



**DIALOG**

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**Young Jewish Adults:  
Attitudes, Activities and Interventions  
Qualitative Research Report**

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**March 1996**

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## A Executive Summary

### Methodology

- Six qualitative group discussions were held in centres of dense Jewish populations, supported by some in-depth telephone interviewing in smaller Jewish communities.
- The six groups each contained 10 respondents. Three groups were for the ages 21-29 and three for the 30-35+ age group. The groups took place in Edgware, Ilford and Manchester.
- There were 20 telephone respondents spread across South London, Liverpool and Glasgow.
- The recruitment criteria were designed to recruit young Jewish singles who have little contact with the Jewish community and who are most 'at risk' of marrying non-Jews:

### Respondents' views of themselves

- For respondents, maintaining their individuality is extremely important and they are not prepared to conform to others' ideas of how they should live. They want to be accepted as they are and not as others think they should be. They don't think that there are others like them but they would like to meet them if there are. They see themselves as different from other Jews and as 'outsiders' from the Jewish Community:
- Nearly all think of themselves as Jewish and are proud to be so. They feel that they share a common culture and history with others. They see Judaism as a culture rather than a religion.
- They see themselves as living in a multi-ethnic society and want to be accepted as normal young British adults.
- They find their 'Jewishness' comes out most when they find themselves under attack (usually verbally) from non-Jews. Being the only Jew in a non-Jewish environment allows them to be Jewish in their own way whereas they feel that their Jewishness is not acceptable to the Jewish community. Most feel that they are missing out on something by not being able to share their Jewishness with others.
- Most would like to have Jewish partners and children but they are prepared to marry out if this is the only way that they can find a 'good' person to share their lives with and many are contemplating this. Most dislike the pressure that comes from their families and from the Community to follow certain rules and to get married. This is seen as an attack on their self-worth and is resisted.
- A small number see themselves as never returning to Judaism as they have built their lives completely away from it and now feel that they have nothing in common with other Jews.

### Views of other Jews

- The Jewish Community was seen as cliquy and closed to outsiders and many Jews were thought to be too materialistic and ostentatious. Members of the Jewish community were seen as too often displaying intolerance towards other people and in some cases of being racist.

- The Jewish community was seen as being hypocritical in not following the rules that they expected others to follow. Most respondents felt that they were often, if not always, treated as non-Jews by other Jews which they resented greatly. The Jewish community was also seen as divided into factions with each part being unaccepting of people who had different ways of expressing their Judaism to their own.
- The Jewish community was seen as representing their parents generation rather than their own.

### **Leisure time: As it is**

- All felt that they worked very hard during the week and that when they had free time the most important thing was to be able to relax and unwind. On the weekends all liked to meet old friends and if possible make new ones. Most liked to 'get away' from their own areas if possible.
- Younger respondents were more likely to go to clubs, gigs and parties whilst older respondents tended to go to parties, dinner parties, restaurants, cinemas and theatres. A relatively small number of respondents visited art galleries and museums. The most popular night to go out for most was Friday. All liked to go to the countryside or to parks to walk. Several liked to take part in or watch sports, particularly the men.
- Older respondents were more interested in meeting a partner than younger ones and these respondents often felt 'left out' by friends who were married.
- Word-of-mouth was the most used method for finding out about events. The original source of this information came from leaflets and posters and to a lesser extent from publications such as Time-out, local papers and the radio.

### **The problem words in advertising events**

- Most respondents had a negative response to the use of certain words, phrases or descriptions in advertising messages. If they saw such words used they would be unlikely to attend any event advertised in such a way. The most problematic words were: Singles, Social, Jewish, Kosher, Jewish education, Educational.
- Most also had problems with the use of over-positive statements and misleading age brackets.
- Most were unlikely to attend any event advertised in the Jewish Chronicle or Jewish Telegraph (in Manchester) as this was seen as the voice of the Jewish community and of their parents. For an event advertised in these publications to appeal, they would need to be presented in a very different way.

### **Reactions to Jewish Continuity Interventions**

#### **Chavurah Cafe**

- The general idea of having a meeting place for young Jews was liked although many did not see how this intervention could work in practice. It was not understood how such a place could be kept Jewish or how it would attract the kind of people that respondents wanted to meet.

- The title was misunderstood and mispronounced. Many thought that it sounded as if it would be associated with an orthodox organisation and would attract an orthodox crowd.
- The idea of having adjoining rooms was viewed with a great deal of suspicion. Many felt that this meant that there would be a hidden agenda.
- The different age groups wanted the cafe to be targeted specifically at people of their own age
- The idea of providing a performance space was popular

### **Holidays for Singles**

- The idea of having holidays was generally appealing but many were not excited by the choices offered.
- The title was not liked because of the negative associations with the word 'singles'
- Weekends at Centre-Parcs were attractive to many but the idea of a 'relationship workshop' was not popular at all.
- Kosher Club-Med was interesting to some older respondents but the use of the word 'kosher' was not popular
- Mission to Prague sounded like a good destination but too much like hard work.

### **'Click'**

- This intervention was unpopular with most respondents with the exception of one older group and some telephone respondents as well as a small number of sporting enthusiasts.
- Many felt that this sounded like a service for people who had no friends and as such was not something that they wanted to be associated with.
- Many women were concerned about the safety aspects of the scheme. They were worried that they would be put in touch with 'dangerous' people. It was suggested that there be a 'club house' opened that would allow people to meet each other in safety before exchanging telephone numbers.
- The charity aspect received little interest whilst the reasons for having a sliding scale for different introductions was not understood.

### **Exclusive Introductions**

- This intervention was popular with a significant number of the older respondents and a few of the younger ones. The majority of those who liked it were women. Most of the younger respondents were not keen on it.
- There was a mixed response to the title with some feeling that it was 'elitist' whilst others felt that it was 'sophisticated'.
- Sharing meals with others was much more popular than cultural visits.

- The idea of attending with friends made the intervention much more attractive to some
- The idea of having a 'host' was viewed with suspicion by many. All felt that the role of the 'host' should be limited.

## Financial and Legal

- Almost no interest was shown from the groups towards the main body of this intervention although some telephone respondents liked it. The 'relocation package' however was of interest to many who felt that they would use it if they were moving.
- Most felt that they already had access to such services and that they did not want to share confidential information with a stranger. There was a great deal of doubt shown towards the idea of having a 'mentor' and concerns about safety were expressed.
- Many felt that this was an idea for people older than themselves
- It was generally not understood how such an idea would help to put them in touch with others

## A Plan for the Future

From the findings of this research we would recommend the following interventions:

- Weekends away (a similar intervention to those presented in 'Holidays for singles')
- Exclusive Introductions warrants a trial for older respondents as long as certain changes are made
- 'Click' warrants a cautious trial for those living in smaller Jewish communities and for some who showed enthusiasm in other groups
- Using Discussion groups for a three fold purpose: to monitor ideas, as 'radios' for events and finally to locate leaders in each area.

## Weekends in Country locations

- Hold weekends away in a country location with comfortable but not 'flashy' facilities. These weekends could be held several times each year catering for a large number of individuals from different parts of the UK. These weekends should take place separately for the 21-29 age group and the 31-39 age group.
- Offer a wide range of 'optional' activities concentrating on 'fun' and steering clear of educational or religious content. It may be possible to include optional discussion groups or debates but these should be presented discreetly. The organisational elements of the weekend should be kept to a minimum.

Offer a vegetarian cuisine of high quality so removing the need to describe the weekend as 'Kosher'.

- We also recommend employing professional organisers for the different activities that take place during the weekend.

## Advertising events

- Use a 'snowballing' system whereby individuals in each area are told of an event and tell others about it.
- Place posters and flyers in places that young Jewish people may go to.
- Place adverts in Jewish and non-Jewish publications that are very different in presentation and content to those that are usually seen.
- Advertising messages should be irreverent in some way and a bit over the top. The advertising message had to assure them that this event was different from the others they had seen and would therefore attract the kinds of people that they wanted to meet. All printed advertising material should be bright and attractive in its presentation.
- Advertising should have as little to do with serious Judaism as possible but could possibly use commonly understood Yiddish words or other phrases associated with Jewish life.
- Employ a professional advertising/marketing agency who have a good understanding of the target audience to produce leaflets/posters and adverts for events.

## The groups worked

- Most respondents enjoyed the group discussion experience. They liked the relaxed atmosphere and the fact that there was no pressure on them to be anything except themselves. Most of all they were delighted to meet others who were in the same situation to themselves.
- Many group respondents exchanged telephone numbers and in one group there was a great deal of conversation about getting together to plan events for the future.
- In each of the groups potential leaders were identified who all stated that they would be keen to take a more active role in organising event/activities.

## How the Discussion groups and Interventions could work together

- We recommend a programme of Discussion groups that will take place twice a year in different areas of the UK. The groups can be used as a multi-purpose tool to:
- Monitor new ideas either connected to the weekends or to other interventions and advertising.
- Enable young Jewish adults to meet each other in an unpressurised and stimulating environment.
- Advertise the weekends away or other interventions by using the groups as 'radios' as they will tell others.
- Identify potential leaders in each area who can then be encouraged to take a more active role.

## **B Background, Objectives and Methodology**

### **Background to the Research**

Indications have emerged over recent years that the demographics and attitudes of the Jewish Community are changing. The Jewish population is shrinking; synagogue marriages are in decline; divorce is rising and Jewish populations are shifting. There is, therefore, considerable concern that there may be an 'internal' threat to the Jewish Community in Great Britain.

The focus has been on young Jewish singles. Recent research has shown that they are particularly resistant to the community events typically on offer. RSGB's research report entitled 'The Missing Generation' highlighted the gaps in provision and a lack of understanding of the needs of young Jews. Research by the Board of Deputies of British Jews into the attitudes of Jewish women described the difficulties of single women. Finally the early results of the recent study by the IJA (now JPR) show that the attitudes of young people differ from those of their elders.

Jewish Continuity have therefore chosen Jewish singles age 18-35 for special attention. While awaiting the full analysis and implications of the JPR survey, this research was set in motion to assess qualitative responses of fairly typical 'uninvolved' young Jews age 21 - 35+ to events currently available to them and to specific suggested interventions. The research was set in a wider context to understand their attitudes to their leisure, their Jewishness and any possible points of contact between the two.

### **Research Objectives**

The overall objective of this research was to understand the lifestyles, attitudes and wants of young Jewish singles who have little contact with the organised Jewish community.

Specifically the research has established:

1. whether these Jews want to meet other Jews
2. how they feel about themselves and about other Jews and Jewish events
3. how they currently spend their leisure time
4. what interventions may appeal to them that would enable them to meet other Jews

### **Methodology**

Qualitative methods were considered the most suitable to ascertain attitudes, needs and wants. Group discussions were felt to be useful to stimulate ideas and fine-tune them and these were supported by some in-depth telephone interviewing in smaller Jewish communities in order to ensure adequate geographical cover. The social interaction within the groups was considered a useful mirror of that very social interaction that was under discussion.

