

## **Final assessment**

Each joint review should provide clear, well evidenced and well considered judgements about performance that can be understood and acted upon by a wide range of stakeholders, locally and nationally.

All these stakeholders have proper expectations that the final judgements are consistent, based upon rigorous analysis of evidence, robustly tested and demonstrated conclusively in the report made to the local authority.

Once all the evidence has been gathered and assessed, there follows a rigorous process of challenge both within the joint review team and by experienced moderators before the conclusions are shared with the local authority. This is intended to ensure that any judgements:

- draw on the whole range of qualitative and quantitative evidence;
- derive from correct application of the joint review methodology;
- are rigorously tested against known criteria;
- are deliberate, fair, consistent, informed and free from bias.

The final assessment meeting is a crucial element in the process of analysis and quality assurance. Immediately following the fieldwork, the joint review team continues to examine the evidence. They then meet with the external moderator to evaluate the local authority's performance in each of the two dimensions contained in the judgement matrix and in all the associated review domains. The basis for these judgements is explained in Section 0.6 of the Handbook. The discussions will draw on all the evidence from the review process.

The meeting will also agree the headline findings to be presented to the local authority in advance of the report. It is not possible to provide definitive judgements at this stage because judgement decisions are re-assessed after the report is written.