



Residential Property Tribunal for Wales Welsh Language Standards Annual Report

April 2023 – March 2024



Y Tribiwnlys Eiddo Preswyl
Residential Property Tribunal

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Foreword

This is the Residential Property Tribunal for Wales (“the Tribunal”) eighth 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 2023 to 31 March 2024.

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; and
- Lay Members.

The tribunal, its members and decisions are independent from Government. The tribunal has 6 members (3 legal, 2 surveyors and 1 lay) 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 Tribunal’s Vice-President is a fluent Welsh speaker.

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.

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Contact details for enquiries: rpt@gov.wales

Section 1 – Compliance Oversight Arrangements

This Annual Report has been prepared by the Welsh Tribunals Unit and has been approved by the Acting 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.
- From March 2024, a new language preference question has been included within forms with a second non-mandatory question asking, "If you can speak Welsh and have indicated English as your language of choice, we would welcome feedback to identify the barriers to using the Welsh language in Tribunals".
- 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 in 2023-2024

Total Applications Received	104
Applications Processed in Welsh	0
Total Hearings Held	19
Hearings Held in Welsh	0

Websites

Due to system changes we are not able to ascertain the number of visits to the Tribunal website for the first quarter of 2023-24. Therefore, the figures noted only cover Q2-4, from 1 July 2023 – 31 March 2024.

Below is a breakdown of how many visits were made to the Welsh and English pages of the RPT Tribunal Website between 1 July 2023 and 31 March 2024.

	English	Welsh	Total
Page views	9,252	309	9,561

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.

Section 3 – Reporting on work undertaken in 2023-2024

	Action	Progress
1.	Work will be carried out to design a system of self-regulation regarding compliance to the Welsh language standards for the Tribunal.	Objective completed. Two tick box questionnaires were devised, one for clerks and one for the business manager. They act as an aide-memoir and to check knowledge of the Welsh Language standards. Implemented 2023.
2.	A guidance document to 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.	Objective completed. Guidance document completed, and a new translation framework is in place. Implemented 2024.
3.	Engage with service users to identify barriers to interacting with the Tribunals through the medium of the Welsh language.	Objective on-going. Process has been designed to capture information from users (see 4th bullet point under Service delivery standards). Data being collected from March 2024 will be analysed once sufficient information has been received from service users.
4.	Identify improvements that can be made and implemented within 2023-24 to promote the use of the Welsh language in our tribunals.	Objective on-going. (see above) We have also identified improvements that can be made to the Website, which will enable promotion of the Welsh language. Currently working with our IT department to implement.
5.	Deliver training to all tribunal members and WTU staff to raise awareness of the use of the Welsh language in its hearings and wider communication and the tribunals obligations within the Welsh Language Standards.	Objective completed. Welsh language standards and awareness training provided to tribunal members during annual conference in November 2023. Training was provided to WTU administrative staff during the Team Training Day in September 2023.

Section 4 – Forthcoming work 2023-2024

1. Engage with service users to identify barriers to interacting with the Tribunals through the medium of the Welsh language.
2. Identify improvements that can be made and implemented within 2024-25 to promote the use of the Welsh language in our tribunals.
3. Assess Tribunal Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards against baseline established in 2023-24.
4. Prepare a Refresher Document to be circulated to all Tribunal Members outlining the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.