Given limited resources it was decided to exclude the 18-21 age group as having little in common with post-student social life. In addition it was decided to split the target age group of 21-35+ broadly into 21-29 and 30-35+ in order to ensure common interests and cohesive discussion.



Six groups with 10 respondents in each, were recruited as follows:

	Age	Age
Edgware	21-29	30-35+
Ilford	21-29	30-35+
Manchester	21-29	30-35+

20 telephone respondents aged 21-35+ were recruited as follows:

	Number
Glasgow	6
Liverpool	6
South London	8

'Singles' were defined as neither married nor cohabiting. A maximum of two divorcees were recruited to each of the older groups.

The following criteria were used to recruit young Jewish singles who have little contact with the Jewish community and who are most 'at risk' of marrying non-Jews:

**All respondents:**

- Did not belong to a Jewish charitable committee
- Did not attend Jewish adult education classes in the last year
- Did not attend synagogue more than 3 times in the last year

**All agreed with either of the following statements:**

- " I have attended Jewish activities/events but I don't like the kinds of people that they usually attract"
- " I would like to meet more Jewish people but I never seen any events organised for Jewish people that interest me"

**All disagreed with the statement:**

- " I would only go out with Jewish men/women"

**All agreed with the statement:**

- " A lot of my friends are non-Jewish"

## **Respondents Backgrounds**

Respondents came from a wide variety of economic backgrounds with most being in full-time employment. A broad spectrum of occupations were represented ranging from those working in a professional capacity to a small number who were manual workers. Most lived in their own accommodation with a small number living at their parents' homes.

The groups offered a broad range of Jewish backgrounds. The majority of respondents had been given some Jewish education as children and had attended Synagogue with their parents. Many had belonged to Jewish youth clubs but had not been involved with any Jewish organisations since. Many respondents had been to Israel at least once for a holiday.

## **C Attitudes towards themselves, other Jews and their futures**

### **Self-image**

Most respondents described themselves as 'different' from other Jews. Most also described themselves as being 'outsiders' and felt that it was difficult for them to find a way of maintaining their individuality within the Jewish community. All felt that they had their own individual interests and pastimes and that it was difficult to meet others who felt the same way as they did. Respondents were not prepared to compromise their own ways of life in order to fit into the Jewish Community, indeed most were confident and positive about the way that they were going, but many expressed feelings of frustration and isolation that there seemed no way to share their Jewish culture and background with other like-minded individuals. The Jewish community was seen as not accepting of their individuality, wanting them to conform to a set of rules that they did not accept.

Most thought of themselves as normal young British adults, which was what they most wanted to be accepted as, and there was a feeling that in order to be more involved in the Jewish community they would have to change the way that they thought and acted which they were not prepared to do. Most felt that the Jewish community had not made enough efforts to cater for their needs and that they had been ignored because they wanted to be different. In particular the Jewish community was seen as not understanding their concept of 'having fun' which did not include educational or religious content and was more concerned with relaxing and 'playing'.

Respondents who lived in areas with large Jewish populations seemed more strident in their expressions about being different from other young Jews, than those who came from areas with smaller Jewish communities. Those from larger Jewish centres seemed to have a greater need to distance themselves from a perceived Jewish stereotype that they intensely disliked.

In areas with smaller Jewish populations respondents felt less need to 'be different' as their differences from the non-Jewish community were constantly being highlighted and so their 'specialness' was reinforced. This made respondents from these areas less resistant to ideas relating to being Jewish and generally they had a greater desire to meet other young Jews. However, even in the smaller Jewish communities a great deal of unease was expressed towards conformity.

Most of the respondents spent much of their working and leisure time in environments where there was little or no Jewish contact. They were often seen as special in these places by non-Jews because of their Jewishness (as they were often the only ones) and this difference made them feel more Jewish than they did in their own communities where they felt that they were not accepted. They were able to express their Jewishness in their own way without having to conform to the stereo-typical behaviour that they felt their own community expected of them.

Much of the desire to be different and special related to a rebellion against parents and families from whom all respondents felt a great deal of pressure to conform. The Jewish community was seen as representing their parents generation and, as such, needed to be rebelled against. Conforming to their parents' wishes would mean that they would become 'like sheep' (a way in which other young Jews were often described by respondents) and as such would lose their individuality and creativeness.

### **Proud to be Jewish?**

Nearly all respondents said that they were proud of the fact that they were Jewish. Although there was much criticism of sections of the Jewish Community for being 'intolerant' and 'too

interested in material things', respondents were not shy about expressing the fact that they were Jewish to non-Jewish people that they met.

The majority of respondents felt that they continued to think of themselves as Jewish because of the suffering that Jews had endured throughout history and particularly during the Holocaust. They felt that because of this history they in some way owed it to those who had suffered that they continue being Jewish. Jewishness was seen as part of their heritage and something that they were 'born with' and that they could not deny.

For many respondents being Jewish was about having a shared culture and not to do with religion. Many liked the closeness shown in Jewish families and felt that this was the basis of being Jewish. A shared taste in food was considered another important bond. Only one respondent mentioned the 'spiritual aspect' of being Jewish which he felt helped him particularly in difficult times.

Respondents felt that their Jewishness came out particularly when they heard others being critical of Jews. For many, these attacks meant that they were aware of their 'Jewishness' when they had not been aware of it for many years.

A small minority did not feel that they had any connection with being Jewish anymore and in some instances did not call themselves Jewish anymore. These respondents were highly criticised by other members for this view.

"You can try and forget what you are but at the end of the day you are Jewish"

"Everybody here is proud that they are Jewish, deep down inside, there is something within"

"I respect the faith but at the end of the day, other than the fact that I was born Jewish, I haven't got much in common with it"

"You can't deny it. It's like having a little chip that has been programmed into you"

"It's not so much about religion it's more about it as a way of life. It's like being French, it's something that you were brought up with and is part of you"

"At work someone called me a rich Jew and that's when I felt very isolated"

"It's about knowing the difference between types of herring and what a bagel is"

"Many of us wouldn't know how to describe being Jewish"

"Everybody who is here cares because, if it continues as it is, there will be no religion left"

"A beck stands round and talks and talks, doing the same things all the time, racing around in their mummy's and daddy's cars"

"They stay in their own community because they don't want to break away and they don't want to meet people who are not Jewish because they feel threatened"

"I'm proud to say that I am Jewish but unfortunately we have the most dreadful name"

"You say to someone that you are Jewish and straight away they think you've got this or you've got that"

"I love looking like a yok and I love it when people slag off Jewish people in front of me and then I tell them that I am Jewish and watch their faces"

"Being Jewish really doesn't mean anything to me"

"Some people are not going to go to Jewish things no matter how they are worded, they are just not interested"

## **Perceptions of other Jews**

The majority of respondents were fairly negative about their experiences of other Jews. Although many of them had close Jewish friends whom they felt were different from the rest, they viewed the Jewish community as very 'cliquey' and that it was very difficult to break into these groups.

Many respondents recounted times when they went out and felt very alienated by groups of young Jews who they felt were unfriendly and who were hostile to allowing new people into their sphere.

"Whenever I go out to places there where there is a large group of Jewish people, they are very cliquy"

"Everybody wants to meet new people but nobody will mingle"

"They are like sheep. They just follow each other. They don't want to start their own trends or anything. It's far better if you stand up for yourself and say here I am and I am not going to follow the rest or dress like the rest or drive cars like the rest"

"The same people doing the same things"

Many respondents felt that many other Jews showed intolerance towards other people with the word 'racist' being used to describe this behaviour. Respondents felt that Jews in particular should have learned not to be this way having experienced so much themselves. It was also felt by many respondents that the Jewish community was too inward looking and not prepared to experience and learn from other cultures.

"In this day and age you shouldn't care what religion people are"

Several of the female respondents were very negative in their views of Jewish men. They felt that many young Jewish men were immature in their outlook and this had led them to go out with non-Jewish men. There was also a feeling amongst this group that young Jewish men were judgmental about how women looked and were over concerned with what clothes women were wearing and what car they owned. This made the female respondents feel that these men were shallow and uninterested in them as people. Many male respondents in response felt that it was Jewish women who displayed these negative attributes and that it was they were over-concerned with material things.

"The majority of Jewish men I meet are not men"

"Jewish men are tied to their mothers' apron strings"

"They (Jewish men) are so shallow. It's all 'what car do you drive?' and 'where did you buy your clothes?'"

"They (Jewish women) don't ask you what your name is, they ask you what car you drive?"

Many respondents talked about the 'hypocrisy' shown by members of the Jewish community by not being consistent in the way that they followed religious laws. A significant minority of these respondents felt that Jewish people should either follow the rules completely or not at all whilst others felt that it was allowable for people to have their own ways of expressing their Judaism. Several respondents talked about experiences of going to Synagogue where people stood outside talking to friends and 'showing off their new clothes' rather than going inside to pray. The largest amount of criticism for this perceived 'hypocrisy' came from those respondents who were least interested in the religious aspects of Judaism.

"A lot of Jewish people don't know what being Jewish means. They don't go to Shul to pray, they stand there and talk and beck"

Several respondents talked about the difference between different types of Orthodox Jews. There was generally a more positive perception of leaders of the Lubavitch than of the United Synagogue. It was felt that the Lubavitch Rabbis were more enabling than their United counterparts who were seen as being too pushy and authoritarian.

"The Lubavitch are much nicer than the United, they are much more friendly"

"Some Rabbis say you must do this and you must do that but the Lubavitch say if you do something then that is great and I will help you"

"It's do as I say and not do as I do"

"There is a lot of dissent between Orthodoxy, Reform, Masorti and Lubavitch and each doesn't recognise the other. We are all Jewish essentially and yet we are not recognised as so, that's bad"

"Orthodox Jews don't see us as Jewish but it doesn't make them any better. They do the same as anybody else, it's just kept quieter"

"Judaism needs to be dragged into the 20th Century. We need to integrate here in Manchester. There should be more bonding together"

"To a Lubavitch Jew I am a Shickser"

"We have the Orthodox Jews who keeps 100% kosher at home but eats anything out, they are hypocrites"

## **Jewish Partner, Jewish Children?**

The majority of respondents wanted to find a Jewish partner if they could, although many felt that it was more important to find someone who was a 'good' person than it was to find another Jew. Several respondents stated that although they had been out with non-Jewish people and that this was not a problem for them, they would like to have a Jewish partner because of a common background that they would share.

"Deep down if I'm going to make a commitment then I want that to be Jewish"

"I can't explain it really. It must be like if you were black and you're with another black person"

"You've got so much in common with another Jewish person it just makes life a lot simpler if you've got that in common"

"I have been out with a lot of non-Jewish men and although they are fun there isn't that same bond"

"I've got a lot of non-Jewish friends and I've been out with a lot of non-Jewish girls but I've come to the stage where I would like to meet a Jewish person who I might eventually marry"

"It shouldn't matter that she's Jewish but it does"

"However much you try to bridge the gap between different people (from different cultures) it is very very difficult"

Respondents had enormous difficulties expressing the reasons why they would like to have a Jewish partner but most agreed that there was something different about being with other Jews. Most thought that these differences were due to the way that they had been raised and that the feeling of Jewishness and a certain familiarity with other Jews was due to childhood experiences. There was felt to be a commonality of culture and of language that was extremely difficult to explain to a non-Jewish person.

