



Case study

# CCH Return Review

## PKF

With more than 1,500 partners and staff operating from 23 offices around the country, PKF (UK) LLP is one of the leading firms of accountants and business advisers in the UK. Alan Rumble, Senior Business Adviser, Tax at PKF, describes how the firm uses CCH Return Review and the benefits that the software brings.

### How long have you been using CCH Return Review at PKF?

We've been using this Wolters Kluwer software alongside CCH Personal Tax for as long as the software has been available. Before that, we were using PerTAX, which had the Variance Reporter doing broadly the same job.

CCH Return Review is used in all our UK offices, which between them handle around 8,000 personal tax returns a year.

### What does CCH Return Review actually do?

The software compares this years figures to last years and reports any discrepancies, highlighting incomplete, inconsistent and missing data. It also checks the 'Complete' and 'Estimate' boxes so you can tell if any of these entries have been left.

It's possible to set up your own variance thresholds within different areas of the return.

However, we've taken a firm-wide decision to set all variances to zero. Used this way, CCH Return Review will highlight *any* item for which there was an entry this year, last year, or in both years.

Because of this, our reports are quite long, but it's actually a very simple matter to scan through them, checking each item in turn. You see this years figures and last years on screen, side by side, and you can use your knowledge and judgement to decide what needs further investigation. Even a big difference doesn't automatically mean an error, for example bank interest will depend on rates, so fluctuations are to be expected. If you see something you want to check, you just click on the report to go straight to the underlying data entry screen.

### On a day to day basis, how do you use CCH Return Review?

It's an essential final step in the workflow. To maintain the highest possible standards, tax returns at PKF are prepared and checked by different people, with senior staff conducting the review. The preparer will often run CCH Return Review themselves to make sure they haven't missed anything but, whether or not they do this, the reviewer certainly will. It's a requirement of

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our review process, to be completed immediately before the return is signed off as ready to send to the client for approval.

Our Cardiff office here is linked with our Bristol office and a lot of the work is done across the two offices. With CCH Return Review it's very easy for the preparer and reviewer to work in different locations. We don't have to move people or paper between offices; it can all be done on-screen.

### What about keeping overall track of client tax returns?

Of course CCH Personal Tax allows us to run reports to see how we're progressing. Have we had the information in? Has the return been started? Has it been finalised? Because CCH Return Review uses the Tax Return Status Flag these reports will also automatically pick up when the review has been completed so we know we can send the return to the client and keep the process moving forward.

### So what are the main benefits of using CCH Return Review?

It certainly helps to limit risk. Our preparers don't make many errors, but they're only human and it's easy to misplace a decimal point when you're entering data. They might even overlook a figure completely, or the client might not have remembered to send it in. There are plenty of opportunities for things to go wrong but the software helps us pick them all up when we do the review. It's definitely a very useful tool for minimising risk.

### What about time savings? Is it possible to quantify that?

Well, without CCH Return Review we would need to go through the two tax returns side by side, manually comparing them item by item, perhaps recording the results on a spreadsheet. I don't think it would give us quite the same level of assurance and it would definitely take longer - I'd estimate about 15 minutes per client.

That may not sound like a big saving, but across an entire client base it adds up. Of course in January, with so many tax returns to complete, 15 minutes is a lot of time! This is precisely when mistakes are more likely to happen with a manual system and when CCH Return Review really comes into its own.

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