

Code for the representation of names of counties and similar areas

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Committees responsible for this British Standard

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- Association for Payment Clearing Services — APACS
- Association of County Councils
- British Computer Society
- British Library
- Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions — Town and Country Planning Directorate
- Federation of Family History Societies
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Joint Information Systems Committee
- Nominet UK
- Office for National Statistics
- Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use
- Royal Geographical Society
- Royal Mail
- Society of Genealogists
- UK Education & Research Networking Association

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Foreword

This British Standard has been prepared by Subcommittee IDT/2/11 under the direction of the Information and Documentation Assembly. It supersedes BS 6879:1987, which is withdrawn.

If the national code specified in this British Standard is used internationally, this standard should be used in conjunction with BS EN ISO 3166-1 (see 4.3).

The first edition of this British Standard arose from the need for standardized codes to represent the names of counties to help distinguish between towns and villages with identical names in different parts of the country, e.g. Newport in Essex and Newport in Somerset.

Prior to the publication of the first edition of this British Standard in 1987, two nationally applicable systems were in general use; the three-letter Chapman County Code and the four-digit code produced by the then Department of the Environment. With minor modifications, those two systems were incorporated in the first edition of this standard, together with a two-letter code.

With further reorganization of local government in the United Kingdom in the 1990s, this standard has been revised to allocate code elements for the names of the newly created unitary authorities in England, Scotland and Wales. Following the abolition of the former Greater London Council and the metropolitan county councils since the publication of the first edition of this British Standard, the names of the first-level administrative areas in London and the metropolitan areas in England in existence when this revised edition was published have also been included. In this revised edition of the standard the two-letter code has been omitted because it is not possible to give visually meaningful two-letter code elements for all the new names and the four-digit code has been omitted because it is being updated in the DETR *Codes for Local Authorities and other Administrative Bodies* [1]. Only a three-letter code is provided in this revised edition.

Annex A and annex B are informative.

A British Standard does not purport to include all necessary provisions of a contract. Users of British Standards are responsible for their correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard does not of itself confer immunity from legal obligations.

Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, an inside front cover, pages i and ii, pages 1 to 12, an inside back cover and a back cover.

Introduction

The basic principle employed in producing the three-letter codes used in this standard, as distinct from abbreviations, is a visual or phonetic association between the code elements and the names being coded. Where small variations in spelling exist in the official names for a specific area, particularly with Irish, Scottish or Welsh names, they have generally been regarded as separate names and have been allocated separate code elements. Furthermore, the lists of names are strictly alphabetical, to avoid any implication of political or administrative status or precedence.

Annex A sets out the principles on which names are included as subdivisions and on which codes are constructed. Annex B gives the names in Welsh and English of first-level administrative areas in Wales.

NOTE 1 This standard does not define in any way the legal, political or administrative status of the subdivisions.

NOTE 2 The subdivisions included in this standard are, or were historically, associated with the United Kingdom. Accordingly, when the code elements within this standard are used in an international context, they should be prefixed by the international alpha-2 code element for the United Kingdom (as defined in BS EN ISO 3166-1) followed by a hyphen, i.e. "GB-" (see 4.3).

NOTE 3 The Post Office has a set of code elements (the postcode) for main mail delivery places that should be used in addressing items for postal delivery purposes.

1 Scope

This British Standard specifies a nationally applicable three-letter code to represent current and historic official names of constituent countries, counties and other first-level administrative areas associated with the United Kingdom. The elements of this code represent the names of subdivisions in current existence, the names of subdivisions used prior to the reorganizations of local government in the 1970s and the mid 1990s, the names of counties in Ireland prior to the Irish Free State coming into being in 1922, and other names in common use.

This standard is applicable to any situation requiring a code or code elements for the names of such subdivisions.

This standard does not specify spatial areas represented by names or codes at any one moment in time because the spatial areas bearing the names are subject to change.

2 Normative references

The following normative document contains provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this British Standard. The latest edition of the publication referred to applies. BS EN ISO 3166-1, *Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions — Part 1: Country codes*.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this British Standard, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1

country name

name of a country, dependency, or other area of particular geopolitical interest

NOTE This definition has been taken from BS EN ISO 3166-1 and, in the context of this standard, applies to the United Kingdom as defined in BS EN ISO 3166-1.

3.2

country subdivision name

name of a unit resulting from the division of a country, dependency, or other area of special geopolitical interest defined in BS EN ISO 3166-1 [BS ISO 3166-2:1999]

3.3

alpha-3 code

series of code elements comprising three letters

3.4

current subdivision

name in official use for a constituent country, county or other first-level administrative area in existence when this standard was published

3.5

historic subdivision

name in former official use for a constituent county or other first-level administrative area formerly in existence but no longer in existence under that official name or no longer associated with the United Kingdom when this standard was published

4 Requirements

4.1 General

When applying this standard for subdivisions associated with the United Kingdom, the code elements in Tables 1 to 3 shall be used.

