Landmark Information Group

PROPERTY AGENTS RETRIEVAL SERVICE (PARS)

Agents Overview, revision 2.0

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1. Overview

The Property Agents Retrieval Service (PARS) is a web-based system which allows property agents to access, download, print and distribute electronic and hard-copy Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) for both domestic and non-domestic properties.

1.1. Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)

Most constructed, bought, sold or rented buildings require an EPC. It contains:

- an energy efficiency rating from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient)
- information about a property's carbon dioxide emissions
- suggestions to reduce energy use and the potential efficiency rating.

EPCs are available to anyone with an interest in the property. However, non-domestic agents can access redacted documents which do not show the property address.

1.2. PARS background for property agents

In response to requests from property agents, DCLG and the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Register Operator (Landmark Information Group) will be implementing technical solutions that provide:

1. A standard service. An EPC can be retrieved from the EPC Register and attached to online written particulars, and
2. An enhanced service. Where confidentiality issues surround a commercial property transaction, a redacted EPC with the address removed can be retrieved from the EPC Register and attached to on-line written particulars.

Both options also allow printing of an EPC for attaching to hard copy written particulars. To ensure that the most up to date information on Green Deal is displayed, both services require the EPC to be retrieved directly from the EPC Register when viewed online. The enhanced service for redacted EPCs will only be provided for non-domestic property agents.

2. Property Agents Retrieval Service requirements

The following sections describe the full PARS requirements.

2.1. Property agent self-registration

Domestic and non-domestic property agents can register on the PARS system by entering their details and agreeing to the terms and conditions. Account administration tasks will also be provided, e.g. to update contact details, change passwords, etc.

Large agents may have many offices; there will be no restriction on multiple registrations from the same company. Organisations may therefore choose a single account for all users or multiple accounts per branch or department.

Agent accounts and API tokens issued by Landmark enable agents to access an enhanced service which incur charges. Organisations are responsible for their own credential security; neither Landmark nor DCLG accept any liability whatsoever for losses or abuse of the accounts.

2.1.1. API tokens

Following registration, the agent can request a unique API token which is required to use the redacted EPC web service (see 0 on page 5).

API tokens are similar to those issued by companies such as Google, Twitter and Facebook; they permit developers to write third-party applications which are authorised to interact with the central system. PARS will only permit access to a redacted EPC if a valid API token is passed.

2.2. EPC document download via the EPC Register

Agents can already request domestic or non-domestic EPCs by entering an associated Report Reference Number (RRN) into the existing EPC Register retrieval screens.

https://www.epcregister.com/searchReport.html

https://www.ndepcregister.com/searchReport.html

The documents are provided as standard PDFs in the format specified by DCLG.

The same EPC can be requested by multiple agents.

2.3. EPC document URL via PARS

This new service will allow agents to request URLs for domestic or non-domestic EPCs by appending the associated Report Reference Numbers (RRN). EPC URLs can be published on the agent's website so the latest document can always be accessed. The agent does not require their own document management system.

The URL directs users to the existing EPC Register website. The user will not need to enter an RRN; the PDF can be downloaded following agreement to the terms and the correct response to a CAPTCHA request.

Following successful registration, agent will be provided details of the URLs

2.4. Redacted non-domestic EPC access via PARS

Redacted EPCs are a format specifically for the purpose of marketing, only consist of page 1 and does not show the property address. The PDF format is specified by DCLG. The documents can be requested and downloaded by agents registered on the PARS website.

Two methods of access are provided:

1. Via the PARS website. A registered agent can log in and download or print EPCs after entering a valid RRN.
2. Via a web service API. EPC PDFs can be accessed by a requesting device passing a valid RRN and API token (see above).

An agent is charged £0.50+VAT every time a redacted EPC is retrieved via the website or API[1]. Their account must be pre-paid with appropriate funds by credit/debit card before a document can be accessed. This occurs via an industry-standard online payment gateway. The minimum permitted payment is £10.

[1] PARS will not make multiple charges for the same EPC from the same IP address and user agent during a 10 minute period following the initial request. This will ensure failed and re-requested downloads are not charged.

3. PARS development phases

PARS will be released in phases.

3.1. PHASE 1: 1 April 2012

The initial PARS release will provide:

- a self-registration service and account management facilities for agents
- a free domestic EPC download and URL service
- a free non-domestic EPC download and URL service
- a non-domestic redacted EPC download via PARS website
- basic PARS administration facilities for updating agent accounts.

