



Residential Property Tribunal for Wales Welsh Language Standards Annual Report

April 2024 – March 2025



Y Tribiwnlys Eiddo Preswyl
Residential Property Tribunal

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Foreword

This is the Residential Property Tribunal for Wales (“the Tribunal”) ninth 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 2024 to 31 March 2025.

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’s membership consists of 19 legal members, 8 surveyors and 7 lay members. Of these the Tribunal has 6 members (3 legal, 2 surveyors and 1 lay member have strong Welsh language skills and the tribunal can 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 President is a first language 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.

Publication date: 30/09/2025

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Compliance Oversight Arrangements

This Annual Report has been prepared 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.

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 uses a telephone system through Microsoft Teams. The Tribunal use this 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 2024-2025

Total Applications Received	112
Applications Processed in Welsh	0
Total Hearings Held	48
Hearings Held in Welsh	0

Websites

Below is a breakdown of how many visits were made to the Welsh and English pages of the RPT Tribunal Website between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.

	English	Welsh	Total
Page views	12,380	137	12,517

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.

Reporting on work undertaken in 2024-2025

	Action	Progress
1.	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, with all application forms requesting that Welsh speaking applicants identify reasons why they may not have chosen to interact in Welsh with the Tribunal. Data has been collected from March 2024. The data received is reported to Judicial Leads on a quarterly basis. Sufficient information has not yet been received to perform a satisfactory analysis. We will continue to collect data which will be analysed once a sufficient pool has been received from service users.
2.	Identify improvements that can be made and implemented within 2024-25 to promote the use of the Welsh language in our tribunals.	Objective completed. We have 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.
3.	Assess Tribunal compliance with the Welsh Language Standards against baseline established in 2023-24.	Objective completed. No fundamental issues were identified when assessing the results of the self-assessment on staff compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. A further self-assessment to be undertaken in 2025-26.
4.	Prepare a Refresher Document to be circulated to all Tribunal Members outlining the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.	Objective on-going. A Refresher Document has been prepared and will be circulated to all Judicial Office Holders during 2025-26.

Forthcoming work 2025-2026

1. Assess Tribunal Staff compliance to the Welsh Language standards by completing a self-assessment.
2. Update the assessment of Welsh language skills among Judicial Office Holders.
3. Circulate a Refresher Document outlining the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards to all Judicial Office Holders.
4. Identify further improvements that can be made and implemented within 2025-26 to build on progress made in promoting the use of the Welsh language within the tribunal.