.

- 3.2 Land Registry is committed to its scheme. It believes that effective implementation is dependent on it being overseen by a dedicated WLC. Furthermore Land Registry also believes that its Welsh language service delivery is enhanced by the employment of in-house translators.
- 3.3 Land Registry continues to support initiatives taken by the Welsh Language Board (WLB) and others in facilitating the use of official Welsh. The WLC is a member of the committee 'Welsh within Government Departments' which meets on a regular basis to discuss technical translation matters and to benchmark service delivery.
- 3.4 A third edition of the *Glossary of Legal Terms* incorporating new terms introduced by the Land Registration Act 2002 has been produced and distributed to practitioners in Wales.

## 4 Policies and initiatives

In formulating new policies and initiatives Land Registry will:

- assess the linguistic consequences
- promote and facilitate the use of Welsh
- move Land Registry closer to implementing the principle of equality and diversity
- ensure that staff and advisers involved in policy formulation (many of whom are not based in Wales) are aware of the scheme and Land Registry's responsibilities under the Welsh Language Act and that legislation for which Land Registry is responsible, policies, projects and initiatives are consistent with the scheme
- apply and monitor the measures contained in this scheme and not vary or alter the scheme without the WLB's agreement.

## 5 Delivery of services

Land Registry offers a Welsh language service on the telephone, in written and electronic correspondence, in the Customer Information Centre (CIC) and in the Telephone Services Centre (TSC) at local level. Forms prescribed by secondary legislation are available in Welsh. Subject to the qualification set out in paragraph 14.1, all explanatory and practice material is available in Welsh.

## 6 The standard of service in Welsh

- 6.1 Land Registry delivers an equally high quality service in Welsh and English.
- 6.2 Land Registry ensures that in key documents (such as the 10-Year Strategic Plan, annual business plans, the annual report and accounts) its commitment to the equality of service standards is clearly stated.

- 6.3 Land Registry's specific standards relating to the provision of services and dealing with customers in Wales, published in corporate and business plans, apply equally whether English or Welsh is used in the service delivery.
- 6.4 Land Registry ensures that the standard of its Welsh language service is included within its general programme of development and improvement. The standard is monitored at national level by Land Registry's Directing Board and at local level by the WLC supported by local members of the WLSG.
- 6.5 Land Registry continues to identify how best to meet the needs of customers who use its Welsh language services.

## 7 Written communication

- 7.1 Land Registry welcomes correspondence (including applications in prescribed forms) in Welsh and initiates correspondence in Welsh with customers who are known to prefer corresponding in Welsh.
- 7.2 Land Registry replies in Welsh to correspondence received in Welsh.
- 7.3 Circulars and standard letters issued to the public and practitioners in Wales are in a bilingual format.

## 8 Telephone communication

- 8.1 Land Registry welcomes telephone calls in Welsh. Calls are answered with a bilingual greeting and callers responding in Welsh are referred to a Welsh-speaking member of staff. When it is not possible to respond immediately in Welsh, arrangements are made for a Welsh speaker to telephone the caller.
- 8.2 Recorded messages are in a bilingual format and also invite the caller to leave a message in Welsh or English.
- 8.3 One TSC is located at Land Registry, Wales Office offering a bilingual service and specialising in the pronunciation and spelling of Welsh place names.

## 9 Electronic communication

- 9.1 Land Registry welcomes emails in Welsh and initiates email correspondence in Welsh with customers who are known to prefer corresponding in Welsh.
- 9.2 Land Registry replies in Welsh to emails received in Welsh.
- 9.3 Most pages on Land Registry's website ([www.landregistry.gov.uk](http://www.landregistry.gov.uk)) are available in Welsh and the provision of a comprehensive bilingual website (subject to the qualification set out in paragraph 14.1) remains the ultimate target.

- 9.4 Land Register Online was launched as a fully bilingual service in October 2004.
- 9.5 Land Registry is, with other interested bodies, developing a system for e-conveyancing that will have regard to the requirements of the scheme.

## 10 Public meetings

- 10.1 Land Registry does not hold public meetings.
- 10.2 Land Registry arranges corporate events and provides technical seminars for practitioner customers at which Land Registry's Welsh language services are advertised. The opportunity is also taken to ask the attendees whether they use the services and whether they have any comments. At least one of Land Registry's staff members conducting the seminar will be a Welsh speaker.

