

Sole practitioners: the new approach

I am already a sole practitioner but I've heard that I now need to be recognised – what does this mean?

From 1 July 2009 any solicitor who wants to practise on his or her own account will need to be a recognised sole practitioner. But don't worry, on 1 July existing sole practices will be passported to become recognised sole practitioners. See the [passporting section](#) above for more background details.

I want to set up a sole practice but won't be able to until after 1 July, what do I need to do?

Before setting up you will need to apply for initial approval to be a recognised sole practitioner on form [RSP1](#), which is similar to the application for firms to be granted recognised body status. Please submit your application at least four weeks before you want to begin practising through your new firm as you cannot set up until your application has been granted.

Will I get a certificate to show that I am a recognised sole practitioner?

No, we will not issue separate certificates. The authorisation is part of the practising certificate, so details of it will be added to your PC when you are granted approval (if approval is granted during a practising certificate year we will ask you to send us your existing PC for this purpose). However, if you have been passported, your passporting letter will be evidence that the SRA has authorised you to practise as a sole practitioner until you apply for renewal of your PC and approval in October 2009.

Will my approval as a recognised sole practitioner continue indefinitely?

No, all sole practitioners will need to apply for annual renewal of approval each October at the same time as recognised bodies apply for renewal of their recognition. The forms for renewal of your approval and for renewal of your practising certificate will be sent to you together ([How much will it cost for renewal in 2009?](#)).

Will it cause a problem if I have a salaried partner?

If you want to have a salaried partner, or to hold anyone out as a partner of the firm, you cannot be a recognised sole practitioner. If you wish to have such partners, you should apply for recognition of your firm as a partnership on form [RB1](#).