



The international conference, *Social Norms Forum: Power of Positive Perceptions* was held on 31 March, 2009 with the purpose of discussing social norms techniques to reduce risky drinking among youth. Speakers from the University of Virginia (USA), University of Copenhagen (Denmark), University of Leeds (UK), University of Bradford (UK), London Borough of Croydon, London Metropolitan Police Service and British late night trade association NOCTIS presented on ways to address reducing risky behaviours of individuals by eliminating misperceptions of a target population.

Appendix I includes a brief summary of discussions held by speakers at working lunch sessions.

The conference was sponsored by Anheuser-Busch InBev with support from the National Social Norms Institute, The Brewers of Europe and NOCTIS.

### Conference Introduction

Welcoming remarks were presented by **Amie Gianino** on behalf of Anheuser-Busch InBev (ABI). Gianino shared with attendees ABI's involvement in abuse-prevention programs and partnerships and shared that nearly €80 million had been invested in these efforts in conjunction with its distributors.

Included in these efforts is ABI's work on social norms. Since 1999, ABI has invested more than €6.5 million to support social norms marketing programs at nine universities in the United States, including a nearly €2 million gift to the University of Virginia in 2006 to help establish the National Social Norms Institute.

Gianino listed other partnerships, including with the Greater Manchester Police in the United Kingdom both on its City Centre Safe initiative in the year 2000 and on the now-nationwide retailer recognition program, "Best Bar None" awards program, 2003-2005. Gianino also noted that ABI also currently sponsors Croydon's "Best Bar None."

Concluding, Gianino reminded attendees that they received a social norms toolkit during the morning registration and then introduced the day's moderator, Patricia Kelly.

**Robert Madelin**, the European Commission's Director General for Health and Consumer Protection also gave opening remarks. Madelin put the Social Norms Forum in the context of the work being done within the European Union Alcohol & Health Forum. Madelin asserted that participants were all in pursuit of the same thing – e.g. a reduction in alcohol misuse – but that goal may be pursued differently by different people, and he stated that the audience could learn something from one another.

Madelin noted there were similarities between the concepts of social norms, social marketing and public health campaigns with social norms being a subset of social marketing. Madelin also remarked that several Commission colleagues were also present

and that, ultimately, they hoped the day's event would contribute to a 'toolbox' for public health officials.

## **An Overview of the Social Norms Approach**

**Jennifer Bauerle, Ph.D.**, of the National Social Norms Institute (NSNI) spoke next and shared background on both NSNI and the concepts behind social norms. NSNI does research in the area of health promotion and behaviour change.

In Bauerle's experience, successful interventions contain four basic elements: they express empathy with the audience, are not argumentative, support self-efficacy and they recognise the discrepancy between an individual's behaviour and the normative behaviour in population.

Bauerle said that the social norms approach is about revealing the gap between the reality and the perception of a given risky behaviour in order to shrink the gap and encourage positive behaviour. Continuing on the social marketing theme introduced by Madelin, Bauerle said that social norms is about reinforcing positive norms through the use of social marketing. She then introduced examples of norms – including the concept of 'elevator etiquette' where one usually faces the front and stays quiet and the concept of 'personal space' which is the imaginary bubble surrounding an individual.

Misperceptions in norms can influence behaviours. Since it is human nature to notice behaviour that stands out, observing aberrant behaviour can lead some to assume that this unusual or negative behaviour is the normative behaviour. Bauerle pointed out that some health promotion messages inadvertently normalise the risky behaviour they mean to prevent. Therefore, it is essential to focus on positive healthy behaviours to shrink the misperception gap.

Bauerle said that a social norms program follows several steps:

1. Determining the intended audience (identify what behaviour is to be changed)
2. Conducting formative research
3. Forming a strategy
4. Implement the strategy
5. Track and evaluate the program

And further, Bauerle described the principles that should be used to present a normative as following the "P.I.E. model" – that is, social norms messages should be Positive, Inclusive and Empowering.

## University of Virginia's Social Norms Program: Implementation and Results

**James Turner, M.D.**, next presented on the University of Virginia's (UVa) social norms program. Turner informed participants that UVa had approximately 13,500 undergraduate students with a 'work hard / play hard' culture. UVa had been implementing social norms marketing projects since 1999. Turner likened social norms marketing to a "population-based brief intervention."