3.2. PHASE 2: 15 June 2012

The second PARS release will also provide:

- an API token request and cancelation facility for agents
- a web service to access redacted EPCs by passing a valid RRN and API token
- a PARS administration facility to revoke agent API tokens
- further reporting facilities for PARS administrators and agents, e.g. API token use.

3.3. PHASE 3: 30 June 2012

The final PARS release will also provide:

- a charging mechanism for non-domestic redacted EPC download and web service API. Agents will be charged £0.50+VAT every time a document is accessed
- a facility for agents to make single payments by credit/debit card and be alerted when their prepayment falls below a specific level (chosen by the agent)
- a transaction statement for agents which lists credits, debits and costs per EPC.
- a facility for PARS administrators to access an agent's transaction history and issue credits.

4. PARS functional design

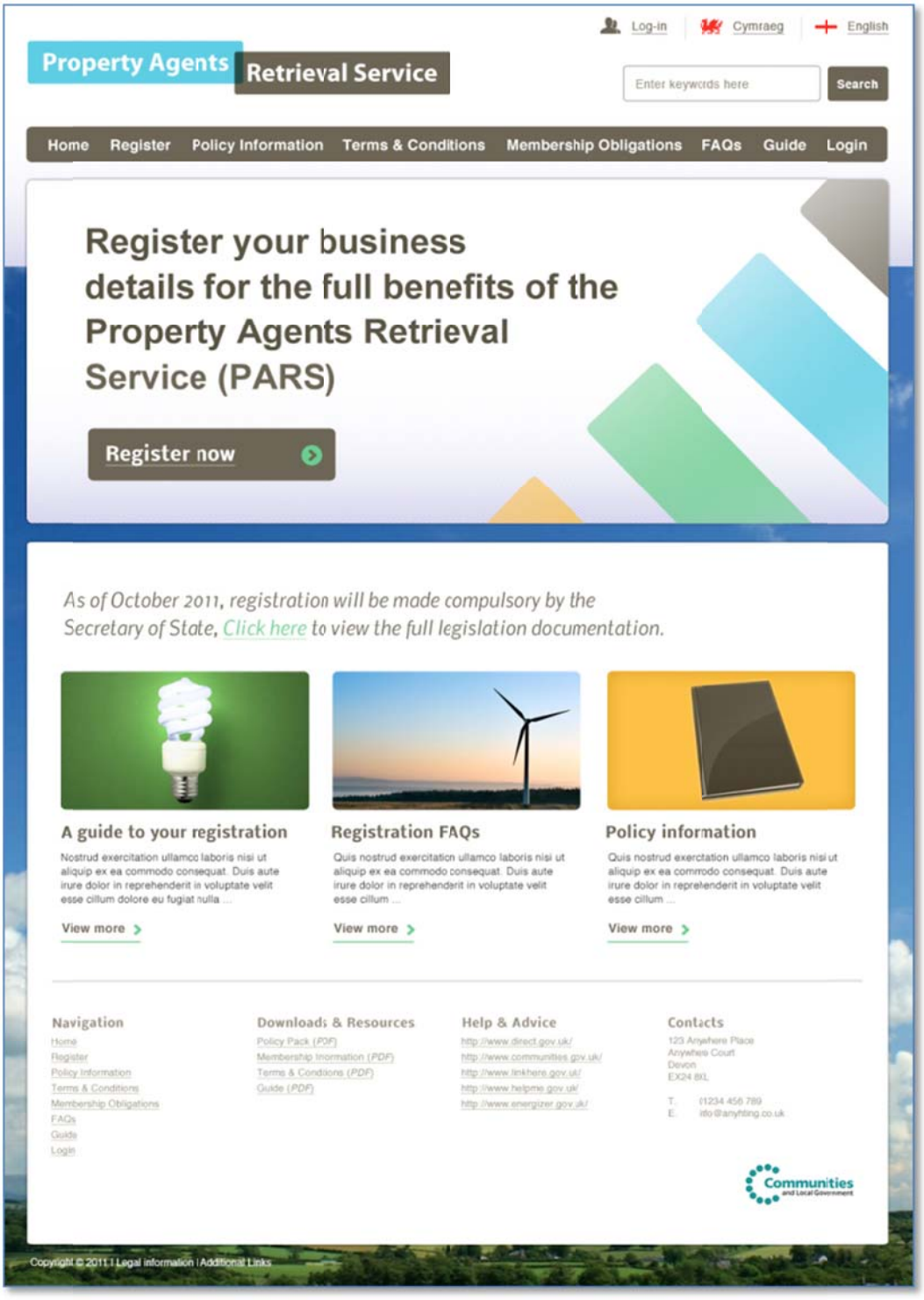
This section describes the essential system architecture for PHASE 1. The later phases will also be considered during the initial planning and development.

