



Legal Aid
Agency

Guidance on the Remuneration of Expert Witnesses in Crime Cases

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1. Overview

- 1.1. The Criminal Legal Aid (Remuneration) Regulations 2013 as amended (the Regulations) set out prescribed rates for most types of experts.
- 1.2. The rates in the Regulations apply to all work undertaken by experts in all crime work with a case start date or representation order date of on or after **2 December 2013**.
- 1.3. A list of the applicable rates from 30 September 2022 is included in **Annex A** along with rates for work on cases started prior to that date.

2. How the rates work

Rates in excess of the prescribed rates

- 2.1. The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) will only pay up to the rates set out in the Regulations, unless you have prior authority to exceed them.
- 2.2. In order to be granted prior authority for fees or rates higher than those listed in the Remuneration Regulations, you will need to demonstrate that the instruction of the expert involves exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances are defined in section 16 of the Criminal Legal Aid (Remuneration) Regulations 2013 ('the Regulations') and are where the expert's evidence is key to the client's case and either:
 - a) **the complexity of the material is such that an expert with a high level of seniority is required; or**
 - b) **the material is of such a specialised and unusual nature that only very few experts are available to provide the necessary evidence.**
- 2.3. Scarcity can be demonstrated by providing alternative quotes or evidence of attempts to secure alternative quotes. Complexity can be demonstrated by providing a background to the case, either within the Letter of Instruction, or as a separate document. The detail may also be provided by the expert in the breakdown of their estimate. When making a decision on whether exceptional circumstances are met and higher rates should be approved, the LAA will consider, in addition to the criteria above, the total costs of the work sought, the speed at which the work has to be completed, any identified shortage of experts available at all or within the timeframes required and any other exceptional reason.

Experts not listed in the Remuneration Regulations

- 2.4. Where an expert is not listed in the Remuneration Regulations the LAA will assess these costs on an individual basis.
- 2.5. In these cases, when considering the rate at which to fund the expert service, the Regulations (paragraph 17) set out that the LAA:
 - a) **must have regard to the rates set out in the Regulations; and**
 - b) **may require more than one quotation for provision of the relevant service to be**

submitted to the LAA.

2.6. Where the expert rate requested is in excess of what may be payable for a comparable expert type you will need to demonstrate why the specific rate has been requested. In addition to the provision of alternative quotations, this may be demonstrated through, for example, evidence of similar work undertaken on previous cases and/or reference to specific and scarce expertise required.

Multiple quotes

2.7. The LAA will not normally require alternative quotes where the quoted rates are within the rates set out in Regulations.

2.8. We may require at least one alternative quote where:

- A quoted expert rate exceeds the regulatory amount;
- The number of hours requested is higher than might normally be expected; or
- The material is of such a specialised and unusual nature that only very few experts are available to provide the necessary evidence.

2.9. In these instances we may ask for at least one alternative quote to ensure that the quoted cost is comparable with normal market rates.

2.10. We understand that there are situations where litigators have difficulty obtaining more than one quote to support prior authority applications. When this happens, we would ask solicitors to provide details of the efforts made to secure alternative quotes to help reduce the chance of the application being returned to them. Evidence such as a telephone note would be sufficient for these purposes.

2.11. There may be instances where more than one quote is necessary. For instance, in VHCC matters providers are required under the VHCC contract to obtain three quotes for expert reports due to the high costs typically incurred in these cases. Where providers are unable to obtain three quotes, evidence of the reasonable efforts made to secure alternative quotations must be provided, and further information may be requested where necessary.

3. London / Non-London experts

3.1. The Regulations set out that there are different rates for certain types of experts working inside and outside of London.

3.2. London rates apply if the expert is based in a London borough. The expert's registered office is used to decide which rate applies. If the expert has more than one office, the office closest to the provider is used. Make sure the expert's base location is clearly shown on the quote.

4. Our approach to assessing expert costs

4.1. Further guidance on the approach that LAA caseworkers will take when considering expert costs is set out in Section 7.2 of the [Criminal Bills Assessment Manual](#).