UVa had determined what the misperceptions were among the student population and set out to correct those misperceptions through a media campaign. The social norms team implemented their campaign by targeting three distinct populations with different messages. Normative messages were sent to: all students, students at risk (freshman, fraternity/sorority), and students identified with abuse problems (those in clinics, etc).

Turner then shared the various data sources they used to track and evaluate their social norms projects. These sources included national surveys (SAMHSA, ACHA/NCHA) as well as local sources (UVa Health Promotion Survey, local Emergency Room data and UVa death records). Examination of these data revealed that at a national level, drinking levels and negative consequences among college students has remained unchanged over the last four to five years. Turner then compared this to UVa data that revealed dramatic declines (2001-2008) in negative consequences including the following:

- 2,000 fewer UVa students suffered injuries related to alcohol
- 1,500 fewer UVa students drove under the influence
- 2,500 more UVa students had NONE of TEN serious alcohol-related outcomes
- Emergency Room visits increased by 100% – part of the campaign was designed to encourage students to seek medical help if they needed it – but the severity of the traumas had decreased
- Death rates due to all causes reduced by as much as 34% over the from 1989 to 2009

Turner concluded that 'something special is happening' at UVa as a result of its social norms programs.

## Reducing Risk Behaviour Among Young People in Denmark: The Ringsted Project

**Flemming Balvig, J.D.**, of the University of Copenhagen began by agreeing with Turner – that one must understand the context of the population where a program is implemented – and proceeded to share the context in Denmark.

Surveys suggest Denmark is a safe society with a happy, secure population. But Balvig pointed out that despite the advanced and democratic nature of the Danish society, there is a high level of youth drinking. Surveys from 1999 and 2003 show that 16-year olds from Denmark drink more than their cohorts from other European countries.

Balvig discussed the fact that various misperceptions exist in Scandinavia including misperceptions about sex, religion, alcohol consumption and drug usage to name a few.

Balvig then shared background on the Ringsted Project. The Ringsted Project attempted to assess a broad range of risky behaviours among 11-24 year olds in the town of Ringsted. Some 7,000 surveys were conducted to assess various behavioural patterns. Researchers determined that risky behaviour has four characteristics:

- The behaviours start early in life (12-13 years of age)
- Certain types of risky behaviours are correlated
- Risky behaviours are seen as ‘status enhancing’ by those who engage in them
- Characterised by exaggerated beliefs (misperceptions) about others

Balvig then shared that the Ringsted Experiment grew out of the Ringsted Project as a way to reduce a specific risky behaviour through an intervention. They also wanted to see if there would be a ripple effect with other behaviours.

A randomised controlled experiment was conducted with pupils to address the perceptions of smoking by them and among their peers. Students were split into groups to ask why they had misperceived how much their peers smoked. They were then asked what they could do to reduce those misperceptions in their own classes, and collectively the students drew up a class contract on what they could do.

The Ringsted Experiment showed that the intervention had a positive and long-term effect on reducing the misperception of the behaviour examined (smoking); it also corrected misperceptions of behaviours not discussed (drinking, marijuana use, ecstasy use). The researchers also found that while the focus of the experiment was on reducing the *misperceptions* of students smoking habits, it also changed their behaviour and students smoked less as a result of the intervention. Importantly, researchers also found that students drank less and committed fewer petty crimes.

Balvig concluded by saying that due to its real success, the intervention is now practiced annually in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class in schools throughout Denmark.

## Decreasing Consumption by Personalised Normative Web Feedback

**Bridgette Bewick, MA**, of the University of Leeds next shared her work in which researchers endeavoured to reduce alcohol consumption among the student population through a web-based intervention. Bewick agreed with previous speakers that the success of any intervention relies, in part, in understanding the context of the population. Bewick then shared the context of the student population of the University of Leeds (UoL). UoL has approximately 67,000 students and in the North West corner of the city students constitute nearly 20% of the city's population (compared to other university cities in the UK where students make up only about 4% of the population).

Due to the large student population and some very public celebrations throughout the city with overconsumption, the general population believes that *all* students (and young people) are drinking *all* the time.

UoL wanted to determine how much students were actually drinking. Surveys suggested that 60% of students were drinking within the governments recommended limits or not at all. A small minority (about 6%) were drinking at dangerous levels, but Bewick noted that they wanted to get the positive message out to all students.

Researchers also determined when students were drinking. They found that students generally drank approximately two to three days during the week and only about 4% drank every day of the week. Interestingly, the researchers also found that the more a person drank, the more they underestimated how much those around them drank. So the minority of people drinking everyday felt that everyone else was doing it, too.

