

Practical 4

Assessing quality

Fictional extract

Participants expressed a range of views on writing reports. One set of participants indicated that this was something that they enjoyed and looked forward to doing wherever possible. Another group of participants expressed some concerns over some parts of reporting, while another still spoke about finding reports very difficult and dreading that part of the project process.

A range of reasons were given for these views. Participants who spoke about enjoying reporting also said that they had been doing it for quite a long time and indicated that their enjoyment of the process had improved as their experience had. There was one exception to this where a participant indicated that they had only relatively recently started writing qualitative reports. However, further probing revealed that this participant had previously worked as a journalist and so had a similar skill set from a previous job. Participants who spoke about finding some parts of the process difficult attributed their concerns to a range of reasons. These included having had a difficult reporting experience in the past, being unsure about what exactly was required from qualitative reports, and concerns around doing justice to the data with which they were working. The group that discussed 'dreading' qualitative reports had similar reasons to those with mild concerns. However, it was also the case that many of these participants were very new to qualitative reporting. Several of them discussed how they thought that perhaps the thought of writing a report was worse than the reality. For example, one participant said

I find that the run up to writing a report can be quite difficult and I get anxious about whether I'm going to be able to do it properly, have enough time etc, but once I start the analysis and writing I'm usually ok (female, 26-35)

These views indicate that there is a correlation between the amount of time that someone has been writing qualitative reports and their attitude towards them. It also suggests that that experience of writing reports is fundamental to feeling positive about the process. Therefore it may be beneficial for researchers to seek as much experience as possible in report writing and, indeed, for training to be provided if at all possible.