- 4.2. Before considering an expert's quote, the caseworker will first decide whether it is reasonable in principle to instruct an expert, taking into account the relevance, usefulness, and necessity of expert evidence to the defence case.
- 4.3. When assessing an expert's quote, the caseworker will consider the expert's suitability, the reasonableness of the rates and hours claimed, and whether the proposed location of the expert is appropriate.
- 4.4. To enable proper assessment, sufficient information must be provided about the quote, including advice where required, rates, hours, division of work, location, anticipated disbursements, and any alternative quotes.

5. Applications for prior authority

- 5.1. The LAA's approach to prior authority is set out in paragraphs 5.25 – 5.34 of the [2025 Standard Crime Contract Specification](#).
- 5.2. Prior authority is an approval from the LAA to pay for expert services or other disbursements. Where prior authority has been granted, we will pay the agreed amount for the work set out in your application. However, this does not guarantee payment if, before the costs were incurred, you knew or ought reasonably to have known that the purpose for which the authority was granted had failed or was no longer relevant or necessary. In these cases, you should not include the cost in your claim.
- 5.3. In most cases, applying for prior authority is not mandatory. If you do not seek permission in advance, or if permission is refused, the costs may still be allowed on assessment provided the expenditure was reasonably incurred. The same approach applies where the authorised amount is exceeded.
- 5.4. In Prison Law cases, you must apply for prior authority if the cost is more than £500. If the cost is £500 or less, you do not need to apply. You can include the cost in your claim and justify it at assessment.
- 5.5. You must apply for prior authority before the work is carried out or the cost is incurred. It cannot be granted after this point.
- 5.6. In addition, under the Litigators' Graduated Fee Scheme, litigators can only claim interim payments for disbursements of £100 or more where prior authority to incur the expenditure has been granted and the expense has already been incurred. [See Section 1.13 of the Crown Court Fee Guidance](#).
- 5.7. LAA caseworkers will make decisions based on the information included within a prior authority application. It is therefore important to include all relevant information within the application. **Annex B** includes a checklist which can be used to make sure that all required information for prior authority has been inputted into the application for prior authority.
- 5.8. Paragraph 5.33 of the [2025 Standard Crime Contract Specification](#) sets out the circumstances in which an application for prior authority will be refused.

How to Apply for Prior Authority

5.9. More guidance on how to apply for prior authority can be found at [Criminal legal aid – Legal Aid Learning](#).

Hours

5.10. Detailed justification for the number of hours requested should be provided in order that assessment decisions can be made effectively.

6. Types of expert

- 6.1. When assessing an application for expert costs, LAA caseworkers will consider the nature of the work to be undertaken. In some instances, it may not be immediately clear why a specific rate has been requested, particularly where there are different categories of expert listed within the Regulations that appear similar or overlap in subject matter. In such cases, it may not be obvious to a caseworker why a particular level of rate has been requested.
- 6.2. For example, if a forensic scientist rate is being requested for a firearms report, further detail should be provided to explain why the firearms rate is not being applied. More generally, providers are encouraged to provide sufficient justification for the rate sought, including an explanation of the expert's specialism, the complexity or nature of the work, and why the chosen category and rate are appropriate in the circumstances. Providing this information at the outset will assist caseworkers in making a timely and informed assessment of the application.

7. Associated expert costs

- 7.1. The LAA will not pay for:
- Experts' cancellation fees other than where the notice of cancellation was given to the expert less than 72 hours before the relevant hearing or appointment;
 - Experts' administration costs including, but not limited to, fees in respect of offices and consultation rooms, administrative support including typing services, subsistence and couriers.

Travel

- 7.2. The Standard Crime Contract:
- Caps the remuneration rates for expert travel time to £40 per hour.
 - Caps the experts' mileage rates to the current guidance for solicitor travel, at 45p per mile.
- 7.3. We would not typically authorise experts' travel disbursements as part of a prior authority application in advance of the expense being incurred. Reasonable travel expenses will typically be considered as part of the final bill once details of the actual travel time/costs incurred are known.