Parental pressure played an important part in this desire to meet a Jewish partner. A significant number of respondents felt that they wanted to have a Jewish partner because of this pressure and that their lives would be made much easier if they did so.

"I know that deep down I want to make my parents happy. It's a guilt thing"

The majority of respondents also felt that when they had children it would be preferable to bring them up as Jews.

"I haven't been out with a Jewish girl for 5 years but when it comes down to the crunch I want to marry a Jewish girl for the sake of the children"

Many respondents also felt that they wanted to marry a Jewish partner because of a feeling of responsibility that they felt towards continuing the religion. For many the suffering of the Holocaust made them feel that they had a duty to those that died to have Jewish children. The differences in approach were felt to be due to a person's upbringing and the views of parents on whether it was acceptable to have non-Jewish partners.

"When I think of the holocaust I don't want them to have died in vain"

"My mum says that if every Jew married out then Hitler would have won"

Several of the older respondents said that although they would like to meet a Jewish partner they had, because of past negative experiences and because of the difficulty in meeting new Jewish people of the opposite sex, become less concerned with finding one and had become more concerned with meeting a 'good' person from any background.

"You can never say never to marrying out"

A small number of respondents were not interested at all in meeting a Jewish partner. For these respondents a person's religion was of no importance. In the main these same respondents also felt that marriage was an outdated institution that had no relevance in modern life.

"I look at people as people. I don't look at the background they have or what colour they are"

The majority of respondents wanted their children to be Jewish although there was a significant minority for whom this was not important. As far as Jewish education was concerned, many emphasised that they wanted this to be a different experience for their children than their own. Many felt that they were forced into learning things which they did not understand and that they had not learned enough about other cultures. Few had considered what they would actually do in terms of educating their children about Judaism or how this sense of Judaism would actually be conveyed. Most felt that they would deal with this issue when the time comes and that there were plenty of organisations and institutions that were available should they want to know more.

"Don't force it on them"

"It was drummed into us and we didn't really understand it so I would want to explain it to my children but also to tell them about other religions"

## Pressure

The majority of respondents stated that they felt pressurised into finding Jewish partners by their families and by friends. Many felt that this made them feel less good about themselves. They felt that they had been stigmatised because of the fact that they were not married. Most respondents stated that they felt an aversion to this kind of pressure and that they would like others to accept them as they were. Respondents wanted to be able to escape from this pressure as they felt that it had the opposite effect to the one intended and made them less likely to find a partner. This pressure also made respondents less likely to attend events or activities that seemed to be organised with the intention of meeting partners.

"I come from a family of 31 married cousins and I hold the world record for 'Please God by yours' "

"The worst weekend is to go to a family wedding and they always say ' why aren't you married?'"

"Do I have to be married to be a nice person?"

"I went to an event where there were only 2 of us who weren't married and I came out feeling like a freak"

"The pressure makes me feel that maybe there is something wrong with me"

" It's harder for women as we have a biological clock ticking"

"I just want to go out and have fun and meet new friends. I don't think that going out to find a partner works, it puts too much pressure on you "

"I just want to go out and enjoy myself and meet people and if I were to meet someone that evening then great but I am not going out with that idea in my head "

## Living in a multi-ethnic society

Many respondents felt that they were living in a country that was changing rapidly in terms of the different communities that live here. There was a feeling that in the future there would be less barriers between these different sections and that this was a good thing. Several felt that eventually through inter-marriage and the desire of young people to mix, there would be no

differences between people. The Jewish religion was not seen as worse than other religions, but all were viewed with a sense of suspicion by the majority of respondents.

"We live in a country where there are a great many different sections of people and they all keep themselves away from others and don't mix and that doesn't get us anywhere"  
"Religion is the root of all evil"

## **A desire to meet other young Jews**

Although many respondents were negative about many aspects of the Jewish religion and critical of events organised for Jewish adults, most of them stated that they would like to be involved in activities of some kind that put them in touch with other Jews.

All respondents were interested in meeting new people, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Many stated that it was very difficult to meet new Jewish people as they knew most of the Jewish people in their own areas. This was particularly true in the case of the Telephone respondents. Those who lived outside London were prepared to travel to other parts of the country to meet new people with several saying that they sometimes went on trips to London with the intention of meeting a partner. Several respondents stated that although they would like to meet other Jewish people, the lack of attractive events forced them into spending much of their social lives with people from work, which although they enjoyed, did not allow them to meet other Jews. The Manchester group, in particular, felt that there were few chances to meet new Jewish people in their own city. For many of the younger Edgware group they felt it was extremely unlikely that they would meet other Jews who were interested in the same kinds of things as themselves.

"I would go to a Jewish event if it wasn't a stereotype situation where you have flash people showing what they've got, because it turns me off"  
"The kinds of Jewish people that I would like to meet, they'd have to be not overly Jewish and they'd have to be very down to earth"

The majority of respondents expressed the desire to meet other young Jewish adults, although some, particularly in the Edgware groups, did not like the idea of having exclusively Jewish events. Most respondents saw themselves as being different from the majority of other Jews of their own age and a widely held view was that other Jews were either 'flashy' and 'ostentatious' or Orthodox. Events organised by the Jewish Community were seen as coming from and attracting those Jews whom they did not like or with whom they did not have anything in common.

At the core of many of the discussions in the Edgware groups was a fear of appearing to be different from other people in the community as a whole. One respondent described how she didn't want to go to events where other people would see her and think 'Oh God you're Jewish'. There was a fear not only of what other people would think but also that there might be 'some trouble' from others in the form of verbal or physical anti-Semitic attacks.

For the majority of the younger respondents the kinds of people that they wanted to meet needed to be in touch with 'what was going on' in the world generally and to be in touch with current fashions and music. Many respondents, particularly the women in the groups, said that they would be happy to meet people who were older than themselves, especially men.

## **Differences between groups**

### **Edgware**

The Edgware groups were most concerned that they should not be like other Jews in their area whom they criticised. The majority in these groups, particularly the younger group, felt

that they wanted to meet non-Jewish people as well as Jewish ones. Being Jewish in North-West London was seen as a social rather than religious idea and these groups were unhappy about the way in which other members of their community acted. They did not like to see themselves associated with other Jews as they felt that they were over materialistic and insular.

The younger Edgware group was particularly concerned with how they appeared to others. There was a great deal of discussion and argument about which members of the group were 'becks'. In this group, openly hostile views were expressed about the local Jewish community and between respondents themselves. Telling someone in the group that they looked Jewish was used by some respondents almost as an insult and those who received this alleged criticism became defensive and attacking to the person who had originally made the comments. There was a feeling of almost self loathing from a small number of these respondents as though respondents could not bear to think of themselves as being like other Jews. Most of this group felt that they did not look Jewish although this was disagreed with on each occasion by other members of the group. Respondents would go to great lengths to distance themselves from the other Jews.

- " This group here (the young Edgware group) shows exactly why this kind of thing doesn't work. There are too many people with different opinions."
- " The people in Edgware are very very Jewish or very very non-Jewish, there are no in the middles"
- " Even after this group I don't feel that I have anything in common with these people or Jewish things"

## Ilford

The Ilford groups were both generally more open towards the idea of meeting other Jews. They were less concerned about the use of 'Jewish' words and a few were more open to learning more about their Jewishness. These groups also felt that their area was not at the centre of events and activities and many of the group headed towards North-West London or the West End on the weekends to visit venues where there would be new people to meet. The Ilford group felt that the types of events that were organised in their area were not attractive and were too 'organised'.

- " Here there is nothing going on"
- " These 'socials' are 'left over nights' "
- " It's dull and boring"
- " You always see people that you don't want to see around here"

Both Ilford groups spoke about the differences between their own Jewish community and the one in North-West London. Many expressed negative perceptions of North-West London Jews. There was a general feeling that North-West London Jews felt that they were superior in some way to the Ilford community.

- " They think that they are superior "
- " They think that their s-t doesn't smell"
- " The difference between us and them is about the fact that the bosses moved from the East-End to the North whilst the workers moved East"
- " When I think of flash Jews I think of those in the North"
- " We always go that way and they won't come this way"

## Manchester

The Manchester groups were generally more involved in their own Jewish community than the other groups. This did not mean that they attended more Jewish events or attend



synagogue but they were more likely to go to places where other Jews congregated. A significant number of the older group were interested in cultural/arts events.

Respondents in both Manchester groups felt that the community there was insular and in many respects in decline and that it desperately needed some help to get things moving again. Most agreed that there were other Jews like themselves in the city that they did not get to meet and whom they would like help in contacting. They also felt that they would like to meet young Jews from other parts of the UK.

One respondent talked about a 'Jazz night' at a Manchester venue that was taking place on the following weekend and this caused a great deal of interest amongst about half of the group who after the discussion swapped telephone numbers.

The Manchester groups also had a feeling that they were not being catered for as much Jewish people in London. The younger Manchester group were the most vocal in describing how they had to help themselves and many were prepared and indeed eager to do something. This resulted in many members of the group swapping telephone numbers and arranging to meet to see what they could do.

"It's so insular here. You go to the same places and see the same people standing in the same spot"

"We need a place to congregate with a nice atmosphere with people from Manchester and outside"

## **Telephone Respondents**

Most of the Telephone respondents felt that it was extremely difficult to meet other young Jews. Most felt that they already knew all the Jewish people in their area and that this meant that they would have to look to other areas of the country if they were to find a Jewish partner. Several spoke of going on trips to North-West London in the past to look for partners, this was true even of respondents from Glasgow. Although a small number had given up on finding a Jewish partner most stated that they were open to ideas that would give them a chance to meet young Jews. In general this group of respondents were more open to the idea of schemes that would allow them to meet other young Jews and were more prepared than others to travel long distances to achieve this.

Several felt that there was not really a Jewish community to be a part of in their areas and several of these respondents felt alienated by being the only Jewish person in a non-Jewish area and were frustrated by the fact that they could not find other Jews to mix with. Many felt that the Jewish community had forgotten about them and that nobody really cared about their futures.

Smaller Jewish communities were seen as being dominated by older people with respondents believing that the younger members would move away from these areas and probably from Judaism in general. For many it was not just that fact that there were no opportunities to meet other young Jews that was the problem, but that there was little to do generally and that they would eventually leave their own areas.

## D Leisure time: As it is and as it might be

### Negative Experiences of Jewish Events

For the majority of respondents who had been to Jewish events, the experience had not been a positive one. Events such as balls were described as 'over-priced and pretentious'. These events were felt to be cliquy with groups of people who only talked to their own crowd. This left those outside these groups feeling unwelcome. The North London group felt that this was particularly true of events in their area. Respondents talked about paying £50 to attend such balls which they felt was much too expensive.