Bewick said that UoL set out to examine whether a web-based tool would be effective at providing a personalised intervention to reduce drinking. The website provided students with three main pieces of information:

- Information about their own alcohol consumption levels (how many units, number of alcohol-free days, 'binging' behaviour);
- Accurate social norms (% of students who drink less than the individual, % drinking less than the individual who experience negative consequences)
- Services information

A review of the findings suggests that consumption levels (days per week) did not change, but drinks consumed per occasion decreased. Bewick stated that UoL then set out to replicate the findings with a second, larger trial and, again, the number of drinks per occasion decreased.

UoL next attempted to replicate their findings outside of Leeds. Bewick stated that a more-professional looking website was then created, and UoL worked with four

additional universities. While the results showed a similar decrease in drinks/occasion, the control group also showed a decrease.

Bewick and her colleagues next looked at whether the intervention could be applied at non-university settings, in particular, with a group of 6<sup>th</sup> Form students (under the legal drinking age). What Bewick found was – like with Mr. Flemming’s work – that the students believe that their cohorts were drinking more than they were and that misperception was greater for students they did not know versus their own friends.

In summary, Bewick stated that a web-based, social norms intervention *is* effective at reducing the number of drinks consumed per occasion, that students are willing to engage in a web-based intervention, and that it is the social norms information – the information about how much they and their peers actually drink – that is the ‘hook’ for driving the students to the website.

## Social Norms Research in Europe: Getting Started

**John McAlaney, Ph.D.**, with University of Bradford shared that he and his colleagues have been engaging in social norms research with more than 100 colleges and universities across the UK. McAlaney's presentation focused on sharing his experiences in starting a social norms project.

To begin, McAlaney explained that in doing this research, they faced two main challenges. The first challenge relates to those typically associated with doing any project – developing context, gathering baseline data – and the second challenge relates to facing general skepticism by government, health care providers, educators and others of the concept of social norms.

McAlaney indicated that 'selling the approach' was also important. It was important to inform all the contributors to a project that social norms was fundamentally different than the traditional 'health terrorism approach.' Social norms is about praising the healthy majority and not demonizing the minority.

Similar to Bauerle's comments, McAlaney commented that it is important to engage the target population in the intervention process, and he pointed out several issues to keep in mind when developing a social norms intervention, including:

- Take care to define exactly who your target population is;
- Understand how homogeneous the group is;
- Determine whether gender/age effects need to be taken into account;
- Decide whether to include descriptive or injunctive norms;
- Determine how obtain the attention of the target population.

McAlaney described how they worked with an organization called Youth Bytes to develop a computer-based system that prompts students to click on an attention-grabbing question when they logged on to computers. Clicking on the questions was followed by a social norms message pertaining to one of several topics (sexual health, physical health, smoking, or drinking). McAlaney and his colleagues also created promotional materials (a wallet, T-shirts, folders) with social norms messages to support the campaign and distributed them to students.

In the end, they learned several valuable lessons including the necessity to address concerns in advance by parents, educators and others that:

1. Social norms messages will *not* encourage abstainers to drink
2. Social norms messages are not simply a way 'sugar coat' the problem
3. Social norms is not a "US invention" and will work in Europe – one must cite the existing literature and be aware of other work, including projects in Australia

McAlaney also encouraged would-be practitioners to collect comprehensive and credible baseline data. This is useful not only in helping to sell a project with potential partners,

but also informs the basis of the intervention later. He concurred with Bewick that computers and technology proved to be an effective tool. McAlaney also said that practitioners should be prepared to make mistakes in setting up any campaign.

McAlaney provided several words of wisdom with respect to working with various groups:

**Educators** – Educators tend to be supportive of social norms projects but have concerns about encouraging certain risky behaviours. To address this, practitioners are encouraged to use injunctive norms instead of descriptive (use statistics to describe attitudes towards a particular behaviour instead of statistics of the behaviour itself).

**Community Groups** – Community groups also tend to be supportive of the social norms approach but often want to move quicker than is advisable. Community groups are often underfunded and are used to working independently. On the other hand, they understand the context better than most and can contribute to the social norms campaign with salient images and messages.

**Media** – Too often the media contribute to the misperceptions of norms with sensational or misleading headlines, articles and images.