7.4. Under the Litigators' Graduated Fee Scheme, where a litigator has claimed an interim payment for a disbursement for work incurred by an expert, reasonable travel expenses for the expert shall also be claimed. Travel disbursements and VAT can be claimed in addition to the sum granted for prior authority, provided they are accompanied by valid receipts or tickets.

Annex A - Summary of Expert Witness Fees in Legal Aid Regulations

Expert rates on Criminal cases started on or after 30 September 2022

Rates are laid out in Schedule 5, Regulation 16 Criminal Legal Aid (Remuneration) Regulations (amended 2022)

Expert	Non-London hourly rate unless stated to be a fixed fee	London – hourly rate unless stated to be a fixed fee
A&E consultant	£115.92	£124.20
Accident reconstruction	£82.80	£62.56
Accountant	£73.60	£73.60
Accountant (general staff)	£46.00	£46.00
Accountant (manager)	£99.36	£99.36
Accountant (partner)	£132.48	£132.48
Anaesthetist	£124.20	£82.80
Architect	£91.08	£82.80
Back calculations	£165.50 fixed fee	£173.88 fixed fee
Benefit expert	£83	£83
Cardiologist	£132	£83
Cell telephone site analysis	£83	£83
Child psychiatrist	£124	£83
Child psychologist	£116	£83
Computer expert	£83	£83
Consultant engineer	£83	£63
Dentist	£108	£83
Dermatologist	£99	£83
Disability consultant	£63	£63
DNA (testing of sample)	£289.80 per test	£289.80 per test
DNA preparation of report	£83	£83
Doctor (GP)	£91	£83
Drug expert	£83	£83
Employment consultant	£63	£63
Enquiry agent	£29	£21
ENT surgeon	£116	£83
Facial Mapping	£124	£83
Fingerprint expert	£83	£43
Fire investigation	£83	£63
Firearm expert	£83	£83
Forensic scientist	£104	£83
General surgeon	£124	£83
Geneticist	£99	£83
GP (records report)	£57.96 fixed fee	£82.80 fixed fee

Gynaecologist	£124	£83
Haematologist	£112	£83
Handwriting expert	£83	£83
Interpreter	£32	£29
Lip reader/Signer	£66	£38
Mediator	£116	£116
Medical consultant	£124	£83
Medical microbiologist	£124	£83
Medical Report	£91	£83
Meteorologist	£116	£165.60 fixed fee
Midwife	£83	£83
Neonatologist	£124	£83
Neurologist	£141	£83
Neuropsychiatrist	£145	£83
Neuroradiologist	£157	£83
Neurosurgeon	£157	£83
Nursing expert	£75	£75
Obstetrician	£124	£83
Occupational therapist	£63	£63
Oncologist	£129	£83
Orthopaedic surgeon	£132	£83
Paediatrician	£124	£83
Pathologist	£141	£496.80 fixed fee
Pharmacologist	£112.24	£82.80
Photographer	£29.44	£21.16
Physiotherapist	£74.52	£74.52
Plastic surgeon	£124.20	£82.80
Process server	£29.44	£21.16
Psychiatrist	£124.20	£82.80
Psychologist	£107.64	£82.80
Radiologist	£124.20	£82.80
Rheumatologist	£124.20	£82.80
Risk assessment expert	£57.96	£57.96
Speech therapist	£91.08	£82.80

Surgeon	£124.20	£82.80
Surveyor	£46.00	£46.00
Telecoms expert	£82.80	£82.80
Toxicologist	£124.20	£82.80
Urologist	£124.20	£82.80
Vet	£82.80	£82.80
Voice recognition	£107.64	£82.80

Expert rates on Criminal cases started between 2 December 2013 and 29 September 2022

The Criminal Legal Aid (Remuneration) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Expert	Non-London – Hourly rate unless stated to be a fixed fee	London – Hourly rate unless stated to be a fixed fee
A&E consultant	£100.80	£108
Accident reconstruction	£72	£54.40
Accountant	£64	£64
Accountant (general staff)	£40	£40
Accountant (manager)	£86.40	£86.40
Accountant (partner)	£115.20	£115.20
Anaesthetist	£108	£72
Architect	£79.20	£72
Back calculations	£144 fixed fee	£151.20 fixed fee
Benefit expert	£72	£72
Cardiologist	£115.20	£72
Cell telephone site analysis	£72	£72
Cardiologist	£115.20	£72
Cell telephone site analysis	£72	£72
Child psychiatrist	£108	£72
Child psychologist	£100.80	£72
Computer expert	£72	£72
Consultant engineer	£72	£54.40
Dentist	£93.60	£72
Dermatologist	£86.40	£72

