

Land Registry

Service standards



This booklet sets out the standards of service you can expect from us.



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Service standards

This booklet sets out our commitment to provide a high-quality service to our customers and the standards of service you can expect from us.

Land Registry's mission is 'to provide the world's best service for guaranteeing ownership of land and facilitating property transactions'. Land Registry's vision is 'making property transactions easier for all'. To fulfil this vision, Land Registry must offer a choice to customers, enabling them to make transactions in a way that suits their individual or business needs, but balance this against the obligation to central government as a key stakeholder to provide a cost-effective solution.

We are fully committed to equal opportunities for all our employees and customers. We design our policies and procedures to be fair and reasonable. We appreciate everyone's differences and make sure all our employees have the opportunity to develop their skills so we can provide the best possible service to all our customers.

Our organisation

We are a government department and executive agency, responsible to the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice. We also have trading fund status, which means we are self-financing. The cost of providing land registration services is met from fees paid by customers and not from public funding. There are a number of Land Registry offices throughout England and Wales, each responsible for specific areas of the country. Our head office is in London.



What do we do?

Our main purpose is to register ownership of **land** in England and Wales and to record **dealings** with land once it is registered.

We also do the following.

- Maintain and develop a stable and effective system of registering ownership of **land**.
- Underpin **title** to registered estates and interests in **land** on behalf of the Crown.
- Provide easy access to up-to-date and state-backed information about registered land. You can find more information online at www.landregistry.gov.uk or in our Public Guides (see the list of leaflets on page 14). Leaflets can be downloaded from our website or obtained from our customer support by telephoning 0844 892 1111.
- Provide a **land charges** and **agricultural credits** service.
- Publish a monthly House Price Index which captures changes in the value of residential properties. This does not include non-residential land and property.
- Organise study visits from overseas delegations and provide some land registration consultancy services to overseas governments.

Why do we register land?

Registering title provides an up-to-date official record of who owns land, eliminating the need to examine the past history of the title. It is a safe and straightforward way of transferring land between parties that cuts the cost of conveyancing and helps to prevent fraud.

A registered title is guaranteed by the state, protecting you against claims of adverse possession. If somebody suffers a financial loss because of a mistake in the register, compensation is usually available. The guarantee does not cover matters which affect the property that are not referred to in the register (overriding interests) such as public rights of way or compulsory purchase orders.

For more information, please see our Public Guide 8 – *Registering title to land - the characteristics and advantages*.

Leaflets, forms and other information

We publish a range of leaflets and forms available on our website at www.landregistry.gov.uk along with press releases and general information.

Our online "Find a property" service provides access to register of title information, identified by an address or title number, to registered users on payment of a fee. Land Registry's Business e-services is an online service for property professionals and offers access to a wide range of different facilities. This service is only available to business users who sign an access agreement and have a variable direct debit account with us. We are also one of several data providers to the National Land Information Service. This service is also aimed at conveyancing professionals and gives them access to comprehensive information on all land and property in the United Kingdom.

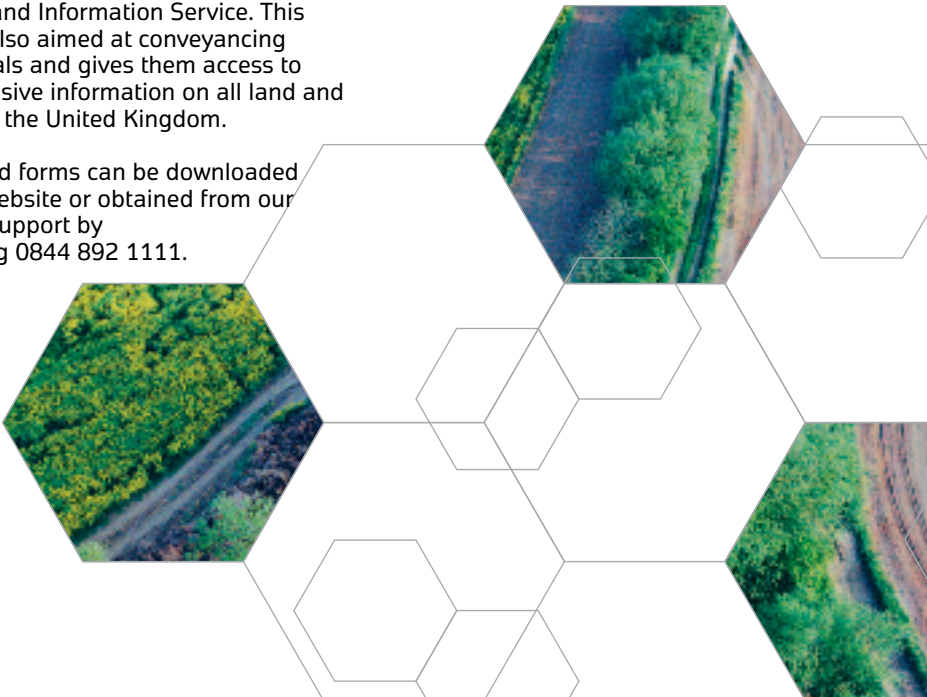
Leaflets and forms can be downloaded from our website or obtained from our customer support by telephoning 0844 892 1111.

