



HM Land Registry welcomes the Independent Complaints Reviewer's annual report for 2018/19.

The report was written by Jodi Berg during her time covering the Independent Complaints Reviewer (ICR) role on an interim basis following the retirement of Elizabeth Derrington. I would like to express sincere thanks to Jodi for her work in this period. I am particularly grateful for her assistance in resolving a significant number of complaints through conciliation and intervention, and the speed with which cases were dealt.

It is clear from the report that the ongoing work of the ICR in providing an independent review of complaints assists both customers and HMLR colleagues in understanding and improving customer service.

I am pleased to note that proportionally only a small number of complaints were referred to the ICR and that the number of cases upheld was small. Ms Berg acknowledged that most people and organisations who have contact with HMLR were satisfied. The report also acknowledged that the majority of complaints were resolved through our internal complaints process.

The report recognises the role that HMLR's Independent Complaints Reviewer Evaluation and Study Team (ICREST) has played in taking forward recommendations from the ICR, and in ensuring prompt consideration and action. ICREST's involvement has, for example, facilitated improvements to practice guidance and reminders to staff on ICR recommendations.

Ms Berg commented on the way we operate our complaints procedure, particularly our recording of complaints and adherence to the steps set out in the published complaints procedure. As acknowledged in the report, these points are already being addressed in a review of HMLR's complaints procedure that we initiated following the launch of our Customer Strategy and publication of our Customer Charter late last year. I welcome the comments as providing further impetus and a helpful endorsement of this important work.

The report has also recognised how the relationship between customers and our staff has changed as our arrangements for handling customer calls and allocating resource to process applications have changed. At the core of HMLR's Business Strategy is our aim to be Brilliant at the Basics. In doing this, we are looking to become more customer focused and efficient in delivering our services. In our Customer Charter, we set out what we see as a shared responsibility with our customers to make conveyancing simpler, faster and cheaper. These strategic objectives, coupled with the operational realities HMLR faces, have made us think differently about how we can most effectively serve all our customers. We are developing our services to support customers alongside increased intakes of work, most of it electronically, and over 6,000 calls daily.

Simon Hayes
Chief Executive and Chief Land Registrar
December 2019