Please note that screenshots provided here are for example only. They do not necessarily show the final layout, design, content or data capture fields.

4.1. Information screens

Visitors to the PARS website will be provided with a home page leading to further content.

Agents who have already registered can log in with their PARS user ID and password. All logon attempts are logged.

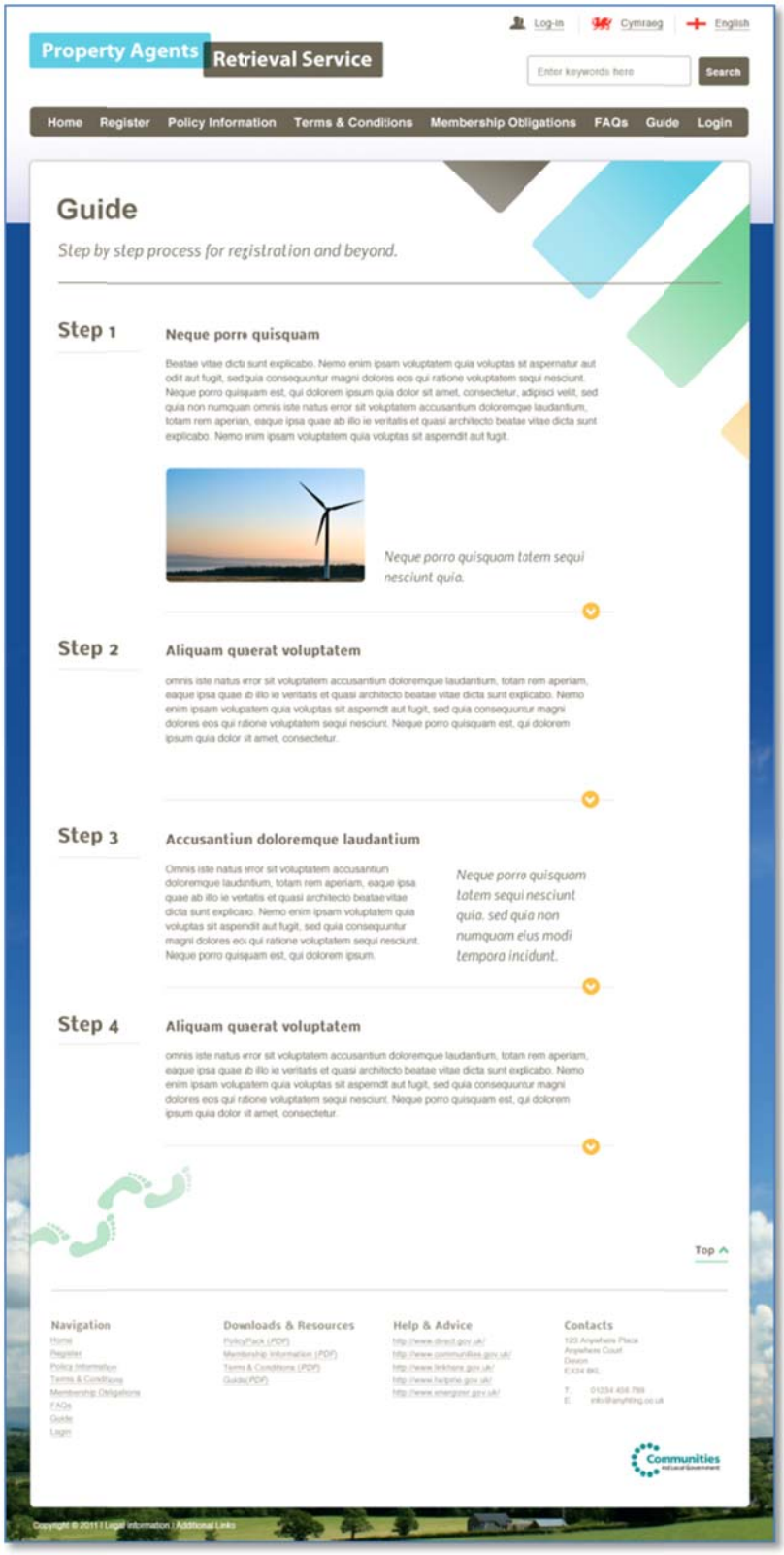


4.1.1. Policy Information

The policy information page provides detailed terms and conditions for agents considering registration:

