



Residential Property Tribunal for Wales

Welsh Language Standards
Annual Report
April 2021– March 2022



Y Tribiwnlys Eiddo Preswyl
Residential Property Tribunal

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Foreword

This is the Residential Property Tribunal for Wales (“the Tribunal”) fifth annual report on its compliance with the Welsh Language Standards since the standards came into force on 30 March 2017. The focus of this report is the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

The Tribunal has two parts: the secretariat and Members. Both work together, during the appeal and claim process doing different tasks. The Members consist of:

- the Tribunal President i.e. the judicial lead
- a Vice-President
- lawyer chairpersons
- professional members who are chartered surveyors
- lay members.

The tribunal, its members and decisions are independent from Government. The tribunal has a number of members with strong Welsh language skills and is able to convene a full panel (i.e. a lawyer chairperson, professional member and a lay member) that can hear and conduct a full hearing through the medium of Welsh. The Vice-President is also a fluent Welsh speaker and is experienced in dealing with legal matters in Welsh.

The secretariat is responsible for tribunal administration and deal with all telephone and written enquiries. They are civil servants employed by Welsh Government and form part of the Welsh Tribunals Unit, who are responsible for administering six devolved tribunals across Wales. The secretariat team has two members who are fluent in Welsh as are the Senior Operations Manager and the Head of Welsh Tribunals.

Publication date: 30 September 2022

Contact details for enquiries: rpt@gov.wales

Section 1

Compliance Oversight Arrangements

This Annual Report has been drafted by the Welsh Tribunals Unit and has been approved by the President of the Residential Property Tribunal.

This annual report appears on the Tribunal's website and the Welsh Language Commissioner has been notified of its publication.

Section 2

Compliance Assessment

Service Delivery Standards

The tribunal ensures compliance with the service delivery standards by:

- Providing staff with guidelines on responding to correspondence, telephone answering and e-mail messages.
- Letter templates offering Tribunal users an opportunity to receive correspondence in Welsh. Letters and emails from the Tribunal also include a standard sentence stating that correspondence is welcomed in Welsh, and that corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay.
- All documents produced for the public are available in Welsh and English, including application forms and guidance documents. English versions of documents and forms produced by the Tribunal also include a standard sentence stating that they are available in Welsh, and that the public can submit information to the Tribunal in Welsh.
- Making sure there is an awareness that provision is in place to enable Welsh language hearings to be held and that an attendee can use Welsh in a hearing.
- Every page of our website is available in Welsh and English.
- The Welsh Government rolled out a new telephone system through Microsoft Teams in April 2021. The Tribunal use this new system to ensure that it complies with standards 8 and 9 by ensuring that Tribunal users have the option of pressing 1 to speak with a member of the team in Welsh and pressing 2 to speak with a member of the team in English.

Use of our Services

The tribunal received 113 applications in 2021-22 and of these applications 86 hearings were held, none were requested to be processed in Welsh and as a result the tribunal held no hearings in Welsh.

Websites

Below is a breakdown of how many visits were made to the Tribunal home page of the internet, in both Welsh and English.

	English	Welsh	Total
Page views	17,819	446	18,265

Policy Making Standards

The Tribunal exercises its statutory functions as set out by its governing legislation. The Tribunal does not have a remit to develop policy. However, we consider the impact of our operational decisions on the delivery of our services in Welsh.

Record Keeping Standards

The Tribunal's Compliance Notice (that details the Service Delivery, Policy Making and Record Keeping Standards that the Tribunal must comply with) has been published on the Tribunal's website: www.residentialpropertytribunal.gov.wales/sites/residentialproperty/files/2019-01/welsh-lang-compliance-notice-en.pdf.

We keep a record of the number of complaints we receive, if any, relating to our compliance with the Standards.

Complaints

The Tribunal received no complaints regarding the implementation of the Standards during the reporting period.

Forthcoming Work 2022-23

1. Develop an action plan for promoting and encouraging the public to use the medium of Welsh when interacting with the Tribunal.
2. The Tribunal will be conducting a skills audit of the Tribunal Legal, Professional and Lay members. This is to review our records for those able to conduct a Welsh language Tribunal hearing through the medium of Welsh.
3. Work will also be carried out to design a system of self-regulation regarding compliance to the Welsh language standards for the Tribunal.
4. A guidance document will be produced, providing the Tribunal with instructions on how to access both written and simultaneous translation, and on facilitating bilingual meetings through video conferencing platforms.