

QM for the Bar- Guidance for Sole Practitioners

The purpose of this section is to offer guidance to Sole Practitioners about the requirements of the Quality Mark for the Bar (QMB). Whilst the QMB is applicable both for Chambers and Sole Practitioners, there are some requirements, which may not be specifically applicable to Sole Practitioners, and these are outlined below. Throughout the standard, where reference is made to Chambers and members, these terms also include Sole Practitioners when applying the standard.

General Principles

It is recognised that in a traditional set of chambers there is a clear distinction between those parts of the barristers' practice, which are managed by chambers, and those parts, which are managed by the individual barrister. With sole practitioners there is no such division.

Finances

It is also recognised that for reason of efficiency and economy sole practitioners may only have a bank account, which will include chambers expenses, professional expenses and private expenses.

Requirement	Guidance
Section A	Access to Service
Section A1	'Staff awareness' is not applicable unless staff are employed in providing the service. The remainder of this section on equal opportunities applies.
Section A2	The level of detail in the requirements may not be appropriate for Sole Practitioners. However, there should be a business plan in operation, which outlines the Sole Practitioners aims and objectives.
Section B	Seamless Service
B3	Sole Practitioners should have a list of QM Chambers when this becomes available. There is no requirement to make this available to staff unless staff are employed..
Section C	Running the Organisation
C1	In most sole practitioner chambers where there are very few chambers expenses it is acknowledged that not all the requirements under C1 may be present but as a minimum the following must be evidenced: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written cash and capital budgets• Record of bank statement reconciliation• Monthly statements of income and expenditure• Up-to-date withdrawal of credit scheme information• Analysis of aged debtor lists.
C2	A written description of the management structure is not required.

C3	<p>The Pupillage Handbook would not be required.</p> <p>Where CPS work is not undertaken there is no requirement to have the CPS booklet.</p> <p>Back copies of Bar News are not required where the practitioner has access to relevant extracts.</p> <p>The funding Code is only relevant where it is relevant to the work of the practitioner.</p>
C4	This must be complied with
Section D	People Management
D1-D4	These requirements are applicable only where a Sole Practitioner employs a member of staff involved directly or indirectly in providing the service.
D3	The requirement under D3 for a review of information received from client feedback forms and complaints records applies.
Section E	Running the Service
Section E	These requirements are particularly important for a Sole Practitioner who may not have a clerk overseeing the work.
Section G	Commitment to Quality
G1	<p>Practitioners should keep a record of all complaints received with details of how they have been resolved..</p> <p>The practitioner would be expected to have procedures in place to utilise either the BSPG appointment scheme or the circuit scheme if there is one in place so anyone who makes a complaint has some form of mediation between the individual barrister and the formal Bar Council complaints system.</p>
G2.1	It is not necessary to have a named individual, unless the sole practitioner employs staff.
G2.3	The review does not need to include clerking procedures where there is no clerk employed.