There was a feeling that the people who organised these kinds of events tried to do too much and that because there were lots of different rooms cliques tended to stay in their own space and not mix. Respondents felt that at many of these kinds of events there were just too many things going on and that the organisers should try and do less but make it of a better quality. There was also the problem at 'sit-down' events that people ended up only talking to the people who were at their tables and that if these people were not interesting it spoiled the entire evening.

Respondents not in the London area felt that Jewish events always attracted the same people and that they had stopped going to them because of this. They wanted to be able to meet new people from other areas.

Events advertised in the Jewish Chronicle were cited by many respondents as particularly bad and most respondents said that they would not attend an event that was advertised in this newspaper.

There was a feeling that the types of people that attend such events were overly interested in material possessions and status. Respondents wanted to go to such events without worrying about whether they were wearing the right kinds of clothes or driving an expensive car.

Many respondents felt that these kind of events attracted only older, unattractive people who are conservative in their appearance and attitudes.

"No one will actually come up to you and start talking to you"

"Unsocial and flashy and it's all down to money"

"It's all about who you know and what you are wearing"

"if you go out you want to feel comfortable. If you feel comfortable then you can relax and enjoy yourself"

"I wouldn't dream of going to a ball with 600 people as it's too impersonal"

"They attract people who are so staid and old-fashioned who dance around their handbags"

"There are all these guys eyeing up these girls and girls eyeing up the guys and I'm sure they are all thinking, God I wish you would go away"

"The food is always crap and you end up paying a fortune for it because it's Kosher"

"You go to a party with non-Jewish people and they are all having fun and it's a party atmosphere, you go to a Jewish party and they are all sitting in the corner eating fish balls"

"There are always very odd guys there. If you came across them in the middle of the night you would run"

"If you go to a Jewish singles 'do' people think that you are looking for a husband which is not always the case and which puts too much pressure on you"

"I went to a meeting and they played the same game they used to play when I was six years old of putting on a badge with your name on"

"I'm sick of going to those Jewish events advertised in the Jewish Chronicle and coming out feeling that I want to slit my wrists"

"We have lived with Jewish Chronicle events for so long that anyone who is going to try something new is going to have a tough job on"

"You get a lot of 'acha nebbish' people at these things"

"Nobody goes, 99% are men, 40+ and retarded, and that is on a good night"

Most respondents wanted there to be events and activities arranged that would allow them to meet other Jews and still be themselves and so keep their individuality. This would mean that anyone who arranged such activities would have to put things on that not only did not expect participants to conform to religious or cultural norms but also that were the kinds of things that these respondents normally did. In other words events would need to be arranged that reflected their lives at present rather than trying to attract them to a new way of being.

## Successful Jewish Events

The most successful Jewish events that respondents had attended were those where they had been able to meet other people and where the event had been designed to encourage this.

One respondent described a 'traffic light' party where people wore either green, amber or red clothes according to whether they were available or not (green signifying being available, amber meaning that the person is seeing someone but open to suggestion and red meaning that the person has a partner). Although some respondents did not like this idea as they felt that it was too organised others felt that it was a fun idea and was a good way of finding out if someone had a partner or not and was a good 'ice-breaker'. In order to overcome the problems of 'sit down' events it was suggested that people change tables after each course.

Similarly some respondents had enjoyed events where games had been played or where people had been put into situations where they came into contact with others as with a Barn dance. The idea of having games such as blind date taking place at an events was appealing to some.

## Replacing their youth experience

Many respondents in all groups felt that they had enjoyed certain Jewish activities when they were younger. These mainly revolved around youth clubs who organised weekends away and other activities. Most felt that they had not been able to find a replacement for this kind of activity within a 'Jewish' context.

The older Manchester group described a social club (Maxims) which had existed some years ago which several respondents felt had been a good idea. They felt that it had attracted a 'friendly and non-religious crowd' of Jewish people in their 20's and 30's. Respondents felt that it had worked because of its non-religious and non-Zionist approach with different events being held every week. The club was open on various nights of the week and had sports facilities and was a good place to meet up with others. Several other respondents talked about their experiences as teenagers and how much they enjoyed going to events organised by organisations such as Maccabi, Habonim and JLB in Manchester and that they missed having these types of 'fun' activities.

"There is nothing to do after you are 18 to replace the clubs that you went to when you were 18 "

"Once you grow out of youth clubs there is no where to go until you are ready for the Derby and Joan club "

"Woodrow and ski were the best weekends away with ghost stories at night and lots of activities"

"I sometimes look back to when I was younger and I went to Jewish youth clubs and I sometimes think that I had a better time then than I do now"

## Do they want to attend exclusively Jewish events

The majority of the Manchester and Ilford groups were happy to go to exclusively Jewish events and actually thought that they were a good idea. However many in the Edgware groups were unhappy about the concept of activities or events arranged purely for Jewish people. Many respondents said that they would not attend events if they thought that they were exclusively Jewish.

"We have this idea of places being run by Jewish Organisations as very sad"

"If I wanted to go to specifically Jewish things then I would belong to the local Synagogue and I would go to the things that are organised by them so I don't need someone to tell me about that. What I do need is to go to somewhere where there are normal people more like us"

## The concept of 'Fun'

For the majority, 'fun' included meeting new people, eating, drinking and dancing as well as taking part in outdoor and fitness activities with others. It also included looking for sexual involvement and, for some of the younger respondents, of recreational drug use. A small number of respondents (mainly older ones) were interested in more 'cultural' pursuits that included the theatre, jazz and art galleries. All respondents wanted to be able to meet others in a setting that would allow them to 'be themselves'. Most respondents felt that if the Jewish community could provide such a setting then they would be very supportive of it.

"There is a thing in the Jewish community that you can't openly express that you want to have fun"

## Their perfect weekend

Respondents were asked to describe their idea of a perfect weekend. Most wanted to be able to relax and unwind as they felt that they worked hard during the week and for the majority their ideal would be to get away from their own area, either to the countryside within the UK or abroad for the weekend. Favourite destinations away from the UK were Paris, Amsterdam and New York. A majority of respondents wanted to go somewhere where there was a good night life with nice restaurants and good clubs that played modern music. Some would choose to go to a beach resort.

The majority of respondents said that they would either like to go with someone of the opposite sex or meet someone of the opposite sex whilst they were away. Most respondents said that they would prefer to go away with people that they knew already and that having friends with them made it easier for them to meet new people. Going away with people that they already knew made them feel more confident and safer about talking to new people and gave them a 'safe haven' to return to. It also meant that even if they did not meet someone new then the weekend would still be an enjoyable experience. A small number of respondents stated that they would prefer to go abroad on their own.

Several of the female respondents coming mainly from the older groups stressed that they would like to go somewhere where there were more 'up-market' facilities ie 4 or 5 star hotels or health farms. Many of these respondents also wanted to be able to go shopping during their perfect weekend.

If respondents stayed in their own areas the majority of the younger groups wanted to be able to go to parties or clubs on Friday or Saturday nights with a small number of friends where they would like to be able to drink alcohol, dance and meet new people. Amongst the older respondents there was less enthusiasm generally for going to clubs and a greater interest in

restaurants and wine bars. Many of the male respondents and a minority of female respondents liked to play or watch sports on Saturday and Sunday.

A few older respondents also said that they would like to visit cinemas, theatres with a smaller number also wanting to go to museums and art galleries.

"Would like to go skiing with a group of single people. Difficult to go with a group I know already as many of the people I know are married and I'd like to meet single people."

"To go out with my friends on Saturday night and to meet a nice Jewish boy. I would go out to eat and then back to a friend's and maybe coffee. A bit of horse riding. Take it easy as I've had a busy week. It's hard to meet Jewish boys in North London. I'd like to meet new ones."

"To go to a good party with my friends, have a couple of drinks, have a bit of a dance and meet people. Party would be in a house, a wine bar or a hall, somewhere where the people are friendly and easy to talk to. The music at the party is up to date, nothing too old. I would prefer to socialise with Jewish people."

"To go to a romantic cottage in Scotland with Claudia Schiffer and go walking, trekking, rambling. Yeah I think that would be pretty cool. It's nice to do things like that with people as you can experience things together."

"Playing sport (tennis and badminton) and watching Spurs on a Saturday afternoon. In the evenings I would like to go to a party without any loud music so that you can have decent conversation and get to know people."

"My ideal weekend would be to go abroad, have loads to drink, loads to eat and to be honest with you loads of sex."

"To go to a health club, preferably in Europe, with a couple of really good girl-friends and in the evening hit the town, visiting pubs, bars and clubs, meeting lots and lots of people"

"It's great being away from London. You can talk to other people, have a giggle without caring."

"There is nothing like being somewhere else. Maybe it's because you are away that you are able to forget your troubles and have fun."

## **The right kind of venue**

The type of venue where parties or other events are held was seen as important by many respondents. Most felt that having an event in one room was preferable to holding it in several smaller ones. It was also felt that it would be better to have a venue that was not too large as this made it difficult to create an intimate atmosphere that would encourage people to talk to each other. Respondents wanted the place to be full of people as that was also felt to encourage contact between people.

"If you rub shoulders with people you are more inclined to talk to them"

## **Differences between ages**

The majority in the younger groups were interested in parties and dancing with a far larger number of respondents in the older age groups being interested in other events such as going to the cinema or theatre. For many of the older respondents parties were not as attractive to them as they were when they were younger and a significant minority disliked going to places where there was loud music that made it difficult to talk to other people. The younger respondents tended to prefer to go to places where there were a large number of people whereas the older ones generally preferred to go to smaller gatherings.

"As you get older your attitudes change, things happen to you that make you think differently and want to do different things"

"We've come to an age where we are independent and individual and it's harder to meet

men who are unattached"

" I don't enjoy standing around waiting to meet people at clubs or pubs anymore"

A majority of the older groups stated that they were looking for a partner whereas the younger groups were less concerned with this. A significant number of the older respondents stated that many of their friends were married with children and that they found themselves looking for new friends.

Older respondents felt more of a stigma was attached to being on their own and were generally more open to ways of meeting new people. Amongst the older groups were a small number of divorced or separated people who found it particularly difficult to get back into a social scene where they would meet people like themselves.

" I'd like to go out with people who aren't in couples feeling like a gooseberry."

For the younger respondents admitting to having no friends was looked on as an admission of being sad and lonely. This may well have effected their reactions to the interventions. This was less of a consideration to the older respondents.

Many older respondents said that they would prefer smaller numbers of people at events like parties. Many respondents felt that parties were also more intimate if they were held in houses rather than halls. Many older respondents also liked the idea of dinner parties and one respondent gave the example of Kaleidoscope: an organisation that arranged small dinner parties and house parties for single people. When this organisation was described to the others in the group they liked the idea.