Disability consultant	£54.40	£54.40
DNA (testing of sample)	£252 per test	£252 per test
DNA (preparation of report)	£72	£72
Doctor (GP)	£79.20	£72
Drug expert	£72	£72
Employment consultant	£54.40	£54.40
Enquiry agent	£25.60	£18.40
ENT surgeon	£100.80	£72
Facial Mapping	£108	£72
Fingerprint expert	£72	£37.60
Fire investigation	£72	£54.40
Firearm expert	£72	£72
Forensic scientist	£90.40	£72
General surgeon	£108	£72
Geneticist	£86.40	£72
GP (records report)	£50.40 fixed fee	£72 fixed fee
Gynaecologist	£108	£72
Haematologist	£97.60	£72
Handwriting expert	£72	£72

Interpreter	£28	£25
Lip reader/Signer	£57.60	£32.80
Mediator	£100.80	£100.80
Medical consultant	£108	£72
Medical microbiologist	£108	£72
Medical Report	£79.20	£72
Meteorologist	£100.80	£144 fixed fee
Midwife	£72	£72
Neonatologist	£108	£72
Neurologist	£122.40	£72
Neuropsychiatrist	£126.40	£72
Neuroradiologist	£136.80	£72
Neurosurgeon	£136.80	£72
Nursing expert	£64.80	£64.80
Obstetrician	£108	£72
Occupational therapist	£54.40	£54.40
Oncologist	£112	£72
Orthopaedic surgeon	£115.20	£72
Paediatrician	£108	£72
Pathologist	£122.40	£432 fixed fee
Pharmacologist	£97.60	£72
Photographer	£25.60	£18.40
Physiotherapist	£64.80	£64.80
Plastic surgeon	£108	£72
Process server	£25.60	£18.40
Psychiatrist	£108	£72
Psychologist	£93.60	£72
Radiologist	£108	£72
Rheumatologist	£108	£72
Risk assessment expert	£50.40	£50.40
Speech therapist	£79.20	£72
Surgeon	£108	£72
Surveyor	£40	£40
Telecoms expert	£72	£72
Toxicologist	£108	£72
Urologist	£108	£72
Vet	£72	£72
Voice recognition	£93.60	£72

Expert rates on Criminal cases started between 1 April 2013 and 1 December 2013

The Criminal Legal Aid (Remuneration) Regulations 2013 SCHEDULE 2
Experts' Fees and Rates

Expert	Non-London Hourly Rate or Fixed Fee	London Hourly Rate or Fixed Fee	Comments
A&E consultant	£126	£135	
Accident reconstruction	£90	£68	
Accountant	£50-144	£50-144	Partner £144; Manager £108; Accountant £80; General staff £50.
Anaesthetist	£135	£90	
Architect	£99	£90	
Back calculations	£180 fixed fee	£189 fixed fee	
Benefit expert	£90	£90	
Cardiologist	£144	£90	
Cell telephone site analysis	£90	£90	
Child psychiatrist	£135	£90	
Child psychologist	£126	£90	
Computer expert	£90	£90	
Consultant engineer	£90	£68	
Dentist	£117	£90	
Dermatologist	£108	£90	
Disability consultant	£68	£68	
DNA (per person) testing of sample	£315 per test	£315 per test	
DNA (per person) – preparation of report	£90	£90	
Doctor (GP)	£99	£90	
Drug expert	£90	£90	
Employment consultant	£68	£68	
Enquiry agent	£32	£23	
ENT surgeon	£126	£90	
Facial mapping	£135	£90	
Fingerprint expert	£90	£47	

