

The Role of Ethical Review

The Academy of Social Science is keen to promote discussion of the issues the current systems of ethical review raise. Some of these were discussed by Robert Dingwall in *21st Century Society* [Vol 3 No 1, February 2008].

The AcSS believes that all social science research should be carried out to high ethical standards and a consideration of current practice is timely. We understand that the ESRC is also reviewing its research ethics framework. There are a variety of ways in which the Academy could take debate forward and we would welcome your views on which options we should pursue.

We are thinking of starting with an event within the next few months for academics and researchers which looks at how ethical scrutiny is working across the range of social science research and considers the consequences of the current and proposed systems of scrutiny. This could be followed by a series of regional meetings and a forum/blog on the Academy's website. The ultimate objective would be to reach some kind of consensus about the appropriate role of ethical review within the humanities and social sciences which could be the basis for discussion with policy makers about future arrangements.

We know this is an issue of growing concern. We would like to hear from you if you have any thoughts on how best to structure discussion and/or if you have experiences to share. We would also be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to join a working group to take these discussions forward. We are keen to hear from as wide a range of social scientists as possible both in academia and in other sectors about their experiences.

Stephen Anderson, Executive Director, Academy of Social Sciences

Please visit the Forum to discuss these issues. This is accessible from the Members' Area: login and then click on the right-hand menu item 'Forum'; click the orange 'Access Forum' button and select 'The Role of Ethical Review'. If you experience any difficulty with your member login, or have forgotten the login details or password, please contact the website administrator: m_barrows@tiscali.co.uk