**Politicians** – Politicians can be very supportive of social norms. Social norms gives policymakers a rare opportunity to share good news.

**Alcohol Industry** – The industry is supportive of social norms, but this support can generate some debate. Defining terms and expectations is key to addressing this.

## Social Norms Action in a Public Space

NOCTIS' **Chairman, Jon Collins**, and **Executive Director, Paul Smith**, shared their organization's context against the backdrop of what has been happening in the United Kingdom with respect to alcohol misuse and alcohol policy. NOCTIS has been in existence – under various names – for more than 50 years with its members being late night venues that serve young adults.

As the voice of the nighttime economy, NOCTIS has partnered with many organizations, encouraged strong enforcement of laws, authored such documents as a guide to Safer Clubbing (to minimise harm), Dispersal Policies and a guide on Community Engagement, which as was encouraged by McAlaney and the other speakers, discusses engaging with the target population.

Collins and Smith discussed the divergence between reality and perception – or more accurately, misperceptions – of behaviours in the nighttime economy. To do this, they used UK Home Office statistics and found that:

- Alcohol-related violence has fallen by a third from 1997 to 2007 [reality]
- Proportion of people thought that rowdy behaviour in pubs is a fairly big or very big problem grew over the last five years (22% to 25% of those asked) [perception]

Collins and Smith tried to look for an alternative social norms message in other government data. For example, the Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign that took place in 2006 reported that 29% of targeted premises in England and Wales served under-18's. That data could have been presented with a different message such as “the vast majority of even the problem-premises are not a problem.”

Like McAlaney, Collins and Smith also noted the media's role in fostering misperceptions. They shared numerous headlines that assert Britain is a country of abusers. In looking at the Home Office's figures, however, the data do not support the headlines and reveal that *most* people in the UK are ‘not binge drinkers.’ Likewise, headlines in the UK assert that licensing law changes that came into effect in 2005 resulted in “24 Hour Drinking”. However, after examining the data, what becomes apparent is that on average, opening times in England & Wales increased by only 21 minutes.

Collins and Smith also described work they engage in with others to foster positive behaviours in the UK, including supporting “Best Bar None”, the retailer recognition program; ‘Purple Flag’ a new program designed to recognise well-run nighttime economies; BIDS (business improvement districts); and Project 10, an industry and trade education campaign designed to enforce positive social norms over the next several years.

NOCTIS works with CGA Strategy (an on-trade market data supplier) to conduct baseline surveys regarding how much people drink, when they drink, for what purpose and what protective behaviours (alternating with non-alcoholic drinks) they engage in with the hope that this data will be the starting point of measuring improvement.

Collins and Smith summarised what the social norms are in the UK:

- Consumption and crime are lower than portrayed;
- UK population enjoy a drink – but not a nation of ‘binge drinkers;’
- Increasing emphasis on quality;
- Café Culture has not arrived – but sophistication is creeping in.

They also shared what the trade are doing to reinforce those norms.

**Paul Foster** with the London Borough of Croydon’s City Council began his presentation by sharing the Croydon context. Croydon has the largest population of the London boroughs with 340,000 people and 25% of them under the age of 18. Croydon sees approximately 20,000 visitors on Friday and Saturday nights.

In 2001, Croydon had a very negative image, so they set out to change that. To begin, they tried to address several things. They tried to:

- Reduce alcohol-related violence;
- Improve standards of management in licensees;
- Challenge irresponsible drinking and promote safe behaviours;
- Tackle sales to under-18’s;
- Improve the relationship between the trade and enforcement;

To tackle improving management standards, they began to use the Best Bar None scheme which rewards retailers for meeting certain criteria in their premises. These criteria include making the most of a premises’ design, incorporating CCTV (closed circuit television) systems, providing staff and door supervisor training, having a crime prevention plan, addressing challenges associated with outside smoking and drinking, and including effective drug policies.

Simply being accredited by the Best Bar None process means that licensees have gone way above the minimum legal standard. Regardless, Foster said the Best Bar None awards ceremony is the highlight of the year among the licensed trade.

**Sergeant Geoff Cooper** with the Metropolitan Police discussed a second area that Croydon was trying to address – challenging irresponsible drinking and promoting safe behaviours. To do this, the city used the Think Safe. Drink Safe. campaign.

