

Qualitative longitudinal research in policy making and policy evaluation

QLR: exploring ways of researching lives through time
Real Life Methods training working

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Why is qualitative longitudinal research especially relevant to policy research?

- policies are processes
- policies are usually intended to bring about change
- policies happen in the context of people's lives and a fluid social world
- the implementation of policy changes
- the policy environment changes
- the questions asked of policies change

Levels of change

- individual level
 - personal context
 - service context
- service level
 - implementation and delivery
 - wider organisational context
- policy level
 - priorities, drivers and emphases
 - information needs
- social or structural level

Contributions to policy

- policy development, implementation and evaluation
- process and outcome evaluations
- answering the big policy question:

what works for whom,
how and under what circumstances?

What does qualitative research tell us about change?

- **manifestation:** has change occurred?
- **description:** what change has occurred?
- **location:** who for ... and who not?
- **explanation:** how did change come about or why did it not?
- **evaluation:** how was change or its absence experienced or evaluated?
- **consequences:** what were the implications of change or its absence?
- **personal meaning:** what is its meaning for the individual?
- **policy meaning:** what is its meaning for policy?

Example design: New Deal for Disabled People