## 11 Contact with the public

- 11.1 Day-to-day contact with the public in Wales is through the CIC at Land Registry, Wales Office. Welsh speaking members of staff are available in the CIC and wear badges to inform customers that they are Welsh speaking.
- 11.2 Signs are prominently displayed indicating that a Welsh language service is available and all signs in public areas are bilingual.
- 11.3 Land Registry welcomes applications, letters, faxes, emails and telephone calls in Welsh and will reply accordingly.
- 11.4 Most pages on Land Registry's website are available in Welsh.

## 12 Corporate identity

- 12.1 Land Registry adopts and presents a fully bilingual corporate identity in Wales.
- 12.2 In particular, Land Registry's name, address and visual identity will be equal in size and quality in both Welsh and English and appear on letter headings, fax headers, compliment slips, business cards, identification badges, publications, vehicles and other goods and materials.

## 13 Signs

- 13.1 All signs within the areas of Land Registry, Wales Office, to which the public has access, are bilingual.
- 13.2 The signs are equal in terms of format, size, quality and prominence.
- 13.3 Any additional signs erected will be bilingual.

## 14 Publishing and printing material directed to the public in Wales

- 14.1 Land Registry publishes all explanatory and practice material directed to the public and practitioners in Wales bilingually favouring the Welsh and English versions together in one document. If published separately, the Welsh and English versions of any document are issued simultaneously and are equally accessible in paper or electronic format. Some material is so intrinsically technical and complex that it would not be practical or reasonable to produce a Welsh version.
- 14.2 Forms prescribed by secondary legislation are available in separate Welsh and English versions.
- 14.3 Where Land Registry sells any publication, the price of a bilingual document is the same as that of one produced in a single language format.
- 14.4 To ensure simultaneous publication, staff responsible for initiating material to be issued to the public are required to give appropriate notice so that translations and printing may be arranged.
- 14.5 Those responsible for designing and publishing bilingual publications have been given guidance and have regard to the contents of *A Guide to Bilingual Design* published by the WLB.
- 14.6 Explanatory and practice material, and prescribed forms are available in the CIC, via the website, at practitioner seminars or upon a written or telephone request.

## 15 The register

- 15.1 The Chief Land Registrar has a statutory duty to keep registers of title to land, profits and franchises.
- 15.2 Registers of land in Wales are printed on a bilingual register template.
- 15.3. Entries are made on the register in the language of the source document.

## 16 Public events, general adverts and press notices

- 16.1 Displays mounted at corporate events and practitioner seminars in Wales are bilingual.
- 16.2 General adverts and notices published in newspapers or other media in Wales are bilingual and are equal in terms of format, size and prominence.
- 16.3 Press notices relating to matters affecting England and Wales or Wales alone issued to the media in Wales are bilingual.

## 17 Recruitment and staffing

- 17.1 Job vacancies for posts in Land Registry, Wales Office and Land Registry, Swansea Office are advertised in bilingual format in newspapers or other media in Wales. The advertisements are equal in terms of format, size and prominence.
- 17.2 Job vacancies for posts outside Wales are advertised in English only unless the post is one for which the ability to speak Welsh is essential in which case it is advertised bilingually as above.
- 17.3 Induction courses for new entrants in Land Registry, Wales Office include specific reference to the requirements of the scheme.
- 17.4 Land Registry, Wales Office ensures that where staff members have contact with the public or practitioners in Wales, a sufficient number of Welsh speakers is available to deliver a Welsh language service. Where necessary, training is provided.

## 18 Welsh language training

- 18.1 Land Registry, Wales Office develops the skills of existing Welsh-speaking staff and encourages non-Welsh-speaking staff to learn the language.
- 18.2 Since 1998, Land Registry has invested time and resource in internal Welsh language training courses ranging from introductory courses to degree level courses for fluent Welsh speakers. Internal courses have been discontinued because there are no longer sufficient applicants to make them cost effective. Land Registry, Wales Office will, however, fund all external Welsh language training courses attended by members of staff in accordance with Land Registry's further education policy.
- 18.3 Dictionaries and other Welsh language reference books are available in the library in Land Registry, Wales Office.
- 18.4 Training has been provided and guidance notes issued to enable non-Welsh-speaking staff to give initial telephone greetings in a bilingual format and to progress telephone or written correspondence and applications in Welsh by referral to a Welsh speaker.
- 18.5 A directory of Welsh speaking staff is published in Land Registry, Wales Office and regularly updated. The WLC is available to provide support and assistance when required.