### As it is: A typical weekend

In reality most respondents spent their weekends relaxing, socialising with friends and attending parties in clubs or in houses on Friday or Saturday nights. They also visited wine bars, pubs and restaurants. They liked to be with people that they knew well and this allowed them to talk to others and share experiences together. Many of the men liked to take part in or watch sport of some kind and this they did with friends. Many of the women liked to go on shopping trips on Saturdays. A significant number of the older respondents tended to steer clear of clubs and were more interested in going to restaurants as well as going to the cinema and the theatre.

Several respondents said that they liked to spend some time on their own during the weekend as long as they knew that they could meet up with friends if they wanted to. Many respondents liked to get out into the countryside or to parks at some point during the weekend to walk either on their own or with friends. This was particularly popular on Sundays.

"I work 6 days a week and weekends are basically recharging batteries. Possibly socialising, going to someone's house with a few people".

"My job is very pressurised and I want to relax at the weekends."

### How do they find out about events

The vast majority of respondents found out about events and activities through word of mouth. Usually this took place over the phone and often very near to the time of the event actually happening. They would then phone other friends to tell them about the event. In each area there were key individuals who would start the ball rolling. These individuals often found out information about events through leaflets.

"If I were trying to advertise I would tell Julian Levy who starts everything in Ilford"

"Everybody finds out from another person who may have seen a leaflet"

Very few respondents in the London groups actually looked in the press to find out about things going on in their area although more of the Manchester groups did this. A very small number of respondents listened to Jewish radio programmes. Many respondents felt that events should be advertised in non-Jewish publications as well as Jewish ones.

Although many respondents looked at the Jewish Chronicle (mainly their parents' copies) in London or the Jewish Telegraph in Manchester there was a general feeling that events advertised in these papers would be unattractive. Many respondents stated that they would not attend any event that their parents might suggest. The Jewish Chronicle was seen as the voice of the older generation and of parents and so was viewed with deep mistrust and cynicism. The paper was seen as part of the pressure exerted by parents for their children to find a Jewish partner. A significant number of the Manchester groups looked in the local papers for events.

"The Jewish Chronicle is too open. Everyone reads it and unfortunately everyone's mother reads it"

"The Jewish Chronicle only tells you where not to go"

A significant number of respondents in London looked in Time-out and the Evening Standard to see what events were on. A few also looked in their local papers. Some of the younger London respondents also looked in New Musical Express for information about clubs and concerts.

Interestingly there was little knowledge of New Moon although those who had seen it in the Manchester groups felt that it was very exciting but did not really cater for those in the provinces.

"It's (New Moon) a Jewish magazine not for religious people and it's quite trendy and it has some quite attacking articles."

"It (New Moon) has all these interesting things going on in London and then it will say: something happening at the Tannenbaum Jewish Centre in Manchester. Swimming. Please bring your tsitsis."

"I read that magazine that you have in London called New Moon and I thought that was excellent. The wording was different. It didn't have stigmatic words like 'singles' or 'unattached'."

## **Advertising words that are a turn-off**

A variety of words were felt by many respondents to have negative connotations and therefore, if used in advertising messages, would dissuade respondents from attending the events that they described. These are outlined in the following paragraphs.

### **Singles**

The word 'singles' was felt to be 'sad' and was thought by the majority of respondents to conjure up an image of desperation and loneliness. The exception to this negative perception were the older Ilford group who did not have a problem with the word.

For the majority of respondents this word was associated with being 'left on the shelf' and was felt to have a stigma attached to it. Many respondents felt that events advertised with this word were felt to be like 'cattle markets'. They felt that such events attracted 'nerds' and 'sad' people. Respondents could not understand why it was necessary for the word to be used at all and that events should be open to everyone, whether they had a partner or not.

There was a feeling of pressure to find partners which often came from respondents' families and this idea was reinforced by the word 'singles'. Respondents do not like being described as 'single'. This word has negative connotations that are connected with pressure from the older generation for them to settle down and conform. Respondents wanted much more recognition of the fact that they are happy with their lives as they are and that although many of them would like to meet partners there should be no stigma attached to being on their own. Advertising needs to emphasise the positives of being alone and not the negatives as this made respondents defensive about their situations and made them uninterested in going to events. People who go to 'singles' events were viewed by many respondents as 'sad' and 'lacking imagination'. Respondents were very clear that they did not see themselves as being like these people.

"As long as it doesn't say 'singles'"

"People that go to these things lack imagination and have no direction in their lives so they have to go to 'arranged' parties"

"There is a stigma attached to being called a 'single' and it gets worse as you get older"

"Desperadoes!"

"Totally unattached, totally unattractive and probably with a serious personal problem"

"If I saw something that said 'Young Jewish Singles meeting' I'd think 'Oh my God' ."

## Social

Another word which was disliked by respondents was 'Social' which was similar to 'Singles' in the way that it was perceived by respondents. A 'Social' event was thought to attract people who were not able to have a social life of their own and that these people were dull and boring.

## Jewish

The word 'Jewish' was also seen as problematical by many respondents. This word also had a stigma by being associated with the older generation and as such as lacking interest and excitement. For many respondents the word 'Jewish' meant that an event would be full of the types of young Jews who they did not want to meet and would attract those who were ostentatious and materialistic or those who had been 'left on the shelf'. The Manchester group felt that events advertised as 'Jewish' attracted the same people time after time and that these people were in some way social misfits.

For a small number of respondents who wanted to meet other Jewish people the word 'Jewish' was not off putting as long as it was not used in conjunction with 'Single'.

"You think that the same people will be at an event advertised as 'Jewish' "

## Kosher

Kosher was another word that was not liked by many respondents. Several respondents did not want Kosher food because it 'didn't taste as good'. It was felt that if this word was used in advertising then this would alienate many people from attending events and would prevent a mixed crowd from coming. In fact respondents felt that only Orthodox people would go to an event that was advertised using this word. A compromise was suggested by one respondent in that it would be good if the food was vegetarian and this was felt to be a good idea by other members of the group.

However a significant number of respondents did not share this view and actually found the word attractive. This was particularly true of the younger Ilford group when seen in the context of Kosher cruises. They were also quite happy to have Kosher food at any event. Several members of the older groups agreed that the word Kosher was not off-putting.



The Manchester group felt that Kosher was all right if used in the context of a Kosher restaurant but not as a title of a club.

### **Jewish Education/educational**

Jewish education was not popular with the majority of respondents as a way of spending their free time. Advertising messages which included this were unattractive to most. Many respondents felt that they had been force-fed Jewish education when they were young without a real understanding as to why they were being made to do it.

"If I see 'educational' I think 'boring' "

However a few from the older Manchester group were interested in combining leisure with Jewish education. These were also less hostile to the idea of attending exclusively Jewish events.

### **Over positive statements**

Advertising messages that were over enthusiastic in their approach such as 'Party, Party, Party' or 'Wow Great party of the year' were unpopular with many respondents. Many had experienced disappointment at attending events advertised in this way when they had not lived up to their expectations. This type of advertising was particularly unpopular with the older respondents.

### **Age brackets**

Although a majority of respondents wanted there to be a guide to the age range of people attending events most felt that they were not reliable guides to the ages of people that went to them. Many of the younger respondents did not want to go to events that were attended by older people and older respondents did not want to go to those that attracted younger ones. Generally the younger respondents wanted to meet those between 21 and 30 years of age whilst the older ones wanted to meet those between 30 and 40.

"You see something advertised for 20 or 30+ and you get people of sixty going there and that puts you off"

"If you put something 18-30 then my niece will go and there is no way that I am going to go to something that she goes to"

"25 to 40 means 45 to 60"

### **Those who disagreed with negative perceptions**

There was a small minority who disagreed with the negative perceptions of these words. These people felt that there were merits to having events designed for Jewish singles. They were much more prepared to be 'organised' by others and more open in their desire to meet other Jewish people. This small but significant group were different to the others in the group in terms of appearance with the men being more 'formally' attired and the women dressing in less youthful fashions than the others. The older Ilford group and several of the Telephone respondents were much less critical of the use of words like Jewish or single.

## **E Interventions**

Respondents were shown 5 interventions that Jewish Continuity wished to test. Each was presented through concept boards that are reproduced in bold below.

### **Chavurah cafe: Details as shown to respondents**

**The aim is to bring together two elements: an attractive cafe where people will want to go to socialise, and, a centre for Jewish cultural and social activities.**

**The cafe will be twinned with or modelled on a successful chain of cafes and will be at an attractively decorated location.**

**You will enter the Chavurah Cafe via the cafe where there will be a host and waiters to serve you.**

**In an adjoining room will be a resource centre with communal information, an internet computer terminal, job information, a notice board for leaving general messages and a bill board for what's on.**

**There will also be a room with a rolling programme of study sessions, debates and performances.**

### **Chavurah Cafe: Respondents' views**

The general idea of a meeting place for young Jewish people was liked although respondents were opposed to the idea of the adjoining rooms.

**"We just want somewhere where we can socialise"**

However most respondents expressed difficulty in understanding how this intervention would work in practice as they wondered how the 'right kinds of people' could be attracted to the cafe and that if this was not possible then the cafe would not be a success. Many cited examples from the past where a cafe or restaurant had started off successfully but had been either taken over by a clientele that they did not like or had closed due to dwindling numbers of people going there.

Respondents felt that the cafe would need to be designed to attract people of their own age and that different decor and locations would attract different clientele. Several respondents wanted the place to be 'trendy' although some members of the older groups felt that this meant that it would be temporary and faddish. Younger respondents had the idea either of a tea-house like one in Jerusalem where people sit on the floor on cushions or a themed restaurant that was decorated with over-the-top Jewish images. They wanted it to be fun.

**" They had a place like that here in Manchester but it got taken over by 17 and 18 year olds"**

**" Make it licensed to stop the younger ones coming"**

**" You could have different age restrictions on different evenings"**

The name was not liked by most respondents although the younger Iford group were less critical. Many did not know what it meant and the majority could not pronounce the word. There was a suspicion from a several respondents that the name implied that it was some kind of front for an ultra-orthodox organisation that would try and lure them in.

**"Its got a Jewish name, I don't like that"**

**"It sounds like the Lubavitch will be there recruiting"**

**" Sounds like Chanukah"**

**"Sounds religious"**

**"I don't know what that means"**

**"I wouldn't read past the first line with that title"**

The words 'cultural and educational' were viewed with some suspicion and were not liked by respondents. Many felt that the use of words like these meant that there was a hidden agenda of 'trying to brainwash people' into a certain way of thinking. Respondents felt that when they had been working all day they did not want to go somewhere where they would be expected to study and that they wanted to go somewhere where they could just relax and have fun.

"It can't take itself seriously, it's got to be a laugh."

"Somewhere like the Hard Rock Cafe or the Dome."

"There is a tea house in Jerusalem that is excellent. It's like going in to a drugs den, it's cushions on the floor and you just drink tea, it's brilliant. It's got dark little corners and because it's small you can meet people and talk to people."

"Why don't you have a place like the Hard Rock Cafe but with Menorahs flashing on and off on the walls and the Dead Sea parting, it would be a laugh."

"Put it in a Jewish area offering Jewish specialities."