Fire investigation	£90	£68	
Firearm expert	£90	£90	
Forensic scientist	£113	£90	
General surgeon	£135	£90	
Geneticist	£108	£90	
GP (records report)	£63 fixed fee	£90 fixed fee	
Gynaecologist	£135	£90	
Haematologist	£122	£90	
Handwriting expert	£90	£90	
Interpreter	£32	£25	
Lip reader / Signer	£72	£41	
Mediator	£126	£126	
Medical consultant	£135	£90	
Medical microbiologist	£135	£90	
Medical report	£99	£90	
Meteorologist	£126	£180 fixed fee	
Midwife	£90	£90	
Neonatologist	£135	£90	
Neurologist	£153	£90	

Neuropsychiatrist	£158	£90	
Neuroradiologist	£171	£90	
Neurosurgeon	£171	£90	
Nursing expert	£81	£81	
Obstetrician	£135	£90	
Occupational therapist	£68	£68	
Oncologist	£140	£90	
Orthopaedic surgeon	£144	£90	
Paediatrician	£135	£90	
Pathologist	£153	£540 fixed fee	
Pharmacologist	£122	£90	
Photographer	£32	£23	
Physiotherapist	£81	£81	

Plastic surgeon	£135	£90	
Process server	£32	£23	
Psychiatrist	£135	£90	
Psychologist	£117	£90	
Radiologist	£135	£90	
Rheumatologist	£135	£90	
Risk assessment expert	£63	£63	
Speech therapist	£99	£90	

Surgeon	£135	£90	
Surveyor	£50	£50	
Telecoms expert	£90	£90	
Toxicologist	£135	£90	
Urologist	£135	£90	
Vet	£90	£90	
Voice recognition	£117	£90	

Expert Fee Rates for Criminal Cases Expert rates on Criminal cases started between 3 October 2011 and 31 March 2013

The Criminal Defence Service (Funding) (Amendment) Order 2011 SCHEDULE 6
Experts' Fees and Rates

Expert	Non-London Hourly Rate or fixed fee	London Hourly Rate or fixed fee	Comments
A&E consultant	£126	£135	
Accident reconstruction	£90	£68	
Accountant	£50 - £144	£50 - £144	Partner £144, Manager £108, Accountant £80, General staff £50
Anaesthetist	£135	£90	
Architect	£99	£90	
Back calculations	£180 fixed fee	£189 fixed fee	
Benefit expert	£90	£90	
Cardiologist	£144	£90	
Cell telephone site	£90	£90	
Child psychiatrist	£135	£90	
Child psychologist	£126	£90	
Computer expert	£90	£90	
Consultant engineer	£90	£68	
Dentist	£117	£90	
Dermatologist	£108	£90	
Disability consultant	£68	£68	
DNA (per person) – testing of sample	£315 per test	£315 per test	
DNA (per person) – preparation of report	£90	£90	
Doctor (GP)	£99	£90	
Drug expert	£90	£90	
Employment consultant	£68	£68	
Enquiry agent	£32	£23	
ENT surgeon	£126	£90	
Facial mapping	£135	£90	
Fingerprint expert	£90	£47	
Fire investigation	£90	£68	
Firearm expert	£90	£90	
Forensic scientist	£113	£90	
General surgeon	£135	£90	
Geneticist	£108	£90	
GP (records report)	£63 fixed fee	£90 fixed fee	
Gynaecologist	£135	£90	
Haematologist	£122	£90	

Handwriting expert	£90	£90	
Interpreter	£32	£25	
Lip reader / Signer	£72	£41	
Mediator	£126	£126	
Medical Consultant	£135	£90	
Medical microbiologist	£135	£90	
Medical Report	£99	£90	
Meteorologist	£126	£180 fixed fee	
Midwife	£90	£90	
Neonatologist	£135	£90	
Neurologist	£153	£90	
Neuropsychiatrist	£158	£90	
Neuroradiologist	£171	£90	
Neurosurgeon	£171	£90	
Nursing expert	£81	£81	
Obstetrician	£135	£90	
Occupational Therapist	£68	£68	
Oncologist	£140	£90	
Orthopaedic surgeon	£144	£90	
Paediatrician	£135	£90	
Pathologist	£153	£540 fixed fee	
Pharmacologist	£122	£90	
Photographer	£32	£23	
Physiotherapist	£81	£81	
Plastic surgeon	£135	£90	
Process server	£32	£23	
Psychiatrist	£135	£90	
Psychologist	£117	£90	
Radiologist	£135	£90	
Rheumatologist	£135	£90	
Risk assessment expert	£63	£63	
Speech therapist	£99	£90	
Surgeon	£135	£90	
Surveyor	£50	£50	
Telecoms expert	£90	£90	
Toxicologist	£135	£90	
Urologist	£135	£90	
Vet	£90	£90	
Voice recognition	£117	£90	