Opening hours

You can ring us between 8.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays.

You may visit our customer information centres between 8.30am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays.

Please note that if you wish to visit between 5pm and 6pm you will need to make an appointment giving at least 24 hours notice.



Our main service standards

Setting our standards

Customer feedback helps us to make sure our service meets your needs. Our standards are set and reviewed every year by the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice to make sure that we improve our level of service and performance.

We:

- carry out regular customer satisfaction surveys
- invite customers who come into our offices to fill in a satisfaction questionnaire
- hold regular meetings with representative groups and customers, and
- pay attention to comments, suggestions and complaints.

If you would like to make any comments or suggestions about our service, please contact the customer service manager at any of our offices.

We also encourage our staff to put forward their ideas for improving our service.

Providing value for money

We review our fees each year and only charge what we need to recover our overhead costs, capital expenditure or new equipment, buildings and so on, to provide a return on our net assets.

Where do we publish our service targets?

We display our main service targets, and details of our performance against these targets, in the Customer Information Centre at every office. We also publish them on our website, in customer newsletters and in our annual report and accounts.

Our service standards

Accuracy

We aim to deal with all applications without making any mistakes. If we do make a mistake we will try to put it right as soon as possible.

Speed of service

We aim to deal with all searches and requests for **official copies** within three working days.

We aim to deal with all applications for registration within five weeks. If we cannot do this we will write to tell you why there is a delay and what we are doing about it.

Correspondence

We aim to reply to correspondence within five working days. This applies to letters, faxes and emails. If we cannot do this we will write to explain why and tell you when you can expect a reply.

This standard does not apply to requests for information under the Data Protection Act, which we will respond to within 40 days.

Personal callers

We aim to see visitors with an appointment straight away and visitors without an appointment within 10 minutes of their arrival. You may visit us between 8.30am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays.

Please note that if you wish to visit between 5pm and 6pm you will need to make an appointment giving at least 24 hours notice.

Phone enquiries

We will answer phone calls quickly and helpfully. We aim to answer 80 per cent of calls to general enquiries within 20 seconds and all calls within 30 seconds. We will try to answer your question straight away. However, if we cannot do this, we will contact you within five working days with a reply, or tell you when you can expect one.

Land surveys

Sometimes we need to survey land before we can complete an application to register or deal with land. If so, we will tell the person who sent in the application as well as the owner or occupier of the property. All our surveyors carry proof of their identity.

What happens when I contact you?

All of our offices, including head office, have a customer information centre. A general enquiry phone service is provided by our customer support on 0844 892 1111, or 0844 892 1122 for our Welsh speaking service.

Our staff are committed to meeting your needs and will:

- give you their name
- be helpful and treat you in a polite and professional way
- give you advice on how to fill in our forms either personally or by giving you an information leaflet
- arrange for you to discuss any problems with the local customer service manager, and
- make arrangements for urgent or complicated registrations.

What advice do we offer?

In line with the Land Registry advisory policy, which is set out in full on page 10, we cannot give you legal advice. If you need legal advice you should see a solicitor or contact your local citizens advice bureau.

If you want to make an application or enquiry in person, you can visit any Customer Information Centre. Our opening hours are 8.30am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays. You can call in at any time during our opening hours

without making an appointment unless you wish to visit between 5pm and 6pm when you will need to make an appointment giving at least 24 hours notice.

All our offices have wheelchair access and our staff receive training in communicating with people who have a hearing impairment.

Please tell us if you would like:

- help understanding the information we give you
- the information in a different language or format, such as on audio tape or in large print, or
- an adviser, friend or member of your family involved when you deal with us.

We will do our best to help.

Customers who have a hearing impairment

Textphone and Minicom users can call our customer contact centres using the text relay service by adding the 18001 prefix followed by 0844 892 1111. Alternatively, you can visit our customer service page on our website at www.landregistry.gov.uk/customerservice

Land Registry Advisory Policy

We offer advice to our customers through our publications and enquiry services and through the day-to-day handling of applications.