Most respondents wanted a cafe of this type to be open very late at night and on Fridays and Saturdays. Many felt that having it open at these times would stop the more religious crowd from going to the cafe which was what they wanted. Most respondents wanted to be able to pop in when they wanted to and stated that they would be dissuaded from going to such a place if it were not open at these times.

"I want it to be open on Saturdays and whenever I want to be able to pop in."

"They need somewhere when the pubs shut to go to."

The idea of having rooms 'at the back' for other events was also viewed with a great deal of suspicion and cynicism. Many respondents laughed at and derided this part of the intervention. A few respondents said that they didn't mind the idea of having a general notice board in the cafe and a similar number liked the idea of an internet facility.

"The cafe is OK but not the room at the back."

"This sounds like hard work."

"You'd go to the toilet and never be seen again."

"It was interesting until you mentioned the rooms at the back."

"There is this thing that Jewish people have got to learn about their history and everything and their faith and Israel and it's rammed down your throat."

"If they have a notice board they'll have second hand Volvos for sale."

The idea of a cafe without the other sections was liked more by respondents but they didn't see how it would be possible to keep it Jewish. Questions were asked as to how someone's Jewishness would be ascertained and there was a great deal of questioning about whether this was a practically viable idea. Some concern was also expressed over the security of a venue that was specifically Jewish and several respondents felt that it would become a place that could be attacked by anti-Semitic organisations.

"You won't be able to keep it Jewish even if you wanted to or it will get taken over by teenagers."

"It would be attractive initially for 2 or 3 weeks, the trendies will go, then the less trendies until in the end you will just get the no-nos."

Suggestions were made that the cafe could have some kind of performance space for comedy or music and that there could be different types of acts appearing on different nights.

"Make it like Ronni Scotts or the Comedy Cafe with a performance space."

The Ilford groups liked the idea of having such a place in their area as they felt that they were sadly lacking in venues where they could meet other Jewish people but many were doubtful about how successful it would be.

"They should have it in Ilford because we haven't got anything here."

"You can bet your bottom dollar that if it were opened in Ilford then no one from North London would come here."

## Holidays for Singles: Details as shown to Respondents

You will have the choice of holidays from weekend breaks in Britain to Kosher cruises.

All your fellow holiday-makers will be young, single, Jewish adults.

All the facilities will be kosher and there will be an educational angle to all holidays, but the main aim will be to relax, have a good time and meet people.

Some sample holidays:

Weekends at Centre-Parcs: a weekend of fun and relaxation with workshops on making relationships work.

Mission to Prague: a long weekend to visit the beautiful city of Prague and its magnificent Jewish heritage.

Kosher Club-Med: a week's cruising in the Mediterranean with Jewish singles from countries across Europe.

## Holidays for Singles: Respondents' views

Overall, this intervention received a mixed response. The idea of having holidays for young Jewish adults was generally liked although many were not excited by the choices offered.

Few of the younger respondents were keen on this intervention with the exception of the Centre Parcs weekend, although none liked the idea of the 'Relationships Workshop'. However several members of both Ilford groups and several Telephone respondents expressed positive comments about the idea overall.

The Edgware groups felt that the idea was too 'Jewish' and exclusive which the group did not like. Respondents felt that this kind of idea was fine for those who were already involved in the Jewish community and that they would find it attractive.

The 'Kosher Club-Med' idea was greeted with derision by many respondents and for many this idea was a particularly good example of what they were not looking for. There was also a feeling that because it would be Kosher this kind of holiday would be expensive. Many respondents thought that the word Kosher would attract more religious people which they did not want. This view was not shared by the majority of the older Ilford group and a smaller number of the younger Ilford group who although they didn't like the name, liked the idea of a Jewish Club Med.

The idea of a weekend in Prague was attractive to several of the older respondents although there were mixed feelings about the title 'Mission to Prague' with some respondents associating 'Mission' with religious zealots. However many of the young Manchester group and a small number from other groups liked the title as they felt it sounded exciting and different. There was a general feeling that although Prague was an interesting and attractive location, the way the weekend had been described made it sound too serious and, to many, 'like hard work'.

Respondents suggested that the educational aspects of the idea be removed and that the holidays should concentrate on 'fun'. A few of the older respondents were less critical however of the educational content as they felt that they wanted more from a holiday than just fun.

When it came to price the generally accepted level for such holidays was felt to be between £100- £150 for a long weekend in the UK. One respondents suggested a scheme whereby people could pay in instalments and this idea was generally accepted by the rest of the group.

Although there were parts of this intervention that were popular with respondents, particularly the weekends away these parts were largely overlooked due to a preoccupation with the word 'Kosher' and to the perceived serious nature of the 'Mission to Prague' as well as to the 'Relationships workshops'. However this did not take away from the fact that the idea of having weekends away was generally very popular.

"Oh come on!"

"It's old school mentality"

"It's too Jewish"

"Singles sounds like some desperate git who is trying to find someone to marry"

"My idea of a holiday is not sitting and reading the bible I'm afraid"

"If I go on holiday then I want to do what I want to do. I don't want to be organised"

"The Kosher cruises will attract the tsitsis brigade"

"I'd prefer ' Go wild, get pissed and have sex at Centre Parcs"

"Wandering about Prague on your own sounds fine but if it means going back to the hotel and sitting in a class that would turn off a lot of people"

"You could hide something within it but not make it so heavy"

"If it was Jewish 18-30 club then you might get some people going along for a laugh"

"I like the title 'Mission to Prague, it sounds exciting"

"The weekend to Prague sounds a bit heavy for a weekend"

"Yuk. I hate the idea of workshops"

"Kosher club sounds like my grandma"

"Yes to fun. No to workshops"

"It's something that if my grandma saw it she would say 'wow! yes! "

"If you called it the floating fun boat then it would be OK"

"If it was for people from across Europe then it would be good"

### 'Click': Details as shown to Respondents

The aim of 'Click' is to produce a confidential, friendly networking facility for all Jewish people in Britain to help them to meet others. This service is to be provided by a non-profit making independent organisation.

'Click' is designed to help you meet a friend or someone to date. It can be used when moving home, going on holiday, learning a new skill or language, playing sport or simply looking for love and friendship.

'Click' is a charity and a fixed percentage of the donor's fee goes to the charity of the donor's choice.

To join simply ring the lo-cost number to ask for an application form. You will receive your first introduction within two weeks of application.

Payment will be on a sliding scale according to the type of introduction requested.

### 'Click': Respondents' views

The majority of respondents in the groups were not enthusiastic about this idea. Many said that they thought it sounded like a dating agency and even after it was made clear to them that it was also about meeting new people for a variety of reasons they were not particularly enthusiastic.

The name was not liked by most respondents as they associated it with the word 'clique' with which they had negative associations. Many of the younger respondents in particular thought it sounded 'desperate' and were not interested in it.

"Sounds sad"

"You may as well put an advert in the paper"

"I don't even want to hear it with that name"

"If I saw that in the JC I wouldn't even look at the details"

"The name is a bit iffy"

"Why not call it Desperados"

"Sounds like a dating agency"

"The name is horrendous"

"That's for people who have no friends and nothing to do"

"It's not a bad idea but I wouldn't do it"

"I think it might work but not the way that it is at the moment"

"It's boring, it's not fun"

"I wouldn't use it at all"

The exceptions to this fairly negative attitude towards the idea were many enthusiastic older Edgware respondents, a small number of the younger Ilford group and several Telephone respondents. These respondents liked the idea of being able to make friends in this way and felt that the idea had a broader appeal than a dating agency.

The Telephone respondents who were positive about this idea felt that it was a good way to put them in touch with Jews from other communities and that it was a good way to deal with their problems of feeling isolated. These Telephone respondents were also less critical, generally, of the name.

Most of the Edgware older group said that they would use this service. This group felt that the name was not so off putting as to take away from the positive aspects of the general idea. A small minority in the other older groups were also less critical of the idea although very few said that they would actually use the service. Others who liked the idea were a very small number who were interested in finding partners to play golf and tennis with.

"It's good. Your going their to meet friends and hopefully nobody has got an attitude"

"It's relaxed and there's no pressure"

"It sounds nice"

"It would be good for getting a golf partner"

A small number of respondents who liked the idea felt that they lacked the confidence to use such a service.

"You'd have to be quite bold to use it"

There was a great deal of concern from all groups about how people who used this service would be vetted so that no dangerous people would be allowed to take part in it. It was felt that in order to overcome this problem there needed to be some sort of club where people could meet each other in safety. The Edgware group expanded this idea into a club that had all kinds of facilities that they could use eg a bar, a pool table, a gym that would be located in an area where a lot of Jewish people visited.

"How do you know that there won't be rapists?"

"You will need to do some proper screening"

"The data could fall into the wrong hands"

Those who were interested in the idea were prepared to pay up to £10 to join but that if it were too much more than that they would not use it. The idea of money going to charity was felt to be reasonable but received no real enthusiasm with the exception of a few Telephone respondents. There was some suspicion shown from some respondents as to where the money would go. The majority of respondents did not understand why there was a sliding scale for different types of introductions.

"If I want to sleep with someone how much will that cost?"

## **Exclusive Introductions: Details as shown to Respondents**

The aim is to introduce you to like-minded single people with whom to share dinner, the theatre, a trip to an art gallery etc....

You can attend on your own or in the company of one or two friends. You will share dinner or a cultural trip with six to eight other singles.

To join simply ring the lo-cost number to ask for an application form. You will receive the date of your first event within two weeks of application.

Dinner will be served in the warmth of a luxurious home and hosted by somebody who is trained to help people get to know each other in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. Similarly, all trips will be led by a skilled host.

If you meet someone you like at one of these events, simply request to meet this person on your next evening.

## **Exclusive Introductions: Respondents' views**

A larger number of older respondents and a significant number of younger women were keen on this idea. The younger respondents felt that this was an idea aimed at an older age group than themselves and the majority were not keen on it.

"It sounds like it's for people who are older than us"

"I think that 'Exclusive' would attract an older crowd"

Several of the older respondents liked the idea of having a meal with other people and felt that it would be a good way to meet people. However a significant number of respondents criticised it as it sounded too much like a dating agency. A very small number of the older respondents liked the idea of cultural visits rather than sharing a meal.

A majority of the younger respondents did not like the word 'exclusive' as it suggested to them that they would have to be rich in order to join. This view was not shared by the older groups and a few women from the young Ilford group who liked the word 'Exclusive' as they felt that it would attract the right kinds of people. The women who liked the idea, associated the word with the event being 'sophisticated' which they liked.

"A lot of us come from non-wealthy families and I wouldn't like it to be called 'Exclusive' as it would mean that it was only for rich people"

"Exclusive is snobby"

"I'd definitely go to that, the name sounds sophisticated"

The older groups had more problems with the word 'Introductions' which they associated with dating agencies which they did not like as they felt there was too much pressure put on them to find the 'right person'.

"I just don't want them to be too pushy"

Several respondents in each group felt that the name had 'seedy' connotations and that it made them think that this was some kind of escort agency.

