

Producing the report

Drafting the report

The report will be drafted by the joint review team following the final assessment, with the lead reviewer taking primary responsibility. The report will expand on the headline findings presented to the authority in the feedback meetings, giving examples of evidence to support the conclusions. The report will not attempt a detailed account of all the evidence and process of the review. The sources of evidence, together with summary results from the surveys and case file sample, will be appended to the report.

The overall judgement of the report will be shown in grid form, with the two axes corresponding to the two main questions of the joint review framework - *How good are the services?* and *How well placed is the authority to sustain and improve performance?* The team will also give assessments under each heading of the framework, to point up the relative strengths and areas for improvement and the components of the overall judgement. The report also considers the actions the local authority should build into its action plan. It will contain specific recommendations (for example, on matters of compliance to statute and guidance) and broader priorities for improvement.

Quality assurance

There are rigorous arrangements for quality assurance, moderation and formal approval of all joint review reports. These operate throughout the process of drafting each report. For example, the initial draft report is scrutinised by the external moderator and revised as necessary before it is sent to the local authority.

The aim is to produce reports which:

- are clear and straightforward;
- can be understood by all who might read them;
- make an impact;
- are balanced, fair, accurate and consistent with the evidence;
- convey some of the character of the review;
- give credit where it is due.

The report is a key tool in pursuing one of the key aims of the joint review process - to make a positive contribution towards the future improvement of social services. Reports will contain a mixture of observed and reported facts, opinion, interpretation and judgement. Sometimes the facts will speak for themselves or there will be a large measure of agreement with what is being said. On other occasions, judgements will be more contentious. The joint review team will take responsibility for what is said, within a duty to comment in good faith on what has been found. They will acknowledge what is good and help to set out what needs to be done better, not shying from bad news but avoiding sensationalism. Quotes will be used judiciously, ensuring that the views and opinions expressed in them are representative rather than idiosyncratic and properly reflect the overall picture (as corroborated by other sources of evidence).

Reports are public documents with a variety of audiences: service users and carers, politicians and the public, partners and stakeholders, practitioners and managers of social services. Inevitably, they will contain some technical terms or phrases which are widely used within social services but not elsewhere. Reviewers will be careful not to use expressions which confuse the reader or which may demean people. They will follow good practice in their writing with regard to equal opportunities - as far as possible, language should be gender neutral and sensitive to ethnic and cultural issues. Reports should be concise, clear and consistent.

Joint review reports are based upon a common template. They have a consistent structure and standard headings, although these may be amended to reflect local circumstances.

Chapter 1	Key findings and recommendations
Chapter 2	The local authority
Chapter 3	How good are the services?
Chapter 4	How well placed is the authority to sustain and improve services?
Appendix A	List of information sources

Appendix B	Survey analysis
Appendix C	Case file analysis
Appendix D	List of people interviewed

In Chapters 3 and 4, the team will:

- give assessments under each heading of the joint review framework (e.g. access, performance management, etc.)
- summarise strengths and areas for improvement under each of the 14 headings.

Discussions with the local authority

The joint review team will request written comment on matters of accuracy and clarification and will arrange a meeting to discuss the draft with the local authority two weeks later. It is anticipated that any response from the authority will be channelled via the Director of Social Services. The lead reviewer and external moderator will consider proposed amendments and representations, making any adjustments considered appropriate to improve and clarify the report. The Director of Social Services will have an opportunity to see a further proof of the report before printing in order to eliminate any final factual errors.

The lead reviewer will consider any comments and:

- correct any factual inaccuracies;
- provide any necessary clarification;
- attempt to resolve any other matters that do not alter the agreed and moderated findings of the team.

The lead reviewer may, as appropriate, request further evidence from the local authority or discuss further with the local authority the substance of the points raised. The lead reviewer may also, as appropriate, discuss with the review team and moderator and lead managers any point raised by the local authority which may justify a change in the findings.

The lead reviewer may not make any significant change to the findings or judgements without the agreement of the moderator or lead managers.

The lead reviewer will inform the local authority of changes made to the report in the light of the local authority's comments.

Challenges to judgements

If the local authority challenges any of the formal judgements of the review (under each domain or the overall judgement grid), the lead reviewer will explain to the local authority the basis for the judgement and consider the grounds given by the local authority for a change. If the lead reviewer considers the judgement should stand, the local authority will be informed accordingly.

If the lead reviewer considers that there may be justification for a change, this will be discussed with the moderator. If the lead reviewer and moderator (after any appropriate discussion with other members of the review team) agree the change is justified, the lead reviewer will inform the local authority.

Further challenge

If the local authority still does not accept the findings or judgements of the review, it is invited to state its grounds for disagreement in writing. The lead managers will consider these grounds and make a final decision. The lead managers will inform the authority of the decision and the reasons for it.

The Director of Social Services will be sent a black and white final version of the report about three weeks prior to publication and a supply of printed copies one week prior publication.

The report remains confidential until the publication date, which will coincide with the presentation to the authority. While it is accepted that a number of senior members and managers within the authority will need to have access to the draft report, it should not be circulated or discussed in an open forum.

A summary will be produced as a separate document after consultation with Director of Social Services.

Timetable

The table below gives an indication of the time scales between the date on which the local authority receives initial feedback from joint review team and the publication of the report/presentation to the elected members.

This is an indicative timetable and precise dates will be set by the review support co-ordinator who will discuss the production schedule with the link officer

Feedback	Start
Report drafting	5-6 weeks
External moderation/internal editing	
Report sent to the local authority	
Authority comment	2 weeks
Proofing	12 weeks
Printing	
Delivery to the local authority	
Presentation to the local authority	1 week