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Titles for Sale - are you really a Lord or a Lady?

Land Registry today (17 February) published Public Guide 14, *The Sale of "titles" and Land Registry*. The guide is aimed at members of the public considering responding to websites advertising the sale of titles such as "Lord," "Lady" and "Earl".

As some websites make reference to HM Land Registry, land registration and Land Registry certificates, the guide is being issued to try and prevent potential misunderstanding. Land Registry has no connection with such schemes other than registering the transfer of any land involved as part of its statutory duties.

The advertisement invites, for example, a Mr John Smith to become "Lord John Smith." Although there is no suggestion that Mr Smith will actually be knighted or become a peer of the realm, the method by which John Smith becomes Lord John Smith is not always explained. What seems to be involved is simply a change of name, evidenced by deed poll.

It is sometimes a part of the scheme that Mr Smith also buys a plot of land and is invited to give it a name, such as "Mayfair." His ownership of the land is then registered in the "register of title" maintained by Land Registry. On completion of registration, a "Title Information Document" (TID) is issued which shows information taken from the register, including details of the owner and the property.

In the example given, the TID will show that "Lord John Smith" is owner of "Mayfair." It is not a certification or guarantee by a government department that Mr John Smith is now "officially" Lord John Smith of Mayfair.

Ends

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REGISTERED SERVICE ENGLAND

Notes for Editors

1. Genuine titles of honour can only be granted by the Crown and cannot be sold by the person to whom they have been granted.
2. Once land is registered, Land Registry guarantees legal ownership or title to the land. A Land Registry title does not authorise or guarantee the use of a particular form of address, such as “Lord” or “Lady”.
3. With the world’s largest online transactional property database, today’s Land Registry underpins the economy by guaranteeing ownership of many billions of pounds worth of property. Around £1 million worth of property is processed every minute in England and Wales.
4. Land Registry is a Government Department, Executive Agency and Trading Fund and reports to the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor. Land Registry keeps and maintains a register of interests in land for England and Wales. There are 24 offices in England and Wales, each providing land registration services for different counties and unitary authorities. For more information about Land Registry, please visit its website at www.landregistry.gov.uk

Contact

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