"Sounds like an escort agency"

For those that liked the idea it was sharing a meal that was interesting to them. Only a very small number of respondents were interested in attending cultural activities.

Amongst the Telephone respondents who liked the idea it was important that such events would attract people from outside their own areas and that unless this was the case they would not be interested in attending.

Respondents also liked the idea of being able to take other friends with them. The majority of female respondents said that they would not go on their own to such an event and would only go with friends.

Having to fill out an application form was also off putting for a small number of respondents in that they did not want to share personal information with others who they were not sure that they could trust.

The majority of respondents in all groups were not enthusiastic about the idea of having a 'host'. They were concerned that this person would be too intrusive. Most thought that it would be better if the host was merely there to greet people and serve the food and then left the room allowing the guests to 'get on with it'.

"I don't like the idea of having a host. Are they going to kiss me?"

"The host sounds like Cilla Black"

As regard to price, about £20 was felt to be about right to pay for an evening's activities.

## Financial and Legal: Details as shown to Respondents

18-39 year olds are often on the move and trying to establish themselves financially and in their careers. They face a range of new experiences: moving to a new town, choosing a mortgage, selecting investments and insurance, writing a will, career advancement, starting a business.

Simply ring the lo-cost number to ask for an application form. Complete the form with details of your requirement.

We will try and match you with a mentor, someone who is experienced in the field that you require to help you make the right choices, legally, financially, career-wise.

All our mentors have received training in how best to advise you. You will be invited to meet your mentor in the most suitable environment to discuss your needs: at home for a dinner during the week or on Friday night or in the office.

If you are moving to a new town, we will send you a relocation package with details of the cost of housing, public transport, the cost and availability of accommodation, Jewish facilities and how to meet people like you.

## Financial and Legal: Respondents' views

This idea was of little or no interest to the majority of respondents with the exception of the 'relocation' service which was seen as being of some use but more in the context of a social aid than a financial one. Indeed many respondents were bemused and some quite hostile towards the idea. They did not understand how this kind of service was going to attract young Jewish people to meet others and most felt that this idea had been thought of by people who did not understand them at all.

The exceptions to this generally negative view of the intervention came from several Telephone respondents who liked the idea of Jews helping other Jews. They also liked the idea of being put in touch with expert advisors. Several of them were thinking of moving to London and the 'relocation' package was of particular interest to them.

"Sounds like the Citizens Advice Bureaux"

"I'm not interested in this at all"

"Sounds like a very good idea but not for me"

"From this idea I really wonder about the people who came up with it. I feel that I have been taken for a ride. This makes me feel like marrying out"

"I've been here for an hour and a half and you come up with this crap"

"I wish that the relocation service was around when I came here from Leeds"

"The relocation idea is great on its own for those that need it"



Respondents felt that this idea related to people over the age of 40 and not to them. The use of an age criteria was not liked by respondents who felt that the age range should not be exclusive.

**"If you took the age brackets away and just had the relocation service then it's OK"**

The idea of having a 'mentor' was not popular with respondents and there was a great deal of suspicion shown towards the idea. Respondents felt that they would not like to share confidential information with a stranger and that there were already people available to talk to about such matters.

**"You can see your bank manger for that"**

**"I wouldn't go to a house with a strange man"**

**"I wouldn't tell a complete stranger about confidential things"**

**"I don't like the word 'mentor' "**

**"Mentor sounds like someone who wants to map out your life. It's impossible for one person to know about everything"**

## **Overall Impressions of Interventions**

Although individual ideas were liked in part, few respondents showed real enthusiasm towards them as a whole. There was a feeling that these were ideas that they had heard of before and that many of them were old-fashioned and dull. Most respondents felt that these ideas had somehow, missed their mark and that they were aimed at other people apart from themselves.

The inclusion of cultural and educational parts to the interventions were not liked by the overwhelming majority with many respondents displaying apathy, frustration and even, in a few cases, anger towards this kind of content being shown to them.

The Telephone respondents were generally more open to the interventions than the groups with several of them showing real enthusiasm for some of the ideas.

'Holidays for Singles' without any educational content received the most support followed by 'Exclusive Introductions' which was most popular with older female respondents. 'Click' was very popular with the older Edgware group and several Telephone respondents.

**"Anything cultural won't work. People have had enough of school really. If they want to learn they will go away on a course"**

**"The problem with all these ideas is that there is no fun, it's so staid, there's no comedy, there is nothing to make you laugh. When you want to do something, something has got to get you going"**

**"They need to go back to the drawing board"**

**"I liked the idea of holidays and meals"**

**" Sounds like the same ideas I heard 20 years ago"**

**" I think that the title is incredibly important because within the first second you decide whether you are interested "**

**" We have poo-pooed Kosher and educational and cultural but those things are already available"**

**"You can't ram things down peoples throats, you have to give them a little taste of the apple"**

**"As soon as I hear the words Kosher or Judaism I think I am going to get a speech and it's not going to be fun. If I want to do that then I will go to a synagogue "**

**"We work very hard during the week and we don't want cultural or financial things"**

**"Keep it down to earth as if for non-Jews"**

## Views on Jewish Continuity

Respondents were told that these interventions had come from Jewish Continuity. Only a minority of respondents knew anything about Jewish Continuity itself and most of those thought that it was an Orthodox organisation. When it was described by the few individuals who knew of it, as an organisation to help young Jews meet others, the majority of respondents, with the exception of a vocal few, thought that it was a good idea.

There was some suspicion showed by several respondents that an organisation like this would be run by older people who did not understand the needs of younger people. A similar number of respondents were concerned that Jewish Continuity may be a front for a more extreme religious organisation that might try to lure them into being orthodox.

- "The people you are working for are involved in a conspiracy to try and get us to marry other Jews"
- "Its something to do with the Board of Deputies and I think that it is concerned with both religious and non-religious things and is concerned with educating and it is a good idea"
- "It's nice to know that someone out there knows that there is a problem and that something should be done about it"
- "They want in-breeding amongst Jews like hillbillies"
- "They are trying to do away with assimilation between Jews and non-Jews. It's not Zionist but trying to enhance Jewish education, enhance Jewish families and trying to do away with intermarriage"
- "I don't agree with their idea of Jewish education because I am not one who would bible bash Jewish education. I think that the Jewish education system should be more open and broadly based than Jewish"
- "They are looking at the way that the Jewish religion has changed and trying to provide the format for Jewish people to get back together"
- "I think that the people that came up with these ideas are older"
- "The people that came up with these ideas probably go to these kinds of things themselves"
- "These ideas come from someone who is not in touch"

## Other ideas from Respondents

Respondents were asked if after hearing these interventions they had any other ideas for events, services or activities.

- A list of places where other Jews go (eg pubs and clubs and what nights people went there) as well as other non-Jewish people.
- A Counselling service for more personal problems.
- A database that gave people the choice of which types of activities they would like to receive information about.
- Murder mystery weekends
- Cruises on the Thames or parties on moored boat
- Barn dancing
- Bowling
- Learning a new skill (eg paragliding)
- Taking people from one town to another (eg people from Manchester to Liverpool)

The young Edware group came up with the idea of having a club that would be in a large venue with different rooms playing different kinds of music. However they did not want this event to be exclusively Jewish and they had doubts as to how this kind of event would actually attract Jewish people. Many of this group felt that there was a different atmosphere created in a club environment when there were a lot of Jewish people there and that this was not as friendly and relaxed as those which attracted a mixed crowd.

The older Ilford group liked the idea of planning a dinner at a lively and fun restaurant. Some of the group wanted it to be a buffet as they felt that this would allow them to meet more new people. Most of the group were happy to have a sit down meal as long as there were opportunities to mix (eg changing seats). For this group and for many other older respondents it was important that they would be able to talk to new people that they met and that a party with loud music could prevent them from doing this.

## F Recommended interventions

From the findings of this research we would recommend the following interventions:

- Weekends away (a subset of 'Holidays for singles')
- 'Exclusive Introductions' warrants a trial for older respondents as long as certain changes are made
- 'Click' warrants a cautious trial for those living in smaller Jewish communities and for some who showed enthusiasm in other groups
- Using Discussion groups for a three fold purpose: to monitor ideas, as 'radios' for events and finally to locate leaders in each area.
- We would also highly recommend the employment of a professional advertising/marketing agency that has a good understanding of the target audience.

This section describes respondents' ideas for weekends away, other ideas that may warrant a trial, how Jewish events might be advertised, explains why the Discussion Groups were so successful and finally how Discussion Groups can be used in conjunction with Interventions to give it a greater chance for success.

### Weekends away

Although the discussions concerning the 'Holidays for Singles' became somewhat overshadowed by discussions concerning the use of the word 'Kosher' as well as the ideas appearing too 'serious' to many as they were described, the concept of having weekends away was popular with the overwhelming majority of respondents. The idea was expanded upon by Edgware and Ilford groups who envisaged a large house in the country and organising a weekend there and this plan was popular with all the groups.

These findings lead us to recommend holding weekends away in a country location several times each year catering for a large number of individuals from different parts of the UK. These weekends should take place separately for the 21-29 age group and the 31-39 age group.

London Respondents wanted the house not to be too far away from London (eg about an hour from London) although the Manchester group were prepared to travel further (ie 2 to 3 hours away from Manchester). Respondents felt it would be a good idea to have a meeting point in their areas and hire coaches to take people to the house.

All wanted the accommodation to be comfortable but not intimidating by being too luxurious. The older respondents were more concerned that the venue should be more 'up-market' with good facilities.

In terms of numbers the ideal was felt to be around 100 people attending the weekend as this would be intimate enough to allow people to get to know each other whilst still giving the feeling of a large crowd.

Above all, respondents wanted the weekend to be for fun and relaxation and not for learning or being 'preached at'. There were different views expressed as to how organised this event should be with some respondents (mainly the younger ones) wanting as little organisation as possible, whilst many of the older respondents wanted to be able to have the choice of joining in organised activities if they wanted to. Respondents did not express the desire to

have any religious or educational content to the weekend and the mention of such things taking place made respondents express doubts as to whether they would want to attend.

"If it's not fun then there is no point in going"

"If there were prayers then I wouldn't go"

"I just would like to be around people like myself"

"I don't want to be lectured at"

"If we were going to go away and have some fun and a giggle and have debates every night then that is fine as long as there is no pressure "

"You will be educated by meeting new people as they will all be into different things"

"We want no pressure. It's up to the individual. Whoever wants to will mix with other people will"

"Anything that you don't usually do would be good"

"I don't want to dress up, it must be casual"

"To me mixing with a 100 or so Jewish people would be educational enough on it's own"

"I want to go away with people that I know and to meet new people when I am away"

"It should be something a bit different that would involve people from all over the country, say a weekend in Stratford"

"It should be more sophisticated than meeting in a disco or a pub"

"I'd like 70' or 80' revival music, you know fun"

"When you get there you should have time to meet people over a couple of glasses of wine. It helps you to relax and be yourself"

A small number of respondents did not mind the idea of some optional, carefully thought out educational or cultural content to the weekend. One of the young Ilford group had the idea of putting on a play during the weekend with a Jewish theme and this received a small amount of support from other members of the group. Whilst the Edgware groups did not want the weekend to be exclusively 'Jewish', the Ilford group felt that it should be although they didn't want any religious content.

