

Section 1: General information

What is HM Land Registry's (HMLRs) proposal?

In our Business Strategy 2017 to 2022, we set out how we are looking to publish our conveyancer data to provide citizens with the real picture on how well their conveyancer is performing at working with us to register land, and to enable those same conveyancers to track their relative performance with us.

How does HMLR intend to show a conveyancer's performance?

We have data about the volume and the type of applications we complete for each conveyancer which we have been publishing as Transaction Data on GOV.UK since 2011.

See transaction data on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hm-land-registry-transaction-data>

We also have data about the volume of applications we cancel and reject for each customer, and how many applications require a requisition: a request for further information or action that we have had to send the conveyancer before their application can be completed.

We can therefore calculate the proportion of completed applications that needed a requisition, which is the 'requisition rate'. The requisition rate reflects the quality of the applications we receive from conveyancers and we intend to use this (when considered alongside the volume of applications a conveyancer sends us) as a reflection of a conveyancer's performance with us.

We publish data about our accuracy on GOV.UK. See our 'About our service' page: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/land-registry/about-our-services>

What data does HMLR propose to publish?

We are currently working with the legal and conveyancing sectors to understand their views about our proposal to publish the following data in 2018:

- a downloadable comma separated value (CSV) file which could name the 500 customers who sent us the highest volume of applications (year to date) and show the percentage of the applications they sent us which needed further work before we could process them; and
- a chart that tracks the data mentioned above for the top 50 customers by volume of applications sent.

Why is HMLR planning to publish data about a conveyancer's application quality?

Opening up our data about conveyancers will help us fulfil our commitment to make all our publishable data accessible and we are doing this by working closely with the regulators and membership bodies in the legal sector. This will help us meet our ambition to become the world's leading land registry for an open approach to data and our aim to make conveyancing simpler, faster and cheaper for everyone by improving transparency.

Our plans for greater transparency are part of our wider commitment to the rest of government (as set out in the [Housing White Paper: Fixing our broken housing market](#)) to support development and financial stability and to improve the competitive markets for citizens in their everyday life.

This is part of how we are supporting the Government's Industrial Strategy but also part of how we can align with the Competitions and Market Authority (the CMA) to provide greater transparency in this market. The CMA has concluded that there is not enough information available on price, quality, and service to help those who need legal support to choose the best option. We have been involved in discussions with the regulators and membership bodies in the legal sector about what part the data we hold can play.

Why does HMLR want to increase transparency in conveyancing, what are the benefits?

Being more transparent will enable conveyancing to become simpler, faster and cheaper for everyone. In this case, we are providing information that gives conveyancers the opportunity and

power to improve what they do, while giving citizens a better picture of how well their conveyancer is performing.

Working with conveyancers to improve the quality of the registration applications they send us can make a real difference to the simplicity, speed and cost of conveyancing. We measure the quality of a conveyancer's applications by the number of applications we completed which required a requisition: a request for further information or action that we have had to send conveyancers before their applications can be completed.

We send 5,500 requisitions each day. There are benefits to us all if customers improve the quality of the applications they send us. By working together, we can minimise re-work on applications, which, as well as reducing the costs for conveyancers and us, will drive down the time it takes us to process applications.

We estimate that the amount of work in the requisitions we send is the equivalent of processing 139,000 updates to existing registers or 19,000 new title applications over the course of one year. That's based on the first six months of 2017, when our caseworkers sent over 450,000 requisitions, covering nearly 700,000 individual points.

Many requisitions can be avoided with due care and attention, such as name discrepancies between documents and the register, or documents not being executed properly. Over 40 per cent of requisitions are avoidable because the issue raised was a clear requirement from the register or something well established by practice and/or a standard legal requirement.

We know that some requisitions are caused by factors that are outside of a conveyancers control. Opening up our data will help conveyancers become more aware of these factors and will provide evidence that can be used to make a compelling case for change to others in the market.

We have a role here too, so we are becoming more consistent with how and when we raise requisitions. To help address this, we are training our caseworkers to be clearer about the reasons for sending a requisition by using a standardised category more often. It is early days but there has already been a small improvement in how often we give customers a specific reason for their requisition. *see answer below for further information.*

If Application quality is such a big problem, what else is HMLR doing about it?

There are things we need to improve which are as important as conveyancers improving what they do. We will therefore be clearer about what customers can expect from us by being clear about the services we offer, by publishing clearer, simpler service standards and being clearer about what we expect: That conveyancers should inspect the register and check available guidance and the information in forms before sending us an application, which should include all relevant supporting evidence.

