



I welcome the Independent Complaints Reviewer's Annual Report for 2022-23 and thank them for the work that they and the team have carried out across the year.

As ever, the insights in the Report and also in the investigations and reviews that the Independent Complaint Reviewer conducted last year have been very helpful both in resolving the complaints and also in highlighting areas that we need to improve for the benefit of all of our customers.

The case studies set out in the Independent Complaint Reviewer's report show clearly what can happen when complaints are not resolved when we first receive them or shortly afterwards. They demonstrate that, notwithstanding all of the work HM Land Registry (HMLR) have done to put the customer at the heart of what we do, there is always more to be learned from cases where customers do not have a positive experience of HMLR services.

My team and I value the professional and balanced way in which the Independent Complaint Reviewer approaches their assessment of the cases, which helps both HMLR and our customers to draw a line under those matters and often highlight ways in which HMLR can and should improve what we do.

As we set out in our Annual Report & Accounts, HMLR recorded 10,991 complaints in 2022-23 compared with 9,566 in 2021-22. In 2022-23, 24 of the complaints to HMLR were not resolved (around 0.2%) and were escalated to the Independent Complaints Reviewer for review.

In line with our Business Strategy 2022+, we have been working on a number of areas that will contribute to a greater customer focus across HMLR which naturally impacts how we recognise, handle and resolve and / or communicate in response to complaints. Some of these have been implemented and others are planned to be implemented. These are summarised below.

Customer focus – We have changed how we are organised so that there is more of a focus on customers in both the delivery of services today and the design of services for tomorrow. We continue to invest significantly in customer insight. In addition, we are finding new ways to bring the customers to life for our colleagues, to drive connection and empathy. We are looking at what best practice we can take from other organisations to ensure that everyone gets to know our customers' needs and cares they are met.

Transparency – We see scope for improving our handling of complaints – reducing the complexity and increasing the ease and speed with which complaints are resolved. A review is underway and recommendations will be implemented this autumn. We are committed to reviewing our public-facing guidance on process to ensure it is up-to-date and as helpful as it can be.

Timeliness – Rapidly getting to the bottom of what has happened and putting things right, where needed, is vital. We have recently changed our policy so that our colleagues can offer compensation for a valid complaint as soon as they think it appropriate to do so.

Fairness – We will always strive to deal with complaints in accordance with our central values of integrity and professionalism. The steps we are taking to understand the customer better, resolve early and keep the process simple will support consistent handling.

Resolution – We will always aim to resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the customer, provided, of course, that the customer's needs are reasonable and don't conflict with the proper handling of a land registration decision in accordance with the law.

Learning – We will systematically learn from complaints. We are investing in our Customer Relationship Management technology to be able to more easily assess and prioritise changes we could make. We will continue our complaints review panel that assesses each of the Independent Complaint Reviewer’s reports and recommendations. Actions in response are now being monitored alongside audit report recommended actions through our Risk and Integrity Committee with oversight from the board.

I welcome the contribution of the Independent Complaints Reviewer through the reviews that they conduct and the contact that the Independent Complaints Reviewer has with me and my colleagues. It continues to play an important part in helping to ensure we can continue to strive for a better customer experience.

Yours sincerely

Simon Hayes

Chief Executive and Chief Land Registrar

18 August 2023