



MASTER OF
THE ROLLS

Practice Guidance: Terminology for Litigants in Person

1. In its Report of November 2011 the Civil Justice Council (CJC) recommended that in future individuals who conduct legal proceedings on their own behalf, and have traditionally been referred to as Litigants in Person (LiPs), should in future be referred to as self-represented litigants (SRLs). Subsequently the term SRL has gained some currency. LiP has however also continued to be used. The use of two terms to refer to the same thing is less than ideal. It is confusing both for individual litigants and the courts.
2. The Judges' Council (including the Lord Chief Justice and President of the Family Division) has consequently considered the CJC's recommendation, and authorised me as Master of the Rolls and Head of Civil Justice, to issue Guidance, to promote clarity, certainty and simplicity, on the term to be used in future.
3. I have considered all the circumstances, including the fact that the term LiP: is used in statute (e.g., The Litigants in Person (Costs and Expenses) Act 1975); is and will continue to be used by Government; is commonly understood and well-known both by the legal profession and individuals generally; the term SRL is unclear in its scope, as it can variously be understood to suggest that individuals are conducting the entirety of legal proceedings on their own behalf, that they are only conducting court advocacy on their own behalf or, that they have themselves obtained representation i.e., secured the service of an advocate.
4. In the light of these factors I have therefore determined, with the unanimous agreement of the Judges' Council, that the term SRL should **not** be adopted or used in future.
5. The term 'Litigant in Person' (LiP) should continue to be the sole term used to describe individuals who exercise their right to conduct legal proceedings on their own behalf.
6. This Guidance applies to all proceedings in all criminal, civil and family courts.

Lord Dyson MR
March 2013