[Letter adjusted depending on whether to Contract/Lead Inspectors-SERCO, CfBT and Tribal, or HMI]

Date

**Dear XXX**

**Governing by Inspection: Education Governance and School Inspection in England, Sweden and Scotland**

I am writing to you in relation to this study, funded by the ESRC in England and Scotland, and by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet), which is currently investigating the ways in which inspection pratices and processes can help us understand how education is governed in the three countries in the study.

As a central element of the research, we hope to interview around 60 key people who are actively involved in the inspection process in England, in order to elicit their views about the recent changes in inspection, and to discuss with them what they see an inspection’s main role in governing education. Most research on inspection has focused on whether or not-and how-it improves school performance, our interest is different. In the context of England, with its very advanced performance data systems, we seek answers to such questions as why continue to inspect? why change the framework for inspection in particular ways? We also want to explore how inspectors experience the work of inspection, how and to what extent they feel they can exercise professional judgement within the quality assurance regime in place in England, and how they consider their relationship with the centre and with the teaching profession to be developing.

**Given your experience of working as a lead inspector/inspector trainer/ contract inspector/HMI** we hope that it will be possible to arrange to record an interview with you during x or x and suggest the following dates:[……]

We appreciate that media treatment and even academic debate on these issues has occasionally been very heated, and stress that this research has its starting point in the perspectives of inspectors themselves. We also guarantee that the interview data will be treated as confidential: we will transcribe the interview immediately and use a code to identify our interviewees. Recordings will be wiped after transcription. The numbered code will refer only to role (for example Lead Inspector 13) and all records will be kept securely. No interviewee will be identifiable in any data used in publication or deposited in data archives. We can also refer you to xxx [senior policy maker], who has worked with us in the past and has enabled access to some of your colleagues and who can vouch for us.

The interview will take around one and a half hours and is based on a thematic interview structure that works through the following topics: your background/career, your experience of the new framework, your experiences of changes in your work produced by the new framework or other developments, your assessment of the balance between professional judgement and data use in inspection, your assessment of relations with the teaching profession. The order and topics are not set in stone, so we are happy to be guided by you if there are particular issues that you wish to pursue. You can, of course, end the interview at any point, and withdraw any comments about which you have concerns.

I am of course happy to provide any further information that you may require about the research, or to discuss the possibility of an interview with you further on an informal basis.

I look forward to hearing from you,

With best wishes,

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| Jenny Ozga, FBA  Professor of the Sociology of Education, Department of Education and  Senior Research Fellow, Green Templeton College, Oxford |