We provide factual information including official copies of registers, title plans and documents, searches and details of our forms and fees.

We provide procedural advice to explain how the land registration system works and how to make applications correctly. This includes:

- advice in advance of an application, where this is requested
- where an application is defective, advice as to the nature of the problem and what options, if any, are available to put it right
- an approval service for estate layout plans and certain other land registration documents.

There are limits to the advice that we will provide. We will not provide legal advice. This means that:

- we will not approve the evidence to be produced in support of a registration application before we receive the application
- apart from procedural advice, we will not advise on what action to take
- we will not recommend a professional adviser but can explain how to find one.

We provide advice only about real cases, not about theoretical circumstances. We will

not express a view on questions where the law is complex or unclear except where the question arises on a live registration application.

In providing this factual information and procedural advice we will:

- be impartial
- recognise that others may be affected by what we say
- avoid any conflict of interest.

What if I have a complaint?

We appreciate that mistakes can be annoying but sometimes things do go wrong. You can complain in person, by phone or in writing (including fax, email and through our website). Please let us know if you would like someone to help you make your complaint.

All our staff follow a standard procedure so you can be sure that we will investigate your complaint fully and fairly.

We will acknowledge your complaint on the day we receive it and aim to give you a full reply within five working days. If we cannot do this, we will write to let you know why there has been a delay and what we are doing about it.

If you need to complain

If you are not satisfied with our service, or you think we have made a mistake, please tell the staff at the office concerned and they will do their best to put things right.

Customer service manager

If you are still not happy, the best person to contact is the local customer service manager. If you are not sure which office you need, you can contact the customer service manager at any office.

Please note that if you are not satisfied with a land registration decision made by a land registrar, then this cannot be reviewed within the complaints procedure. A land registrar decision is final, and can only be reviewed by judicial means.

You can get more information on our website at www.landregistry.gov.uk

Independent Complaints Reviewer

If you have contacted the local customer service manager and you are still not satisfied with our response, you can get in touch with the Independent Complaints Reviewer at:

New Premier House (Second Floor)
150 Southampton Row
London WC1B 5AL.

Phone: 020 7278 6251
Fax: 020 7278 9675
Email: enquiries@icr.gsi.gov.uk

The Independent Complaints Reviewer (ICR) will usually only investigate complaints that have been through our internal complaints procedure. You should contact the ICR within six months of us completing our investigation into your complaint.

You can get more information and guidance on the ICR's website at www.icrev.org.uk

Other options

- You can ask your Member of Parliament (MP) to contact us on your behalf.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, or the way it has been handled, you can ask an MP to refer your complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will accept a referral from any MP but you should approach your own MP first.

For more information about the Ombudsman, please contact:

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP.

Helpline: 0845 015 4033
Fax: 020 7217 4000
Email: phso.enquiries@ombudsman.org.uk

The Parliamentary Ombudsman's website is at www.ombudsman.org.uk

Glossary of terms used in this leaflet

Agricultural credits

This is a system of registering charges (also called mortgages) over agricultural land and equipment.

Dealings

These include creating a new interest in land, for example, a right of way, or transferring an existing interest, for example, on a sale.

Easement

An easement is a right that the owner of one piece of land has over other land. An example would be a right of way over part of a passage that is included in a neighbour's title. An easement belongs to the land itself and is not a personal right. This means that when land changes ownership, the benefit or burden of the easement passes to the new owner.

Land

Land usually includes any property built on the land, other than movable or temporary buildings. Different interests in land can exist at the same time, for example one person may own the freehold while another owns a leasehold interest.

Land charges

This is a system of registering interests against an owner of unregistered land, such as certain types of mortgages, covenants and **easements**. A bankruptcy register is also kept. This records the names and any known addresses of every person who has been made bankrupt or is in the process of being made bankrupt.

Register

The record that we create when we register title to land.

Title

A person's right to land or property, or the evidence of that right.

List of leaflets

You can get leaflets about our complaints procedure, the Independent Complaints Reviewer and the Ombudsman from any of our offices. Or, you can look at them online at www.landregistry.gov.uk

The leaflets listed below are the ones that our customers find most useful.

Public Guide 1

A guide to the information we keep and how you can obtain it

Public Guide 2

Keeping your address for service up to date

Public Guide 3

General Land Registry information

Public Guide 17

How to safeguard against property fraud

Public Guide 20

Evidence of identity - non-conveyancers

Public Guide 22

Keeping your name in the register up to date



This document can be made available in alternative formats. If you or a colleague require an alternative format, please contact:
Customer Service
Head Office
Tel: 020 7166 4394
Email: customer.service@landregistry.gov.uk

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