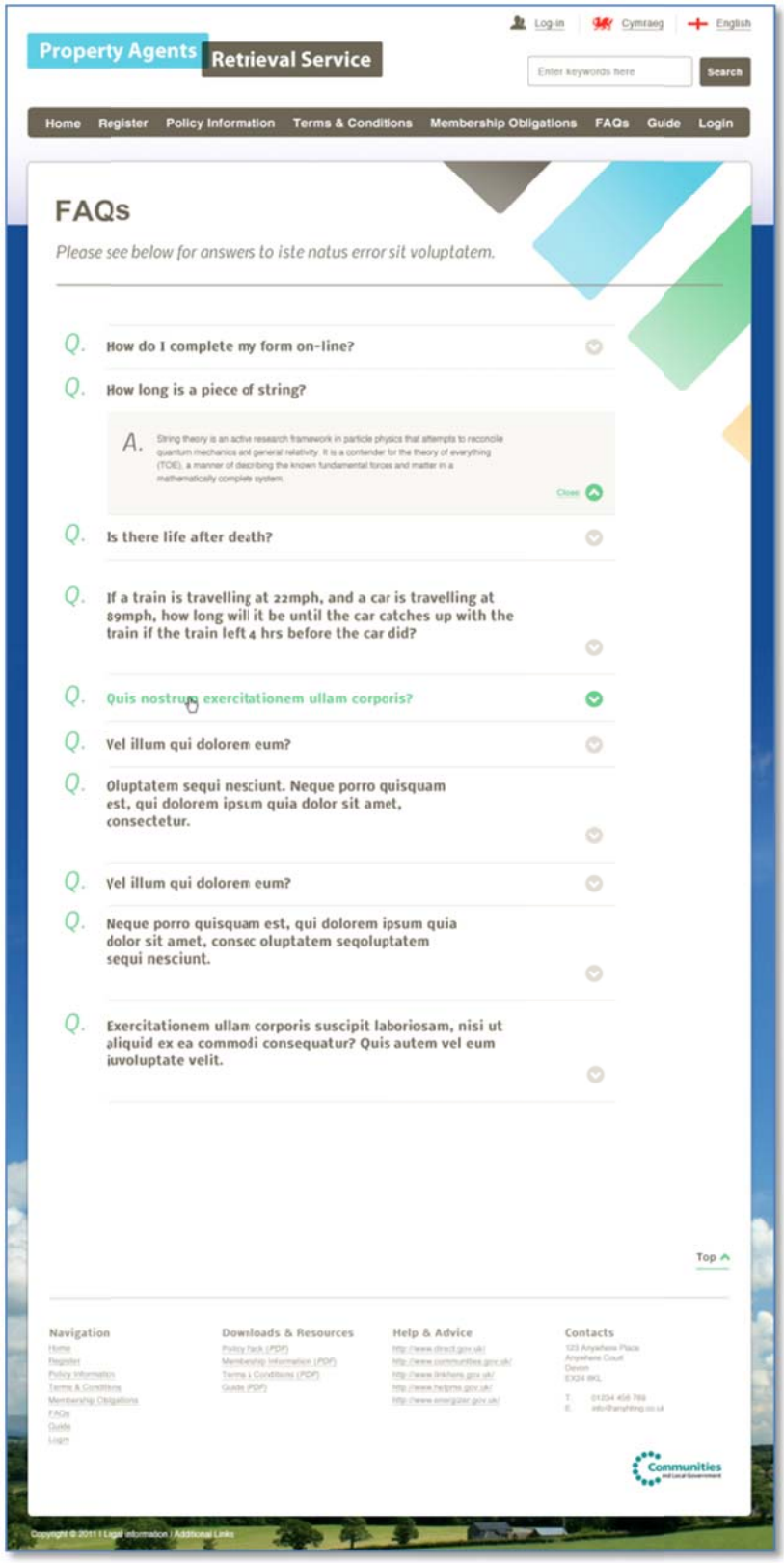
4.1.2. System guide

The system guide page provides information about the registration process, account management and how to access EPCs.