## 19 Services delivered on behalf of Land Registry by other parties

- 19.1 Land Registry ensures that agreements and arrangements made with third parties for the provision of services to the public in Wales are consistent with the requirements of the scheme.

19.2 Land Registry includes specific reference to scheme requirements in tendering documents and contracts and ensures proper monitoring of agents and contractors.

## 20 Administrative arrangements

- 20.1 The WLSG is responsible for the direction, management, implementation and monitoring of Land Registry's policy with regard to the Welsh language.
- 20.2 The Chairman of the WLSG reports directly to the Land Registry Directing Board.
- 20.3 The Annual Business Plan for Land Registry, Wales Office incorporates the requirements of the Welsh Language Act 1993.
- 20.4 All staff at Land Registry, Wales Office have a copy of the scheme as do all members of Land Registry's Directing and Managing Boards and all heads of group in Head Office.
- 20.5 The scheme is an agenda item at all SMT meetings held in Land Registry, Wales Office.
- 20.6 Land Registry will implement the commitments of the scheme when considering new, replacement or adapted computer programs which facilitate Welsh language service delivery in Wales. This will become of increasing importance as Land Registry moves towards e-conveyancing.

## 21 Monitoring

- 21.1 The scheme is monitored. The WLC is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the scheme and reports to the Chair of the WLSG who, in turn, reports to the SMT at Land Registry, Wales Office and Land Registry's Directing Board.
- 21.2 The following are monitored to ensure compliance with the scheme:
- forward planning and procurement
  - all aspects of service delivery
  - corporate identity, forms, signs, notices, the website etc
  - publications and external training material
  - recruitment, staffing and training
  - the provision and administration of services by agents and contractors
  - the incidence and nature of complaints relating to the scheme.
- 21.3 Customers are invited to comment on Land Registry's Welsh language services in customer service surveys, in user panels, during visits to the office and during seminars for practitioners. By this means Land Registry indicates its willingness to invite and record suggestions for improvement. The public is also made aware of how they can make their views known, to whom and how they will be dealt with.
- 21.4 Land Registry's complaints procedure includes provisions for dealing with grievances regarding the scheme.

21.5 Land Registry provides an annual report to the WLB describing the progress in implementing and enhancing the measures in the scheme and which analyses the number and nature of any complaints and suggestions for improvements received from the public.

## 22 Publishing information

22.1 Land Registry's annual report and accounts contains specific reference to the Welsh Language Scheme. A copy of the annual report is sent to the WLB with the bespoke report on the implementation of the scheme.

22.2 Land Registry publishes information comparing performance with standards and targets and explains reasons for not meeting those standards and targets. Where appropriate there will be an explanation of the steps to be taken to put matters right.

## 23 Publicity

23.1 Copies of the scheme are distributed to Members of Parliament for Welsh constituencies, Assembly Members, local Law Societies and other interested bodies including libraries and citizens advice bureaux in Wales. The scheme is available on Land Registry's website and paper copies are available at Land Registry, Wales Office.

23.2 Prominent signs in public areas in Land Registry, Wales Office publicise Land Registry's Welsh language services.

23.3 Details of Land Registry's Welsh language services are promoted at external events and during visits to Land Registry, Wales Office.

23.4 A bilingual customer newsletter is sent periodically to customers and copies are available from the CIC at Land Registry, Wales Office. Every opportunity is taken to publicise the Welsh language services. The Land Registrar at Land Registry, Wales Office is a member of the Associated Law Societies of Wales.

23.5 Land Registry's headed paper indicates that it welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English.

# Annex

Referred to at paragraph 1.3 of the scheme

## **Names and contact numbers**

Land Registry, Wales Office  
Tŷ Cwm Tawe, Phoenix Way, Llansamlet  
Swansea SA7 9FQ

Telephone (01792) 355000  
Fax (01792) 355055  
Email [eleri.jones@landregistry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:eleri.jones@landregistry.gsi.gov.uk)

### **Land Registrar**

Terry Lewis (01792) 355001

### **Area Manager**

Mike Harris (01792) 355002

### **Welsh Language Co-ordinator**

Eleri Sparnon Jones (01792) 355169





This document can be made available in alternative formats on request. If you or a colleague requires an alternative format please contact:

Eleri Sparnon Jones  
Tel: 01792 355169  
Email: [elery.jones@landregistry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:elery.jones@landregistry.gsi.gov.uk)