

News release

Annual exercise for solicitors without practising certificates from April 2023

03 August 2022

We have confirmed that, from April 2023, we will re-introduce a requirement for solicitors without practising certificates to apply to remain on the Roll of Solicitors of England and Wales.

The need to reintroduce such an annual application process has come about due to changes to laws on how personal data is handled and our need to make sure the data we hold is up to date. These changes directly impact information held on the publicly accessible roll, extracts of which are also published on online via the Solicitors Register.

As a result, all solicitors without a current practising certificate, including those who are retired, working in-house, or who are not currently practising, will from next year be required to complete an annual application to remain on the roll, and pay a small administration fee.

If anyone to whom it applies does not complete their annual return, they would from that point lose the right to refer to themselves as a non-practising solicitor or access the associated benefits this title brings.

Ahead of the application exercise in opening in April, we have committed to running an extensive awareness raising campaign to make sure all current solicitors without practising certificates are aware of the requirement and that the contact details we hold are up-to-date.

Paul Philip, SRA Chief Executive, said: 'Since we stopped the previous keeping of the roll exercise there have been significant changes to data legislation and requirements. We now need to re-introduce a process for ensuring all data held on the roll is accurate and up-to-date. Importantly, we are working to make sure that the costs are as low as possible and that the process is straightforward.

'Ahead of this we will be making extensive efforts to get in touch with those on roll to make them aware of the requirements and make sure we have accurate contact information for them, so that they can take part in the exercise if they wish to.'

A public consultation exercise ran earlier this year inviting views on our initial proposals for how and when a new application process should operate. This saw more than 500 people responding. Many respondents understood the need to restore the keeping of the roll exercise, but

questioned the administration charge.

We consulted on an annual administration fee of £30-£40, but have since confirmed the fee will be £20.

We have committed to keeping this charge under review and will adjust it in future years if costs reduce over time. Solicitors with a practising certificate are already required to confirm their data is accurate and up to date as part of their annual certificate renewals.

Under GDPR regulations we have a responsibility to ensure we maintain accurate data relating to individuals, and to ensure this is processed fairly and lawfully. To discharge this responsibility data held and published must be periodically reviewed. This requirement was not in place when the previous annual keeping of the roll exercise was halted in 2014.

Final confirmation of reintroduction is subject to LSB approval.

Read the full consultation response and next steps

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/sra/consultations/consultation-listing/restoring-annual-keeping-roll-exercise/>] .