Annex B - Prior Authority Checklist

This checklist is to assist you when submitting prior authority amendments. The checklist outlines the information we will typically need from you in order to make fully informed decisions.

Further guidance can be found below on completion of the CRM4 – Application for Prior Authority to Incur Disbursements in Criminal Cases:

[Criminal legal aid – Legal Aid Learning](#)

General:

Please include full details, including:

Quote from the expert, which should include:

- Expert type
- Expert name
- Expert's postcode
- Requested Number of Hours
- Requested Hourly Rate
- Estimated Volume of Documents (number of pages that the expert needs to consider)

Alternative quotes (*see Section 2 above for details on when we might ask for alternative quotes*):

- If no alternative quotes have been obtained, please confirm why.
- If no alternative quotes could be obtained, please attach evidence of this. Evidence such as a telephone note or email correspondence would be sufficient for these purposes
- If you have not selected the most cost-effective estimate, please explain why.

Evidence of any travel disbursements (*see Section 7 above for details of allowable travel costs, and Section 5 for information on our approach to assessment of travel costs*):

- Alternatively, these can be justified on billing.

For an expert where there is no prescribed rate:

- Please provide at least one alternative quote to ensure that the quoted cost is comparable with normal market rates
- If no alternative quotes could be obtained, please attach evidence of this. Evidence such as a telephone note or email correspondence would be sufficient for these purposes

Where there is a discrepancy between the expert type and the hourly rate requested:

- When assessing an application, we consider the nature of the work to be undertaken. In some instances, it may be unclear why a specific rate has been requested.
- For example, if a forensic scientist rate is being requested for a firearms report, please provide detail on why the firearms rate is not being applied.

Where an exceptional hourly rate or increased number of hours has been requested:

- When requesting an exceptional hourly rate, please refer to 16.(3) in the Remuneration Regulations and outline how the exceptionality criteria are met.
- Please provide at least one alternative quote to ensure that the quoted cost is comparable with normal market rates
- Detailed justification for the number of hours requested should also be provided.

When requesting an exceptional hourly rate or number of hours

- Provide sufficient detail in your prior authority application to justify an increased number of hours or an exceptional hourly rate
- Please ensure the expert's estimate includes a breakdown (e.g. hours for reading, report writing, attendance with client, attending an experts' meeting).
- Where the expert has requested additional hours for reading, please confirm the volume of documents to be considered by the expert.
- Please provide alternative quotes
- If no alternative quotes have been obtained, please confirm why.
- Please confirm on submission if you have approached other experts who have declined the instruction, providing evidence if possible.
- Where there is a more cost-effective alternative quote, please confirm why the expert was not selected.

General Reminders

- Prior authority is granted exclusive of VAT.
- If an expert exceeds the number of hours granted under prior authority, these hours can still be claimed by being justified on assessment.
- The application form can be returned to the provider for amendments to all fields, with the exception of the Expert Type and the Prison Law Indicator. If these have been completed incorrectly, a fresh application may need to be submitted.
- If you complete the alternative quotes section, please upload a copy of the alternative quote with your application.
- Prior authority applications are generally processed on a 2 working day turnaround.
- If the request needs to be considered urgently, please contact the Customer Services Team on 0300 200 2020.
- A prior authority request is not considered retrospective until the work has been undertaken.
- If a prior authority request is refused as retrospective; this is not an indication that the cost will not be met, only that the cost will need to be justified on assessment.