Respondents were very concerned that the weekend should attract the 'right kinds of people' and that it should not attract a Orthodox crowd. Respondents also stated that they wouldn't want the cliquey, materialistic crowd that was usually to be found at Jewish events but would want genuine and lively ones. They felt that this could be achieved by advertising in the right places with the correct messages. The weekend would start on Friday night and end on Sunday. By leaving on Friday night respondents felt that this event would attract people like themselves who were not Orthodox. Friday night was felt to be the best night for 'unwinding' and having fun.

"They go out on Friday night in Israel. If it's good enough for them then why not here?"

Respondents wanted there to be good food (the Edgware groups did not want Kosher food but were happy to have vegetarian food) and 'loads to drink'. Most other respondents did not mind there being Kosher food as long as it was not of the bad quality that many of them associated with it. They stated that they would like to see interesting dishes moving away from the stereotypical idea that they had of it being only fried food and tough chicken.

"I don't mind Kosher food as long as it's not the usual rank fried rubbish. It would be good to have things like Lasagne or chicken in a sauce or something"

Activities that they would like to see were walking, riding and a variety of sports. Many respondents wanted there to be unusual activities available with suggestions including absailing, archery and line dancing. Organised optional trips to surrounding areas were popular with the majority. The Edgware group wanted to be able to arrange their own activities and were against the idea of being organised by others. However they liked the idea of some equipment (such as a football) being available so that they could organise themselves. The other groups were more open to the idea of organised activities as long as they were optional. Indeed most respondents felt that there needed to be some kind of structure to the weekend. However all respondents were clear that they did not want to be

over organised by over-zealous people that would make them feel as though they were back at school.

"There should be various choices of activities going on at the same time so that when people come together in the evenings they have something to gab about"

"You don't want someone bouncing about in a T-shirt with a name tag on trying to get you to join in"

"I don't want compulsory "

"You can't cater for everyone and there has to be a variety of things"

"You're not going to please 100% of the people all of the time"

The Ilford group had the idea of having a group meeting on the first night (in some ways similar to the discussion group itself) where people would be able to meet each other.

All respondents wanted there to be a party on Saturday night with good music, lots of food and drink that would run late into the night.

The majority of the older Manchester group wanted there to be people from other areas attending the weekend otherwise many said that they would not be interested in attending. However a significant number of this group did not really want to meet partners from too far away as this would make it difficult for them to continue any relationship that may have started.

From these findings we recommend that the weekends themselves should provide a wide range of optional activities that are fun but should steer clear of any overtly 'educational' or 'religious' content. A vegetarian menu would overcome the need to emphasise the event being 'Koshe.' but this would need to be of a high quality. The organisational elements of the weekend should be discreet and kept to a minimum with participants being encouraged to manage themselves regarding rules of behaviour. We would also recommend the employment of professional activity/party organisers for such a weekend so that events are of a high standard and do not suffer from an 'amateur' feel.

### **Exclusive Introductions: A trial with older respondents**

Of the interventions suggested by Jewish Continuity we believe that 'Exclusive Introductions' gained enough positive feedback from older respondents to warrant a trial with this age group if certain changes are made. These would include changing the title as well as limiting the role of the 'host'. As this Intervention was particularly appealing to women attention would need to be paid to ways of attracting men to this scheme.

### **'Click': A cautious trial**

This Intervention gained a considerable amount of support from one of the older groups as well as from several of the Telephone respondents. These findings lead us to conclude that a small trial of this intervention could be made providing that the title is changed and the sliding scale is removed. Attention would need to be paid to the fact that many respondents associated this Intervention with appealing to those who had no friends and so had negative connotations. The Intervention would therefore need to be advertised in such a way that lessened these perceptions.

This Intervention could be effective for those living in smaller Jewish communities where the desire to be put in touch with other young Jews from other areas is greater.

## Advertising Jewish events

It was felt that the best ways to advertise events would be:

To tell a group of people that it was taking place by telephone and to ask them to bring people with them to this event. They could then phone others to tell them. The starting places for this 'snowball' invitation scheme should be people who did not know each other otherwise there would be the problem of having no new faces.

To place posters and flyers in places that young Jewish people may go to. These would include wine bars, clubs, coffee bars, delicatessens and bagel shops. The message on the flyers and posters should not be too long but should suggest that the event was different from other events. Respondents suggested that this advertising should start with posters a good while before the event so that people become aware of it and these should be followed by flyers. The poster and flyers should be bold and bright and colourful. Another idea was to have a small brochure that showed the price of the event and possibly included pictures of the venue. Although respondents did not want the advertising to contain any direct reference to Judaism the Ilford group felt that it could include some small Jewish symbol like a star of David.

To send a mailshot to a large number of people. A majority of the respondents said that they would be happy to be included on a database.

## Key advertising words to use

Although respondents found it difficult to come up with the exact words that should be used when advertising events that would attract a Jewish crowd there was a general feeling that it should be done in a humorous and alternative way. They liked the idea of having advertising messages that were irreverent in some way and a 'bit over the top'. The advertising message had to assure them that this event was different from the others that they had seen and would therefore attract a different crowd.

Many respondents expressed the idea that the advertising should have as little to do with serious Judaism as possible but could possibly use commonly understood Yiddish words or other phrases associated with Jewish life.

Among the examples given were:

Circumcision required.

Women without sheitels only need apply.

"I don't think it has got to be a rude word but just words that you wouldn't expect to see"

"I was sent a flyer that was to do with Mad Cow Disease (BSE) that sounded like it was fun. The BSE stood for Big Social Event and made prescriptions for things to do"

"Go wild, get pissed and have sex at Centre Parcs" (A comic suggestion made by one of the older Manchester group. People laughed at this suggestion but when asked if they would go to such an event they all said yes)

"Why don't you use Jewish words that people do relate to, like nosh but not Kosher"

"It has got to shout out that it is fun and different"

"There is a simple three letter word called FUN"

## **The Discussion Group experience**

All of the groups (with the exception of the younger Edgware group) enjoyed the experience of the discussion group itself and felt that this kind of forum was a very good way of meeting other Jewish people. Many respondents stated that they had not been in a group with other Jews for many years and that they found it an interesting and stimulating experience. The majority of respondents said that they had felt relaxed in the discussion group environment. There was good interaction between respondents in all of the groups (with the one exception) with several people exchanging telephone numbers and arranging to meet up at future dates. Many respondents felt that the discussion group was actually a better way of meeting other people than the 'interventions' as it was more about 'having a chat' and therefore made people feel less pressurised. The younger Manchester group actually started to discuss what they might be able to arrange in their own community and about three quarters of the group were involved in conversations after the group had ended concerning how they might get things going.

"I reckon that if we were to have a few bottles of wine here we could have a real nice evening"

"I've had a really good time and it's good to talk"

"I think that it's been a really enjoyable evening and I think that it's what everyone wants, to meet people in these kind of circumstances, there's no pressure"

"Never mind all those ideas that you showed us, they should arrange discussions groups where people can be themselves and it is a lot easier to meet people"

"This is much more enjoyable than I thought it would be"

"Wouldn't it be a good idea if all these groups that you are doing got together on a large scale "

"We've been here an hour and 45 minutes and it has flown by"

"I think that this has been a great opportunity to sit down with people I don't know and to talk and be fairly open about our views and its nice to know that you are not the only one feeling like this and that there are a hell of a lot of people in Manchester feeling the same way as you feel"

"With something like this you could plant a seed and then people would arrange to do something else"

"It would be nice if you could come back in a few months and try out the new ideas on us"

"It's been enlightening tonight and its been good to hear that other people think the same way that I do about things. If anything was arranged then I would give it a go. It's nice to know that someone is taking a bit of notice and trying to help us because there isn't much here in Manchester"

"It's nice being here with people of my own age"

"This evening has been different and enjoyable"

"Maybe the people in this room should get together and start something"

"It proves that a group of people who don't know each other can sit and talk together"

"Anything that creates this kind of atmosphere would be good"

"More than anything it's nice to know that there is someone out there thinking about us"

"In a group like this if we hadn't been thrown together maybe half of us would never have talked to each other and that is a sad thing"

## **Why did they come to the groups**

Apart from the obvious incentive of the £15 which respondents were paid, there were other reasons expressed by them as to why they agreed to attend the group discussion. Many respondents cited that they were 'curious' to find out what this was about and most said that they were interested in the possibility of meeting new Jewish people. A large number of respondents said that they would have come to the group even if there had been no incentive.

"When someone tells me about a Jewish group and it's not religiously oriented then I am interested "



"What attracted me to come tonight was that it was a chance to meet other people who are in a similar situation to me and there was no frightening literature"

## Leadership

Many respondents stated that they would be prepared to help to organise events and activities. There was a hesitancy amongst many to take on a leadership role although there were at least two people in each group who said that they would be interested in taking on some responsibility for organising things.

Several respondents talked about times in the past when they had organised parties and other activities and how they had found it very difficult to keep people's enthusiasm up. Some respondents talked about the need for charismatic leadership and that they had rarely come across people who inspired them. They wanted to see someone who was different in appearance to their stereotypical idea of Jewish Leaders and who spoke in a way that they could understand. Most respondents felt that leaders needed to be of a similar age to themselves as they would be able to relate to them and their needs.

"Yes I would take a leadership role because life is what you make it"

"I only haven't done it because there is nothing here. If there was something new then I would"

"I would be interested if I knew that it could attract the right kinds of people"

"I would do it if I could be sure that there were other people who shared my way of thinking, other people like me"

"If I could get together with a group of friends or some of the people here then I would"

"People in our own age group will understand our needs"

"I've only heard of one guy from that and if you were to have a lecture from anyone it would be from him, his name is Clive Laughton and he is an absolute genius. I think that he could relate to anyone in the room. He dresses like Jesus"

"A leader has to have a gimmick so that you think 'I wonder what he will come up with'. By amusing me he will keep me interested"

"People of our own age have a better understanding of what you are interested in whereas older people are interested in their generation"

## Discussion groups for a greater chance for successful Interventions

The popularity of the Discussion groups themselves leads us to conclude that these could be combined with other interventions to increase the chances of success of any new initiative chosen.

Working alongside the Interventions chosen we recommend a programme of Discussion groups that would take place twice a year in different areas. The groups can be used as a multi-purpose tool:

- Using the participants as 'sounding boards' to test concepts for the weekends, other interventions and advertising.
- Using them as 'radios' as participants will tell others in their areas about events and specify the best places to advertise in each area.
- To identify potential leaders in each area whom Jewish Continuity will be able to target individually (Our Research has shown that at least two people per group would be able to be involved in a leadership role).
- Enabling participants to meet other young Jews in an unpressurised and stimulating environment.