Think Safe. Drink Safe. promotes using safe or preventative behaviours (staying with friends, eating food, paying close attention to one’s drinks, taking a licensed taxi, etc.). Cooper said that retailers were happy to display posters encouraging these positive behaviours. Cooper also pointed towards the many organizations they partnered with in

order to do the campaign – including a taxi company that branded its vehicles with the Think Safe. Drink Safe. logo. Cooper also shared other promotional materials that were used in the campaign to get the message out about safe and responsible drinking.

Cooper then shared some data on the effects of their efforts. In 2002, crimes in licensed premises in Croydon were recorded at 1,855 – however, by 2008, these numbers had been reduced to 815. The government also did a study and found similar results – that crimes against a person were reduced in Croydon by some 13%.

Cooper said that if would-be practitioners are “enthusiastic about partnership, then we can actually achieve a lot more than we can achieve if we work in isolation.”

## Conclusions

**Jennifer Baurele, Ph.D.**, of the National Social Norms Institute (NSNI) concluded the day’s *Social Norms Forum* by looking at traditional health promotion messages and turning them into a social norms message with her ‘social norms paint brush.’ Bauerle used examples from the UK, Belgium and Australia to emphasize her point.

<b>Source</b>	<b>Actual Message</b>	<b>Social Norms Message</b>
<i>Press &amp; Journal, United Kingdom</i>	“Five alcoholic beverages the typical amount consumed – eight drinks ‘the norm’ for night out” <i>headline</i>	“Study finds five drinks on average is typical, not eight”
Sign in Antwerp, Belgium	“Our street is not a dirt box – please clean up after your pet” €250 fine, <i>unappealing photo of dog waste</i>	“Two out of three pick up after their pet. Woof!” <i>image of happy dog with bag being properly disposed</i>
Anti drinking & driving campaign, Australia	“Don’t turn a night out into a nightmare” <i>dead/injured person in a pool of blood</i>	“Most Australian Youth Get Home Safely From A Night Out. Thanks, Aussies” <i>Image of most popular sports car in Australia</i>

## **Appendix I**

### **Guided Luncheon Conversation with Jennifer Bauerle**

The luncheon conversation was varied and quite lively. The discussion began by looking at the differences between social marketing and social norms marketing. Social Norms Marketing uses positive normative data to highlight what a specific population is doing well with regards to a specific behavior. It uses this data to correct a misperception the population is experiencing and thereby changes the behavior. Marketing principles are used to develop and convey the message to the intended audience. Social Marketing uses the same marketing principles to develop and convey the message, but does not necessarily use a normative, positive message to bring about behavior change. It does not require a gap between perception and reality to exist in order to proceed with the methodology as does the social norms approach.

This led into a discussion of how the social norms approach can fit into other prevention interventions already in use. This approach can be a stand alone intervention, but can also work with other programs already in place to enhance a comprehensive approach to behavior change.

There was quite a bit of discussion around what the best age is for the approach. Specifically, can it work for youth under the age of 10 years? There has been little research conducted with this young a population. Most controlled studies have been conducted with high-school or college-age students.

Also reviewed were the different mediums for delivering the message and how to determine the best one to use. Along similar lines, there was discussion on how to best survey a large community. There have been several statewide projects that have successfully conducted their own surveys of large populations. It is also possible to add some perception and normative questions to an existing survey for economies of scale.

The conversation ended with the examination of how social norms could be applied to the various professions at the table. The mood was optimistic, and there was a keen interest in furthering the discussion.

### **Guided Luncheon Conversation with James Turner**

Group discussions revolved around using social norms marketing to promote protective behaviors. The behaviors sought were:

1. Counting drinks and self-tracking of estimated BAC;
2. Empowering parents to arrange safe rides home for teens and young adults who had been drinking;
3. Use of appropriate medical services when a young person had become ill or injured from alcohol; and finally

4. How to incorporate Social Norms Marketing into the high-school environment.

Discussions were referred to published research and the NSNI website for more details.

### **Guided Luncheon Conversation with John McAlaney**

The main topic discussed was how to get a social norms programme off the ground. People were particularly keen to ask:

- How to go about collecting baseline data. McAlaney explained the importance of getting credible data from a representative sample and how online technology can help, keeping in mind the limitations it has
- How to target sensitive behaviours, such as sexual health in minors. McAlaney spoke about the use of injunctive norms and the importance of involving the target population (including their parents) in the design and delivery of norms messages
- How to overcome existing negative perceptions in the media and wider healthcare community. McAlaney gave some examples from national UK alcohol surveys, which demonstrate that in young men, the heaviest drinking demographic, binge drinking is not a majority behaviour.