The number and date of this British Standard, BS 6879:1999, shall be stated when the code elements in Tables 1 to 3 are used.

4.2 Temporary code elements

For future subdivisions, code elements following the principles of this standard and starting with X shall be used until permanent code elements are allocated by the BSI committee concerned.

4.3 International application

When the code elements are used internationally, they shall be prefixed by the international alpha-2 code element for the United Kingdom, in accordance with BS EN ISO 3166-1, followed by a hyphen, i.e. "GB-" [see example b)].

NOTE The code elements within BS EN ISO 3166-1 were derived largely from the country designations for vehicles reported by the governments of states adhering to the code for international use.

Great Britain (the name of a component part and thus a subdivision of the United Kingdom) shall be distinguished from the United Kingdom itself (the country name) as shown in examples a) and b).

EXAMPLES

a) National use

United Kingdom	UKM
Great Britain	GBN (GBR in BS EN ISO 3166-1)
Wales	WLS
Powys	POW

b) International use

United Kingdom	GB or GB-UKM
Great Britain	GB-GBN (GBR in BS EN ISO 3166-1)
Wales	GB-WLS
Powys	GB-POW

4.4 Code elements for further divisions

In order to code names of country divisions not listed in Tables 1 to 3, or to code names of divisions within a county or other first-level administrative area, e.g. districts or parishes, codes shall be devised using code elements distinguishable from those used for other areas or purposes.

NOTE 1 A four-digit code could be used for this purpose, such as that published by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions for local authorities (DETR *Codes for Local Authorities and other Administrative Bodies* [1]).

When drawing up other codes in a multi-county context a suitable separator, e.g. : (colon) shall be inserted between code elements.

NOTE 2 The use of a code element from this standard as a prefix is recommended, in order to avoid ambiguity.

4.5 Subdivision lists and code elements

The alpha-3 code elements for current subdivisions shall be used in accordance with Tables 1 and 2. The alpha-3 code elements for historic subdivisions shall be used in accordance with Tables 2 and 3.

NOTE Table 1 lists current subdivisions in alphabetical order, followed by the code element and the location of the counties and other first-level administrative areas within the Channel Islands, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Table 2 lists, in alphabetical order, the current and historic alpha-3 elements given in Tables 1 and 3, followed by the name of the subdivision and the location of the subdivision within England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales, or within Ireland before the Irish Free State came into being officially on 15 January 1922 but not within Northern Ireland.

Table 3 lists the alpha-3 code elements for commonly found historic subdivisions, arranged in alphabetical order within constituent countries followed by the code element.

Table 1 — Alphabetical list of official names of current subdivisions with their code elements and locations

Subdivision	Code element	Location	Subdivision	Code element	Location
Aberdeen City	ABE	SCT	Blaenau Gwent	BGW	WLS
Aberdeenshire	ABD	SCT	Bolton	BOL	ENG
Abertawe	ATA	WLS	Bournemouth	BMH	ENG
Angus	ANS	SCT	Bracknell Forest	BRC	ENG
Antrim	ANT	NIR	Bradford (City of)	BRD	ENG
Ards	ARD	NIR	Brent	BEN	ENG
Argyll and Bute	AGB	SCT	Bridgend	BGE	WLS
Armagh	ARM	NIR	Brighton and Hove	BNH	ENG
Ballymena	BLA	NIR	Bristol, City of	BST	ENG
Ballymoney	BLY	NIR	Bro Morgannwg	BMG	WLS
Banbridge	BNB	NIR	Bromley	BRY	ENG
Barking and Dagenham	BDG	ENG	Buckinghamshire	BKM	ENG
Barnet	BNE	ENG	Bury	BUR	ENG
Barnsley	BNS	ENG	Caerdydd	CRD	WLS
Bath and North East Somerset	BAS	ENG	Caerffili	CAF	WLS
Bedfordshire	BDF	ENG	Caerphilly	CAY	WLS
Belfast (City of)	BFS	NIR	Calderdale	CLD	ENG
Bexley	BEX	ENG	Cambridgeshire	CAM	ENG
Birmingham (City of)	BIR	ENG	Camden	CMD	ENG
Blackburn with Darwen	BBD	ENG	Cardiff (City of)	CRF	WLS
Blackpool	BPL	ENG	Carmarthenshire	CMN	WLS