

# A Guide to Peer Review Crime



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# Presenters

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## **Geoff Bell**

Geoff trained and qualified as a magistrates' court clerk before joining Stevens Solicitors in Stoke on Trent in 1989. He became the Senior/Managing Partner in 2001 and the practice has grown to become one of the largest criminal defence practices in the country.

Geoff was appointed as a Peer Reviewer in crime in 2004 and thereafter was appointed a senior panel member, reviewing and validating the work of other peer reviewers and actively involved in peer reviewer training. During his 12 years as a peer reviewer, he has carried out and validated very many reports.

## **Philip Whittaker**

Philip qualified as a solicitor in 1972. He has chaired several Law Society, Legal Aid Agency and Criminal Injury Compensation Board Groups.

Philip answered Professor Avrom Sherr's first advert for crime Peer Reviewers and he was an active Peer Reviewer between 2005 and 2014. In 2007 he was appointed by Professor Sherr as his Consultant for Crime Peer Review in England and Wales and he remains in post.

# Agenda

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- An overview of the PR process
- Why the LAA are stepping up Peer Reviews
- The scoring system
- What Peer Reviewers look for
  - Examples of good practice
  - Examples of poor practice
- Tips and pitfalls to avoid
- Specimen client care letters, proformas and forms

# An overview of the PR process

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- Selection of Firms for Peer Review
- Selection of Files from that firm
- Sending the files to the LAA
- Where is the review carried out?
- Reviewing the files
- Time recording

# Why the LAA are stepping up Peer Reviews

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# The scoring system

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- Ratings
- The Representations process

# What Peer Reviewers look for

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- Examples of good practice
- Examples of poor practice

# Tips and pitfalls to avoid

- File Submission process
- Your approach to PR
- The file itself
- Appeal advice
- Receiving a rating of 4 or 5



# Specimen client care letters, proformas & forms

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## Useful Links:

- Extract from LAA website re: Audit via Peer Review:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/legal-aid-agency-audits>
- Independent PR Process Document June 2017:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/620110/independent-peer-review-process-guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/620110/independent-peer-review-process-guidance.pdf)
- Improving Your Quality: A guide to common issues identified through Peer Review:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/490047/peer-review-quality.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/490047/peer-review-quality.pdf)

# Any Questions?

Please email [teamadmin@dglegal.co.uk](mailto:teamadmin@dglegal.co.uk)