Also discussed was the typical scene usually shown on news reports of a drunken people falling about on the main streets of a city centre on a Saturday night. McAlaney noted that whilst individuals in such clips had clearly drunk to excess, the fact was that they still represented only a fraction of the total adult population of a particular city.

### **Guided Luncheon Conversation with Bridgette Bewick**

This discussion focused on the development and marketing of web-based social norms interventions. Of particular interest was the financial costs and time associated with developing a comprehensive web-based feedback system; often costs are underestimated both by developers and by commissioners.

Ways in which a wider understanding of the complexities involved (which not only have implications for cost, but also potential effectiveness) could be developed were discussed. The importance of raising awareness of the difference between traditional static page and interactive feedback systems was considered.

The group was also interested in how one might recruit users, discussed barriers faced, ways in which these might be overcome and were mindful of institutional differences.

Much of the discussion was spent talking about the challenges faced when using web-based technology. Overall the group was positive about the progress that has been made in recent years. It was agreed that within Europe there are exciting research and development

opportunities, and all involved in the discussion hoped to build on the links made at the Social Norms Forum to ensure this work can continue to progress.

### **Guided Luncheon Conversation with Paul Smith**

This group talked quite a lot about how in a number of European countries at the moment, governments are responding very negatively to the tide of unfavourable media comment that is surrounding alcohol and anti-social binge drinking debate. It seems that this previously British phenomena is making significant in-roads across Northern Europe. Yet the response by government to the rise in press attention is not dissimilar to the British solution – to discuss tough measures, and potentially very costly measures, curbing the practices of the alcohol industry.

It was clear that no similar equivalent bodies to NOCTIS exist in Belgium, France or Holland – simply because historically there has not been the need to defend the Nighttime Economy (NTE) from hostile media or legislation.

There was a general consensus round the table that a lot of the move towards greater government control is being driven by negative press – and that a re-balancing of the social norms would be very useful.

### **Guided Luncheon Conversation with Sergeant Geoff Cooper**

Cooper introduced the Best Bar None concept to the participants as a successful tool for reducing alcohol related crime and disorder. Best Bar None is a management competition, which originated in the Greater Manchester Police area at the beginning of the decade. Croydon is now entering its sixth year of the scheme which uses this non-confrontational setting to raise standards in the night-time economy. It uses a multi-agency approach bringing the Police, Fire Department and Local Authorities together to assess competing premises against a fixed standard which is well above the statutory minimum. The winners are announced at a celebration evening event. In addition, ‘Think Safe Drink Safe,’ a publicity campaign to encourage customers of the night time economy to drink responsibly and to stay safe, runs in conjunction with Best Bar None. This encourages customers of the night time economy to plan their evening and stay safe.

This discussion centred on how the retail sector can benefit from both initiatives. The ‘Safer Croydon’ message was discussed, and the benefits for retailers in the area were considered. Cooper highlighted some positive messages from the local newspapers.

Further useful information is available at -  
<http://www.croydonbestbarnone.com/>  
<http://www.bbnuuk.com/>

## **Guided Luncheon Conversation with Janet Witheridge**

Witheridge introduced the European Research Advisory Board (ERAB) to participants, only one of whom was already familiar with the organisation. ERAB is an independent foundation founded by the Brewers of Europe in 2003 to fund research into the biomedical and psychosocial effects of alcohol on health and where possible the particular effect of beer.

Witheridge explained that the independence is guaranteed by having two boards – the Advisory Board consisting of six internationally renowned researchers in different specialities (cardiology, epidemiology, liver, psychosocial etc .) from different European countries. The role of the Advisory Board is to assess applications and send them for peer review and to the Board of Directors, which has a majority of public members, whose purpose is to monitor the legal and financial status of the Board.

All but one of the participants were actively engaged in research in the UK and Finland, and they discussed their research, their funding and other funding opportunities . The majority were engaged in public sector research and were glad to hear about ERAB's fund and the process by which successful applications were selected. Participants were also pleased to know that ERAB is particularly seeking applications in the area of psycho-social research and encourages young researchers by providing Travel Awards for researchers under the age of 35 to attend conferences to present their data and Exchange Awards to visit other centres of excellence.

Participants were given a copy of the 2008 Report from ERAB and directed to [www.erab.org](http://www.erab.org) for further information.