4.1.3. Frequently Asked Questions

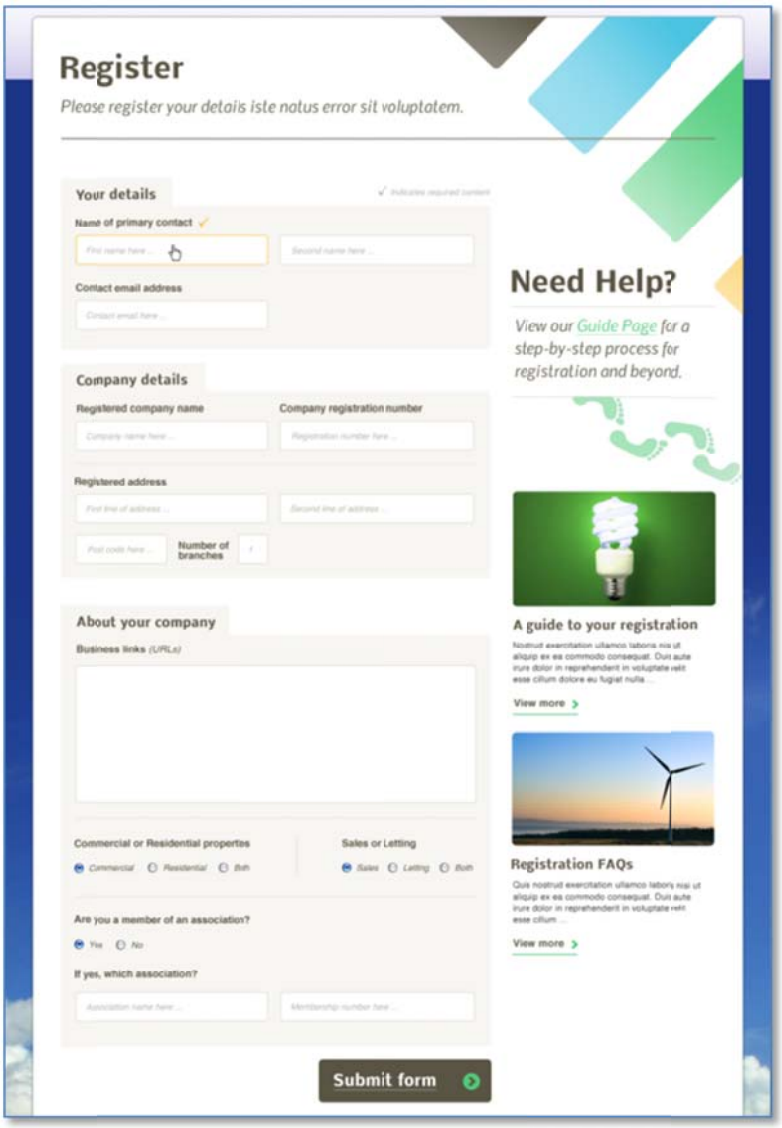
The FAQ page provides a set of questions and answers regarding registration, EPCs, privacy and other issues as appropriate.



4.2. Agent self-registration

An agent can register for an account by providing:

- their email address and password (used for log on)
- their company name, number, address and number of branches
- their property types: domestic, non-domestic, sales or letting[2]
- association memberships and numbers
- their agreement to abide with the service terms and conditions.



Following registration, the agent is sent an email containing a confirmation link. System access is only permitted once the link has been clicked.

[2] The agent's business type will not restrict access to particular EPCs. For example, a domestic agent is still permitted to access documents for a commercial property.

4.2.1. Associated registration data

Further information about the agent registration will also be collated for PARS administrators:

- the IP address and user agent of the device used during registration
- the registration date and time

4.2.2. Agent account management

Agents are permitted to:

- update their email address (a new email and confirmation link is sent to the new address)
- update their password
- update the company name, number, address, number of branches, property types and associations.

All changes require the user to re-enter their current password.

4.2.3. Agent password reset

An agent can enter their email address to authorise a password reset. The process:

1. Sends a confirmation link to the user by email. The link is valid for a period of one hour.
2. Once the link has been clicked, the user is prompted for a new password.
3. The password is changed accordingly.

Users are prompted to call a support line if they have forgotten their email address or have problems accessing the system.