We will also work with customers and the industry to address areas they know they need to be better at; such as when conveyancers knowingly send us incomplete applications to get priority (so they have assurance that we will process their application before any other entries can be made on the properties' register).

We know we need to be easier to do business with and give customers a better experience by being clearer and simpler as outlined above, but we also need to be more consistent with when and how we raise requisitions with our customers.

To help address this, we are training our caseworkers to increase their use of standard forms of requisition. This means they will specify why they have sent the requisition from a pre-defined category more often.

There will always be occasions where our caseworkers need to send 'free-format' requisitions that cannot be easily categorised. We currently do that in about 34% of cases which is too high, given that many of the requisitions we raise are on the same overall issues. Fewer free-format requisitions will give us better data that will help us become more consistent about when and why we raise requisitions, and customers will receive clearer information about the action they need to take. It is

early days but there has already been a small improvement in how often we give customers a specific reason for their requisition.

We will also reconfigure our free format requisitions so that even when they are used they contain better data as to the reason for the requisition.

So, while conveyancers are still responsible for completing applications with due care and attention, we can help them improve by giving them better data and advice, a more consistent service and a better experience. This is not just about conveyancers improving the quality of their applications; we need to improve too, and by working together to do better across the board we can help make conveyancing simpler, faster and cheaper for all of us.

When does HMLR propose to publish the data?

In our Business Strategy 2017 to 2022, we committed to release the data in 2018. We will not publish the data until after March 2018 and we are working closely with the regulators and membership bodies in the legal sector to prepare for the release. We will publish updates when we have further information about the release date.

Why hasn't HMLR involved me so far?

In our Business Strategy 2017 to 2022, we committed to release the data in 2018. Although we do not have a release date, we will not publish the data until after March 2018. We provided further information in our blog 'Opening our conveyancing data' at the end of November to make sure customers had reasonable notice.

See the blog on GOV.UK: <https://hmlandregistry.blog.gov.uk/2017/12/28/opening-our-conveyancer-data/>

While we gather views about this publication, we are sending a monthly workbook to the 500 customers who send us the highest volume of applications (year to date). The workbook contains data about the work we have done with the conveyancer in the current financial year, such as the number and type of:

- applications they have sent to us;
- the most common reasons we needed to request further information about an application before we could process it; and
- cancellations we have had to make.

The workbooks are the beginning of a dialogue about application quality. They give customers the information they need to be able to improve processes in their organisations before we publish the data. They may also help customers identify what we can do better for them. We have had very positive feedback about the workbooks so far.

How do I contribute my views?

Please review the comments on our blog and share your views there if your view hasn't been covered before, or send us your comments via our contact form. Please select 'Business enquiries' from the drop-down menu and then 'performance measures'.

- Blog: <https://hmlandregistry.blog.gov.uk/2017/12/28/opening-our-conveyancer-data/>
- Contact us: https://help.landregistry.gov.uk/app/contactus_general/

Why isn't HMLR just focussing on the backlog?

We aim to be "Brilliant at the Basics" which is why that is the first of our six major themes in our new Business Strategy. Therefore, our focus for this year has been about bringing down our backlog, ensuring we are meeting our speed of service targets and delivering against our quality standards. We published this [online](<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/land-registry/about-our-services>)

However, our plans also need to look to the future. Which is why we are working towards our long-term aim to achieve comprehensive registration by 2030, to digitise our services and maximise the accessibility and re-use of our data.

Our Business Strategy's main aim is to ensure that we are continuing to make conveyancing simpler, faster and cheaper for all. One area that can make a real difference to the simplicity, speed and cost of conveyancing is the quality of the registration applications that conveyancers send us.

Greater transparency in conveyancers' performance with us has a role here. It will give citizens a better picture of how well their conveyancer is performing at working with us to register land and those same conveyancers will be able to track their relative performance with us.

We have a role here too, so we are becoming more consistent with how and when we raise requisitions.

See answer to question: 'Why does HMLR want to increase transparency in conveyancing, what are the benefits?'

Will people be able to use this data for marketing purposes?

We expect to release the data free of charge and make it available for use and re-use under the [Open Government Licence](#) (OGL). Under the OGL, users can exploit the Information commercially and non-commercially but they must acknowledge the source of the information by including or linking to any attribution statement specified by the Information Provider(s) and, where possible, provide a link to this licence.

What is the Application Quality Strategy and what does it consist of?

HMLR has developed a strategy for improving the quality of registration applications it receives from conveyancers. This sets out a shared responsibility between HMLR and conveyancers to improve things, encompassing a number of actions for all concerned.